Rabbi Joseph Dweck: More Ashkenazi "Rupturing and Reconstructing"

I recently wrote a lengthy response to Haym Soloveitchik and the Tradition magazine symposium on his 1994 article "Rupture and Reconstruction":

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NBCYyz07l0iTs34hfKZuCZ9croAiB8Mb-JK4Gx9BOFE/edit

Here is Soloveitchik's original article:

https://traditiononline.org/rupture-and-reconstruction-the-transformation-of-contemporary-orthodoxy/

And here is the link to the symposium articles:

https://traditiononline.org/archives/?_sft_category=fall-2019-issue-51-4&_sf_ppp=20

The aim of my article was to engage with the Anti-Sephardi racism of both Soloveitchik and the symposium participants, which is ultimately related to the Medieval schism over Maimonidean Jewish Humanism and the Sephardic approach to Gentile culture in contrast to Ashkenazi Ghetto Judaism, as embodied in the Orthodox tradition:

Judaism is therefore always alone and on the outside of civilization. There is no possibility of a true synthesis based on cultural and religious evolution. The primordial is the true, the atavistic and the literal become absolute markers of a closed Jewish epistemology.

It is thus fascinating that this harsh rejection of Sephardic Jewish Humanism, with its robust philosophical and scientific values, would come up against that other Ashkenazi stand-by: Sephardim have no relationship to Modernity.

I made note of two footnotes in the Soloveitchik article which assert a pretty obnoxious form of Anti-Sephardi racism:

Several points very much need underscoring at the outset. First, the orthodox community described here is of European origin. This essay does not discuss religious Jewry issuing from Muslim countries, commonly called Sefaredim, primarily because, unlike their Western brethren, their encounter with modernity is very recent. (p. 103)

Significantly, demons and ghosts are still part of the popular Israeli Sefaredi cosmology, and is reflected in the preachings available on cassettes in Israel. This difference should be corollated with the divergence that exists on the issue of "hellfire." Direct appeals to the horrors that await sinners are strikingly absent from contemporary Ashkenazic writings and equally from the burgeoning cassette literature. It is found abundantly, however, on the cassettes by Sefaredic preachers

(e.g., R. Nissim Yagen in the series Ner Le-Me'ah: no. 41, Neshamotj no. 86, Ha-Parpar ha-Kahol" Part I; no. 140, Ha-Shoshanah she-Navlahj in the series Hasdei Naomi: no. 3, Omek ha-Din). This suggests that in the Ashkenazic community, after some five or six generations of exposure to modernity, thoughts of the afterlife have lost much of their vivacity. The Jews from Muslim countries arrived in Israel soon after its founding in 1948. For those who came from rural areas this was their first encounter with the modern world; the same was true even for some coming from more urbanized settlements. Only a generation removed from their former culture, their vivid sense of the afterlife has not yet been dulled by modernity. (p. 115)

Soloveitchik has made it clear that Sephardim are not part of Modernity, only Ashkenazim are.

What makes his racist assertions so complicated is the following passage from his father's book *The Halakhic Mind*:

It is pertinent to note that modern Jewish philosophers have adopted a very unique method. The source of knowledge, for them, is Medieval Jewish philosophy. The living historical religious consciousness which embraces both antiquity and modern times is ignored. Such a method cannot cope with the problems of Jewish philosophy for three reasons. First, medieval Jewish thought, despite its accomplishments and merit, has not taken deep root in Jewish historical religious realism and has not shaped Jewish religious world perspective. When we speak of philosophy of religion, we must have in mind foremost the philosophy of religious realities experienced by the entire community, and not some abstract metaphysics cultivated by an esoteric group of philosophers. Second, we know that the most central concepts of Jewish philosophy are rooted in ancient Greek and medieval Arabic thought and are not of Jewish origin at all. It is impossible to reconstruct a unique Jewish world perspective out of alien material. (p. 100)

