

Privacy, Publicity, Pornography:  
Restif de la Bretonne's  
*Ingénue Saxancour, ou La Femme séparée*

Rori Bloom

In his preface to the most recent edition of *Ingénue Saxancour, ou La Femme séparée*, Daniel Baruch raises Restif's novel to the status of a "livre de combat que les féministes auraient dû depuis longtemps mettre à sa juste place, la première."<sup>1</sup> As an impassioned plea of a battered wife against her sadistic husband, *La Femme séparée* (1789) addresses the plight of women's rights (or the lack thereof) at the end of the Old Regime before the Revolution allowed unhappy partners to avail themselves of divorce. However, in an age when the term "philosophical books" included both socio-political tracts and pornographic texts, Restif's novel belongs to both genres, founding a discourse of liberation for women on the literary exploitation of one woman's story in an exploration of pain and punishment reminiscent of the works of the Marquis de Sade.<sup>2</sup>

As author of a 1769 tract entitled *Le Pornographe*, Restif introduced the word "pornographer" into French, but he did so with characteristic ambiguity in a text that proposes to reform prostitution but at the same time titillates readers with a detailed description of this

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1 Daniel Baruch, "Notice" for *Ingénue Saxancour* in *Restif de la Bretonne II* (Paris: Laffont, 2002), 471. References are to this edition.

2 See Robert Darnton, *Édition et sédition: l'Univers de la littérature clandestine au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 13–16.

profession.<sup>3</sup> Twenty years later, in *La Femme séparée*, the pretence of the philosophic is again undercut by Restif's penchant for the pornographic, but in a less obvious and more problematic way. Ingénue Saxancour is not a prostitute, exposing herself to the violence of life on the streets, but rather a wife exposed to sexual violence in her own home. In showing this second situation to be just as dangerous as the first, *La Femme séparée* exposes the secrets of spousal abuse, crossing the line between private and public.<sup>4</sup> This central tension between the private and the public spheres<sup>5</sup> is expressed in the story's telling, as the victim becomes the vigorous agent of her own defence and the text moves from private complaint to public outcry, defining itself doubly as a *mémoire* and a *mémoire judiciaire*.

When the question of authorship is closely examined, however, this duality is resolved by its own impossibility, for the ingenuous Ingénue seems incapable of composing a sophisticated legal argument. The text thus deconstructs its narrator's claim to authorship, constantly hinting that it is not the product of an amateur but of a professional author. The presence of this third person in the private problems of a couple seems strangely invasive, but, while critics have found this external perspective aesthetically interesting, they have more or less dismissed it as morally unproblematic.<sup>6</sup> However, when the sexual brutality endured by Ingénue is not recounted by the victim but by someone else, this new vision of events constitutes a sort of voyeurism that appeals less to the aesthetic or the ethical sensibilities and more to the prurient curiosity of readers.

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- 3 The entry "pornographe" in the *Petit Robert* dictionary refers to Restif's as the first known usage of the word.
  - 4 See Mary Trouille, "Truth Stranger Than Fiction: Wife-Abuse in Restif de la Bretonne's *Ingénue Saxancour*," *SVEC: Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 1 (January 2003), 311–44. Trouille concludes that "Restif's is still one of the most powerful depictions of spousal abuse ever written" (344).
  - 5 Jürgen Habermas has situated an important "structural" transformation of the public sphere in the eighteenth century and thus a new distinction between private and public life. See Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).
  - 6 Isabel Herrero explains the intrusion of the authorial presence in the novel as characteristic of the internal intertextuality of Restifian writing. Herrero, "*Ingénue Saxancour* de Restif de la Bretonne ou l'ambiguïté du point de vue," *Études rétroviennes* 13 (December 1990), 21–40. Frank Houriez describes the presence of the father's voice in the daughter's story as a textual effort at reconciling their relationship, strained by Ingénue's unauthorized marriage. Houriez, "Collage et coherence dans *Ingénue Saxancour*," *Études rétroviennes* 15 (December 1991), 15–30.

In response to the text, one eighteenth-century reader asked “Si c’est un factum, pourquoi l’avoir publié comme un roman?” While the legal brief attempts to redress real social wrongs, its fictionalization represents a vulgarization and even a glamorization of this supposedly true but extremely sordid story.<sup>7</sup> More disturbing perhaps is the idea that the horrific events described in the fiction are indeed true, and that the victim of its terrifying acts of sexual deviance is not Sade’s cypher Justine but a real woman. Most troubling of all is that Restif does not take this tale from the proceedings of a well-publicized court case but publishes a part of his own private life: the trials and tribulations of his unhappily married daughter.<sup>8</sup> In so doing, this strange story returns the reader to familiar Restifian territory, for like many of his works it is autobiographical. At the same time, this novel allows Restif to return to his interest in the pornographic in the original sense of the word, for he sells his daughter’s story and thus prostitutes her pain to his reading public. In this article, I will examine the text’s slippage from private to public to pornographic discourse, analysing the shifting perspectives that allow one man’s feminism to be another’s pornography.

### The Necessary Fiction of the Sympathetic Victim

In revealing a particularly scandalous chapter in the secret story of his family, Restif nonetheless denies literary paternity of *Ingénue Saxancour*, not only changing the names to protect the innocent but also writing in a false first person as if the heroine had penned this story.<sup>9</sup> While the supposedly “ingenuous” narrative of *Ingénue* is thus founded on an initial deception, this fiction of the first-person female narrator could be justified as a means to facilitate the telling of diffi-

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7 Grimod de la Reynière cited in Baruch, *Restif de la Bretonne II*, 470.

8 Mary Trouille echoes Restif’s biographers in identifying *Ingénue Saxancour* as “a thinly veiled account of [Restif’s] daughter’s disastrous marriage to an abusive husband” (Trouille, 312). Pierre Testud, *Restif de la Bretonne et la création littéraire* (Genève: Droz, 1977), Ned Rival, *Les Amours pervers: Une biographie de Restif de la Bretonne* (Paris: Perrin, 1982), and Baruch, *Nicolas Edmé Restif de la Bretonne* (Paris: Fayard, 1996) all identify the fictional *Ingénue Saxancour* and her husband Moresquin as the real Agnès Restif and her husband Augé. Trouille and Rival both bring to bear court documents related to the couple’s separation as proof of the serious problems in their marriage.

