

Penyai's Vision of the School and Education in Selected Poetry in *Nhekwe Dziri Kanyi* (2011)

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Summary

The Ndau and Manyika people are well known for their craving for education, commonly regarded as “school” among the speakers of the two dialects. They are also popular for their love for code-switching between Shona and English. In his anthology of Ndau and Manyika poetry, *Nhekwe Dziri Kanyi* (2011), Ishmael Penyai focuses on many issues, among them: love, the family and education. On education, the poet expresses his vision of the ideal learner, teacher, school head and school curriculum – a vision which the researchers believe is an epitome of the dialect speakers in question. This article is an examination of Penyai's view of education in terms of the above-mentioned. It observes that the poet calls for learners to put first things first, by acquiring education before pursuing such things as sexual relationships and urges them, together with teachers and school heads, to be well behaved and cultured in a bid to facilitate knowledge and skills acquisition. In addition, he also widens learning to include such disciplines as music and sports and urges learners to pursue those disciplines they are good at and comfortable with. The article points out that whilst the poet is right in his call for remarkable behaviour among learners and the practitioners, his vision does not take into account why they fail to live in accordance with the ideals. It concludes that whilst Penyai's vision is plausible and wider than previous perceptions of education, it still needs further sharpening for it to actualise people's expectations.

Opsomming

Die Ndau- en Manyika-mense is bekend vir hul smagting na opvoeding, wat algemeen as “skool” beskou word deur die sprekers van die twee dialekte. Hulle is ook gewild vir hul kodewisseling tussen Shona en Engels. In sy versameling van Ndau- en Manyika-gedigte, *Nhekwe Dziri Kanyi* (2011), fokus Ishmael Penyai op baie temas, waaronder: liefde, die gesin en opvoeding. Wat opvoeding betref, verwoord die digter sy beskouing van die ideale leerder, onderwyser, skoolhoof en skoolkurrikulum – 'n visie wat die navorsers glo 'n verpersoonliking van die betrokke dialeksprekers is. Hierdie artikel is 'n beskouing van Penyai se opvatting van opvoeding met betrekking tot die bogenoemde. Daar word opgemerk dat die digter 'n beroep op leerders doen om hul prioriteite in orde te kry, deur opvoeding te verwerf voordat hulle dinge soos seksuele verhoudings najaag. Voorts word die leerders, tesame met onderwysers en skoolhoofde, aangemoedig tot goeie, beskaafde gedrag – in 'n poging om kennis en vaardighede te verwerf. Daarmee saam verbreed hy die begrip van “leer” om

dissiplines soos musiek en sport in te sluit, en moedig hy leerders aan om daardie dissiplines na te jaag waarmee hulle goed en gemaklik is. Die artikel wys daarop dat hoewel die digter se pleidooi vir voorbeeldige optrede deur leerders en diegene wat dit beoefen, geregverdig is, sy beskouing nie voorsiening maak vir die rede waarom hulle nie daarin slaag om volgens die ideale te lewe nie. Die gevolgtrekking van die artikel is dat hoewel Penyai se siening geloofwaardig is en meer omvattend is as vorige persepsies oor opvoeding, dit verder verfyn moet word voordat dit mense se verwagtinge kan verwesenlik.

Introduction

Poetry, the language of emotions and the inner soul, is one of the surest ways of getting to understand the Shona people. Through it, one is exposed to issues of the heart. It is no wonder why every important stage in the traditional Shona person's life was punctuated by poetry and, or song. Ishmael Penyai exploits this genre in conveying a variety of issues which include love, the family and education. On education, the poet stresses a variety of issues, most of which centre on the learner. Not only does the artist contribute to poetry; a genre that is usually overlooked by publishers, writers and readers, but does so in Ndau and Manyika, dialects which are at the periphery in the standard writing of the Shona language. He exploits the "words, accents, tones and nuggets of ethnic expression currently alienated by the Shona Language Committee's obsession with the so called 'Standard Shona'" (Zimunya 2011). The beauty of the poetry is expressed and experienced in words which contemporary society would have believed and thought to be forgotten. The poems exude and prove many things: that Ndau and Manyika dialects sound crazy but are quite rich in conveying issues on courtship, marriage, romance, death, misery and also education. In addition, the poetry is written in dialects which are not only captivating to both the internal and external speaker, but whose accents and tones are quite humorous, all adding to the glamour of the poetry.