Digging deeper into this ethnocentric idea, we would do well to note that the famed Brisker Method of the Soloveitchik rabbinical dynasty, initiated by Hayyim of Volozhin in the late 19th century, was an attempt to turn Talmud study away from the practical, and into the mystical Platonic conceptual-theoretical in a way that sought to apply PILPUL to the Maimonidean rational tradition, thus subverting it in the process:

https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-methodology-of-brisk/

As we read in the My Jewish Learning post:

His method of Talmud study is difficult to define, but it departs from earlier methodologies in several ways. First, and perhaps most importantly, Rabbi Hayim shifted the focus of Talmud study from textual to conceptual analysis. Rather than analyze the flow of discussion in a particular *gemara* (the part of the Talmud that records the discussions of the sages in the years 200-600 B.C.E), he analyzed the

conclusion of that *gemara*, the different positions that arise from that discussion. What are the practical ramifications (*nafka minot*) of the different positions? What principles underlie them? Rabbi Hayim took the vast case-based literature of the Talmud and created legalized, formalized principles to describe what is happening in the innumerable particular cases.

We can thus see how the Platonic essentialist method connected to the Jewish Ghetto separatism of *The Halakhic Mind*:

Although Rabbi Hayim was not the first to use this type of conceptual analysis, he was unique in that he constructed a new terminology for these concepts and categories. This terminology was rooted exclusively in the sources of *halakhah* (Jewish law); Rabbi Hayim strongly opposed borrowing concepts from the world outside *halakhah*. The new terminology enabled Rabbi Hayim to transmit his methodology to numerous students.

In the end it is deeply antithetical to the Maimonidean-Sephardic pragmatist tradition:

Rabbi Hayim shifted the focus of Talmud study from the give and take–called *shakla ve-tarya*–of the *gemara*, to the positions that arise from that discussion. He therefore devoted a large portion of his study to Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, the great medieval legal code. Maimonides took out the *shakla ve-tarya* from the *gemara* and only recorded the conclusion of a discussion. For this reason, his work was ideal material for Brisker analysis.

Rabbi Hayim also shifted the orientation of Talmud study from practical to theoretical. He did not study in order to produce practical legal rulings. Rather, he saw *halakhah* as an ideal, a priori system, and he was not primarily concerned with how that system plays out in reality.

The Brisker Platonic Method has permeated contemporary Talmud study in the Lithuanian Yeshivas, as it has sought to eliminate the clean lines of the Maimonidean hermeneutical approach and its logical strictures:

https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Talmud_Study#id0e5sae

As I indicated in my "Rupture and Reconstruction" essay, this Anti-Maimonidean ideology can also be found in the thought of Samson Raphael Hirsch:

This great man, Maimonides, to whom, and to whom alone, we owe the preservation of practical Judaism to our time, is responsible, because he sought to reconcile Judaism with the difficulties which confronted it from without, instead of developing it creatively from within, for all the good and the evil which bless and afflict the heritage of the father. His peculiar mental tendency was Arabic-Greek, and his conception of the purpose of life the same. He entered into Judaism from without, bringing with him opinions of whose truth he had convinced himself from

extraneous sources and — be reconciled. For him, too, self-perfection through the knowledge of truth was the highest aim, the practical he deemed subordinate. For him knowledge of God was the end, not the means; hence he devoted his intellectual powers to speculations upon the essence of Deity, and sought to bind Judaism to the results of his speculative investigations as to postulates of science or faith. The Mizvoth became for him merely ladders, necessary only to conduct to knowledge or to protect against error, this latter often only the temporary and limited error of polytheism. Mishpatim became only rules of prudence, Mitzvoth as well; Chukkim rules of health, teaching right feeling, defending against the transitory errors of the time ; Both ordinances, designed to promote philosophical or other concepts; all this having no foundation in the eternal essence of things, not resulting from their eternal demand on me, or from my eternal purpose and task, no eternal symbolizing of an unchangeable idea, and not inclusive enough to form a basis for the totality of the commandments.

