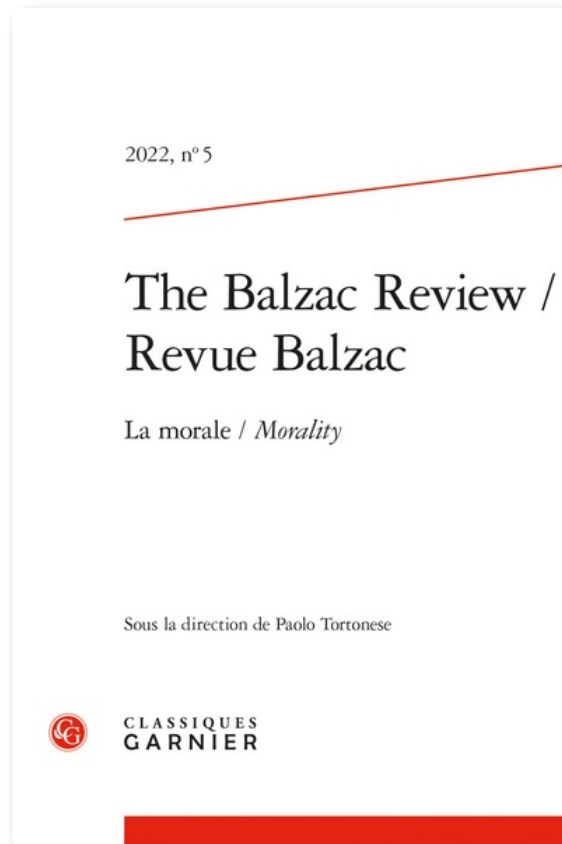




Véronique, Virginie, Mélanie, or the Misfortunes of Modesty

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Abstract: After reading *Paul et Virginie*, Véronique, the protagonist of *Le Curé de village*, experiences the initial infatuation that will lead her to commit adultery. By what paradoxical means could a novel with a “childlike, innocent, and pure” reputation produce such an immoral effect? What readings of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s novel could have authorized this reversal? What path did the memory of Virginie take through Balzac’s work between *Le Vicaire des Ardennes* and *Le Curé de village*?

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