9 This technique is, of course, typical of the eighteenth-century memoir-novel genre, as is the use of a female narrator by a male author. *La Femme séparée* bears some interesting structural and thematic similarities to Diderot’s *La Religieuse*.

cult truths. Written from any perspective but that of its heroine, *Ingénue's* story would be shameless in its shocking depictions of domestic violence. Moreover, this presentation of the story from the victim's perspective affords readers an alibi, allowing them the excuse of compassion, co-opting the heroine's innocence to cover the guilt of their inquisitiveness.

At the same time, *Ingénue's* inherent naïveté allays (at least initially) any accusation of exhibitionism in her account of the atrocities she has endured. She can hardly be charged with constructing a case, much less of consciously composing a piece of hard-core pornography, for at every turn she is shown to be all too easily seduced. When her aunt presents *Ingénue* with a suitor, the girl is easily convinced that she has no real reason to reject the marriage: “[Le discours de ma tante] ... était plein de raison, du moins en apparence, et je m’y laissai prendre.” *Ingénue* reveals that she is helpless against the persuasive powers of her aunt, her mother, and her suitor, incapable of inventing an argument against them. “Je ne savais de quelles armes me servir pour me défendre,” she writes (518).

To even the odds, readers must side with the hapless heroine in a clear and classic conflict of good against evil. Innocent *Ingénue* is the virgin sacrificed to the ogre, and throughout her story she refers to her husband as a “monstre.” When *Moresquin* first appears, it is as if ominous music is playing in the background, so clearly is he indicated as the object of the reader's antipathy: “C’est donc ici où le fourbe, le brutal, le fou, le vil, le lâche *Moresquin* commence à paraître sur la scène.” As antipathetic as he is, she is pathetic and actively solicits the reader's sympathy with direct (albeit rhetorical) questions like “Hélas! ne peut-on donc éviter son sort?” (518).

Thanks to the first-person presentation of events, the reader feels *Ingénue's* fear firsthand as she is delivered from the safety of her father's house to the lair of the monstrous *Moresquin* clan, a setting in which she is the only sympathetic character. Her first impressions of her in-laws—as they eat a poor meal, beat their servants, scream at each other—reveal her sensitivity in the face of their brutality: “J’étais accoutumée à voir meilleure compagnie! Je fus étonnée, une sorte de frayeur s’empara de moi, et je me demandais plusieurs fois: ‘Où suis-je?’” She likens her malevolent mother-in-law to the evil witch of French fairy tales, the “fée *Carabosse*,” and when her husband treats her with less regard than the lowest of the scullery maids, she compares her plight to that of a fairy-tale heroine, describing herself as “une infortunée sans habits propres, les mains salies par le décrochage,

ayant toujours l'air d'une Cendrillon." She is completely at the mercy of Moresquin, who in turn emphasizes her total dependence on him: "Tu n'existes que pour moi [...] . Ta famille t'a abandonnée," he declares to his new wife (524, 571, 547).

What follows is no fairy tale but the detailed account of torture from the victim's point of view, and what repels readers at the same time attracts them, luring them into the private life of Ingénue: the obscurity of her impoverished home, the dark recesses of her marriage bed, the most secret spaces of her body. Ingénue establishes an intimate relationship with readers, inviting them to be privy to the sordid secrets of her marriage, the minute and painful details of the everyday, recounting the time when her husband flies into a rage upon finding that the bread has gone stale or that the *pot au feu* is not ready. Against a backdrop of these ordinary occurrences, Moresquin's brutality seems even more extreme, so that his wife's daily life takes on the strange quality of a nightmare. In an endless repetition of tiresome tasks—dressed in rags, Ingénue is forced to scrape the mud from her husband's boots; she is fed scraps on the floor; she must serve his every whim at table—Ingénue faces both physical and psychological abuse. Finally, these two forms of torment meet in the sexual torture Ingénue endures from the very first night of her marriage: "J'étais étonnée comme l'est une jeune personne qui s'est toujours respectée, et qui jamais n'avait été exposée à aucune attaque [...] . J'ai su depuis qu'une partie de ces caresses étaient des libertés les plus criminelles même de mari à femme." A victim of violence, Ingénue is also a victim of violation, for no part of her body is protected from the sexual aggression of Moresquin, and she notes: "Il souilla toutes les parties de mon corps, et je crus que j'en mourrais de dégoût. J'en fus quitte, à la dernière infamie, pour ... un soulèvement de cœur ... . Il s'endormit alors" (526, 564).

This open exposure of every orifice risks making the reader ill at ease. However, if there is anything that excuses Ingénue's extraordinary honesty and engages the reader's indulgence, it is her simultaneous attempt to retain some small claim to privacy. She may tell quite a bit, but she does not tell all, eliding the most demeaning details of her story. "Le monstre se jeta sur moi, et (ce fut son mot) il me donna des leçons de ... . Ces détails ne peuvent se rendre," she writes, censoring the most scandalous words and images. In bringing her husband to justice, she stops just short of full disclosure in the hope of retaining some dignity for herself: "Je dévoilai à mon père une partie des horreurs que j'avais souffertes [...] ; jamais je n'eus la

force de les faire passer [toutes] par mes lèvres.” Even in stating her case to her lawyer, Ingénue shows a reticence that makes her respectable, writing of the brief he presents: “Ils [les faits] y sont plus abrégés [dans le mémoire judiciaire ...] parce qu’on y a retranché tous les traits atroces, dont on ne voulait pas faire retentir les tribunaux” (564, 573, 604).

Finally, when Ingénue decides to write her own version of events, her memoir is not composed in a desire for more publicity but in a moment of private contemplation, as she explains in the last lines of the text: “J’ai entrepris de composer ces mémoires, qui ne m’ont rappelé des moments cruels, mais passés, que pour me faire mieux sentir mon bonheur actuel.” Having escaped the sexual exploitation of the conjugal relationship, Ingénue returns to the idyllic domesticity of the paternal home, surrounded by “mon père, une sœur chérie dont les grâces, l’aimable naïveté ne peuvent être comparées qu’à celles de ma céleste amie, Félicité.” In a retreat from the publicity of a court case, Ingénue leaves Paris for an isolated country house where she can finally enjoy the “heureuse tranquillité” of private life (605).

