



Year VI, v.1 2026 | Submission: 02/14/2026 | Accepted: 02/16/2026 | Publication: 02/18/2026

Education as a Tool for Social Transformation in Pepetela's Narrative: A Comparative Study Between The Adventures of Ngunga and Mayombe

Education As A Tool For Social Transformation In Pepetela's Narrative: A Comparative Study Between The Adventures Of Ngunga And Mayombe

Leonildo Rocha - Higher Pedagogical School of Cuanza Norte

Henriques Samuel - Faculty of Humanities, UAN <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1830-2579>

Summary

This article analyzes education as an instrument of social transformation in Pepetela's narrative, based on a comparative reading between **The Adventures of Ngunga** (1972) and **Mayombe** (1980). The research demonstrates that, in both works, education transcends the school setting and assumes a political, ethical, and identity-forming role, configuring itself as a mechanism for the formation of the Angolan subject during the revolutionary period. In **Ngunga**, education guides the moral construction of a young person who learns to distinguish values, responsibilities, and commitments in a context of anti-colonial struggle. In **Mayombe**, education is diluted in guerrilla warfare, where ideological debate, internal conflict, and collective practice shape the political consciousness of the combatants. The comparative analysis reveals that Pepetela conceives of education as a continuous process of emancipation, capable of generating conscious, critical individuals committed to social transformation. It can be concluded that both narratives propose complementary educational models that reflect, critique, and project the construction of Angolan society.

Keywords: Education; Social Transformation; Angolan Literature.

Abstract

This article analyzes education as an instrument of social transformation in Pepetela's narrative, based on a comparative reading of *The Adventures of Ngunga* (1972) and *Mayombe* (1980). The study demonstrates that, in both works, education goes beyond the formal school sphere and assumes a political, ethical and identity-forming role, functioning as a mechanism for shaping the Angolan subject during the revolutionary period. In *Ngunga*, education guides the moral construction of a young protagonist who learns to distinguish values, responsibilities and commitments within a context of anti-colonial struggle. In *Mayombe*, education appears in a more diffuse form within guerrilla life, where ideological debate, internal conflict and collective practice shape the political consciousness of the combatants. The comparative analysis reveals that Pepetela conceives education as a continuous process of emancipation, capable of producing conscious, critical individuals committed to social transformation. It is concluded that both narratives propose complementary educational models that reflect, criticize and project the construction of Angolan society.

Keywords: Education; Social Transformation; Angolan Literature.

Introduction

Education, conceived as an instrument of individual and collective emancipation, occupies a central place in Angolan literature committed to social transformation. In the period that preceded independence, marked by intense political, cultural, and identity tensions, the production of literature ceases to fulfill merely an aesthetic function and asserts itself as a space for critical reflection and social intervention. It is in this context that Pepetela's work stands out, articulating fiction, historical awareness and political project.

The choice of the works *The Adventures of Ngunga* and *Mayombe* is justified by both representing decisive moments in the history of Angola and highlighting, in different ways, the



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The centrality of education in shaping the individual and building national consciousness. In *As Aventuras de Ngunga* follows the formative journey of a young man as he learns to interpret the reality that surrounds him leads him to take an active role in the struggle for liberation. Already in Mayombe, he delves deeper into the educational dimension within the guerrilla movement, showing how coexistence and ideological debate and the confrontation of different views function as fundamental pedagogical processes for the construction of collective identities and values.

This approach seeks to answer the following central question: how does education... Does it manifest itself as an agent of social transformation in both narratives? This problem allows to understand education not only as literacy or formal instruction, but as a process of broader construction of consciousness, development of critical thinking and of internalization of ethical and political values that drive social change.

Regarding the historical context, it is important to point out that the pre-independence was characterized by the emergence of liberation movements that aimed not only to achieve a political break with the colonial regime, but also a cultural and identity redefinition of society. In Angolan. Within this context, literature assumed a clear socio-political mission, becoming an instrument of denunciation, resistance, and the formation of consciences. Pepetela, as a writer and as a militant, her works reflect this close relationship between education, political struggle, and transformation. social.

The selected narratives thus constitute literary testimonies of a project. A collective that sought, through education and critical awareness, to contribute to the construction of a more just, autonomous society, aware of its own historical destiny.