Born in 1965, in Chanhuwa Village, Biriwiri in Chimanimani, Ishmael obtained both primary and secondary education at Biriiri and Matshayi-sikhova Primary as well as Biriiri High Schools. It is therefore clear that, when he writes about education; the curriculum, the learner and the practitioner, he writes from experience. On the other hand, Penyai hails from Ndauland, that is, he was born and raised in Ndau speaking area. Ndau, bordering with Manyika in the Shona dialect continuum, Penyai thus had exposure to both dialects in his upbringing. Being so, he is best suited to write poetry in the two dialects, celebrating the linguistic heritage of the Eastern Shona varieties.

It is generally known that speakers of Ndau and Manyika dialects are also well-known in Zimbabwe for their love for code-switching between Shona (that is, their dialects) and English. Their love for English is so pronounced that in most cases, English words and expressions punctuate most of every Ndau or Manyika speaker, a clear case of people who not only love education, but live it. It is therefore not surprising that, even in his poetry, Penyai at times

shifts between Nda/Manyika and English in a bid to capture reality as far as is possible. He thus embarks on what Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike (1980) regard as “political engagement”, that is, perceiving social realities and making those perceptions available in one’s works of art. The Nda and Manyika speakers’ love and commitment to education is expressed by Penyai in the poem “Iwe mwana wechikora” (Hey you learner or; You, learner!) in the anthology *Nhekwe Dziri Kanyi* (2011) where he lucidly and in some cases, humorously talks about education; focusing on the learner, teacher, school head and the curriculum. In conveying these issues, the poet assumes the role of society’s gadfly (Etim 2004) who explains and teaches (Achebe 2009), interprets, warns and advises.

Expected Learner Behaviour in Penyai’s Poetry

In his explication on education, the poet has a vision of the school and the learner. In describing an ideal school environment, he puts more emphasis on the learner, to whom he commits the poem “Iwe mwana wechikora” (You learner). Regarding the learner, the poet stresses the need to be well-behaved, both within and outside the school. This way, the poet, like Kyriacou (1995: 81), argues that discipline is the order that is necessary in the classroom and school for learners to engage in effective learning. In fact, he underscores the need for learners to first concentrate on, and finish school before embarking on such issues as sexual relationships. In other words, he urges learners to pursue “First things first”, and the first thing being acquiring of an education.

In pursuance of an academic qualification, the poet regards good behaviour at school as integral. Using the head as his focal point, the poet discourages hot-headedness among learners, a forgetful mind, and a head with unkempt hair. He pushes for a level headed mind and one that concentrates on, and does school work on time. Penyai (2011: 11) advises:

<i>Kuite musoro pachikora</i>	Having direction at school
<i>Kwete musoro unopisha</i>	Not a hot head
<i>Haiwa soro rinodziya</i>	Not a head full of mischief
<i>Kwete musoro usikazi kukamwa</i>	Not an unkempt head
<i>Haiwa soro rinokanganwa</i>	Not a forgetful mind
<i>Kwete musoro unotemesa amweni masoro</i>	Not a problematic head

The kind of head (mind) that the poet calls for is one that facilitates acquisition of knowledge, hence of education. A forgetful mind does not auger well with learning because daily exercises, end of term and final exams all test one’s remembrance of learnt concepts and skills. With a forgetful mind, one surely cannot make it. Mischievous and hot-headed learners normally do not do well in their learning, for they spend precious time on petty things.

The poet identifies, and pours vitriol on many examples of learner misbehaviour and misdemeanours. These include smoking, beer-drinking, engaging in love relationships and engaging in fist-fights. He identifies and castigates unwanted behaviour on the part of both the boy and girl learner. For the smoking learner, the poet sarcastically warns that the result is burning up one's books, "*Unangwarire kupishe bhuku rezvibaro*" (You will end up burning up books for reading). For the learner who is a drunkard, he again warns that instead of taking home a certificate, they will instead take a mug of beer. He observes that drinking is now practiced by the boy and girl learner, together with the teacher; behaviour which he considers as unbecoming. In an informal interview, the poet testified that he was compelled to write the poem after observing that learners and teachers compete in drinking beer, disregarding their responsibilities in the process. Drinking, apart from taking one away from their responsibilities and daily tasks, blurs one's judgement. For the teacher, it makes him/her forgetful of their duties, or affects the effective and efficient execution of teacher roles. For the learner, drinking affects one's thinking and subsequently, one's performance in class. It also results in one disregarding school rules and daily learner tasks. Beer, together with smoking (especially dagga) results in hot-headedness on the part of learners. Both influence learners into embarking on actions that they will regret later, such as unprotected sexual intimacy and early but unwanted marriages or pregnancies.

