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# The Proverb *manong a ja ka ditshika* as an Embodiment of the Principle of Unity

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## Abstract

The proverb, *manong a ja ka ditshika* (*birds of a feather flock together*), has a unifying element among the Batswana because it contains principles that meaningfully guide, counsel and also influence their behaviour. This chapter aims to explore the relationship between proverbs, identity and culture, and how proverbs impact one's identity. It will first define three concepts – proverb, culture and identity. This will be followed by a discussion of the theory of structuralism, which best explains the use of proverbs among communities. The theory is grounded on the idea that the community produces literature and an author is a product of society. Therefore, society determines ways of survival that should be transferred to posterity to ensure social control, group thinking and continuity. The chapter will then present a catalogue of proverbs that support the notion of unity in the proverb under discussion.

**Keywords:** culture, identity, idiom, metaphor, proverb

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## 1. Introduction

At the outset, the chapter intends to clarify the relationship between the Batswana as a 'volk' (nation) and their ways of applying social control as evident in their proverbs, idioms, metaphors and folktales (all part of their folklores). In short, the Setswana proverb is a collective of direct and indirect statements that cover, among others, idioms, myths and folktales, all of which form the folklore of the community. Culture, history and civilisation all belong to a community conscious of its existence and way forward. In this regard, the complementary role of proverbs, metaphors and folktales play a pivotal role of uniting the community and keeping it glued together.

The terms culture and identity will be defined, and a working definition of each will be extrapolated from the several that would have been identified. These will be defined because they are the underlying concepts around which the chapter revolves. This will be followed by an in-depth discussion of the theory of structuralism, mainly because the theory accounts for the systemic nature of discourse, written and spoken. The next section will be a discussion of the meaning of the proverb, *manong a ja ka ditshika*, its origin, as well as its role in the unification of the Batswana as a nation. There will also be a discussion of other proverbs, which serve the same purpose.

## 2. Definition of culture

The logical way of defining culture consists defining and representing the culture of the targeted community [1], in this case, the Batswana. Margaret Mead defines culture as a tapestry of traditional behaviour, which has been developed by the human race and is successively learned by each generation [1]. Central to this definition are development, learning and generation. Each community or era has its highest good that ensures a smooth transition of behavioural patterns that lead to sustenance and productivity. The highest good of the Romans was physical strength and power; hence, they regarded disability as the lowest form of human development. A true citizen had to be strong enough to protect his family and the state. The Greeks on the other hand believed in mental power, much in agreement with Des Cartes' famous maxim, 'I think, therefore I am' [2]. The highest good of Christians is purity that should lead to eternal life after death. Each of the above groups or philosophies had to be preserved for posterity and the young ones taught the principles of survival, which were in line with each highest good.

Culture can also be characterised as a learned activity, which is associated with groups of people and whose content embraces a wide range of phenomena, among others, norms, values, shared meanings and patterned ways of behaving [3–8]. Once again, culture is embedded in learning, which implies the ability to be taught, and therefore, the capacity to implement. What is key in the description of culture in the above definition is shared meaning. The saying 'It takes a village to raise a child' corroborates this thought. If a group does not agree on principles of survival, they will not be able to have a collective mind or group thinking, which are needed to impart the values of that group.

The third definition of culture is that it is the total socially acquired lifeway or lifestyle of a group of people. 'It consists of the patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling and acting that are characteristic of the members of a particular society or segment of a society' [9]. It does not deviate from the previous definition since it also emphasises ways of life by a group of people. The highest good of a people is protected and transmitted to young ones because a group is agreeable on how its members should behave in order to ensure prosperity.

From the three definitions above, it is safe to say that each culture or society produces images and forms which are unique and peculiar to it. This is the form that this chapter is going to follow, which is to confirm that the Batswana, as an African nation, have forms of communication

that are peculiar to them. These include their idioms and proverbs, both of which are imprinted in their culture. In the next section, the term identity is defined as a precursor to the main thesis of discussion later on.

### 3. Definition of identity

As with culture, identity is dependent on interaction. One of the reasons societies want to exert influence on citizens is that the raw human being is out of control. This can perhaps be better explained by the story of creation, in particular, the fall of man. The physical aspect of creation was completed and the spiritual was interrupted when man sinned. Because of this void, societies have been striving towards perfection. Religions and cultures have certain beliefs about what makes a complete man or citizen. Each feels strongly that theirs is the right one. The way of life of a society forms its culture, which gives shape to the identity of that society. This identity is imprinted in the individual identities of the citizens. Without this identity, there will not be shared meaning and therefore, no patriotism.