Education and social transformation

An analysis of education as a force for social transformation in the works of *The Adventures of Ngunga*. Mayombe demands a distinction between formal education and sociopolitical education, since *Pepetela* works with both in a complementary way in her literary and ideological project.

Formal education, although limited by the context of colonial guerrilla warfare, is associated with school instruction and structured teaching are manifested primarily in *The Adventures of Ngunga*. The work presents the protagonist's initial contact with school and the idea of learning, systematized, as can be seen in the excerpt where Ngunga expresses bewilderment at this unknown space. The figure of the teacher, the act of teaching literacy, and the value of knowledge. organized groups represent an attempt to build a new national consciousness. By learning to read and write, Ngunga begins to interpret the world more critically and to understand norms. social, revealing that literacy is understood as a fundamental step towards participation. active in society. This education symbolizes a break with the colonial model, historically



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marked by the exclusion of the majority of the population from access to knowledge. Thus, the school, under the guidance of the liberation movement, it transforms into a space for identity reconstruction and affirmation of cultural.

On the other hand, sociopolitical education manifests itself more intensely in *Mayombe*, where the learning process takes place outside of the school environment. The guerrillas learn through from coexistence, ideological debate, collective reflection, and the direct experience of armed struggle. A The forest symbolically takes on the role of a "classroom," while the guerrilla warfare becomes a A space for political education. The exchange of ideas between figures such as Sem Medo, Teoria and We fight constitute an ongoing educational process, in which each activist is led to review... prejudices, understanding internal cultural conflicts, and reinforcing the commitment to liberation. In this context, political education becomes an essential condition for group cohesion and for... survival itself depends on the struggle.

The dialogues that address the need for study, even in the midst of war, demonstrate that Knowledge is seen as indispensable not only for the present of the armed struggle, but also for the future of the society to be built after independence. The criticism of the refusal of the study reveals the awareness that political liberation must be accompanied by intellectual and civic education of individuals.

In both narratives, pedagogy assumes a role of collective emancipation. In *As In the adventures of Ngunga*, emancipation occurs primarily through literacy and education. a civic consciousness; in *Mayombe*, it is realized through the construction of political unity and by Overcoming ethnic and ideological tensions. Pepetela presents education not as mere transmission. not just about content, but about critical thinking, dialogue, and the construction of values—fundamental elements. for social transformation in the context of the anti-colonial struggle.

Thus, education in both works transcends the individual dimension of the learner and It becomes a collective project of social renewal, oriented towards building a better Angola. Free, just, and conscious. The transformation of the subject—be it Ngunga or the anonymous guerrilla fighter. marked by internal conflicts — it symbolizes the transformation of Angolan society itself. intends to build. In narrating these educational processes, Pepetela affirms literature as a space of critical reflection and, simultaneously, intervention in historical reality.

Pepetela's relevance in the construction of national memory.

The testimonial value of Pepetela's novels is directly related to their experience not only as a guerrilla fighter in the Angolan liberation struggle but also as a government official during that period. post-independence, but also as a social actor who, at times, found himself on the borders. existing both within and outside the country, using literary writing as a means of expression.



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His literary choices reflect various concerns that marked the creative process.

of the Angolan state and nation. His transformation into an Angolan public figure and intellectual.

engages deeply with these issues (Machado, 2019, p. 3).

Thus, Pepetela's work occupies a central place in the consolidation of historical memory and Angola's identity, especially by articulating literature, political reflection, and direct testimony of the struggle of liberation. Her writing is not limited to narrating events, but organizes, interprets and It preserves collective experiences that constitute the core of national memory. This function becomes This is particularly evident in *The Adventures of Ngunga* and *Mayombe*, narratives that record, in a way... Literary, two decisive moments in the formation of Angolan consciousness.

First and foremost, Pepetela contributes to the national memory by reconstructing the struggle. Anticolonial from within. As a former MPLA guerrilla fighter, he brings his experiences to fiction. Internal tensions, ideological debates, and contradictions within the movement, offering a pluralistic view of... liberation. In this sense, his work is part of a literary tradition in which resistance, the Identity affirmation, nation-building, the utopian project, and the valorization of a historical past. These constitute fundamental features of Angolan literary discourse (Machado, 2019, p. 15).

