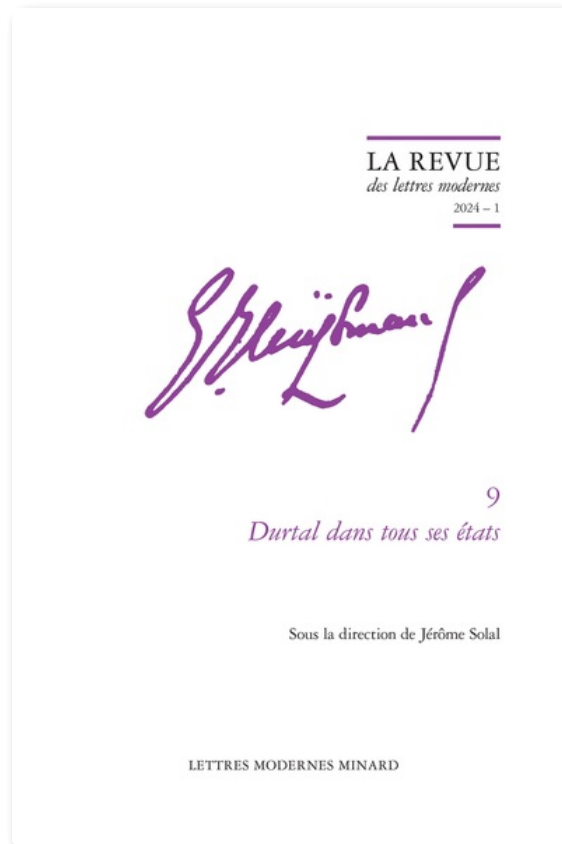




The Disappearance of Durtal (the reluctant writer)

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Abstract: Many readers of Huysmans find themselves perplexed by the blurred lines between novelist and character. The author himself was very much aware of the risk he ran by leading readers into an autobiographical interpretation. But how might authors speak for themselves, and about themselves, in a fictional setting? At first glance, the recognizable character of the introspective, solitary bachelor appears to be the ideal device. But when Durtal the writer makes his appearance in Huysmans' universe, the waters are decidedly muddled.

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