The poet warns against peer pressure when one is at school. He observes that most learners are pushed into unwanted and unwarranted behaviour just because everyone is doing it:

<i>Makwikwi ekumwe doro</i>	Competing to drink beer
<i>Ngana nangana anomwe doro</i>	So an so drink beer
<i>Makwikwi nekufembe forya</i>	Competing to smoke
<i>Ngana nangana anofembe forya</i>	So and so smoke
<i>Saka rekerai ndifembe nani baba nhiya</i>	So let me smoke also
<i>Makwikwi ekunyenge pachikora</i>	Competing to have sexual relationships
<i>Nhingi nanhingi akanyenga akadiwa</i>	So and so proposed and were loved
<i>Kubva rekerai ndinyenge nani</i>	So let me also propose love
	(Penyai 2011: 12)

It is true that most wayward and awkward learner behaviour is a result of peer pressure. Mob psychology negatively affects many learners. The poet advises against going with the mob. He points out that a deed does not always become good because everyone is doing it. Rather, at school, it is usually the case that what most learners crave for may be out of place. This is worse if learners are in their adolescent stage; a stage which psychologists agree is a period characterised by storm and stress. At this stage, learners tend to associate more

with peers than parents (Zindi & Makotore 2000: 125). Conformity with peers is more paramount to the adolescent, in some cases to the extent of indulging in anti-social behaviours such as drug-taking (Wall 1977: 49). Adolescence is also a period during which such learners feel they are always right. As such, they resist advice of whatever form. They consider themselves grown-ups who know very well the direction their lives should take. It is also the age where most of the learners' misbehaviours and misdemeanours identified by Penyai are rampant. At this age, learners focus more on themselves and their looks than they do on school work. Penyai advises that a successful learner is one who is above mob psychology, one who concentrates on school work first before anything else.

Using humour, Penyai (2011: 12) warns of the end result of learner misbehaviour:

<i>Makwikwi ekumitisa</i>	Competition to impregnate one another
<i>Teka teya teka teya yaamimba</i>	A small girl struggling to walk
<i>Choite chikora chaana tekateya ere?</i>	Is it a school for the pregnant?
<i>Chakanaka ere ichocho?</i>	Is it the right school?

The result of all acts of misbehaviour, such as beer-drinking, smoking and indulgence in early love relationships is early and unwanted pregnancies. The poet makes use of onomatopoeic ideophones to dramatise the pathetic gait of a very young pregnant girl. She will be too young to carry a pregnancy and, hence, her walk is one of limping, in a bid to carry and sustain the heavy load. He makes readers visualise the undesirability of pregnancies at school. More so, a pregnancy requires maximum attention, and having it at school is the worst thing ever to happen to a young and inexperienced learner who should be concentrating on her books. Thus, the poet's vision of a school is that it is an environment of good and exemplary behaviour. It is a place where the learner should be responsible and focused.

To the poet, an ideal learner should exude good behaviour within the school, the community, in the province, Zimbabwe and Africa at large. He argues that, exemplary behaviour should start from the home and to the school. He singles out some of those who later became great musicians and footballers such as Oliver Mutukudzi and Peter Ndlovu. He avers that these started all these activities from home and took them to school; hence good behaviour should start with the home and then be transferred to school. This way, the poet bridges the gap between the home and the school and shows that the home should in fact influence the school. Matsika (2012: 204) advises that schools must be culturally responsive; that is, allow parents, teachers and community members to be involved in its decision-making and governance. Penyai's poem and advice come at a time when the school, built away from the home, normally appears to be an ivory tower not linked to, or with experiences of the home. It also comes at a time when some parents believe their duty is just to pay school fees and leave the rest in the hands of the school

teachers, whom they expect to teach their children both academic disciplines and responsible behaviour.

As the poet castigates deplorable behaviour, he also presents what he believes to be admirable traits of a responsible learner. Apart from being punctual and conscious of his/her school work, the learner also assumes the position and duties of a prefect, a head boy or head girl. He argues that such positions and responsibilities are awarded to learners who are focused and exemplary.

