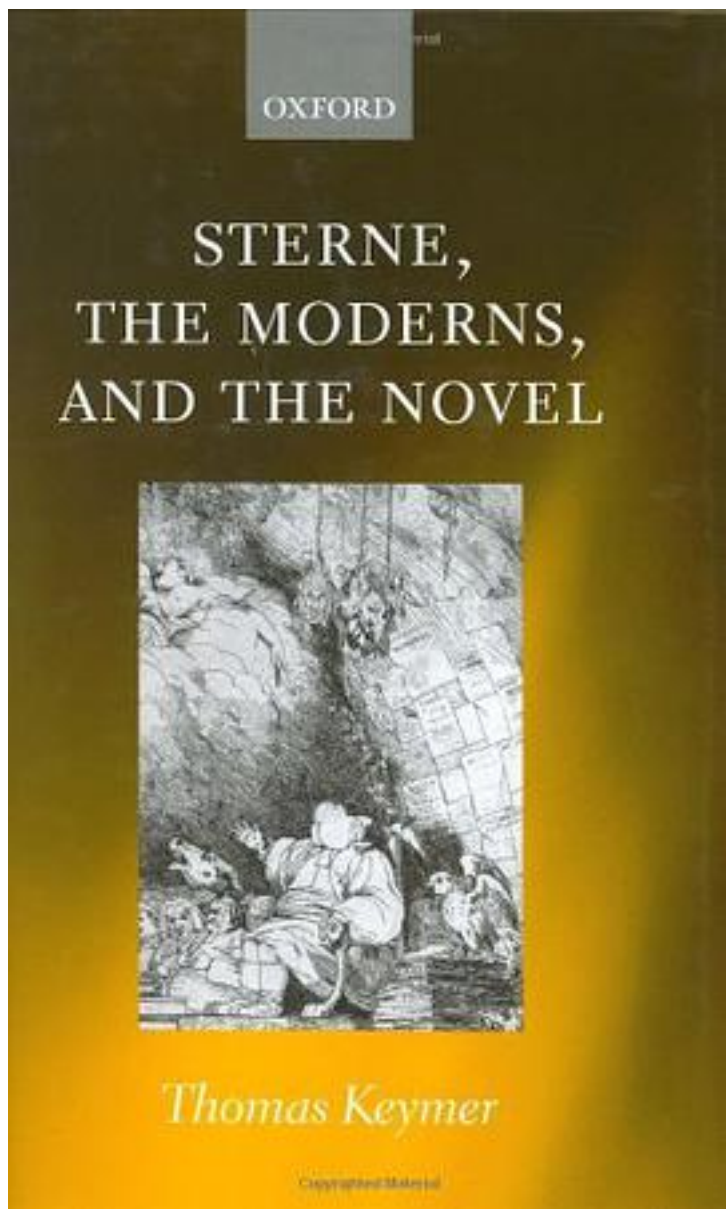


# Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel



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The author of *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) is often seen as an anachronism - a belated exponent of learned-wit satire whose kinship is with Montaigne, or a proto-modernist whose narrative pyrotechnics anticipate Joyce. Yet to many contemporaries Sterne's writing was emphatically of its immediate time, a voguish compound of all things modern that seemed to typify, if not indeed constitute, a 'Shandy-Age'. In this historicizing study, Thomas Keymer demonstrates the self-conscious imbrication of *Tristram Shandy* in the diverse literary culture of its extended moment. Not only absorbing but also updating Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, Sterne's text turns the satirical resources of Scriblerian writing on the post-Scriblerian literary marketplace, and above all on that quintessentially modern genre, the novel itself. For all its anticipation of later trends, his play on narrative representation, linguistic indeterminacy, the unruliness of reading and the materiality of text turns out to be firmly grounded in the conventions and tropes of mid-eighteenth-century fiction. Through the mechanisms of improvisatory serialization, Sterne could also engage with other new texts and trends as they continued to emerge, including 'Nonsense Club' satire, the Ossianic vogue, and debates about the Seven Years War.

作者介绍:

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