#### From Private to Public I: The Promiscuity of Parisian Life

If, in the end, Ingénue reclaims her lost innocence by returning to nature, this opposition of the purity of the country and the perversity of the city is nothing new in Restifian (and in Rousseauistic) writing: Paris always perverts the peasant.<sup>10</sup> In *La Femme séparée*, private life is constantly contaminated by contact with the public sphere, the sanctity of the home violated by the incursions of strangers from the streets. The story of Ingénue Saxancour shows Parisian life to be essentially promiscuous, for in the crowded neighbourhood where she lives with her husband, the couple’s dirty laundry is aired in public for all the neighbours to see. And despite Ingénue’s best efforts to maintain some modesty, in the permeable space of the *petit peuple* of Paris, secrets like hers are impossible to keep.<sup>11</sup>

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10 Among Restif’s most famous novels are *Le Paysan pervertie* and *La Paysanne pervertie*, in which urban life corrupts the innocent peasant.

11 Descriptions of crowded living conditions in the popular quarters of Paris are characteristic of Restif’s writing. In *La Femme infidèle*, he notes that his wife easily eavesdrops on the neighbours through the thin walls, “n’ayant qu’une cloison de planches pour la séparer de celle de la fille de mon hôte, souvent elle était aux écoutes avec une autre voisine du troisième.” Cited in Baruch, *Nicolas Edmé Restif de la Bretonne*, 121.

Although Moresquin has told Ingénue that she is alone in the world and at his mercy, their home is surprisingly open to outsiders. When her husband's spoiled servant girl abuses Ingénue, her neighbours overhear the commotion and burst in to save the battered wife and to punish the brazen maid: "Ces femmes, toutes du commun, furent indignées [...] . Et elles la soufflèrent [la servante] tant qu'elles en eurent la force" (555). While their intervention saves Ingénue from abuse, on another occasion the presence of a witness to her humiliation hurts her pride: "Le garçon perruquier me tira de ses mains, car il [Moresquin] aurait continué de se livrer à sa rage, et j'eus l'humiliation de me voir avilie, devant un homme de cette espèce qui, par son état, pouvait répandre le bruit de mon malheur dans cinquante maisons" (544). Ingénue is aware of the activity of Parisian gossip networks and knows that her unhappy marriage is grist for the rumour mill.

If Ingénue is not safe from scandalmongers in her very own home, it is because her husband is unconcerned with hiding the truth about their relationship from the rest of the world, and he even invites his friends to serve as spectators to his brutal domination of his new bride. If Ingénue often characterizes their quarrels as "scènes," she is not only citing the expression *scène de ménage* but also emphasizing the theatrical quality of Moresquin's brutality and his need to perform before a public. In the first days of their marriage, Moresquin abuses Ingénue in front of their assembled guests: "Ma résistance m'attirait toujours des brutalités, qui n'étaient pas proprement des coups, mais il me renversait, me contenait, me découvrait, et m'exposait dans cette situation tandis que la fille rentrait! et ce qui est horrible, pendant que ses amis arrivaient chez lui à son invitation! Il jouissait ensuite de ma honte" (530).<sup>12</sup> He doubles his pleasure by violating her in front of his friends and even does so "dans une alcôve vitrée" (531), exposing his wife under glass as if in a sort of display case for his gawking guests to examine. When the couple spends the night with friends at a country house, Moresquin takes advantage of the close quarters, aroused by the idea that the other guests can hear him in the act, as Ingénue describes: "Il savait que Fromentel était couché tout proche de nous et pouvait nous entendre. Lorsqu'il se fut réchauffé, il voulut se satisfaire; et il employa les expressions les plus obscènes pour m'intimer ses volontés [...] . Excité par l'idée que tout

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12 See also 544 and 555.

était entendu par Fromentel, il se livrait à sa brutale passion” (576).

In the end, Moresquin pushes the private relationship of the married couple squarely into the public sphere by prostituting his own wife to other men, persuading her that this degradation will cause her elevation in his eyes. “Fais cela pour moi, que j’aie le plaisir de te voir au nombre de femmes que je mets au dessus de toutes les autres,” he cajoles her (563). When Moresquin forces Ingénue to sell her body to his superiors at the *bureau de comptes*, her humiliation is his stimulation, and he even arranges to listen in, taking a second-hand pleasure in overhearing his wife engaging in sexual acts with another man (553). If Ingénue refuses to be a wholesale whore (she agrees instead to look for some wealthy protector), her resistance to Moresquin’s machinations is not completely successful, for she discovers later that he has already sold her to a paying public without her knowledge, allowing other men to replace him in their bed in the dark. Realizing what has happened, she writes: “Je frémis en songeant à tout ce qui m’était arrivé! Il fallait ... . Je dis avec horreur que trois hommes, au moins ...” (564).

Taking the most private of acts and making it public, Moresquin is less interested in avoiding scandal than in inviting it. And as much as Ingénue wishes to preserve some vestige of privacy, her husband finds every opportunity to advertise the problems of their marriage. His exhibitionism takes the form of both deeds and words, for his pleasure is doubled not just by selling his wife to other men but by telling them about her promiscuity. When Ingénue finally leaves him, Moresquin publicizes their private differences, and to prove that she is at fault in their separation, he fabricates slanderous stories about her. Ingénue records some of them in her memoir, relating: “Il assurait que j’allais coucher avec cet homme, et que la dame chez laquelle j’étais en pension nous apportait le matin notre déjeuner au lit. Que le perruquier qui accommodait Fromentel m’avait vue dans le lit de ce jeune homme, qu’un monsieur qui sortait pour monter son équipage m’avait également vue ainsi que les domestiques” (590).

Arguing his case before the tribunal of public opinion, Moresquin even produces false evidence of his wife’s misdeeds, forging a letter from his wife to her supposed lover: “Il annonçait la lettre [...] dans les cafés, à tous les hommes vils de sa connaissance.” When Ingénue leaves him, he cannot leave her in peace, and the street becomes his theatre and his courtroom, as Ingénue observes: “Pendant mon absence, Moresquin avait donné quelques scènes sous les fenêtres de mon père, avec son fils. Il rassemblait les femmes du commun, et leur

faisait une narration à sa manière, et comme il est le plus faux des hommes, ce devait être le parfait opposé de la vérité. J'appris à mon retour le scandale qu'il avait causé" (592, 603).

