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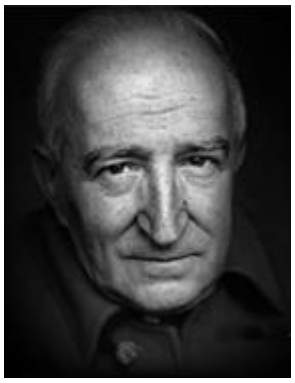

LOURENÇO [de Faria], Eduardo (S. Pedro do Rio Seco, Almeida, 1923 –)

Eduardo Lourenço pursued secondary education at the *Colégio Militar*, following in the footsteps of his father, who was an Infantry Captain. He graduated in Historical-Philosophical Studies from the University of Coimbra, where he remained for five years as an Assistant to Joaquim de Carvalho. Lourenço subsequently served as Lecturer in Portuguese Culture at the universities of Hamburg, Heidelberg, and Montpellier, followed by a year of teaching at the Federal University of Bahia. From 1965, he resided in France (Vence), teaching first at the University of Grenoble and then at the University of Nice, as *maître de conférences*. After retiring, he served as Cultural Adviser at the Portuguese Embassy in Rome and as a non-executive Administrator at the Gulbenkian Foundation. Since 2013, he has been living in Lisbon. Among the many awards he has received are the *Prémio Camões*, the *Prémio Pessoa*, and the *Prix Européen de l'Essai Charles Veillon*. His honorary doctorates include those from the universities of Bologna, Coimbra, and Rio de Janeiro. He has been decorated with Portugal's highest honours and, among foreign accolades, holds *the Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur*. Lourenço was elected an honorary member of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences and a corresponding member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters. His first book of particular relevance to historians was published in 1978: *O Labirinto da Saudade. Psicanálise Mítica do Destino Português* [The Labyrinth of Longing: A Mythical Psychoanalysis of Portuguese Destiny] (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote).

Eduardo Lourenço never considered himself a historian; nevertheless, among non-professional historians, no other Portuguese intellectual of the second half of the 20th century has demonstrated such a structured and coherent vision of the history of Portugal. An essayist above all, his closest parallel might be António Sérgio, from the preceding generation (from whom Lourenço explicitly distances himself — see "Sérgio como mito cultural" ["Sérgio as a Cultural Myth"] in *O Labirinto da Saudade*). Like Lourenço, Sérgio was also an essayist with a consistent perspective on Portugal, producing a carefully constructed and well-grounded interpretation of Portuguese history. However, Sérgio's focus was more fragmented, dealing with specific historical issues and engaging more heavily with empirical data. By contrast, Lourenço's approach is broader, adopting a forest-wide perspective rather than examining individual trees. His vision of history encompasses the entirety of a people's cultural life. Building on the premises of a philosophy of history, Lourenço conducts

a philosophical analysis of Portuguese culture, or what might be termed a phenomenology of Portuguese culture across time (considering the philosophical tradition in which he was trained). He highlights its most significant moments in politically and socially critical contexts, focusing particularly on behavioural trends that indicate or reflect the values, myths, and deepest aspirations of the national collective. In other words, Lourenço typically invests in the fundamental structures that must be understood through philosophical reflection, which he articulates in his more theoretical writings, including those addressing literature. Lourenço regards literature as one of a community's highest creations, as its literary expressions reflect the community's most profound way of being. In his view, cultures—especially Portuguese culture—manifest themselves through their literary imaginaries (it is this perspective that appears to align with the title of an interview published in book form, *A História é a Suprema Ficção* [History is the Supreme Fiction]. Literature, including both fiction and poetry, serves as a privileged medium for uncovering culturally significant moments that reveal a community's identity.

This appears to be precisely the task Lourenço undertakes in his classic *O Labirinto da Saudade*. In the aftermath of the 25 April Revolution, the Portuguese repeatedly questioned their identity as a people and the future they sought for themselves. This collection of essays, previously published in various outlets, resonated with Portuguese readers (at least those who engaged with books, newspapers, and magazines), many of whom saw themselves in the portrait sketched by Lourenço. It should be noted, however, that although the essayist sought to intuitively capture the Portuguese collective unconscious, the term "psychoanalysis" in the subtitle seems misplaced, as Lourenço's reflections owe little to Freud. Instead, they are rooted in his sharp readings of the authors of the "Generation of 1870," particularly Eça de Queirós and Antero de Quental, and, in terms of history, particularly Oliveira Martins. As Lourenço himself wrote: "Vieira and Oliveira Martins, each in their own way and sometimes alike, are the psychoanalysts of the nation" (*Situação Africana e Consciência Nacional* [African Situation and National Consciousness], p. 22).