Mayombe is exemplary in this respect, as it describes the guerrilla movement not as a homogeneous bloc, but as a space marked by ethnic diversity, personal conflicts, political reflections and educational processes. The memory of the struggle is thus preserved with complexity and authenticity. moving away from simplistic and idealized interpretations.

(...) The noise brought in the Chief of Operations.

What's going on here?

– Comrade Pangu-Akitina came here to insult us – said the group leader.

Kiluanje.

"No," said Theory. "They started arguing. I tried to interrupt, but then..."

Neither side wanted to stop.

"But who's talking now, provoking?" Kiluanje said. "We are."

We fell silent when we saw what Pangu wanted. But he continued, and continued.

Now he calls us slaves of the Kikongo people...

"That's a lie!" said Pangu-Akitina.

"That's true!" said Ekuikui. "You were stupid, you lost your head, that's what..."

They wanted to. You said yes, that's right. But they were the ones who started the conversation and...

Then things heated up. It wasn't Pangu who came here to insult.

"Well, the Command will sort that out later," said the Chief of Operations.

Now, disperse!

Heading to the room they shared, Ekuikui said to Teoria:



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I don't know if Pangu was just taken for a ride or if he really wanted to start a fight.

The others were sneaky. They annoyed him and then shut up, so he could be the one to do it.

to bury himself. He reacted out of tribalism.

– Of course, comrade professor. But it seems to me that he knew that and didn't...

It mattered. He was doing it on purpose.

– To provoke? (...) (Pepetela, *Mayombe*, 1993, p. 65).

In *The Adventures of Ngunga*, Pepetela records another fundamental dimension of memory.

National: the formation of youth as a pillar of the new Angola. Ngunga's journey reflects this.

a time when literacy, civic awareness, and identity awakening become important.

decisive in the fight against colonialism. By inscribing in the collective imagination the figure of the young person who

Learns — or needs to learn — in order to transform, the author constructs a pedagogical memory.

of liberation, highlighting that independence was not just a military act, but also a

educational process.

– Ngunga, you're too small to be a guerrilla fighter. I already told you here that

You can't stay like this. Walking alone, like you do, isn't good. One day it will happen to you.

That's a bad thing. And you're not learning anything.

– How? I'm seeing new lands, new rivers, new people. I hear what

They speak. I am learning.

It's not the same thing. You learn more at school. And that way you'll get to know the...

Professor. Have you ever seen a professor? Tell me what one looks like.

Professor? You're going to see the school. I'm leaving tomorrow and you're coming with me.

(Pepetela, *As Aventuras de Ngunga*, 2002, p. 21).

Pepetela's relevance in the construction of national memory also stems from the way in which

It values Angolan cultures, languages, and identities, integrating them into the literary narrative. The dialogues

The presence of characters from different ethnic groups, common in *Mayombe*, reveals the diversity.

internal issues within the country and highlight the need for an inclusive national project. Literature becomes,

Thus, a space for recognition and legitimation of the multiple "Angolas" that make up the

nation.

At the same time, the author plays a critical role in the construction of national memory.

by questioning myths, denouncing inconsistencies, and problematizing both the colonial legacy and the

contradictions of the post-colonial period. Instead of producing a merely glorifying memory,

Pepetela constructs a reflective memory, allowing the reader to understand the fragilities, the

The challenges and tensions that accompanied the formation of the Angolan state. This critical stance reinforces

The educational dimension of his work: remembering to rethink and rethinking to transform.



Childhood as a space for moral development in *The Adventures of Ngunga*

In *The Adventures of Ngunga*, childhood emerges as a central moment of learning and of building moral and civic awareness. Pepetela presents Ngunga not only as protagonist of the narrative, but as a subject in formation, whose educational journey reflects the tension existing between colonial legacies and the emerging values of the liberation movement.

Ngunga's formative process begins within the community, but quickly expands. for the school context and for direct experience of political reality. From an early age, young people are confronted with the rules, norms, and hierarchies of colonial society, learning to distinguish Behaviors considered acceptable or unacceptable. However, their true education It manifests itself when one begins to question these norms and to understand values such as justice, Solidarity and collective participation are fundamental to the struggle for independence. Literacy, Contact with books and dialogue with more conscious adults function as instruments that They allow him to organize his thoughts and develop ethical principles that will guide his actions. future.