Indeed, it is quite confusing when we attempt to understand what the Ashkenazim think of Sephardim.

Are we Jewish Humanists who rejected the irrational Ashkenazi PILPUL, preserved in the Brisker Method, and adopted the values of philosophy, science, and general culture at the time of Maimonides, the man who was made anathema in the Ashkenazi rabbinical tradition?

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/killing-off-rational-juda_b_498846

Or are we primitive boors who lack any of the basic traits of the Modern, as Haym Soloveitchik claims?

The Tradition symposium displayed its usual White Jewish Supremacy by not inviting a single Sephardi to respond to Soloveitchik's calumnious statements.

But not to worry!

We have just gotten a "Sephardic" response from the YU-trained Rabbi Joseph Dweck that has been published in the latest issue of the magazine:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BOrUXGLCx9GUx4jpQER9pqSyVgMMe3Sw/view?ths=true

The written article was preceded by an oral presentation which is available on-line:

https://events.limmud.org/limmud-together-uk/programme/timeslot/sunday-1200/925/

https://traditiononline.org/podcast-a-sephardic-response-to-rupture-and-reconstruction/

Dweck, who moved to London after years in the Brooklyn Syrian Jewish community, where he apparently hopes to return as soon as possible, presents his response in a fascinating way.

His main strategy, contrary to the current reality, is to argue that Sephardim have maintained their tradition without Rupture:

But as an American Sephardic Jew, this was also a world that I did not feel a part of nor one in which I truly belonged. The Sephardic world evolved in different ways. It had not relinquished its mimetic traditions to the degree that Soloveitchik had illustrated with the Ashkenazic community. The rupture of which he spoke was not as profound amongst Sephardic Jews and we also did not share the historic catalysts of Enlightenment and Holocaust which he identified as generating and influencing the rupture he was describing. For us, it was more of a tremor—if anything. There was reverberation, upheaval, change, yes—but not rupture. In the twentieth century Sephardim were developing from a different history and towards a different future than the Ashkenazim. Still, we were no longer isolated. The last century brought the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews face to face, living side by side, and they influenced one another.

How Dweck understands this is somewhat unclear, given that in his formative years he was trained at a YU High School in Los Angeles, and is a proud member of the Modern Orthodox group:

https://www.jewishtelegraph.com/prof_378.html

For those who might not recall, he was embroiled in a controversy with the Sephardi Haredim over remarks he made about Homosexuality:

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/pKJapxjS8lA/m/S7uqgtFhAgAJ

He has served, like Rabbi Marc Angel, whose work is frequently cited in his tendentious article, as a "Good Sephardi" who speaks in the codified YU language:

https://www.yutorah.org/rabbi-joseph-dweck/

Indeed, he has fully immersed himself in the world of Ashkenazi Modern Orthodoxy and is well aware of the many "Ruptures" that have taken place in a Sephardic community that has dispensed with its mimetic heritage.

Unless we mean "Bourekas and Haminados" and the unique religious customs that distinguish us from the Ashkenazim:

When I was growing up there were many examples amongst Sephardim of mimetic tradition that were unaffected by stringencies that might have been influenced from textual sources. One such example is the kippa. Although Shulhan Arukh rules that

one must not walk more than four amot without a head covering the Sephardim did not take that to mean that one must wear a kippa at all times. Even the most devout Sephardic laymen in my family and community did not wear a kippa outside of synagogue if they were not studying, praying, or eating. In fact, if what one was eating was not a sit-down meal, a sleeve, napkin, or someone else's hand was regularly used to cover one's head for the recital of the pre-blessing in order to keep the law that obligates a head covering when saying God's name. Indeed, a generation earlier, even many of the rabbis who worked in or owned businesses often did not wear their kippot to work. In contrast, in typical Ashkenazic Orthodox communities not wearing a kippa was tantamount to being irreligious. Another example is that every Sephardic family I knew spoke between washing hands and eating bread, an act that even among the lesser-observant Ashkenazic households is known to be prohibited by Jewish law. The Sephardim that I knew largely lit the Hanukka candles not by a window or doorway as prescribed by the legal codes, but on a table inside the house. These practices among others were essentially identical in both Eastern and Western Sephardic communities. These were also not behaviors that the rabbis urged us to change as a part of their usual encouragement towards greater observance and piety. The rabbis' reticence testifies to the strength of the mimetic culture amongst the Sephardim.

