

Odeshi And the Ontology of Self-Preservation in Igbo Epistemology

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ABSTRACT

Self-preservation has remained a fundamental concern of human existence across cultures and philosophical traditions, yet its ontological interpretation varies significantly across worldviews. Within Igbo epistemology, this concern is metaphysically articulated through *Odeshi*, an indigenous protective system grounded in a force-based understanding of reality. The problem addressed by this research is the persistent dismissal of *Odeshi* as superstition or fetishism due to the imposition of Western scientific and ontological categories that inadequately capture its metaphysical logic. Adopting a philosophical and analytical method rooted in African and Igbo metaphysics, the study examines *Odeshi* within the Igbo conception of being-as-force, the hierarchy of beings, *nommo*, and communal epistemology. Through critical analysis of Igbo cosmology and indigenous experiential validation, the study finds that *Odeshi* functions as a coherent ontology of self-preservation rather than an irrational belief system. It demonstrates that *Odeshi* operates as ontological resistance to destructive forces by reordering force relations rather than suspending natural laws. The findings further reveal that moral discipline, ritual speech, and communal authorization are central to its efficacy, underscoring the inseparability of ontology

Keywords: *Odeshi*, Self-Preservation, Igbo Ontology, Being-as-Force, Hierarchy of Beings.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of self-preservation has occupied a central position in philosophical reflection from antiquity to the present. While modern discourse frequently frames self-preservation in scientific, biomedical, or technological terms, such perspectives represent only one among many possible ontological interpretations of how life is sustained against existential threats. Indigenous African societies, long before the advent of modern science, developed metaphysical systems that addressed the fragility of human existence within a cosmos perceived as both visible and invisible.

Among the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria, *Odeshi* emerges as one such metaphysical response. Literally translated as “it does not leak,” *Odeshi* refers to a protective force believed to render the human body impervious to physical weapons such as bullets, machetes, and sharp objects, as well as to metaphysical aggression. Despite its deep entrenchment in Igbo lived experience, *Odeshi* has often been dismissed by critics as superstition, fetishism, or irrational belief (Igwe, 2024). Such dismissals, however, frequently arise from the imposition of Western epistemic and ontological categories upon African realities.

This research argues that *Odeshi* can only be properly

understood within the ontological framework of Igbo epistemology, where reality is conceived not as static substance but as dynamic force. When examined through this lens, it emerges as a coherent indigenous ontology of self-preservation rather than a pre-scientific anomaly. The aim of this research is therefore to situate *Odeshi* within Igbo metaphysics of being, force, and hierarchy, and to demonstrate its philosophical legitimacy as a mode of ontological resistance to existential threats.

The Preparation of *Odeshi* in Igbo Indigenous Practice

The preparation of *Odeshi* in Igbo indigenous tradition is embedded within a complex matrix of cosmology, ritual discipline, moral regulation, and experiential knowledge. It is not conceived as a casual or technical procedure but as a sacred process of alignment involving human intention, natural substances, spiritual forces, and ethical conduct. Consequently, preparation is understood less as mechanical manufacture and more as ritual activation within a religious and metaphysical framework.

At the foundational level, preparation begins with the selection of specific natural materials believed, within Igbo epistemology, to possess inherent protective potency (*ike*). These include a range of plants, animal substances,

and natural elements commonly associated with *Odeshi*. These include particular leaves and barks such as *ogwu ahijia* (medicinal leaves), *akukū osisi* (tree bark), and roots (*mgborogwu osisi*) traditionally associated with strength, resilience, and resistance to harm- *Ijite* and *Abodi* (anti bullet leaves), *Oji*, *Ube*, *Nbone*, *Enyi kwo nwa*, *Bahama*, *Alligator pepper*, *Akpo ayasa*, *Ebube agu*, *Aku ebisi*, *Unripe pawpaw fruit*, et cetera. Such materials are not chosen arbitrarily but on the basis of inherited communal knowledge and long-standing experiential validation.