As another example of Lourenço's preference for constructing structural traits, one might consider a statement made in a recent interview. According to him, from a cultural and political perspective, the predominant worldview in France was adopted by the Portuguese elite, but not by Portuguese society as a whole (*Ler*, no. 138, Summer 2015, p. 33). He further developed this theme in the essay "Portugal-França ou a comunicação assimétrica" ["Portugal–France or Asymmetric Communication"], included in the volume *Nós e a Europa, ou as duas razões* [Us and Europe, or the Two Reasons], a collection that helps shape a collective portrait of Portugal and Iberia (once again echoing Oliveira Martins) in relation to Europe, particularly France. Notably, in more recent writings, Lourenço has also drawn comparisons with the Anglo-American world.

The afore-mentioned distinction he draws between the elite and the masses is crucial to the thinking of this essayist, as he recognises two distinct levels of Portuguese identity: the educated elite, which emulated and sought to imitate France, particularly from the 19th century onwards, and the general population, which remained rooted in ancestral practices (captured, for example, by diverse figures such as Oliveira Martins in

historical texts and Teixeira de Pascoaes in poetry). This population resisted assimilation, apart from superficial external modernisations, some of which were merely cosmetic.

A prototypical example of an essay in which Lourenço reveals his fundamental theoretical framework for historical analysis is "Portugal como Cultura" ["Portugal as Culture"], included in the volume *A Nau de Ícaro, seguido de Imagem e Miragem da Lusofonia* [The Ship of Icarus, followed by the Image and Mirage of Lusophony]. This essay opens with a statement that summarises and corroborates the points made above: *"*The silent or silenced aspect of what we now call 'Portuguese culture,' being the vital and symbolic expression of the Portuguese people, is the obscure magma of millennial inheritances and rites where, without being aware of it, the visible and clear manifestations of this culture are rooted*"* (p. 37). It is worth continuing the quotation, as it is illuminating: *"*Mythologised as Iberian, Celtic, or tinged with accidental Phoenician or Greek colours before Rome imposed the mark of its institutions and, most decisively, its language, only this silent substratum explains why, at the farthest tip of the Iberian Peninsula, and beyond the patchwork quilt that all cultures are, Portuguese culture acquired and preserved its distinct identity among its Celtic, Latin, and Mediterranean counterparts*"* (p. 37). Lourenço goes on to assert: *"*Our cultural mythology — and also the opinions of those who have studied it — includes the idea that the central and even obsessive drive of Portuguese culture is its lyrical vocation. […] What is meant by this insistence on the lyrical vocation of Portuguese culture is its historical dominance, not only over other forms of our poetry, but also the permeation of all other expressions and manifestations of Portuguese sensibility by that voice, which is closest to humanity's ecstatic awe at the beauty of the world or its nostalgia for it*"* (p. 38). After a succinct exploration of literary figures, highlighting the lyrical vein of the "country of tears," Lourenço adds: *"*It is natural to think that this painful sense of existence, imbued with sweetness and resignation, which seems to characterise Portuguese culture, is due to the influence and omnipresence of Christianity. Denying this influence, or rather this near consubstantiality of our culture with Christianity, within which it evolved and was defined, would be absurd. If there is a country in Europe, aside from perhaps Poland, where the Church exercised its intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, and even temporal authority in its full plenitude, it is surely Portugal*"* (pp. 39–40). Lourenço's foundational ideas about Portuguese history become even clearer a few lines later:

*"*In a certain sense, which might be more perceptive than a profane, historicist, or sociological perspective, Portuguese culture could be described in its symbolic functioning as a latent or active conflict between the profane demands characteristic of a society prior to Christianity and the demands of a religious, ethical, and spiritual behavioural model that, in principle, underpins all acts of existence*"* (p. 40). He follows on from this with the striking observation: *"*It was not the notorious Inquisition that served as the firewall safeguarding the framework and references of the Catholic vision that conditioned Portuguese culture until the 19th century; it was the spontaneous defence of orthodoxy that made the Inquisition possible*"* (p. 41). Finally, as another illustration of the theoretical underpinnings shaping Lourenço's worldview, he concludes the same essay with this assertion: *"*The profound life of a culture does not move according to the laws that alter the political,

economic, or even social status of a society*"* (p. 42).