Indeed, Dweck's aim is to show how Sephardim are **not** Modern; how they did not experience the Enlightenment upheaval as Ashkenazim did.

He thus strongly reinforces Soloveitchik's racist point.

In the following note he shows how little he understands the matter of Jewish Humanism and its history:

Clearly, the broader culture of the Middle Ages was still a religious one; modernity moved away from that. We should differentiate between a fifteenth-century Sephardi encountering Al Ghazali from his late-eighteenth-century Ashkenazi counterpart encountering Kant. Each community was exposed to "outside" ideas in different ways, and each found its own path to modernity. Generally speaking, Sephardim did not have to exit a ghetto (physical or intellectual) in order to encounter modernity, and this "softened the blow."

He deploys the religious-secular binary, just as his YU Orthodox training has taught him. He makes no distinction between different facets of Medieval Judeo-Arab scholasticism, such as the split between the more pious Ghazali and the more radical Averroes:

https://nation.com.pk/22-Feb-2016/ibn-rushd-vs-ghazali-did-the-muslim-world-take-a-wrong-turn

Which is also the case with Maimonides and Judah Halevi:

https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/halevi-versus-maimonides

Because Dweck never deploys the term Religious Humanism, he is able to completely ignore the massive changes instituted in the Sephardic community by his beloved mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef:

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/zUknG4xW8Kg/m/R1QqbCH42gcJ

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/pRnfkfaOgV4/m/9LVc9BXAKGsJ

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/8LjdZFmKAYQ/m/yOMSTE0cBSsJ

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/W_G0C9PV1gY/m/r4gIi7dSuwMJ

He makes the point quite clear in the following passage:

The Sephardic world was drawn towards a new center of gravity and overwhelmingly succumbed to the neo-Ashkenazic world that Soloveitchik describes. Still, in this shift towards textual authority and concomitant stringency, emerged a response from within the Sephardic world that answered the textual foundations of the Ashkenazim but did not follow the stringency that it seemed to necessitate. During the 1980s, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, answered the textually based move towards stringency with a call towards leniency using textual authority as his basis. In fact, there are few *posekim* who have so comprehensively and thoroughly used written sources to such an extent in the substance of their legal rulings. Yet, his approach was not accuracy towards stringency, but rather diversity of textual sources for leniency. He drew on an older principle that he identified as being particularly espoused as a central value and aspect of Sephardic halakhic tradition emphasizing the pragmatic and human-centric: the legal value of finding leniency in the law— *koha de-hetera adif*. R. Ovadia's encyclopedic knowledge of texts and deep understanding of the dynamics of Jewish law afforded him the ability to do so.

In his false representation of a united Sephardic community under the SHAS Halakhic banner, which utterly rejects the Maimonidean tradition of philosophy and science, he emphatically neglects the teachings of Rabbi Jose Faur and Hakham Matloub Abadi:

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/ORulbdv3qcQ/m/NDlDXjdhAQAJ

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/Ox-wE_ec5zo/m/GX_d4kVXBQAJ

He also avoids the battle between Haredim and Zionists that has so impacted the Sephardic community, which I discussed in my article "The New Sephardic Jewish Binary":

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/dx_QfCVHTu0/m/f8HBTmmLAQAJ

Which serves to affirm Soloveitchik's racism:

The absence of Haskala in the Eastern communities left deep and penetrating consequences in the twentieth century, when the aftermath of the "rupture and reconstruction" of the Ashkenazic world would meet with, and impinge upon, the unaffected and, as a result, vulnerable and underdeveloped Eastern Sephardic Jews upon their arrival in the West.