Using personification and hence, making his poem humorous, the poet considers books, knowledge, listening, understanding, questions and answers to be today's girls who young boys should propose and fall in love with. Since relationships require time, having these new lovers would undoubtedly lengthen one's contact with books and improve one's understanding and acquisition of knowledge. It is therefore clear that one who falls in love with the mentioned "girls" usually does not go wrong. Thus, the poet urges learners to fall in love, but to be in love with education. The poem is significant in that it comes at a time when learners spend more time pursuing and nursing sexual relationships most of which never culminate in marriage.

Expected Teacher Behaviour at School

After presenting the qualities of a focused learner, the poet proceeds to challenge the teacher and even the school head to pause and think if theirs is good behaviour too. Levin and Nolan (1996) stress that the responsibility for appropriate behaviour should focus on both the teacher and the learner. The poet poses rhetoric questions:

<i>Uri kuite chakanaka ere?</i>	Are you doing what is right?
<i>Iweawe mudziidzisi wechikora</i>	You, the teacher
<i>Iweawe mukuru wechikora</i>	You the school head

(Penyai 2011: 11)

Here, the poet's vision of a good education involves the learner, the teacher and the school head. The teacher is regarded as important for it is he/she who facilitates the acquisition of knowledge. It is therefore imperative that the teacher must be of exemplary behaviour. In fact, Kasayira, Chireshe and Chipandambira (2004: 65) argue that for teachers to be effective in influencing learners' behaviour, they must control and change their own behaviour first. This is so because the teacher is a source of the hidden curriculum (Thondhlana, Ngara, Mutemeri, Mateveke, Gudyanga & Kadodo 2014: 10). The hidden curriculum refers to the kinds of learning students derive from the organisational design of the school as well as behaviour and attitudes of teachers and administrators (Chikumbu & Makamure 2000: 19). Some lessons from the hidden curriculum include behaviour appropriate for young

people (Thondhlana et al 2014: 10). Teachers are the learner's immediate role models. Learners are challenged into exceptional behaviour and performance by the contact of their teachers. Hence, the teacher's dressing and etiquette should be exemplary. The poet is against teachers who smoke and drink beer in school premises as this can be of bad influence to the learner. His call for remarkable behaviour also entails punctuality and shunning absenteeism. He also discourages teachers from engaging in improper love associations with learners, "*Kunyenga ana echikora kambiri kaenda*" (Being known for proposing love to learners). This does not only distract the learner from her core business, but also results in unwanted pregnancies. In fact, teachers act as *in loco-parentis* (Matsika 2012: 204), that is, they take the position and role of learners' parents and so have to nurture learners into responsible behaviour. This is because, most of the times, learners are away from their parents and other extended relatives who, in Shona culture, were responsible for moulding their behaviour in accordance with societal dictates. At boarding schools for example, learners are in the custody of teachers for the entire term, making it imperative that teachers exercise parental care and love to learners.

The rhetoric question, "*Uri kuite chakanaka ere? Iweiwe mudzidzisi wechikora?*" (Are you doing what is right, you the teacher?) is rich in meaning. In addition to the exemplary behaviour noted above, the statement also challenges the teacher, and even the reader to think of all ways that a teacher can prove to be doing the right thing. This may include being knowledgeable of his/her subject so as to render maximum and useful help and guidance to learners. This implies that the teacher should do intensive and extensive research about his subject area and should be duty conscious, as well as sympathetic and empathetic to the learner. This would enable him/her to accommodate and address the needs of both the fast and slow learner who, according to modern teaching methods, should constitute a mixed class. In addition, an ideal teacher should be knowledgeable of his/her learners, including their backgrounds. This is because learners' backgrounds positively or negatively affect such learners' performances. Kasayira et al (2004: 65) observe that some of the needs that affect learner performance lie outside the school. A sympathetic and empathetic teacher thus goes beyond the learner to examine how the learner's history could be influencing their performance.

The poet's vision of the school and education is quite handy. It comes at a time when some learners and teachers exude awkward behaviour even within school premises. Some learners have been expelled from school for such behaviour as smoking and beer-drinking while those who have had pregnancies have been excluded from school. It also comes at a time when some teachers have been forced to transfer from certain schools due to their negligence of duty or for deplorable behaviour outside the school environment. Others have also been transferred due to very poor student performance in final examinations. Other teachers have also been expelled from work due to improper associations with learners. In a survey on the abuse of girls in

African schools conducted in 2003, it was established that in Zimbabwe, about one fifth of the girls in the sample testified that they had been proposed by teachers (Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira, Lemani & Machakanja 2003: 4). Owing to the increase in cases of improper associations, the Zimbabwean government has even promulgated the Infanticide Act, which makes it heinous for teachers to have improper associations with learners. Under this law, teachers who are found in such unwanted relationships are expelled from work. Hence, the poet's advice and warning is quite relevant.

