



The masterpiece and its model

Balzac and his followers

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Abstract: The narrative structure of *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* is related to the visual structure of the eponymous painting. A process of textual duplication affects the characters and the image: two modes of knowledge and mimesis, and finally perhaps two images superimposed on the canvas. Some later works, reprising the Balzacian subject in literature and cinema, are examined more quickly: those of Théophile Gautier, the Goncourt brothers, Émile Zola, and Jacques Rivette.

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