From Private to Public II: From Confession to Cause Célèbre<sup>13</sup>

Although Moresquin addresses his side of the story to a crowd of passersby, he is no stranger to more formal tribunals. In the first weeks of his marriage, he brutally beats a servant who then brings charges against him (529), but this sort of thing is nothing new to a man who has been accused of rape and murder many times before and who has even been exiled to the colonies for his crimes. While most of the past cases against Moresquin have been settled out of court, Ingénue eventually succeeds in bringing her husband to justice. After Moresquin attacks her in a public place, Ingénue begins to take the necessary legal steps to end her marriage: "On commença la procédure de la séparation, d'après les derniers écarts de Moresquin. On prouva par deux témoins oculaires les soufflets au jardin du Roi; on prouva par trente témoins les infamies débitées à Montrouge [et] [...] à Paris [...] . La séparation a enfin été prononcée, moins d'après le mémoire de mon procureur que d'après celui-ci" (604). If the exhibitionist Moresquin goes public with his case against his wife, complaining about her before the drunks in the cafés and the housewives at their windows, Ingénue's legal action against him is the ultimate publication of their problems.

Ingénue's affirmation that her eventual vindication is less a consequence of her lawyer's words than of her own words forces a reinterpretation of her writing and our reading. From personal memoir to *mémoire judiciaire*, this generic reidentification of the text transforms it from a painful revelation of private truths to a purposefully persuasive presentation of her story. Although she first protests a desire to protect her privacy, Ingénue's story has an essentially public vocation. Despite her self-characterization as an innocent victim, she constructs her case with the skills of a practised prose-

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13 The eighteenth century is the era of the *cause célèbre*, as Sarah Maza demonstrates in her history of famous court cases of the Old Regime: *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The "Causes Célèbres" of Pre-Revolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Maza's argument is especially appropriate here since she studies not only the importance of court cases in the eighteenth century, but also the era's interest in the publication of legal briefs that often became best-sellers.

cutor. If she allows the reader to share the most private parts of her life, Ingénue has chosen them selectively to show herself at her most vulnerable. In deciding to depict her most intimate moments—the loss of virginity and the pains of childbirth are described in detail—Ingénue emphasizes her fragility to win sympathy for herself and antipathy for the monster who abused her. This defenceless victim thus carefully composes a story that assures us of her innocence and her husband’s guilt.

Supposedly helpless and abandoned, Ingénue has the presence of mind to realize that others have witnessed her abuse at the hands of her husband and could thus support her legal claim: “La garde que j’avais alors existe. Elle peut dire dans quelle situation elle me trouvait en rentrant: car dès qu’elle avait tourné le dos, pour exécuter ses ordres, il [Moresquin] se donnait l’affreux plaisir de me maltraiter. L’accoucheur pourrait en dire autant.” Instead of collapsing under her abuser’s blows, Ingénue gathers her courage and builds her case. When she is not sure that she has enough evidence, she even summons others to see her husband in action, inviting her aunt’s maid to meet Moresquin in their home: “J’eus encore par là un autre avantage: c’est que les indignités que me dit Moresquin à notre retour et pendant la nuit persuadèrent de ce qu’on avait peine à croire auparavant.” And if these witnesses are not credible enough, Ingénue names her own aunt, a respectable bourgeoisie, as a witness to Moresquin’s mistreatment, saying she will call upon *la tante Bitez* as a guarantor of her story: “Elle signera ces mémoires” (546, 556, 575).

Insisting on her husband’s guilt, Ingénue also emphasizes her own innocence, and anticipating his counter-accusations, she has included in her narrative exculpatory evidence on her own behalf. Knowing that Moresquin will charge her with adultery, Ingénue relates his efforts to inculpate her in order to reiterate her resistance to participating in his sexual schemes. She admits that she has accompanied her husband to a brothel, but this admission also allows her to introduce into evidence the conversation they overhear between the madam and the man accused of being Ingénue’s lover. After listening to Fromentel tell La Zaïre that he has never received Ingénue’s favours, Moresquin admits to his wife: “Je vois que [...] tu n’es pas coupable.” Even when Ingénue is guilty of agreeing to sell herself to her husband’s superiors in order to secure his position, she uses her memoirs to justify this action: “Je proteste ici que j’avais horreur de ce moyen que je proposais, mais je voyais les coups, peut-être la mort; j’étais seule, au milieu de la nuit, avec un homme vil, bas, semblable aux assassins” (563–64).

At last, when she decides to leave Moresquin, Ingénue makes the following remark as if to mitigate a misdeed: “Je prie qu’on fasse cette observation, qu’il s’en fallut de beaucoup que j’emportasse tout ce qui était à moi!” Reflecting on how her departure will be publicly perceived, Ingénue describes her act as disinterested. She leaves her property behind, facilitating judgment in favour of her petition for separation by obviating any argument about the division of property between husband and wife. More problematic is Ingénue’s handling of the custody of her child, for she coldly abandons a toddler to the man she has portrayed as a monster. Again, she uses her memoir to justify her questionable conduct: “Je n’ai pas voulu lui laissé mon petit chien, mais je lui laisse l’enfant! [ ...] . Mais j’y suis forcée, ne voulant jamais le revoir. Si j’avais amené son fils, c’était lui donner l’occasion de me poursuivre” (586, 587). The elaboration of such a sophisticated discourse of self-defence in her pursuit of justice shows that Ingénue is conscious of her own transformation from private person to public figure.

#### The Sins of the Daughters: Filial Guilt and Fatherly Innocence

If Ingénue’s memoir serves to deny her culpability, its aim is undercut from the start, for the preface with which it begins (“l’Avis de l’éditeur”) ends with a declaration of her guilt: “Si elle fut coupable, qu’elle est punie!” (474). According to the preface, the real criminal is not the abusive husband but the disobedient daughter who married in defiance of “l’autorité sacrée d’un père éclairé” (473). If, initially, *La Femme séparée* is the story of the relationship between a wife and her husband, it must also be read as the exploration of an equally problematic relationship between a daughter and her father. In her study of eighteenth-century English fiction, Caroline Gonda writes: “What novels helped to reinforce was the sense that this [marriage] was the most important decision ... that a daughter would ever have the chance to take; and that the success or failure of that decision was intimately bound up with the relationship which she had with her father.”<sup>14</sup> In *Ingénue Saxancour* the conjugal relationship that seems to be the story’s centre is challenged by the filial relationship that reclaims its original importance, and this alternate interpretation

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14 Caroline Gonda, *Reading Daughters’ Fictions: 1709–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 37.

reframes our reading to focus it on the father figure of the text.

