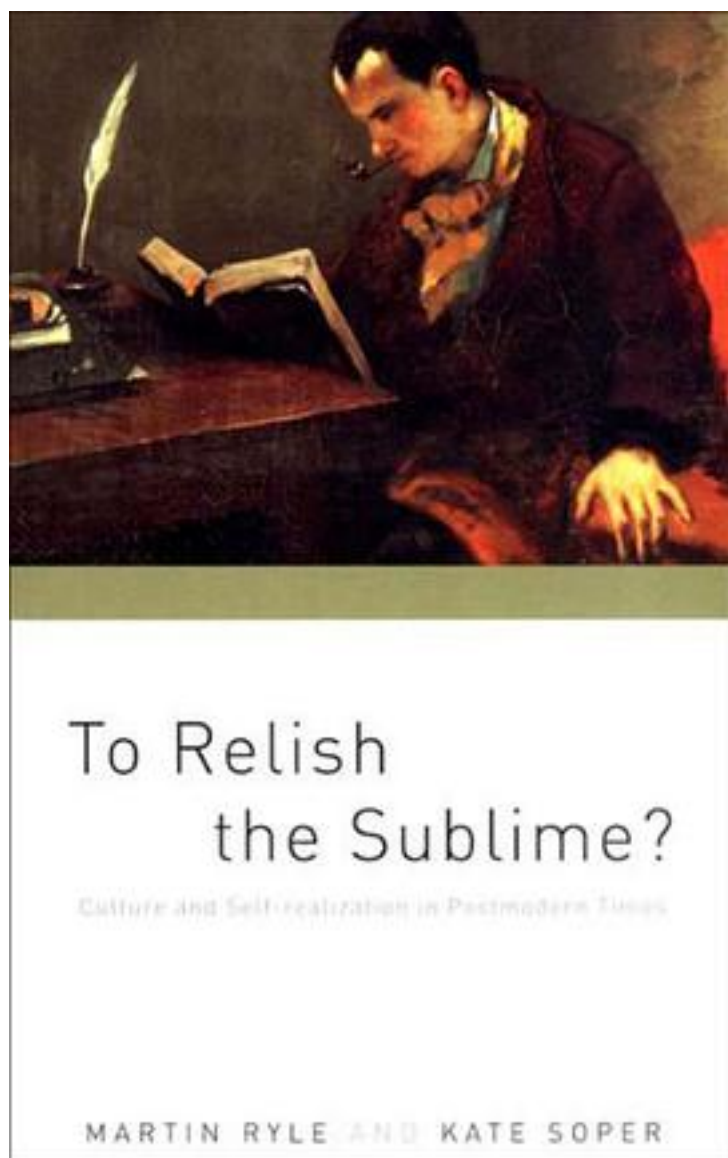


To Relish the Sublime?



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出版者:VERSO

出版时间:20021028

装帧:

isbn:9781859844618

More than 130 years from Matthew Arnold's pronouncement that human beings 'must be compelled to relish the sublime', education in the humanities still relies on the ideal of culture as the means of intellectual development. In this distinctive and original work, Martin Ryle and Kate Soper explore the growing tensions and contradictions between this and the contemporary world of work, pleasure, and consumption. While critical of the hypocrisies and elitism that can attach to notions of cultural self-realisation, the authors nonetheless defend its overall educational and social value. Their wide-ranging discussion takes in critiques of philosophers from Kant and Schiller to Nietzsche and Marx, and includes historically contextualized readings of novels by Wollstonecraft, Hardy, Gissing, London, and Woolf. In their sustained defence of a conception of personal worth and self-fulfillment for its own sake, Ryle and Soper not only offer a powerful critique of the continuing dominance of work in contemporary society, but also provide a compelling alternative to the standard postmodern scepticism about the relevance of high culture.

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