Identity is seen as how our sense of who we are is bound up with our membership of certain social groups. Most obviously, the term appears in the context of explorations of ethnicity or nationality and how ethnic and national group memberships are implicated in behaviour [10]. Another view is that it is how the individual understands the self as well as their interpretation of the social definition of the self within their inner group and the larger society [11]. It is further defined as 'how people understand their relationship to the outside world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future' [12].

Critical to the understanding of identity is the consideration of the different types of identity. For purposes of this chapter, cultural identity is given precedence which, if nicely nurtured, can provide an individual with a sense of belonging, purpose, social support and self-worth [13]. This type is given precedence mainly because structuralism, as shall be noted below, foregrounds society as the custodian of the idiom of that group. In other words, while each individual is entitled to their idiolect, it can only make sense when they belong. One might have developed an identity, but it is dependent on how society has come to prescribe as acceptable. A good example is the contrasting practices of religious rites of rising and sitting in the former Tswana region and the Zulu region of the Lutheran church.

In the Batswana Lutheran church, congregants would rise as an outward sign to show respect when praying and the amaZulu congregants argued that sitting down was closest to kneeling down and thus a sign of respect for one's senior. A junior may not stand before a king, what more before the Holy altar [14]? Thus, even if you have your own appreciation or respect for the Holy altar, if your actions are not synchronised with that of the congregation, you will not make sense.

Another closely related form of identity is social identity. A social group is a collection of more than two people who share the same social identity and have the same definition of who they

are, what attributes they have and how they relate to and differ from specific outgroups [15]. This is greater than cultural identity. The Batswana, for instance, comprises of different clans, which includes the **Bakwena** (whose totem is the crocodile), the **Bakgatla** (whose totem is a monkey), the **Bafurutshe** (whose totem is the baboon), among others. Each grouping has its own cultural identity but all of them have a central concept of the rites of passage. They celebrate life, observe the seasons and mourn the dead in pretty much the same way. They differ culturally and might even wage war to conquer other groupings and acculturate them. Their social identity can be seen in action during *magadi* (lobola) negotiations. They can differ on how to receive the groom's delegation, but they all agree on the worth of each cow (as a monetary unit) towards a settlement of the transaction.

At the micro level, there is personal identity, which is identity with personality attributes that are not shared with other people [15]. It is not necessarily selfish, but is a recognition of an individual as part of the greater puzzle that completes a pattern. If the individual was not important, there would not have been proverbs like *moremogolo go betlwa wa taola, wa motho o a ipetla* (loosely translated: that while masterpieces can be created by man, man alone is a master of his destiny. He has to design his own destiny in this world of ours. Basically, you are a master of your own destiny) [16]. This one is intended to teach an individual that for them to be worthy of society's attention and recognition, they have to work on their character. **Motswana** continues to say *ntšwanyana e bonwa mabotobotong* (literal translation: A doggie is to be judged by its nosing, European equivalent: a bird is known by its note, a man by his talk) [17]. Constructive competition is encouraged.

#### 4. Structuralism

It is important to note that the theory of structuralism revolves around the system in society. It recognises the different parts and structures and accounts for social cohesion among members. It does not discount any member because if they are left out, the golden thread that binds society together will be severed and there will be chaos. The theory is important in our understanding of proverbs, in particular, *manong a ja ka ditshika*, because it promotes working together. At the centre of structuralism is the idea of coherence, completeness and a system, which is made up of constituent parts. Interference of any kind renders the system awkward and therefore makes it lose its original aspect of totality. Each constituent part is therefore meaningless and detached on its own unless connected to its system. A linguistic example in our case would be the distinction between phonetics and phonology. With the former, speech sounds are analysed individually without any reference to any other speech sound, whereas with the latter, the value of a speech sound is established with the whole sound system in mind [14].

In agreement with the above, Blankenburg et al. [18] assert that structuralist analysis advocates a focus on a system in its totality and on the interrelations between its elements rather than on individual elements in isolation. The theory of structuralism can be summarised as: individual elements (of life, beliefs or consciousness) have no value on their own but are tied to a structure and the meanings of each element can only be identified or described relative to their relationship with other elements in that structure. According to the theory of structuralism, nothing makes

sense when observed on its own and everything can only make sense when observed in relation to others. Established and popular in the mid to late 19th century as one of the earliest approach to psychology and its introduction to the laboratory setting, structuralism views perception as only a combination of different elements (sensations). This view sought a permanent structure in everything and attempted to master all ideas, perceptions and individual acts into structures and structural relationships [19].

