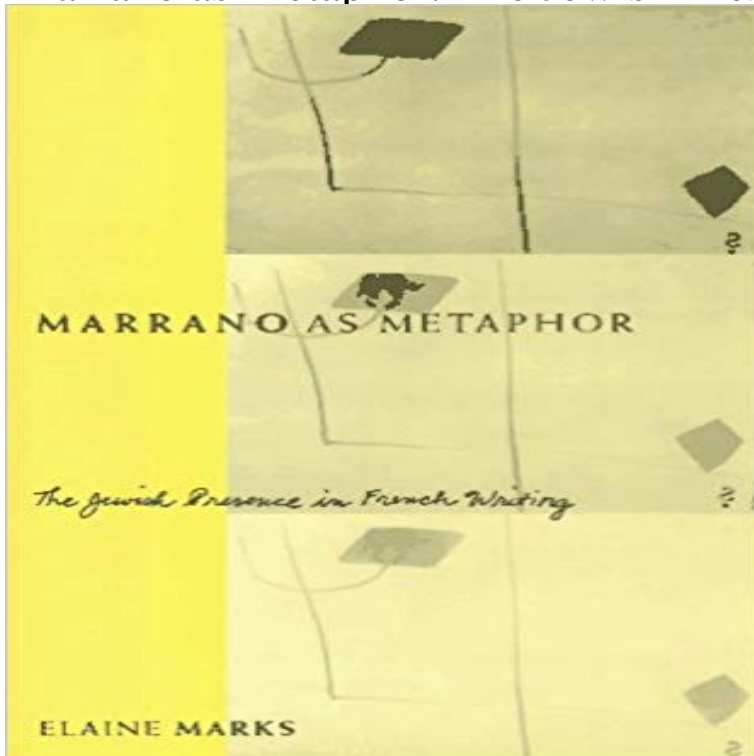


## Marrano as Metaphor: The Jewish Presence in French Writing



When Europeans in the Middle Ages spoke of marranos, they were making a derogatory reference to crypto-Jews--those who publicly converted to and performed as Christians, but who remained secretly faithful to Judaic law. Today, asserts Elaine Marks in *Marrano as Metaphor*, the concept can be used to describe all Jews living in a dominant Christian or Muslim culture, whatever may be their conscious relationship to Judaism. A sweeping examination of the Jewish presence in French literature from the sixteenth century to the present, *Marrano as Metaphor* explores the many shapes and forms in which Jews are perceived, spoken, and written about. Employing a wide spectrum of analytical methods from history, literary theory and psychoanalysis, renowned French scholar Elaine Marks opens new doors in the study of literature. *Marrano as Metaphor* investigates questions of difference and assimilation, of respect and derogation, in a wide range of French literature--from Alain Robbe-Grillet's discussion in his memoirs of his parents' antisemitism to the story of Esther through Jean Racine and Marcel Proust; from efforts to address Jewish issues in the writings of Marguerite Duras and Jean-Paul Sartre to the secular, assimilated Jewish tradition of Jacques Derrida and Helene Cixous. Marks looks closely at strains of antisemitism running through French literature, analyzing such antecedents as the nihilism of the 1880s and its meditation on death and absence.

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