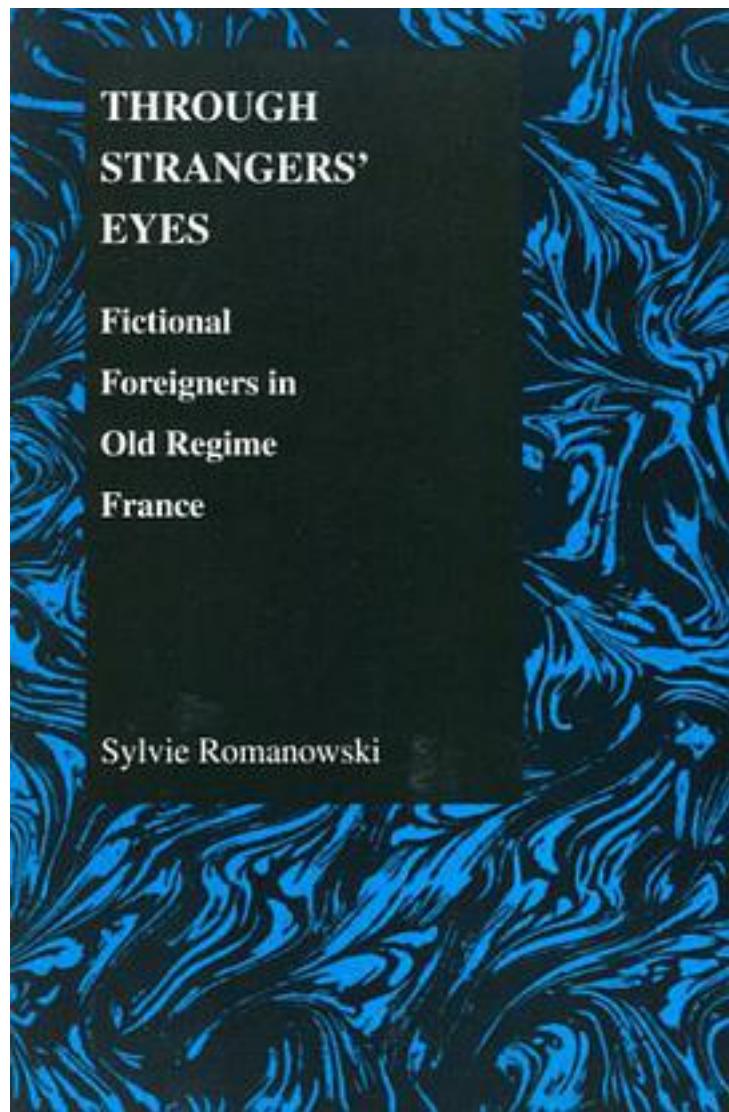


# Through Strangers' Eyes



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In the eighteenth century, a type of novel flourished showing naive outsiders who come to Europe and are amazed at what they see. Foreign travelers first setfoot in Europe in the sixteenth century and are memorably present in Montaigne's essay *Des Cannibales*. The genre was made popular in France by Montesquieu's novel *Lettres persanes*. Considering the "stranger" as a figure of ambiguity, Sylvie Romanowski explains why the genre was so useful to the Enlightenment. The question of why showing ambiguous stranger is important in that period is addressed in the book's introduction by setting the Enlightenment in the historical context of the seventeenth century. Romanowski then examines Montaigne's *Des Cannibales*, showing how these first "outsiders" relate to their eighteenth-century successors. She next considers Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* in its entirety, studying the voices of the men, the women, and the eunuchs. She also studies other examples of the genre. The author closes with a discussion of the philosophical tension, ongoing in Western thought, between skeptics and those who, refusing skepticism, seek firm foundations for knowledge, this draws connections between the sixteenth century, and our "postmodern" era.

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