In practice, structuralism has been applied in different fields and phenomena including language, literature, culture, mathematics and architecture among others. These fields have witnessed varying results in the application of the theory and principles of structuralism. In culture, structuralism has been claimed to 'reject the general laws of culture and society' leading to movements such as Marxism and positivism [20]. With structuralism, culture can be perceived as a system formed by the relationship between several elements such as arts, social behaviours and even human intellectual abilities and activities. These elements have no significance on their own without the relationship that exists between them. Evidence of structuralism in culture can be seen in patterns or art, religion, traditions, kinships, rites and beliefs [3]. Nature and culture, especially the opposition between them, play crucial roles in the conceptual system idealised by the theory of structuralism. According to structuralism notions, for culture to exist and thrive, a structure that organises the various individual elements of nature and binds them together in a dependent relationship needs to be idealised. In other words, structuralism in culture creates and simultaneously aims to close the gap between nature (individual existent elements) and culture (a structure that unites natural elements and relative to which their individual values can be derived) [21].

The theory of structuralism raises a few fundamental questions that challenge, apart from language and culture, many of human experiences and values, including identity. Structuralism often neglects observable and measurable elements and relies on abstractions and unobserved or unobservable structures. A structuralist approach to identity and human behaviour explains that all human experiences (conscious or not) can be broken down into simple influencing elements even if these elements are abstract and immeasurable. This raises a question of reliability, especially when viewed in the perspective of structuralism as laboratory psychology. If the elements or variables in a system cannot be observed or measured, it leaves a huge room open for observer bias – as it is in the concept of identity. The identity of individual elements can be intrinsic or contextual. Contextual elements are rooted in relationships and systems compatible with the principle of structuralism [4]. The concept of identity can be described as a combination of different individual elements (interpersonal, environmental, genetic etc.) that might not always fit into a set structure. Nevertheless, the theory of structuralism still has a place in the concept of identity and self-concept as identity more often than not focuses (and relies) on connections to and similarities between individual elements in a group. Sometimes identity focuses on differences and distinctions between different elements or groups, but the value of each element, as idealised by the theory of structuralism, still relies on relationships [22].

Structuralism theory has evolved over the years into different varieties as well as post-structuralism. Each variety has offered different perspectives, often limited by the theory's own fundamental limitations. The theory has faced many criticisms, the most critical of which is 'its

failure to grasp the proper application of its eponymous concept and structure to its own research data, and thus to realise its potential as an anthropological project' [23]. One criticism highlighted that both the actions and behaviours that form identity and culture are often made up of both deliberate and involuntary acts that sometimes cannot fit into a structure [24]. Factors such as race, socioeconomic background, genetic and environmental influences impact culture identity in unstructured patterns. The theory of structuralism, in arguing that each individual element (such as conscious, creative and non-creative actions and behaviours) can only derive their value from their relationship in and with a structure, fails to accommodate the agency (free will) that man possesses and 'considers mankind in bondage cultural and social forces consider such as norms and values, it is deterministic, but a cultural determinism' [25].

In conclusion, the theory of structuralism, as the successor of existentialism, has unified different fields such as philosophy, psychology, linguistics, economics, mathematics and anthropology and has pushed research in these fields to look beyond the surface of human behaviour and social life/order and dig deeper to find the underlying structures and elements that support and organise these norms [26]. The theory's determinist shortcomings have also been instructive and have given rise to new theories and systems such as post-structuralism, perspectivism and animism. Perhaps, most significantly, the focus of the theory of structuralism on an inner, non-observable structure to human behaviour and the notion that all conscious and creative experiences can be traced down to basic individual elements has led to instructive modern research in fields such as sensory neuroscience.

## 5. Characteristics of proverbs

To understand the proverb, it is important to paint a picture of the social culture of the Batswana. They were a performative society, with no records of writing to preserve their cultural wisdom. They used simple forms like folktales, riddles, idioms and proverbs [27] to train memory, as well as to adjudicate over community matters. Proverbs were used to advise, admonish and give direction, to ensure compliance. Social control, thus, was deliberately and inadvertently the bedrock of proverbs among the Batswana. The following definitions, based on the above discussion on structuralism, are aimed at shedding light on the purpose of the Setswana proverbs and *manong a ja ka ditshika*, in particular.