It is thus important to note that he makes no mention of Sabato Morais, Elijah Benamozegh, Henry Pereira Mendes, David de Sola Pool, and their essential role in the advancement of Sephardic Humanism in the Modern age.

I have presented the indispensable work of Arthur Kiron on Morais and its connection to Modern Judaism in the following SHU post:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oJ6PrGWTGHnTnfPkBhPao3oSucPPg-k4sEKZDgCGOZc/edit

My article "Sephardic Judaism and the Levantine Option" goes into some detail on the matter, providing a general overview of the tradition which stands in contrast to Dweck's SHAS-centered view of things:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1NQdm28qvvXVFhBSjh3eVdIU0E/view

And, as we can clearly see from Dweck's biographical materials, he is squarely on the side of the YU Religious Zionists and the Neo-Con Islamophobes, and presents Sephardic and Ashkenazi Judaism along the lines of the Modern Orthodox conceptual categories in which he was trained.

Indeed, his conclusion is quite curious:

The Jewish people are no longer living in their respective ethnic silos. The world at large is rapidly globalizing and comprehensively redefining itself, and our people are not immune to this. In this milieu it is not simply a question of retention of heritage regarding various unique approaches to religious life, but a question of how, in the great interconnections and interactions of populations of which we are a part, will the various Jewish cultures and communities bring their unique aspect of heritage and cultural knowledge and experience to the Jewish table and offer it as a contribution to the great tapestry that is being woven from the myriad threads of Jewish experiences throughout two millennia of diaspora. Principles do not focus on information per se, but rather provide tools for valuing information. The Sephardic communities had and have a unique framework for viewing Jewish life. I believe it is a core responsibility of Jewish leaders today to teach these principles much in the fashion that the Sephardic rabbis I've mentioned did, as we face the aftermath of rupture and an uncertain future.

According to the original presentation of the "Rupture and Reconstruction" symposium, we are **indeed** living in our "respective ethnic silos," as Sephardim were kept off the list of participants.

Now we have the Dweck response, which never speaks directly of White Jewish Supremacy, though this passage comes close, in a way that should by now be familiar to us:

In Israel, however, there was now greater upheaval for the Sephardic Jews. Those who had lived in Israel before the establishment of the State, as well as those who arrived from Arab lands afterwards due to persecution because of the existence of the State, were subject to prejudice, ridicule, and disrespect by both the secular Ashkenazim who founded the State and the Ashkenazic Orthodox religious leaders who began to rebuild and establish—indeed to "reconstruct"—academies of Torah study and religious institutions. The Sephardic Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, having not gone through the Enlightenment, were misunderstood by the Ashkenazim and sadly seen as unsophisticated, uneducated, unworldly, and uncouth. Their Torah scholarship was not recognized as significant and their customs and ways were seen as foreign and not recognizably Jewish. This stigma introduced a profound sense of shame and self-consciousness among Sephardic Jews.

Indeed, this passage can fit snugly with the recent article by Hen Mazzig, which affirms a primal Zionist HASBARAH sense as it feebly points to Ashkenazi exclusion of Sephardim in Israel:

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/uuYUx4AGMd4

It goes no deeper than that, because Dweck remains fearful of the institutional White Jewish Supremacy and what it does to the "Wrong Sephardim." His YU alliance has made him a very popular lecturer in the Brooklyn Syrian Jewish community, and it would suicidal for him to rub against the Ashkenazi consensus.