"I'm not a child," Ngunga interrupted. "If there's an attack, I won't cry."

Don't even run away. If I have a weapon, I'll shoot. If I don't, I can load the weapons of... comrades.

The commander laughed.

Have you seen the Portuguese fire?

So, really? It's not worse than ours!

Mavinga was amused by the conversation. He said: –

You are a clever and brave boy. That's why you should study. A newcomer has just arrived.

A teacher is going to set up a school nearby. You should go there and learn how to...

To read and to write. Don't you want to? (Pepetela, *The Adventures of Ngunga*, 2002, p. 21).

The narrative clearly highlights the opposition between colonial values and values... revolutionaries. While the colonial system seeks to mold the individual for acceptance of In contrast to inequality, subordination, and the maintenance of the status quo, revolutionary values promote Critical awareness, equality, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Pepetela contrasts These two perspectives are evident throughout Ngunga's lived experiences: school discipline, many Sometimes rigid, this contrasts with the lessons that emerge from living with activists and from Direct observation of social injustice. This contrast contributes to the formation of an ethical vision and A policy that goes beyond mere formal instruction, teaching young people the importance of acting in benefit of the community and social transformation.

In this way, Ngunga's childhood ceases to be merely a biological or chronological stage and



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It transforms into a pedagogical space for moral development, in which one learns to distinguish between

That which perpetuates oppression and that which promotes freedom. Education thus assumes a...

Dual function: to shape the individual into a critical citizen and to prepare them to play a role.

active in the collective struggle for independence and social justice.

Formal schooling and political pedagogy

The people came with the children, and the commander addressed them all, announcing that the school was ready and that classes could begin. The teacher Union had been sent from afar by the Movement to teach. At the time Due to colonialism, there had never been a school in that region, and men were rare. who knew how to read and write. Now, however, the people were beginning to be free. The The movement, which belonged to everyone, built freedom through arms, and The school represented a great victory over colonialism. The people He should help the MPLA and the teacher in everything, so that the educational work... that it would be useful. The children needed to learn to read and write and, above all, to To defend the Revolution. To properly defend the Revolution, which existed for the For the good of all, it was necessary to study and be disciplined. Thus spoke the Commander Mavinga at the school's opening. Following him, speeches were given by... Professor and the president of the Action Committee, Comrade Livanga. The chinjanguila came to complete the celebration, demonstrating that the people were happy. (Pepetela, *As Aventuras de Ngunga*, 2002, pp. 25-26).

In *The Adventures of Ngunga*, Pepetela presents the school as a space for instruction.

formal, but also as an instrument of political pedagogy. The figure of the teacher, who initially It symbolizes the authority linked to the party system, and that of the revolutionary militants, who act As informal educators, they converge in the process of Ngunga's formation. Both contribute. to teach not only reading and writing, but also an understanding of the meaning of freedom, of justice and solidarity.

The militants of the liberation movement thus assume a fundamental educational role. transmitting revolutionary ideals and ethical values. Revolutionary pedagogy manifests itself as an education geared towards critical awareness and inner emancipation, demonstrating that the True learning goes beyond the limits of formal instruction.

— Never forget that you are a pioneer of the MPLA. Fight wherever you are.
Ngunga! (Pepetela, *As Aventuras de Ngunga*, 2002, p. 38).

The connection between these two modes of education allows Ngunga to integrate knowledge.

Formal education and political awareness, revealing education as a path to inner liberation — liberation from



fear, ignorance, and the passive acceptance of colonial reality.

Social transformation as seen through the lens of individual learning.

Ngunga only said goodbye to Mavinga. He explained to him why he wished to leave.
in secret and asked her not to reveal her destination to anyone, nor
He started talking about Ngunga again, as if he had died that night.
Unforgettable. He didn't even reveal his new name to the commander. He left.
Alone on the way to school. A man had been born inside the little one.
Ngunga (Pepetela, *As Aventuras de Ngunga*, 2002, p. 56).