The poet's vision of education also includes the role and behaviour of the school head. The poet poses rhetoric questions so that each sits down to reflect whether they are doing the correct thing. The school head is also expected to be exemplary, and like the teacher, to be a father or mother figure to the learners. Through the combined efforts of the teachers and the head, the school must provide a homely environment where every learner feels loved and accommodated and where they feel free to express them-selves (Matsika 2012: 203). In addition, as the chief manager, the head also asks him/herself questions to do with his leadership style, and his management of school finances as well as the general development of the school. Penyai's poetry comes at a time when many school heads have been in newspapers for the wrong reasons, such as embezzlement of funds or other poor leadership styles. For example in 2016, twenty (20) school heads were suspended in the Midlands for failure to account for school moneys (*The Herald*, 2016). Thus Penyai's poetry is handy in reminding and shaping up the learner, the teacher and the headmaster so that they put first things first.

However, although the poet does well to warn, advise, teach and admonish, his poetry does not get to the root causes of the deplorable behaviour he condemns. Wayward learner behaviour itself has causes which need to be examined in a bid to find lasting solutions. Smoking, beer-drinking, bullying as well as indulging in early sexual liaisons all have causes which the poet sadly does not look into. As Achebe (1988) rightly observes, what is needed is to look back and see where the rain began to beat us. In other words, no one is born with deplorable qualities. Instead, these are formed in one's socialisation, which should be addressed so that learners desist from doing what is wrong.

While the poet advises learners to concentrate on acquiring an education, his vision of such has some weaknesses. Merely advising the juveniles not to succumb to peer-pressure at school is not enough. It is tantamount to believing that a school child is stronger than his/her school environment and that they can shape the environment when in fact it is the environment that shapes the behaviour of individual learners. Thus, it is important to correct the environment which causes learners to indulge in acts not expected at their age or level of study. Again, whilst the poem urges teachers and school heads to put first things first by enhancing the acquisition of knowledge by learners, he overlooks that they too are also products of modern socialisation plants.

Modernity does not have mechanisms for shaping proper behaviour in its citizens, teachers included. Traditional structures which used to curb and curtail such behaviour have been mercilessly torn apart by modernity. Instead of society looking after and shaping its people, individuals have been left to shepherd themselves in an environment which is not only mightier than them, but also decadent.

In today's Zimbabwe, gripped by serious socio-economic challenges, it seems unrewarding to stick to good behaviour. Bad behaviour such as stealing and embezzlement of funds seems more rewarding, especially at a time when civil servants' salaries are not only meagre, but are also erratic in their coming. The poet castigates teachers who indulge in improper associations with learners, "*Kunyenga ana echikora kambiri kaenda*" (Being known for proposing love to learners). Whilst he is justifiably against such associations, the poet does not examine why practitioners indulge in such deplorable behaviour. Through interviews with some teachers, it was established that some teachers and school heads who have improper associations with learners are mostly those distanced from their wives by the imperative need to work for their families. As one cross border woman observes, "Staying together is a luxury enjoyed by those who have a secure job and a salary at the end of the day" (Moto Editor 1997: 5). The majority cannot afford to be together, hence are usually distanced from their spouses by the economic situation prevailing in the country. As a result, poorly raised and trained teachers and headmasters who are distanced from their spouses end up taking advantage of the immature learners. Owing to the severe economic drive, the vulnerable learners usually give in to such moves. As a result, deplorable behaviour is rampant in learners, teachers and school heads. No amount of sane advice can effect behavioural change unless the environment changes and shapes up for the better. In other words, although the poet's advice is noble, economic and social imperatives for survival are more compelling and are the strong determinants of one's behaviour.