His contention that Sephardic Jews did not go through the Enlightenment also remains curious, given that the classical Andalusian tradition became a model for the Haskalah and figures like Naphtali Herz Wessely and Moses Mendelssohn, as I have recently indicated in my article "Sepharad in Ashkenaz, That Is the Question!":

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/kKoo0WTd4Pk

It is likely that, since Dweck strictly divides the Sephardic world into East and West, following the racist Ashkenazi model that does not account for the essential connection between Arabic-based Jewish cultures in Andalusian Spain, the Ottoman Balkans, and the Fertile Crescent over many centuries, he is unable to process the ongoing reformulation of Maimonidean Jewish Humanism which can be seen in disparate figures

like David ibn Abi Zimra, Hayyim Yosef David Azoulai, Moses Almosnino, Israel Moses Hazzan, and Moise Ventura.

And of course in O"Y's nemesis Haim Nahum Effendi, the last Hakham Bashi of the Ottoman Empire, and Chief Rabbi of Egypt until his death in 1960; a true Jewish Humanist and proud bearer of the Arab culture, which SHAS has rejected:

http://www.sephardicstudies.org/haim.html

It was this encounter between European Jewish Modernity and Sephardic Jewish Humanism that played an important role in the development of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, as the Ottoman Empire was crumbling:

http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1264-alliance-israelite-universelle

It is a process that has been presented by Esther Benbassa in her excellent book on Nahum:

https://www.amazon.com/Haim-Nahum-Sephardic-Politics-1892-1923/dp/081730729X

And in the work of Aron Rodrigue on the AIU:

https://www.amazon.com/French-Jews-Turkish-Universelle-Experience/dp/0253350212

https://www.amazon.com/Jews-Muslims-Sephardi-Eastern-Jewries/dp/0295983140

This alternative tradition has not been integrated into contemporary Judaism in the same way that SHAS essentialism has.

Indeed, as I indicated in my "New Sephardic Jewish Binary" article, and as we can see from Dweck's article, the key issue in these discussions is **how** the conceptual categories are deployed, and how those categories can square with the YU White Jewish Supremacy.

So, as we have also seen with Hen Mazzig and Mijal Bitton, it is not just **what** you say that counts, but what your CV **contains**, and how well you fare in the racist Jewish institutional world.

Dweck speaks in a resolutely Ashkenazi language that not only affirms Haym Soloveitchik's Anti-Sephardi racism, but which rejects the alternative Jewish History that can be seen in the pioneering studies of scholars who are outside the YU racist orbit.

There is Jose Faur's groundbreaking work on Jewish Post-Modernism, *Golden Doves with Silver Dots*, which brings the story of Sephardic Jewish Humanism into the current period and its philosophical and literary concerns:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1NQdm28qvvXQnNIeEJ3aGdSSjQ/view?ths=true

It is important to note that two of the fixtures of Post-Modern thought presented in *Golden Doves* are Sephardim, Jacques Derrida and Edmond Jabes, who were both connected to Emmanuel Levinas.

Levinas worked for the AIU teaching North African Jewish students:

https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/emmanuel-levinas/

The definitive intellectual biography of Levinas was written by one of those students, Salomon Malka:

https://www.amazon.com/Emmanuel-Levinas-His-Life-Legacy/dp/0820703583

The conclusion of the My Jewish Learning post sums up the ideas of Jewish Post-Modernism nicely:

In part because of his friendship with major figures such as Jacques Derrida and Maurice Blanchot, Levinas has become a truly influential figure in continental philosophy, sometimes grouped with Derrida and other "postmodern" philosophers. Interestingly, Levinas has also become one of the voices in the contemporary conversation between philosophy and theology (both Jewish and Christian), valued for his arguments that both religion and philosophy can contribute to our running conversations about human values.

Levinas has been accepted–perhaps inappropriately–by some postmodernists as a sort of "Rabbi," an authoritative speaker on matters of Jewish tradition, because he provided readings of Jewish texts that are agreeable to a postmodern sensibility. Levinas argued for the open-endedness of texts, the importance of interpretation, and the relevance of biblical and Talmudic religion, offering a philosophical account of ethical responsibility in both philosophy and Judaism. Still, many of Levinas' interpreters attempt to disentangle these two strands from one another, but while he wrote for different audiences during his lifetime, it has become increasingly clear that neither "side" of his intellectual project is entirely comprehensible without the other.