To highlight the social control characteristic of a proverb, it is described as a word spoken by a ruler, in addition to denoting a pithy saying, especially one condensing the wisdom of experience [28].

It is important to note that a ruler, like any accountable head of family, has the duty to see to the safety and well-being of his or her subjects. They should not only be fended for and protected, but also prepared for the future. The future of the family depends on the governance thereof. Proverbs were important tools in social control, to the extent that the Biblical book of Proverbs is referred to as a guidebook for successful living [29].

Wisdom is another very important quality of proverbs. It feeds on experience, which in turn relies on human interaction. Members of a society interact with one another, with their environment

and with themselves daily. Such interaction produces different experiences, positive and negative. As such, because man is a homo sapiens and has to relate to the world in a friendly and cost-effective manner, they learn much from experience. The ability to adapt to new situations and to be able to predict the future by invoking past experiences is a sign of wisdom. Since wisdom works for the elderly, then the young ones should develop and preserve it. The proverb thus becomes an indispensable vehicle for such a transmission [29].

Proverbs can also be described as truthful, over and above being laden with wisdom. Although truth is relative, members of a community, based on their experiences, have come to accept certain realities as their joint and social truths. For experience to have purpose, it should be covered in truth, for truth transcends untruths. It is the responsibility of the elderly, and therefore, experienced members of the society, to ensure that what they impart to their young ones is morally honest. This is important because the children are very dependent on their elders and their innocence, gullibility and vulnerability must not be taken advantage of. The truth element is thus crucial in the expression of proverbs. Truth is also wholesome. The reticence of a proverb makes it brief and to the point. The robust symbolism contained in any one proverb gives it scope [29].

For society to be dynamic, it must grow. For it to grow, fresh members need to join the fray through marriage. These new members not only help grow the social group through biological procreation, but also through intellectual procreation. They bring brand new ideas into the fold of the social group that they have joined, and in the process, help to make the culture sustain itself and grow. Without these new ideas, it would be the demise of the present culture and therefore its growth will cease. If all the men in a community could prefer to not seek partners from other places, then that community would most probably become stagnant. There would not be any cultural exchange and the economy would not flourish. There would be no multicultural understanding of other communities and children would not be encouraged to venture into new complexities. Proverbs thus should indeed be socially driven because they are the important sinews that hold society together.

## 6. The meaning of the proverb *manong a ja ka ditshika*

The European equivalent of the proverb, *manong a ja ka ditshika* (literal meaning: vultures eat with their blood relations) is birds of a feather flock together [17]. This proverb, as with many others which will be referred to in this chapter, emanates from the very basic proverb: *motho ke motho ka batho* (loosely translated as I am because you are). In pursuit of a good life for all citizens, the Batswana have devised a mechanism of social control, which starts with decorum. For a young one to appreciate that I am because you are, they have to start by showing respect as soon as they become conscious of their existence. The following ways of address are intended to emphasise the point being made here. In Setswana, one's paternal uncle, *rangwane* (lit. Young father) has a distinctive role to *malome* (maternal uncle) (lit. One who bites or eats). Each one of them knows and executes their duties and obligations differently albeit to the same child. They do so together with the child's biological parents who also understand fully the



importance of such reciprocal roles and duties. Both of them are significant others in the lives of their siblings' children.

*Rangwane*, who carries the child's surname is, by definition, a young father to the child. In the event that his brother passes on or becomes incapacitated, he is bound to take over paternal responsibilities of the deceased or incapacitated. The aim is to ensure continuity of the genealogy, which is enshrined in the ethos of the Batswana. As explained above, because of a shared meaning, the brothers understand their roles and can execute their responsibilities diligently. In contrast, *malome*, who hails from the mother's side, is there to, among others, speak on behalf of his nephew or niece during *magadi (lobola)*. This he does conscious of a huge responsibility of buying his niece her wedding costume. He acts like a father from another side. In cases of children born out of wedlock, he becomes a father literally and does everything that fathers do for their children.