Thus, the vilification of the husband works not only towards the exoneration of the daughter but also towards the justification of her father and his promotion to a central position in the story. Any accusation that he may not have lived up to the responsibility afforded him by paternal authority is averted in the text, which applauds Saxancour's severity in the face of Ingénue's rebellion. While the text opposes a husband's abuse of his wife, it upholds a father's right to strike his daughter, especially when the one blow Saxancour deals to Ingénue is in an attempt to ward off the many to be dealt to the girl by her husband thereafter: "Il [Saxancour] me défendit de voir et d'entendre Moresquin ... . Je suis obligée de tout dire parce que depuis l'indigne mari que le sort m'a donné a reproché à mon père de ne s'être pas opposé à sa recherche ... . Mon père me frappa pour la première et la dernière fois" (520). While Ingénue affirms her father's right to discipline her before her marriage, she also justifies his loss of interest in her life after she has left the paternal home. "J'ignorais qu'un homme occupé, d'une santé faible, est facilement impatienté" (522) writes Ingénue, excusing her father's insensitivity by invoking his own problems. She also remarks that her father was really ignorant of the gravity of her plight: "Il ignorait à quelles extrémités j'étais réduite" (560). In the end, this ignorance is really her own fault, since Ingénue never tells her father the true extent of her torment at the hands of her husband: "D'après cette réticence, mon père me recommanda la patience et me représenta que j'avais un fils" (573). Once he has ceded paternal rights over Ingénue, her father is ready to respect the new conjugal ones of Moresquin over his daughter, to remind her that although she has forsaken her filial duties, she has new ones as wife and mother.

If her father appears to unconsciously facilitate the persecution of the daughter he first set out to protect, Ingénue's mother seems to consciously cause her daughter's unhappiness: "Ma mère ayant tout examiné, tout reconnu, tout pénétré, mit dans sa tête qu'il fallait me marier à Moresquin pour me punir de tout ce qu'elle nommait mes torts à son égard" (522). Moreover, this mother (more *marâtre* than *mère*) cunningly contrives to prevent her daughter's father from coming to the girl's aid, as Ingénue understands only after the fact:

J'écrivis à mon père; on supprima mes lettres; on les intercepta: ma mère, depuis si violente ennemie d'Elise Leeman [a seductress with her sights set on Saxancour], s'entendait avec la mère de cette jeune fille, pour ne rien laisser parvenir à mon père qui contrariât leurs vues, si différentes, mais qui

s'accordaient en un point, celui de faire mon mariage, de le faire malgré mon père, et par un effet de son indisposition. (523)

The father, in charge of the good management of his family affairs, cannot be blamed for his daughter's *mésalliance* once it is so thoroughly established that her mother's machinations are fully responsible for Ingénue's misguided act.<sup>15</sup> In a reading where Ingénue and not Moresquin is the criminal, Saxancour and not Ingénue is the victim, and the father, not the daughter, becomes the sympathetic character and the centre of attention.

### Woman as Legal Fiction<sup>16</sup>

Just as Ingénue is seduced by those around her, her father, too, is the unwitting victim of seductive schemes: "Une dangereuse séductrice travaillait à m'enlever son cœur; [...] cette fille, jeune et jolie, profitait des plaintes qui lui échappaient contre moi, pour s'emparer de sa confiance, de son amitié," writes Ingénue (522). This Elise Leeman attempts to alienate Saxancour from his family, proposing herself as a "fille adoptive" who offers to "faire le charme de [ses] derniers jours" (522).<sup>17</sup> While Ingénue's memoirs begin by providing insight into the first sexual experiences of a young woman, they also offer the parallel: a story of the last sexual experiences of an older man. In *Ingénue Saxancour* woman will be what Nancy Miller calls "the legal fiction" that allows the exploration not of female but of male sexuality.

Ingénue herself is responsible for the pairing of her father with her friend Félicité, and this new match is the opposite of her own marriage, for instead of pain it brings pleasure, as Saxancour declares to his beloved: "Vous faites mon bonheur et je vous dois la santé! Oui, vos délicieuses caresses, vos sentiments, que je n'eusse osé demander, désirer même, font circuler mon sang, et préviennent ou détruisent

15 In enumerating Restif's motives for writing *Ingénue Saxancour*, Mary Trouille also includes the author's "desire to clear himself of blame for his daughter's disastrous marriage" (329).

16 Nancy Miller analyses male authors' use of female narrators, hypothesizing that "female drag allows the male 'I' not so much to please the Other ... as to become the Other ... the better to be admired by and for himself." She continues: "By this I mean that the founding contract of the novel as it functions in the phallogocentric (heterosexual) economies of representation is homoerotic: 'woman' is the legal fiction, the present absence that allows the male bond." Miller, "I's in Drag," in *French Dressing* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 95–96.

17 Elise Leeman has been equated with Sara Debée, the inspiration for the heroine of Restif's *La Dernière aventure d'un homme de quarante-cinq ans*. See Rival, 155.

les causes du mal que je redoutais! Ange Céleste! je dois te chérir.” The Rousseauistic replaces the Sadistic, and instead of blows, we have caresses, instead of sex, sentiment, for according to Ingénue, her father’s relationship with Félicité is “absolument très platonique.” “C’était une estime très tendre, très vive, un attachement dévoué, mais rien de plus,” she affirms (601). Fleeing the pain of her past sexual abuse, Ingénue finds refuge in this image of sexless love.