I have presented a review of Levinas' thought in the following SHU post:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XWNPnJU7ZjavXKNzSH8d3suz3a7L89UqHyf4ISlwgTU/edit

While the YU Ashkenazim have sought to co-opt Jewish Post-Modernism in their misleading way, it has been Faur's book that most closely hews to the basic interpretive values of the movement, showing its ties to the Sephardic tradition:

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/de-xEWk9-XE/m/nQhx3c1CBwAJ

And in his book *In the Shadow of History*, Faur shows how Sephardim and Conversos in their battle with the Ashkenazim laid the groundwork for Modernity and Enlightenment:

https://www.amazon.com/Shadow-History-Jews-Conversos-Modernity/dp/0791408027

I discussed those issues in the following article:

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/viiv-4n-NIw/m/9jwMT5EtVE4J

We can see in Faur's critical discussions of seminal figures like Solomon ibn Verga, Fernando de Rojas, and the apostate Spinoza, how the Sephardic tradition dealt with the Enlightenment, and provided an alternate vision for Modernity.

Crucial to this approach was his enlightened reading of the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico:

https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1NQdm28qvvXeTMtSjJWWEZfT1E/edit

Picking up from Faur's analysis is Ammiel Alcalay's *After Jews and Arabs*, which penetrates further into the Modern Sephardic intellectual tradition and its Medieval roots with a more political edge:

https://www.amazon.com/After-Jews-Arabs-Remaking-Levantine/dp/0816621551

Alcalay tracks the Sephardic literary heritage from the classical Andalusian poets and S.D. Goitein's massive reconstruction in his epic work *A Mediterranean Society*, up to and including contemporary Mizrahi writing in Israel, which reflects the degrading racism and Orientalism of Ashkenazi Zionism.

And in this regard, he builds on the work of the Mizrahi radicals, as we have seen in Ella Shohat's classic article "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims":

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1NQdm28qvvXa2ZPUWpyZ1pFS0k/view

And, of course, there are the bracing studies of the late Maria Rosa Menocal on the polyglot Andalusian world:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e9Bi7Y12B3li38_PHne_JThpC67yhH1kJrSK48XXAX0/edit

Menocal has provided a very important popular iteration of the values of Convivencia in her book *The Ornament of the World*:

https://www.amazon.com/Ornament-World-Christians-Tolerance-Medieval/dp/0316168718

Her ecumenical view, rooted in the traditional Sephardic cosmopolitanism, has been rejected by Ashkenazi Jewish ethnocentrists in the typical Ghetto manner, which has further served to marginalize our heritage.

Most famously, Convivencia was emphatically rejected by Dweck's primary source Marc Angel, who went to the lengths of defending a book by a Catholic apologist:

https://groups.google.com/g/davidshasha/c/_nrcdGWekO0/m/9HlHPrs9AQAJ

So, contrary to Dweck's presentation, we are **not** required to accept Ashkenazi racism when it comes to Sephardic Modernity, as we have many academic resources that can allow us to paint a broader yet more detailed picture of the Sephardic world over the course of many centuries; which does not align with the White Jewish Supremacy or partake of its essentialist religious categories and their binary depredations.

It is not necessary for Sephardim to cower in the face of the Ashkenazi attacks, as our heritage has ample literary and intellectual resources that might, as Wessely demanded, more effectively respond to the various schisms that now plague a Jewish world which is firmly controlled by the many contentious Ashkenazi factions.

In the end, Dweck does his readers a disservice by obscuring this vibrant tradition, and effectively submitting to the tyranny of Ashkenazi civilization as it seeks to ultimately erase our Sephardic Humanism, and replace it with the new realities of an Ashkenazi-centric Judaism that would have us remain silent.

David Shasha