Due to migrant labour practices of the past, among other factors, the Batswana had extended families. Biological parents had to leave their children under the guardianship of their grandparents. These children had to co-exist with their cousins from their uncles (*bo-rangwane* and *bo-malome*) and aunts (*bo-rakgadi* – paternal aunts, and *bo-mmangwane* – maternal aunts). The principle of sharing became paramount, hence the proverb: *sejo sennyega se fete molomo* (literal translation: the small piece (of food) is not so small that it will pass by the mouth; European equivalent: half a loaf is better than no bread) [17]. All of them were treated equally, whether some of their parents brought more food to the table or not. No one felt left out because of the ubuntu principle: **I am because you are**. Everything fed into the thought of togetherness. In the next section, different proverbs are discussed to show how ultimately the principle of unity is realised.

Families were constructed on a solid base where parents arranged marriages for their children. The purpose was to ensure continuity and harmony. The groom's parents would choose their son's bride from a family they knew shared the same values as theirs. To justify their choice, they would say: *mosadi ga a tswe borwa e se phefo* (literal translation: a wife never comes from the south, only winds do; European equivalent: he that goes a great way for a wife is either cheated or means to cheat) [17]. The idea of birds of a feather flocking together begins here. The family was a sacredly guarded institution, and bad starts were not encouraged. The Batswana knew that a strong family requires a diligent wife, hence: *mosadi mooka o nya le motshegare* (literal: a woman is as useful as a mimosa tree, which yields gum all day long; European equivalent: one hair of a woman draws more than a team of oxen) [17]. Women were expected to not only keep the fires of the homesteads burning, but also to teach the children proper values for sustenance. Another one complimenting this proverb is *mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo* (literal: a woman is like a baboon, you can only eat her hands (labour); European equivalent: *all women are good, viz. for something or nothing*) [17]. Of interest is that a Motswana man would never refer to his wife as *mosadi wa me* (my wife) but as *mosadi wa etsho* (one married into my homestead).

Once the children are born into the family, responsibilities are increased, all in the name of continuity. Not only should they be fended for, but they should also be protected at all cost. The proverb: *botlhale jwa phala bo tswa phalaneng* explains the sense of purpose that a parent

develops when they have children. A father would say *korwe ga ke je, ke bapalla tsetse* or *kgakakgolo ga ke na mebala, mebala e dikgakaneng*, both intended to express his commitment to his children. He knows very well that if he does not do that, the survival and sustenance of his household will be threatened.

With this type of worldview imprinted in the DNA of the young ones, they become familiar with these and other proverbs:

- *Mafura a ngwana ke go rongwa* (the joy of childhood is performing chores) or *maoto a nong ke phofa* (literal: The feet of the vulture are its wings) [17].
- En route to adulthood, the young one will get to know that *phokoje go tshela yo o dithetsenyana* (literal: The muddy jackal alone doth eat; European equivalent: he only gets the palm who has had the dust).
- *Sedikwa ke ntšwa-pedi ga se thata* (literal: that which is seized by two dogs is never too strong; European equivalent: many hands make light work).
- *Ga ke thata ke le nosi, ke thata ka ba bangwe* (literal: 'By myself I am not strong', but I am strong in a crowd; European equivalent: Show me the man who would go to heaven alone, and I will show you one who will never be admitted).
- *Bongoe fela ke bobedi, bojosi losho* (literal: Two persons are equal to one, one is a mere nothing, European equivalent: *Two heads are better than one or why do folks marry?*).
- *Lepotlapotla le ja podi, modikologa o ja pholo ya tona* (literal: hasty actions will kill a goat, slow proceedings will win a big ox; European equivalent: slow-footed counsel is most sure to gain, rashness still brings repentance in her train).

Once again, the positional structure of the family is heightened. The parents or elders who have endeavoured to fend for and protect the children from infancy, should enjoy the fruits of their toil. As the children execute their duties, they learn diligence and the value attached to hard work. They are not only encouraged to work hard, but are taught the value of working together. The motto of the former Bantustan state, Bophuthatswana, which was *Tshwaraganang lo dire pula e ne* (working together will lead to prosperity), attests to this.