The School Curriculum in Penyai's Poetry

Penyai also talks of what he considers an ideal curriculum for a school. In addition to academic subjects to be studied, he considers disciplines such as soccer and music as equally important for learners to pursue. Thus, to Penyai, an ideal school curriculum has both the formal and informal content. The formal curriculum includes the academic subjects with laid down prescriptions on the content, knowledge and skills that learners have to acquire (Chikumbu & Makamure 2000). In addition to this, the poet calls for what Thondhlana et al (2014: 11) regard as extra mural curriculum. This curriculum entails the learning activities or experiences learners are exposed to by their

teachers but which are not stipulated in the official curriculum and these include music, sports or drama clubs. The poet says:

Oliver Mutukudzi kukone kuemba
Oliver's Mutukudzi' singing

Zvakatangira kumhatso nekuchikora ikweyo
Started from home and the school

Hemunoona murenje une mare amuna woye
People, even the leg pays

Peter Ndlovu kukhabe bhora ngemurenje
Peter Ndlovu kicked the ball

George Shaya kukone kukhabe bhora remurenje
George Shaya also kicked it

Benjani kutambe bhora ngemurenje
Benjani kicked the ball

Zvakatangire kumhatso nekuchikora ikweyo
It was from the home & school

Umwe naumwe une chipo chake
Everyone has their talent

Shandise chipo chewahinwa ndiMwari
Use the talent bestowed by God

The poet's vision of the school curriculum is wider than was allowed, by colonial perception, especially. The colonial mind limited the school curriculum to academic subjects. Even in the academic disciplines, there was bottle-necking, such that very few learners realised the rewards of acquiring an education. The rest were left in the abyss. Other disciplines like music, sporting and athletics were accorded very little, if any time on the school timetable. More so, they were lowly considered and seen as a pastime for the hopeless and not-so-bright learners. One who played the guitar was actually derogated as a *rombe* (rogue).

Today's world has proved that previously shunned disciplines are in fact, more rewarding than the academic ones. Soccer players and musicians are amongst the highly paid persons in the world. They are also amongst the celebrities of today, whilst academic disciplines rarely bring such rewards to those who pursue them. As such, it is noble that the poet calls for a widened school curriculum. His call is also in sync with the new changes in Zimbabwe's education syllabi that have been implemented by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022). In the new syllabi, physical

education (which also brings in athletics and other sporting activities) has been made a compulsory subject from primary to Advanced level. This allows for those gifted in sports to pursue careers of their interest and widen their chances of earning a living. This way, the school curriculum caters for every learner.

Although the poet makes reference to a widened school curriculum, he no doubt puts more stress on academic disciplines. This is seen by the many lines he devotes to book education as well as to how the learner, teacher and school head can make that a reality. Sadly, his over-emphasis on such academic disciplines is negated by Zimbabwean realities where those who have gone all the way to pursue such disciplines have been dismayed by the outcomes. Zimbabweans are amongst the highly educated people in Africa, with literacy levels of around 98%. More diploma and degree holders continue to be churned out by the country's increasing tertiary institutions. However, most people who emerge from these academic institutions are amongst the unemployed while some of them constitute the civil service, which is amongst the poorly paid workforce in Zimbabwe at the moment. Whereas the poet urges learners to acquire an education, the learners see no incentive in the call, especially when those who have acquired it, and the very people who teach them, are amongst the pathetic group in society. Most of the graduates have resorted to street vending, selling airtime, vegetables and other wares. In other words, the socio-economic challenges bedevilling Zimbabwe makes it a mockery for anyone to present education as imperative to learners. Inversely, some of the uneducated are amongst the highly rewarded people, either through embezzlement of government funds or other shoddy deals. As such, the poet's vision in this regard, is less convincing.

Conclusion

The article analysed Penyai's vision of education and the school in his poem, "Iwe mwana wechikora" in the anthology *Nhekwe Dziri Kanyi* (2011). It observed that the two dialects, Ndau and Manyika enable the poet to humorously and yet vividly convey his vision on the issues in question. The article discovered that the poet calls for learners to put first things first, by acquiring education before pursuing such things as sexual relationships and urges learners to be well behaved and cultured in a bid to facilitate knowledge and skills acquisition. In addition, his vision of the school curriculum includes such disciplines as sporting and music, wherein he urges learners to pursue the disciplines they are good and comfortable with. The article observes that, whilst the poet is right in his call for remarkable behaviour among learners, teachers and school heads, his vision does not take into account why they fail to live in accordance with the ideals. In addition, whereas education has been broadened to include disciplines formerly neglected, the vision does not take

into account the limitations of the academic disciplines especially in modern Zimbabwe where the educated are amongst the poorest and pathetic figures in society. The article concludes that, whilst Penyai's vision is plausible and wider than previous perceptions of education, it still needs further sharpening for it to actualise people's expectations.

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