It should also be noted that a significant portion of Eduardo Lourenço's articles and essays addresses the question of the colonial empire. For example, one might consider the volumes *Situação Africana e Consciência Nacional* [African Situation and National Consciousness] (1976) and *Do Brasil. Fascínio e Miragem* [On Brazil: Fascination and Mirage] (2015). Additionally, many of these texts are strongly critical of the empire: slavery, he argues, "was, probably, the greatest sin in our history" (*Ler*, p. 32). Another revealing and noteworthy passage can be found in *O Fascismo Nunca Existiu* [Fascism Never Existed]: *"*It is true that, modest Cortéses and Pizarros, our empire's pioneers ended up carving out in the African hinterlands authentic homelands of their own that seemed to extend the kingdom or the republic from which they had departed. It is no less true that, whether kingdom or republic, from time to time, with delayed spasms of recovery, they would endorse this existence, controlling it from afar just enough to extract its fruits*"* (p. 99).

Lourenço's historical vision is always expressed in an evaluative register, as opposed to an analytical, distant, empirical, and neutral narrative. It is consistently critical, juxtaposing the thinker's worldview with the historical realities he examines. He never hesitates to make value judgements, clearly motivated by a profound passion for Portugal, heightened by the fact that he observed, studied, and experienced it from a distance; that he had to explain it to foreigners; and that he longed for the homeland he always considered his own. In summary, Lourenço offers a complex vision of Portuguese history, resistant to any oversimplification (including this attempt at synthesis). While it remains scattered across a multitude of writings yet to be fully collected in a single volume, it nevertheless reflects one of the most coherent interpretations of Portugal. His approach is animated by what Max Weber defined as *Verstehen*: an empathetic understanding from within.

Primary references: "Uma parte da Humanidade já encara a morte como o fim de tudo", entrevista de Paulo Moura, *Ler. Livros & Leitores*, nº 138, Lisboa, Verão, 2015, pp. 30-41; *A Nau de Ícaro seguido de Imagem e Miragem da Lusofonia*, Lisboa, Gradiva, 1999; *Do Brasil. Fascínio e Miragem.* Lisboa: Gradiva, 2015; *Eduardo Lourenço: A História É a Suprema Ficção.* Entrevista conduzida por José Jorge Letria. Lisboa: Guerra e Paz, 2014; *Em Diálogo com Eduardo Lourenço.* Entrevista conduzida por Ana Nascimento Piedade, Lisboa, Gradiva, 2015; Lourenço, Eduardo, 1976. *Situação Africana e Consciência Nacional*, Lisboa, Dom Quixote, 1976; *Nós e a Europa ou as duas razões*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1988; *O Labirinto da Saudade - Psicanálise Mítica do Destino Português*, Lisboa, Dom Quixote, 1978.

Secondary references: "Eduardo Lourenço 85 anos". *Colóquio-Letras*. Número Especial. Nº 170 (Jan.-Abril 2009);"Ler Eduardo Lourenço", blogue do Projecto Edição das Obras Completas de Eduardo Lourenço: eduardolourenco.blogspot.pt; "Sobre Eduardo Lourenço". *Prelo*. Número Especial. (Maio, 1984); Besse, Graciette, org. *Eduardo Lourenço et La Passion Humaine*, Paris: Éditions Convivium Lusophone, 2013; Real, Miguel. *Eduardo Lourenço e a Cultura Portuguesa*, Lisboa, Quidnovi, 2008; *Tempos de Eduardo Lourenço. Fotobiografia*. Org. Maria Manuela Cruzeiro e Maria Manuel Baptista. Porto, Companhia das Letras, 2003.

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