Moreover, Saxancour is the object not only of female admiration but also of male interest. If in *La Femme séparée* the conflict would seem to be between husband and wife, a closer look reveals that the real tension is between son-in-law and father-in-law, since Moresquin only pursues Ingénue to attract the attention of Saxancour. Ingénue herself explains Moresquin’s desire to marry her as a desire to be associated with Saxancour, for she writes of her husband:

On le voyait se gonfler, quand il rencontrait quelques-uns de ses amis ou de ses connaissances, en leur disant: “Voilà ma femme.” Ce mot était prononcé comme s’il eût dit: “Voyez! admirez! considérez l’adresse que j’ai eue d’avoir cette créature, malgré son père! Suis-je un homme fin, rusé!” Il racontait aussitôt tous les obstacles qu’il avait eu à surmonter; il nommait mon père; il tirait vanité de ses talents; ensuite il en disait un mal infini, s’exprimant tout à la fois comme un homme glorieux et honteux d’être son gendre. (544)

The relationship of Moresquin, Ingénue, and Saxancour is the “désir triangulaire” described by René Girard, in which Moresquin’s most important feelings are not directed at their supposed object but at a third person who represents a sort of obstacle: Saxancour. According to Girard: “le sujet éprouve donc un sentiment déchirant formé par l’union de ces deux contraires que sont la vénération la plus soumise et la rancune la plus intense.”<sup>18</sup>

At first, Moresquin desires the friendship of Saxancour, later he seeks revenge against the man for rejecting him, and his attentions to Ingénue turn from amorous to abusive. Although his wife suffers the consequences, Moresquin himself admits that she is not the real object of his actions, confessing:

Tout ce que je t’ai fait, depuis que je te maltraite, n’a été que pour te forcer à faire des démarches auprès de ton père pour qu’il me voie, qu’il me parle, qu’il me reçoive. Il m’a toujours accablé de mépris, et je me suis vengé sur sa fille

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18 René Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961), 19.

chérie. Oui, j'aurais voulu, pour le mortifier, te voir raccrocheuse et qu'il t'eût rencontrée: j'aurais tressailli de plaisir. (578)

Just as his relationship with his wife combines pain with pleasure, so his feelings for his father-in-law are at the same time aggressive and erotic, for in imagining Saxancour's humiliation, Moresquin shivers in ecstasy. As Girard has written: "l'élan vers l'objet est au fond l'élan vers le médiateur";<sup>19</sup> Ingénue is only a screen for Moresquin's psychosexual obsession with Saxancour.

But Ingénue herself is responsible for this displacement of the story's centre from herself to her father, for she constantly diverts attention from her own suffering to evoke Saxancour's suffering through her. In detailing her husband's acts of brutality, she designates her humiliation in front of her father's enemies as one of her most painful experiences: "Moresquin connaissait deux hommes aussi vils et méchants que lui, tous les deux ennemis jurés de M. Saxancour [...] . Ce furent ces deux hommes que Moresquin invita pour leur faire voir l'humiliation de la fille de leur ennemi" (545). "Jamais je n'ai vu de scène si cruelle" (546), she declares in a sentence that transforms its subject into the object of voyeurism. This objectification is emphasized by the simultaneous effacement of the subject, since, according to Ingénue, the worst injury inflicted is not to her body or even to her mind but to her father's reputation.

### Literary Paternity and the Question of Authorship

This extreme identification of daughter with father seems strange after Saxancour has been of so little help throughout Ingénue's ordeal. The only active role he plays in her rescue seems to be his aid in writing a draft of what will become her memoir: "Mon père, indigné, [...] fit un mémoire, le même que j'ai remis à mon procureur, et qui ne contient que le récit exact des faits. Ils y sont plus abrégés qu'ici parce qu'on y a retranché tous les traits atroces dont on ne voulait pas faire retentir les tribunaux" (604). In introducing this version of the facts, Ingénue identifies her father as its author, and while she claims to have written the more complete memoir published after her judicial problems are resolved, her assertion of authorship is ambiguous in a text where the idea of forgery is explicitly

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19 Girard, 19.

evoked. For example, when Moresquin produces a love letter supposedly written by Ingénue but really authored by him, Saxancour rejects it as a fake, since it is so crude in its description of female sexuality; Saxancour observes: “une femme ne pouvait écrire une lettre pareille” (593). True or false, the seed of doubt is sown, for if this letter is not written by Ingénue, maybe her memoirs—so explicit in their evocation of sexuality and brutality—are not written by her either.

If the father has replaced the daughter as hero of the story, this transposition is possible because he has also replaced her as its author. Indeed, the text intimates throughout that Saxancour is not just a father but also a writer. In the daughter’s story, we see the father with pen in hand to record his thoughts on marriage: “M. Saxancour [...] se détermina enfin à tracer les conditions d’un accommodement, telles qu’on les a vues dans *La Femme infidèle*” (593). If Ingénue states that the aforementioned work was “composé par un ami de mon père” (600), this reference to a female-narrated text having been written by a man causes the reader to suspect that *La Femme séparée* might be another such case of authorial impersonation.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, this attribution of *La Femme infidèle* to “a friend of my father” seems a way to hint that the father himself is the author of the text in question.<sup>21</sup> In *La Femme séparée*, Moresquin overtly makes this attribution, protesting the publication of *La Femme infidèle* under “Saxancour’s” windows,<sup>22</sup> and this identification of Saxancour as the author of *La Femme infidèle* implies that he may be the author of the similarly titled *La Femme séparée*. Moreover, the preface of the second novel affirms its connection to the first: “[Ces horreurs] étaient voilées dans la IV<sup>e</sup> partie de la *Femme infidèle*; ici elles sont à nu” (474).

In the preface to *Ingénue Saxancour, ou la Femme séparée*, the “editor” insists: “Je l’avoue, j’ai frêmi en lisant dans ces mémoires, des traits véridiques, écrits ingénument [...] par une jeune femme qui peint ce qu’elle a senti, souffert” (28), but this very insistence on the text’s authenticity and the attribution of its authorship to its heroine are clues to the contrary, according to the rhetoric of the genre in the period. As Carole Dornier explains: “l’esthétique du roman ‘faux-

20 *La Femme infidèle*, another novel by Restif, is a collection of letters supposedly written by an unfaithful wife (based on his own) to her various lovers.

21 Restif published it under the name Maribert-Courtenay.

22 “Moresquin découvrit l’impression du livre intitulé *La Femme infidèle*, composé par un ami de mon père et dans lequel il voulut se reconnaître sous le nom de l’Echiné. En effet, c’était lui-même” (600).

mémoires' consiste à proclamer que le récit est vrai pour encourager le lecteur à chercher le faux."<sup>23</sup> Thus, when the preface affirms that the text is not a novel but a memoir, the reader should immediately recognize that the memoir hides a novel and that the ingenuous narrator hides an ingenious author. If this author's famous name is not spelled out in the text, the titles of his other works are (Ingénue cites *La Femme infidèle* and *La Découverte australe*), and the pseudonym "Saxancour" hints that the author of *La Femme séparée* is none other than the most celebrated citizen of Sacy, Restif de la Bretonne.