Ngunga's journey clearly exemplifies how individual learning is articulated.
with social transformation. The protagonist's maturation functions as a metaphor for formation.
of a new citizen, capable of critically interpreting the reality that surrounds him and of acting for the
transform. Each stage of your education, both formal and political, contributes to building
ethical and political values that prepare him to assume responsibilities and integrate into a
A community committed to achieving freedom and justice.

In this way, the narrative shows that social transformation is not an abstract process.
But it begins with the formation of the individual. The conscious and educated citizen emerges as the foundation.
fundamental to a society capable of breaking with structures of oppression and building projects
Collectives focused on freedom and social justice.

Guerrilla warfare as a classroom

In *Mayombe*, Pepetela shifts the focus of education from the formal space to the context of
guerrilla warfare, presenting the forest as a true classroom. In this scenario, learning
It occurs continuously and in a multidimensional way, through daily interaction and ideological debate.
and conflict resolution, reflecting a political and social pedagogy aimed at the formation of
activists and critical citizens.

"That's where the problem lies," said Fearless. "Things happen between those in charge."
If there's dirty laundry to be aired, the activist must not know about it; it's aired in the chapel. That's all.
Everything always happens in the little chapel. So how do you teach the guerrillas to criticize and to be sincere, and to
How can they control those in charge if, in practice, they don't set examples for them? I, when I have a...
Something to tell you, or to Das Operações, I don't call you to the chapel to criticize, have you noticed?
It should be the same for you.
— That's what you say! But the guerrillas are already talking, saying there are problems among us, that the
Command is divided. (Pepetela, *Mayombe*, 1993, p. 72).

The forest, as a space for armed struggle, assumes a clear pedagogical function: each task,
Each patrol and each moment of observation constitutes an exercise in acquiring skills and



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internalization of collective values. The guerrillas learn to survive, to respect rules of

Discipline, strategic decision-making, and understanding the importance of solidarity.

The Commissioner was nervous, and his eyes betrayed his unease.

Why argue? – thought Fearless. Digging up what's already dead. The

Men like to flagellate themselves over the past and are never content without doing so. It's
the inability to put a stone on a fact and move on.

The future. There are others, however, who don't know how to enjoy life, who only see the future.
future. Inability to suffer or enjoy a situation. If they suffer,

They console themselves by thinking that tomorrow will be better; if they are happy, they temper their feelings.

This happiness comes with the idea that it will soon end. I live in the present. But

The Commissioner is a young man whose personality is torn between the past and

The future. Perhaps you can learn to enjoy life, but for now, still...

"It needs an explanation." — "Let's go," said Fearless.

They sat down on a fallen tree trunk at the entrance to the Base, with their weapons drawn.
knees. Muatiânvua turned them over and didn't take his eyes off the two figures.

(Pepetela, *Mayombe*, 1993, p. 72).

Learning in guerrilla warfare is also marked by constant debate. The discussions
ideological, often intense, mechanisms function as educational tools that allow...

Activists confront ideas, review positions, and consolidate ethical and political principles. Pepetela
describes situations in which coexistence and internal conflicts contribute to growth.
individual and collective.

"You talk like a priest," said Fearless. "If they didn't believe you, at least they are..."

They are well-educated enough not to show it. I think so, it needs to be repeated.

Actions of this kind; these people can be mobilized. If we had an organization here...

Solid, yes. But what do you want? With the organization we have, with the mess that exists,
these actions remind me too much of the promises of the Seminary. It's like promising
eternal life in the afterlife, when on Earth you do your best to make life unbearable. (Pepetela,
Mayombe, 1993, p. 21).

The guerrilla experience therefore reveals a practical and critical education, in which instruction
It is not limited to formal content, but integrates learning through action, reflection, and...
Shared responsibility. The forest, its dangers, and its challenges become tools.
Educational tools that shape the political awareness, ethics, and leadership capacity of the protagonists.

In this way, Pepetela presents guerrilla warfare as a comprehensive educational space, in which the
The individual develops into a conscious and active citizen, and education is an inseparable part of this process.
process of social transformation proposed by the narrative.

"Me?" Fearless smiled. "I'm a heretic, I'm against the religiosity of politics. I am..."



