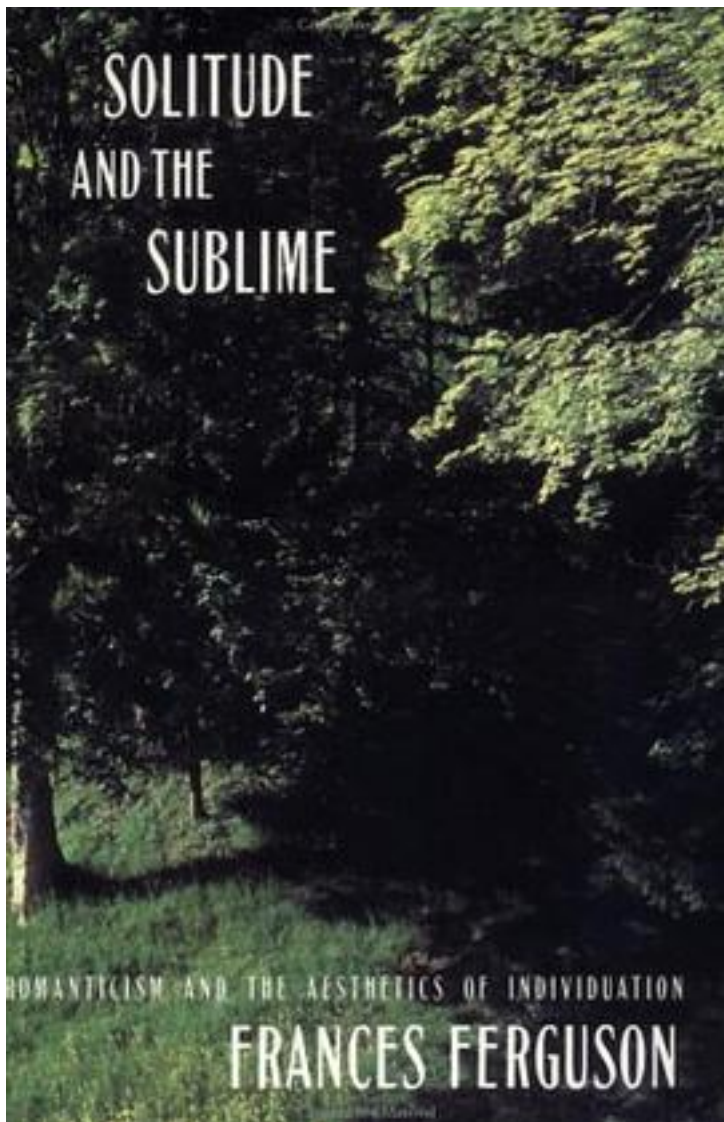


Solitude and the Sublime



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At the close of the eighteenth century, the aesthetics of the sublime were shaped by two conflicting views: the empiricism of Edmund Burke and the formalist idealism of Immanuel Kant. Today, theoretical work struggles once again with this philosophical issue. In modern debates over the nature of literary language and of human agency, the sublime has been a bone of contention for critics of every stripe, from Adorno and Eagleton to Derrida and de Man, from deconstructionists to New Historicists. In this bold work, Frances Ferguson seeks to rescue Kantian idealism from prevailing empiricist critiques and to explain its particular urgency for our understanding of Romanticism. Burke and Kant are discussed in terms of the philosophical issues they raise, and the theoretical issues addressed by some of the most important recent writing on them. Ferguson then engages with various phenomena in Romantic writing - the Gothic novel, the population debates in eighteenth and early nineteenth century England, and travel literature. The final section of the work weighs the materialist claims of New Historicism and deconstruction. Following no party line, the author offers a judicious critique of the debate over the sublime and presents and enriches our understanding of the interpenetration of philosophical and literary traditions.

作者介绍:

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