Once the reader realizes that Restif and not Ingénue is the author of "her" story, his or her reading reflex is reversed, for this identification of an author who is also an inveterate autobiographer implies that some truth lies behind the fiction after all. Indeed, Restif eventually identifies *La Femme infidèle* and *La Femme séparée* as part of his autobiographical oeuvre by publishing a key to *La Femme infidèle* that tells the reader that Moresquin, Ingénue, and Saxancour represent his son-in-law Augé, his daughter Agnès, and Restif himself, respectively.<sup>24</sup> Even before the publication of this key, these stories were recognized by Restif's readers as true, their characters as real people. A righteously indignant reader condemns Restif for publishing private family matters, finding it "fort mal que vous deshonorassiez ainsi votre épouse et vos enfants aux yeux du public." He adds: "Un tel ouvrage ne peut que faire le plus grand tort à Mme Augé, qui est réellement avilie."<sup>25</sup> Once again, this reading gives the father's role in the text pre-eminence, for now the crime is not the husband's abuse but the father's libel of his own daughter.

### Autobiography as Pornography

Why does a writer reconstruct the sexual abuse of his daughter, and why does he do so not in dry, legalistic language but rather in dramatic detail that seems to derive less from a desire for justice than from a much more problematic passion? Restif's motivations are ques-

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23 Carole Dornier "Préface et intentions de l'Auteur des *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité* (1731) [Preface to *Manon Lescaut*] et la Préface des *Égarements du cœur et de l'esprit* (1736)," in *Le Roman des années trente* (Paris: St-Étienne, Publications de l'Université de St-Étienne, 1998), 89.

24 This "key" takes the form of an *Errata* to *La Femme infidèle*, published as an appendix to the 2nd ed. of Restif's *Contemporaines* (Paris: Veuve Duchesne, 1778).

25 Grimod de la Reynière cited in Baruch, *Restif de la Bretonne II*, 470.

tioned even from within the author's own work when he allows its villain, Moresquin, to accuse him of all sorts of perversity: "Moresquin, ivre, forcené, écumant, vomit contre [Saxancour/ Restif ...] devant le garde, et devant M. Robé le poète, les injures les plus atroces, l'accusant de m ... ge, d'inceste, de prostitution de [sa fille], et surtout lui prêtant de ces torts bêtes qui n'en sont pas" (600). Pierre Testud argues that the hints of guilt in Restif's work are efforts at better disarming his accusers: "Restif considère sans doute que c'est le meilleur moyen de paraître innocent."<sup>26</sup> In this instance, when an accusation is voiced by such an unreliable and unappealing character as Moresquin, it would seem to guarantee the innocence of the accused. As Testud has proven, however, Moresquin's charges are not baseless. By decrypting the notes recorded in Restif's diary, Testud has analysed the period just after Agnès/Ingénue's separation from Augé/Moresquin and her return to her father's home, decoding entries from 1788 to read: "Le 4 mai, le 13 mai 'foutu Agnès' [...] le 29 'baisé Agnès en levrette' [...] le 24 'Agnès foutue à plein con.'"<sup>27</sup> If Restif's incestuous interest in Agnès is suggested in the relationship between the fictional father and daughter of *Ingénue Saxancour*, it is documented in the author's diary.<sup>28</sup>

We do not have to wait for twentieth-century researchers to discover and decrypt Restif's *Inscriptions* to suspect the sexual nature of his relationship with Agnès, for in the sequence to which *La Femme infidèle* and the *La Femme séparée* belong, a final instalment is a celebration of sexual relations between a father and his daughter.<sup>29</sup> If, in the second book in the series, a son-in-law accuses his father-in-law of incest, in the third book the father responds to the charges, admitting his "crime" but also congratulating himself on it, declaring: "Heureux, heureux qui

26 Testud, 640.

27 Cited in Baruch, *Nicolas Edmé Restif de la Bretonne*, 213.

28 Nonetheless, it is impossible to say whether the diary is a true record of events as they happened or just an extension of Restif's oeuvre and another example of the proximity of autobiography and novel within it.

29 The Enlightenment's interest in incest exemplifies the same split already signalled in the eighteenth-century idea of the philosophical, a shared space for social theory and sexuality. For philosophers such as Rousseau, the study of incest is fundamental to a new anthropology, providing a means to understand the structures of nature and society. At the same time, for the authors of pornographic texts such as Sade, incest is fundamental to the ideal of transgression, the subversion for which he strives.

cocufie et fait cocufier un gendre également détesté de tous deux.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, Restif’s *L’Anti-Justine* is not just a response to Sade but more importantly an answer to questions raised in his own previous writing, a re-examination of the relationships between husbands and wives, fathers and daughters. Even as *L’Anti-Justine* argues against the physical violence of an abusive marriage, it reveals the moral violence of incest, showing the dark side of the father-daughter relationship, a photographic negative of the Restif family album.

Although Restif recycles the characters and plots of *Ingénue Saxancour* in *L’Anti-Justine*, where a heroine named Conquette-Ingénue is featured in chapters such as “Des conditions du mariage” and “De l’infâme mari,” the permutation of narrative point of view from daughter to father, from victim to torturer, makes the latter novel very different from the former. *L’Anti-Justine* is neither a sequel nor a prequel to *Ingénue Saxancour* but rather a parallel to it, a version of events from a different perspective that affords the story a new signification. Where *Ingénue Saxancour* argues that a daughter should always listen to her father, *L’Anti-Justine* replaces the father’s prudence with the revelation of his real prurience, explaining his attitude towards his daughter’s marriage thus: “ Craignant que je parvinsse à la déflorer avant mariage [...] elle précipita aidée par sa maîtresse, Madame Conprenant, un mauvais établissement avec un infâme [...] . Je lui notifai que je ne signerais rien qu’à la condition de la dépuceler auparavant” (42–43).