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Marxist? I think so, I know enough about Marxism to see that my ideas

They conform to him. But I don't believe in a number of things that are said or imposed in

The name of Marxism. I am, therefore, a heretic, an anarchist, a non-party member, a renegade,

a petit-bourgeois intellectual. One thing, for example, that makes me sick is the ease

Why do you label someone just because they don't have exactly the same characteristics?

opinion on one problem or another.

Why do you always say "you all," including me in a group?

— Because you're actually part of a group: the future Party officials, the cadres.

superiors, who will excommunicate heretics like me. "You" represents

all those who lack a sense of humor, who take themselves too seriously and adopt a grave demeanor in order to
to give importance.

"Fearless" stopped talking. The Commissioner waited for him to continue, but the Commander seemed...

to have stopped completely. He lit a cigarette and watched the swirls stand out in the night.

and get lost, higher up, in the darkness of Mayombe. Muatiãnvua continued to watch them.

From afar. Ekuikui approached him. (Pepetela, *Mayombe*, 1993, p. 73).

Ideological clashes as an educational process

In *Mayombe*, Pepetela demonstrates that education in the context of the guerrilla war is not limited to

Practical or military instruction, but it includes ideological confrontation as an important tool.

pedagogical. Discussions among activists address identity, cultural, and political issues.

allowing each member of the group to better understand their individual and collective role in the struggle.

for liberation. The debate thus emerges as a privileged space for learning, in which they are formed

Critical awareness arises, and the direction of the revolutionary project is questioned.

— Well! We're going to seize power, and what are we going to tell the people? We're going to build

socialism. And, ultimately, this construction will take thirty or fifty years. To

After five years, the people will start saying: but this so-called socialism...

He solved this problem and that one. And it will be true, because it's impossible to solve...

Such problems, in a backward country, in five years. And how will you react?

The people are being agitated by counter-revolutionary elements! Which also

That's true, because any regime creates its own elements of opposition. There are

Instead of arresting the ringleaders, we must be vigilant against the maneuvers of imperialism.

The secret police need to be reinforced, etc., etc. The dramatic thing is that you will have to...

Reason. Objectively, it will be necessary to tighten surveillance inside the

Party, increase discipline, clean house. Objectively, that's how it is. But

These cleanups will serve as a pretext for ambitious men to mix things up.

counter-revolutionaries with those who criticize their ambition and their

Mistakes. From the necessary vigilance within the Party, we will move to an environment...



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Police within the Party will silence all criticism from within.

Centralism is reinforced, democracy disappears. The dramatic thing is that...

You can escape this...

— It depends on men, it depends on men... (Pepetela, *Mayombe*, 1993, pp. 74-75).

Identity and political issues frequently arise in these dialogues and debates, in which bring together personal experiences, perceptions of colonialism, and different views of future for Angola. This clash of ideas constitutes a fundamental educational process, because It allows activists to reflect critically on power, political organization, and risks. inherent to the exercise of authority, reinforcing the pedagogical and transformative dimension of guerrilla warfare. described by Pepetela.

Collective education and revolutionary consciousness

Pepetela's narrative demonstrates that education within the guerrilla movement takes on a collectivist character. geared towards building a common ethic and forming a revolutionary consciousness. solid. The group learns to value solidarity, shared responsibility, and respect for differences, fundamental elements both for the success of the armed struggle and for the transformation intended social purpose.

"Men?" Fearless smiled sadly. "Men will be..."

prisoners of the structures they have created. Every living organism tends to to crystallize, if it is forced to close in on itself, if the environment is hostile: the skin hardens and gives rise to defensive spikes, the internal cohesion becomes- It becomes larger, and therefore internal communication decreases. A social organism, how is a Party, or is it in an exceptional state that requires a constant confrontation between men in practice — just like a war permanent — or tends toward crystallization. Men who have worked for a long time. The more time they spend together, the less need they have to talk, to communicate. therefore, it's a matter of confrontation. Each one knows the other and the other's arguments; A tacit agreement was reached between them. The dispute will therefore disappear. Where will the dissenting voice appear? The dissenters will be confused with the... counter-revolutionaries; the bureaucracy will be master and lord, and with it the Conformity, orderly but passionless work, the inability to do everything. to question and reformulate again. The truly living organism is one who is capable of denying oneself in order to be reborn in a different or better way. still, to give rise to another. (Pepetela, *Mayombe*, 1993, p. 75).