The proverb *manong a ja ka ditshika* continues to inform young adult life. At initiation school, the boys become a *mophato* (regiment). They have a sense of belonging and they know that during war, they will club together to fight for their land. They become birds of a feather and their survival depends on their being united. Other proverbs with a similar meaning include, among others, *bophokojwe ba ba nkgwe ba itsanye ka mebala* (literal: grey jackals know each other by their speckles; European equivalent: all flesh consorteth according to its kind and a man will cleave to his like) [17]; *Dinkwe go latswana tse di mebala* (literal: spotted leopards lick each other; European equivalent: birds of a feather flock together) [17]; *bana ba tadi ba itsiwe ka mereto* (literal: kittens of the wild cat are known by their mewling; European equivalent: *the Devil's children have the Devil's luck*) [17]. In all three proverbs, the fulcrum is unity. Like the vultures in the proverb *manong a ja ka ditshika*, members of a regiment must understand that society has weak and infirmed members. It is their role to protect them, look after them and value them.

The old carry wisdom from experience while the youth are endowed with lots of energy, sometimes misdirected. As youth, they are taught to look after the old who have now become dependent on their young ones.

This principle of unity is carried over into family life. Even when they have their own families, they remember that *sejo sennye ga se fete molomo* (literal: the small piece (of food) is not so small that it will pass by the mouth; European equivalent: *half a loaf is better than no bread*) [17]. In other words, no brother or sister should go to bed knowing that one of their own has slept hungry. Should that happen, the proverb *manong a ja ka ditshika* would have been flouted. They looked after their own because *goora motho go thebe phatshwa* (literal: a man's home has a white and black (fine) shield, European equivalent: *there is no sanctuary of virtue like home*) [17]. They knew that charity begins at home.

The essence of principles contained in the proverb *manong a ja ka ditshika* is to encourage collegiality among the Batswana by providing them with empowering knowledge. The other supplementary proverbs that were discussed play a complementary role to cement the concept of oneness among the people. The values embodied in the proverbs all help members to deal with attitudes and attitude change, all in the name of togetherness.

## 7. The role of proverbs in the process of peace and Unity

The Setswana word for peace is **kagiso**, a noun deverbative derived from the verb stem **-aga** (build) and the nominal prefix **n-** and the phonological process of nasalisation culminates into **kagiso**. The word has a special meaning in the unity among the Batswana since it promotes altruistic behaviour. When the applied extension is added to the verb stem, it becomes **-aga + -ana = agana** (*build one another*). The concept of a construction site is drawn here, where different skills are needed to complete a building. One person cannot mix concrete, carry bricks, lay them with mortar, build a roof and install the ceiling as well as perform plumbing and electrical services by himself or herself. The proverb **motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe** (*Through others I am somebody*) attests to the fact that alone one is nothing. Another supporting proverb is **motho ga a iphetse** (*man is not sufficient unto himself*).

The role that culture plays in the determination of human relations, in particular, peace-making, has fascinated many researchers [30, 31–33]. **Kagiso** (*peace*) is preceded by war. Napoleon Bonaparte is known to have coined the expression: He who wants peace must prepare for war [34]. With the fall of man, there was animosity between man and God, to the point of his son being executed. The Holy Spirit was unleashed to bring peace (**kagiso**), after the unfortunate war. In Setswana, thus, when war is over, community members come together to re-build what was ruined. This is in a way an admission that war is not wanted. It is an acknowledgement of humanity among the Batswana and other African nations that we are first and foremost humane, and thus, war can be averted and peace be attained without bloodshed. At the 5th Hans Brenninkmeijer Memorial Lecture, Jonathan Jansen retorts: Until we are stripped of the arrogance of race and recognise the likeness of our brothers and sisters, we can never be truly free [35]. Again, humaneness as contained in the proverbs of the

Batswana and other African nations is a golden thread that binds the national fibre of society. In fact, according to the notion of ubuntu, each member of the community is linked to each the disputants, be they victims or perpetrators. If everybody is willing to acknowledge this (that is, to accept the principles of ubuntu), then people will either feel some sense of having been wronged or a sense of responsibility for the wrong that has been committed [36]. Conflict, where it would erupt, was suppressed through the use of proverbs and the idiom of a nation. A three part study on Yoruba Marital Conflicts to determine the power of culture and proverbs in facilitating conflict resolution [37–39].

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the author agrees with Makward [40] when he says ‘culture is no dream; it is a reality. Its roots go deep down into our being. A culture, while it is sometimes a matter of sublimation, gathers together all the creative activities of a people, its methods of producing and acquiring material wealth, the social relationships within it, the ways in which it is organized, its victories and defeats, its joys and sorrows, its sufferings, beliefs and artistic and literary creations, whether written down or handed on by word of mouth from generation to generation as in those civilizations where the oral tradition persists, the civilizations of most of the peoples of this continent’.

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