Now that the father and the daughter have changed places so that the narratee of the earlier novel has become the narrator of the later one, we gain new insight into the inception of the story by Ingénue and its reception by Saxancour. While his public reaction (represented in *Ingénue Saxancour*) is one of righteous indignation on behalf of the innocent victim, his private reaction (revealed in *L’Anti-Justine*) is one of guilty pleasure: “Ce récit de ma fille, quoique gazé dans sa bouche, m’avait révolté; je lui promis un prompt secours. Mais en même temps, il me faisait bander en carme comme tous les récits de brutalités libidineuses” (51). While in *Ingénue Saxancour*, the story of spousal abuse is told in service of the wife’s vindication, in *L’Anti-Justine* it is told for her father’s sexual stimulation and thus for the woman’s victimization by yet another man. The father admits: “Je lui

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30 Restif de la Bretonne, *L’Anti-Justine, ou les délices de l’amour* (Paris: Pré aux clercs, 1998), 41. References are to this edition.

fit raconter la manière dont elle croyait qu'elle avait été dépucelée, parce que ce récit avait du haut goût pour moi et qu'il me ranimerait assez pour me la faire foutre encore" (54). Although *L'Anti-Justine* presents itself as an antidote to sadism, offering in its subtitle "les délices [and not the *sérvices*] de l'amour," it procures pleasure through pain, as the father admits when alluding to his daughter's suffering: "je dois à cet exécration mariage d'indicibles délices" (42). Confessing that her agony increases his excitement, he writes: "Ma délicieuse fille était encore embellie dans les douleurs" (49). After reading *L'Anti-Justine*, each detail of abuse in *Ingénue Saxancour*—the bruises, the beatings, the blood—can be reread not just as precise proof to be presented as part of her case but also as tidbits to titillate the author who is, after all, his own first reader.<sup>31</sup> Despite the novel's stated moral mission to warn wayward daughters against unwise marriages—its preface ends with the admonition "Lisez, jeunes filles, et tremblez!" (474)—readers of *Ingénue Saxancour* may tremble less with fear than with the sort of ecstatic shivers that seize the sadistic Moresquin when he imagines his wife prostituted to her own father.

According to Grimod de la Reynière, the one shuddering should be Restif, and upon reading *Ingénue Saxancour* Grimod writes: "Cette publicité donnée à de telles infamies est un grand scandale! [...] Si vous saviez ce qui m'a été écrit de Paris à cette occasion, et cela par des gens qui ne vous connaissent même pas, vous en frémiriez."<sup>32</sup> Grimod reproaches Restif for the very crime committed by Moresquin, the villain of the novel: making the private public. While the exhibitionism of both the character Moresquin and his creator Restif can be read as part of a personal sexual pathology, the blurring of boundaries between the private and public spheres is also a phenomenon characteristic of the time. By bringing the private problem of spousal abuse to public attention through legal action, *Ingénue Saxancour* operates according to the logic of the *cause célèbre* as defined by Sarah Maza, who argues that "the writing and reading of sensational courtroom literature contributed to the birth of public

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31 Restif admits in the preface to *L'Anti-Justine* that he is an appreciative reader of Sade and a bit of a sadist himself: "Blasé sur les femmes depuis longtemps, la *Justine* de Sade me tomba sous la main. Elle me mit en feu; je voulus jouir, et ce fut avec fureur; je mordis les seins de ma monture; je lui tordis la chair des bras." He adds that readers of his own *Anti-Justine* will also be inspired to such acts, ending his prologue with the advice: "Prenez, lisez, et vous en ferez autant" (17).

32 Baruch, *Restif de la Bretonne II*, 470.

opinion and of a new public sphere in the decades just before the French Revolution.”<sup>33</sup> However, if *Ingénue Saxancour* contributes to the consolidation of the public sphere in the eighteenth century, it may appeal less to the public’s desire to know what goes on inside the courtroom than what goes on inside the bedroom. Indeed, in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500–1800*, Lynn Hunt associates the formation of the public sphere and the simultaneous rise of print culture with pornographic publications, pointing to pornography’s pivotal position between private and public: “The male-bonding effect of most pornography no doubt accounted for its total incompatibility with the new ideals of domesticity that were developing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The ideology of a separate, private sphere for women depended on a reassertion of fundamental male and female sexual (and therefore social and political) difference. Pornography, in contrast, always intentionally transgressed the boundaries establishing difference.”<sup>34</sup> In Restif’s novel, the spheres are certainly not separate; the private problems of a marriage are made public in courtroom proceedings and printed in a pornographic text. Even Mary Trouille, who prefers to read Restif as more pedagogic than pornographic, concludes that with *Ingénue Saxancour* the author makes the most of a “sensationalist approach designed to win larger audiences.”<sup>35</sup>

In addressing these new readers, authors must cultivate their curiosity, writing works that expose private life through the publication of legal actions or illicit acts in a dynamic that demonstrates the interdependency of the public and the private. The very tension between the two makes the eighteenth century the era of both courtroom and clandestine literature, and the tension also makes this the perfect period for the development of modern autobiography, which publishes personal life as never before. Following the epoch-making *Confessions* of his hero Jean-Jacques Rousseau,<sup>36</sup> Restif’s *Monsieur Nicolas* is an autobiography that divulges its author’s deepest secrets, a project that relies on an exhibitionistic desire to plumb the depths

33 Maza, 3.

34 Lynn Hunt, *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500–1800* (New York: Zone Books, 1993), 44–45.

35 Trouille, 339. The last section of her essay on *Ingénue Saxancour* is entitled “Restif’s reformist impulses: a pioneer against sexual abuse?” (Trouille, 341).

36 For more on Restif and Rousseau, see David Coward, *The Philosophy of Restif de la Bretonne* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1991), chap. 13.

of the self and then to display the results to readers increasingly interested in the intimate details of writers' lives. Restif decides to reveal his vices to a voyeuristic readership, as he explains in the autography's first lines: "C'est Nicolas Edme qui s'immole et qui lègue aux moralistes son âme viciée pourqu'ils la dissèquent utilement aux yeux de leur siècle et des âges futurs. Je serai vrai lors même que la vérité m'expose au mépris."<sup>37</sup> These vices are most visible, however, in *Ingénue Saxancour*, where Restif perverts the autobiographical paradigm, not exposing himself but stripping someone else's secrets bare. Instead of leaving his own soul to moral science, he delivers his daughter's body to his readers, pimping her sad story to the public in a text that reaffirms his original association of prostitution and pornography.

According to Pierre Testud, Restif contemplated calling himself "Rectif," which he translated as "'homme droit et ami de la justice"; instead, the author chooses the name "Restif": "l'homme qui reste."<sup>38</sup> In reading *Ingénue Saxancour*, it would seem that Restif was less interested in justice for the novel's heroine than in immortality for its author, even if this fame is obtained at the price of infamy.

University of Florida

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37 Restif de la Bretonne, *Monsieur Nicolas 1* (Paris: Pauvert, 1959), 1.

38 Testud, 2.