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The Identity Construction of Spanish Marrano Jews and Its Modern Implications

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Abstract: Marranos are “new Christians” who were forced to convert to Christianity under the anti-Semitic movement in Spain at the end of the 15th century, but who still practised Judaism in private. This article focuses on the transformation process of Sephardic Jews into Marranos in Spain, and analyses how Marranos have gradually achieved the construction of their identity as “non-Jewish Jews” through the search for self-identity, collective identity and social identity. The identity construction of Marrano Jews is a reflection and reexamination of “what is a Jew”. Marrano highlights the possibility of non-Jews adhering to Judaism, and their concern for the world and individualism perfectly correspond to the many dimensions of modernity. At the same time, Marrano’s dispersal brought a spirit of change containing freedom, equality, and tolerance to the places it passed through, which is in essence a mode of life and attitude towards human beings with modernist sentiments. Therefore, in a sense, it can be said that everyone of us is Marano.

Key Words: Marrano, Identity Construction, Modernity, Spain