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The formation of a collective ethic manifests itself in group discipline and the sharing of resources. in mutual aid and accountability for individual mistakes that affect the collective. Each activist understands that their actions have consequences for the whole, reinforcing the sense of commitment to and belonging to the revolutionary project.

Finally, Pepetela emphasizes that social transformation is the ultimate goal of education. revolutionary. Learning aims not only to train technically skilled individuals, but conscious citizens, capable of rebuilding Angola based on principles of justice, freedom and equality. Guerrilla pedagogy articulates practice, ideology, and ethics, shaping a process. A comprehensive education that transforms the individual and, by extension, society.

In this way, *Mayombe* demonstrates that collective education is inseparable from the construction of a revolutionary consciousness, demonstrating that political and social freedom necessarily depends on from the ethical and critical training of its protagonists.

Convergences

Despite the contextual differences between *The Adventures of Ngunga* and *Mayombe*, both works They share significant convergences in their treatment of education as an instrument of social transformation, highlighting common pedagogical and ideological patterns.

First, it is observed that education functions as a form of emancipation. In *The Adventures of Ngunga*, literacy and contact with New ideas liberate young people from the ignorance imposed by the colonial system. allowing him to understand injustices and act accordingly. "I'm not a child," Ngunga interrupted. "If there's an attack, I won't cry." Don't even run away. If I have a weapon, I'll shoot. If I don't, I can load the weapons of... comrades.

The commander laughed.

Have you seen the Portuguese fire?

So, really? It's no worse than ours!

Mavinga was amused by the conversation. He said: – You are a clever and brave boy. That's why you should study. A newcomer has just arrived. A teacher is going to set up a school nearby. You should go there and learn how to... Reading and writing. Don't you want to?

Ngunga remained silent. School? He'd never seen one. He'd heard of them, though. It was a place where you always had to sit, looking at some written papers. It shouldn't be good.

– I prefer to be a guerrilla fighter. If they don't want me here, then I'll go somewhere else.



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– Ngunga, you're too small to be a guerrilla fighter. I already told you here that
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That's a bad thing. And you're not learning anything.
– How? I'm seeing new lands, new rivers, new people. I hear what
They speak. I am learning.
It's not the same thing. You learn more at school. And that way you'll get to know the...
Professor. Have you ever seen a professor? Tell me what one looks like.
Professor? You're going to see the school. I'm leaving tomorrow and you're coming with me.
(Pepetela, *As Aventuras de Ngunga*, 2002, p. 21).

In *Mayombe*, education emerges primarily from practical experience, debate, and reflection.
ideological, freeing the guerrillas from fear and passivity in the face of oppression. In both
In these works, learning is not limited to formal instruction, but involves the formation of a conscience.
Criticism capable of transforming both the individual and the community.

— If you only knew how much I couldn't care less about that tribal prestige! If I don't do it,
That's not the reason.
— Why then?
Perhaps because it's too strong a gesture of rebellion, perhaps exaggerated.
Regarding the seriousness of the case. Or because I have a secret hope of
that there is another solution.
"That's a new one!" said the Commissioner. "If it were someone else, I wouldn't be surprised. But..."
I'm amazed to hear you talk like that.
— What do you want? Maybe I'm less of an anarchist than you think... And you, would you be?
A man to lead this survey?
— I've thought about that too. It would be possible, if he were born from a meeting of
activists, if the majority of activists demanded it. Why not? What is in
The cause is the struggle. Our last action showed that the conditions are right for the struggle.
It's spreading here. What's lacking is organization. André is, therefore, sabotaging the development
of the war. It's the militants' right to sweep him away. But
It had to be a decision made by the vast majority of activists.
— You're being demagogic! You know very well that the majority would march if it were just the two of us.
that we should take a position in favor of this uprising. Do not say, therefore, that you
You would be subjecting yourself to the opinion of the masses, if you know perfectly well that you can influence them.
this mass. (Pepetela, *Mayombe*, 1993, p. 87).

