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**Rewriting the past in *Teoria Geral do Esquecimento* (2012)
and *O Vendedor de Passados* (2004)**

The novels *Teoria Geral do Esquecimento* (2012) and *O Vendedor de Passados* (2004) by José Eduardo Agualusa feature characters who, on opposite sides of history (a colonist and a colonized) reconstruct and reposition their identities in the tumultuous social and political context after independence and the end of the civil war in Angola, between the 1970s and the beginning of the 21st century.

The problematic relationship of the characters with their memories is structured from, and around, concrete places such as Ventura's house and Ludovica's apartment in the "Invejados" (the envied) building, which becomes the ultimate location vis – à – vis post – colonial reality. Life within these places is regulated and circumscribed by political and social phenomena linked to the violence of colonialism and its repercussions. Ludovica's and Ventura's efforts to isolate and barricade themselves from the outside world generate a tension between the space they inhabit and the world that surrounds them.

Throughout the action, the limits of these houses are dissolved and invaded by the radical transformations that from the outside interfere with the inside, reorganizing and intervening in the characters' awareness of their identities and memories, forcing them to acknowledge their biographies, which leads them to a historical repositioning. This process takes place through the infiltration and contamination between colonial history, the consequent civil war, and the characters' biographies.

My comparison of these two novels focuses on how the tension between the colonial reminiscences and the new postcolonial narratives are materialized in the biographies of the protagonists on different sides of history. These protagonists reenact and rewrite the postcolonial problematics of cultural memory in their countries, they do so by rewriting the past as a way of (dis)enabling the nationalist, post – independence Angolan narratives.