

## The Way of the Novel

Romanticism was brought into being by bourgeois and aristocratic writers at the end of the 18th century. While the struggles of the hungry protagonists they invented were usually far from their own personal situation, the idea of the poor, misunderstood genius working in solitude, rejected by society, fell on fertile grounds elsewhere. Painters, sculptors, musicians and writers that had ended up unemployed and without perspective among the underclasses of the cities, as the church and the aristocracy no longer commissioned their work, were electrified by this concept and adapted the model. While they remained poor, their suffering was now no longer for good; reinvented as romantic heroes, absence of success was proof of true artistic singularity, and while they might leave the stage unrecognized, eternal glory was theirs.

Today, this trick doesn't work anymore, now the carrot goes by the name of artistic entrepreneurship, the WASPish doctrine allows for performativity, but it requests identity. Any role can be taken on, as long as it is done in a coherent and affirmative way. It stays in fact quite close to the romantic constructions, with worldly success at the end of the road instead of eternal glory. But maybe the more fundamental discovery of Romanticism was the discrepancy that could exist between social individuality grown into and artistic subjectivity taken on. *The Way of the Novel* comprises positions that share a sense for the possibilities of this split.

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