Another point of convergence lies in the link between learning and ethical responsibility. Ngunga
learns that knowledge implies duties towards others and towards society: teaching the



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Being younger or respecting collective norms are ethical acts. In parallel, in *Mayombe*, the Guerrillas understand that every individual decision affects the entire group; political education and This practice thus reinforces an ethic of collective responsibility. In both narratives, education is... Inseparable from morality: being polite also means being aware of the impact of one's own actions.

Finally, the two works converge in the construction of the Angolan subject as a project. Ngunga represents the citizen in formation, capable of integrating cultural, social, and political values into a Critical identity. The *Mayombe* guerrillas symbolize the same process in a collective context: Each individual learns, debates, and acts in service of a broader national project. Pepetela proposes, Thus, education is simultaneously individual and collective, constituting an instrument central to the formation of an individual capable of actively participating in the transformation of society. Angolan.

These convergences reveal that, despite the difference in scenarios — childhood versus Guerrilla warfare, school versus forest—Pepetela's pedagogy maintains common principles of emancipation, ethics and the construction of national consciousness, highlighting the continuity of a vision Educational approach geared towards social transformation.

Disagreements

Although *The Adventures of Ngunga* and *Mayombe* share significant convergences in Regarding the representation of education as an instrument of social transformation, disagreements also arise. relevant, related to the context, the type of learning and the experiences of the protagonists.

The first key difference lies in the opposition between the individual and the collective perspective. In *The Adventures of Ngunga*, the narrative follows the personal journey of a boy in the process of... growth, focusing on their moral, intellectual, and civic development. Education presents- It is seen as an internalized process that prepares the individual to act consciously in society. In contrast, in *Mayombe*, education takes on an essentially collective character: the guerrillas They learn in groups, through interdependence and shared experience. The individual is shaped... not only through the teachings of a guiding figure, but above all through constant interactions with the remaining members of the guerrilla group.

Another important difference relates to the type of education and formative experiences. Ngunga develops within a school and community environment, combining formal learning with... Life lessons, and it confronts ethical and moral conflicts typical of childhood and adolescence. Already In *Mayombe*, education takes place within the context of guerrilla warfare, through combat practices and discipline. The military and ideological debate. It is an intense and immediate learning process, marked by risks. of life, strategic decisions and direct confrontations with the enemy, which gives the experience a the most acute political and social dimension.

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Finally, the works differ in terms of age, maturity, and the type of formative conflicts of the authors.

protagonists. Ngunga is a child or adolescent in the process of identity formation; the challenges

The challenges they face are mostly internal and symbolic, such as distinguishing right from wrong.

To internalize values and understand social injustices. In *Mayombe*, the guerrillas are adults.

Young or old, confronted with complex dilemmas that articulate ethics, politics and

survival. Education, in this context, is practical, immediate, and geared towards collective action.

whereas in *The Adventures of Ngunga*, a gradual, reflective, and formative learning process predominates.

Thus, these differences demonstrate that, although education in both works aims to

emancipation and social transformation, their modes of realization vary according to the

historical context, the age of the protagonists, and the challenges faced. Such diversity allows for...

Pepetela explores different facets of Angolan pedagogy, from the individual formation of the citizen.

...up to revolutionary education of a collective nature.

Final Considerations

The comparative analysis of the works *As Aventuras de Ngunga* and *Mayombe* shows that Pepetela

It uses education as a central instrument for social transformation, manifesting it through

different contexts and experiences. In *The Adventures of Ngunga*, childhood and formal schooling are explored.

They function as spaces for moral and civic education, preparing young people for critical understanding.

of colonial reality. In *Mayombe*, the guerrilla movement emerges as a collective classroom, where the

Learning is practical, ideological, and ethical, shaping citizens capable of actively participating in...

struggle and in the construction of a just society.

This analysis makes a significant contribution to literary and educational studies by

To highlight the intersection between narrative, pedagogy, and national projects. It demonstrates how literature

Angolan culture does not merely represent historical reality, but also intervenes in the formation of consciences.

reinforcing the link between fiction, memory, and education as a driver of social change.

In short, Pepetela presents a vision of education as a transformative force, capable of...

to form critical and active citizens and to contribute to building an Angola that is aware of its

With a past that is responsible in the present and capable of shaping a more just future.

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