Animal substances also feature in the preparation of *Odeshi*. These include animal skins, bones, horns, claws, or other hardened parts derived from animals symbolically associated with toughness, endurance, or aggression- *Mkpu ezi*, *Abuani*, *Ichakpa* (baby bush: the hair is mobile and the bones moves in the presence of fire), *Nnachi* (wartug), *Ene* (antelope), *Eruru* (electric fish), *Okoro* (*Nnukwu Okpo/Azu egbiri*), *Akabo*, *Mbe*, et cetera. Within Igbo symbolic reasoning, animals are understood to embody metaphysical qualities that can be ritually redirected toward human protection. Their inclusion reflects a belief in the transfer of force through sacred mediation rather than through biological imitation.

In addition, the importance of mineral and metallic elements, particularly iron (*igwè*). Iron fragments, metal filings, rust from iron tools, and soil from iron-working sites are symbolically associated with hardness, permanence, and invulnerability- *Thunderstone*, *Powder* (gotten from different materials burn into ashes), *Bullet seed*, et cetera. The widespread metaphor of “iron skin” (*akpukpo igwè*) derives from this cosmological association, where physical hardness functions as a symbol of metaphysical fortification.

The preparation of *Odeshi* may also involve environmental and earth-based materials, including soil from ritually significant locations such as ancestral land, places of communal memory, or sites associated with power. Stones, hardened earth substances, ashes, or charcoal from meaningful ritual contexts are similarly important. These materials situate *Odeshi* within a place-based spirituality, emphasizing the relationship between protection, land, ancestry, and communal identity.

Furthermore, the liquid and binding substances that serve symbolic and mediatory functions. These include water drawn from ritually significant sources, oils, and herbal infusions often described as *mmanya ogwu*. Such substances are not understood as active agents on their own but as carriers that unify materials and facilitate ritual mediation.

Equally important to material selection is the moral and spiritual disposition of the preparer. *Odeshi* is traditionally prepared only by individuals recognized for ritual competence, moral discipline, and spiritual authority. Observance of taboos, truthfulness, sexual restraint, and ethical uprightness are believed to condition the efficacy of preparation. Any moral breach is thought to weaken or

neutralize the protective force.

The preparation process also involves ritual timing, sacred speech, and symbolic bodily acts. Words, invocations, and ritual utterances are believed to activate the latent forces within the materials, while symbolic bodily actions- such as anointing or ritual contact- translate metaphysical preparation into embodied protection. Preparation is therefore inseparable from language, gesture, and ethical responsibility.

Summarily, the preparation of *Odeshi* draws upon a wide range of Igbo materials, including medicinal leaves, roots, and barks; animal-derived substances symbolizing strength and endurance; iron-related elements representing resistance and invulnerability; soil and stones from ritually significant locations; and liquid binding media such as water, oils, and herbal infusions. These materials are not treated as autonomous agents but as symbolic carriers of force whose efficacy depends on ritual mediation, moral discipline, and religious authorization within the Igbo cosmological worldview.

Self-Preservation as an Ontological Imperative in Igbo Thought

In Igbo worldview, life (*ndu*) is not merely a biological phenomenon but the manifestation of vital force within the cosmic order. Life occupies the highest metaphysical value, and its preservation is understood as an ontological imperative rather than a mere instinctual response. To preserve life is to sustain one's participation in the network of beings and forces that constitute reality. This formulation synthesizes themes found in Placide Tempels' ontology of being-as-force and John S. Mbiti's account of life as relational and sacred.

Unlike Western philosophical traditions that often conceptualize self-preservation in individualistic or mechanistic terms, Igbo thought situates the self within a relational ontology. The human person exists in constant interaction with ancestors, deities, spirits, natural objects, and communal structures. Consequently, threats to life are not perceived as purely physical occurrences but as disturbances within an interconnected metaphysical order.

Within this ontological framework, weapons such as guns and machetes are not merely material instruments; they are carriers of destructive force. Self-preservation therefore demands more than physical defence- it requires metaphysical fortification. *Odeshi* arises precisely from this ontological awareness. It represents an indigenous strategy through which the individual aligns with protective forces embedded in nature and sanctioned by the divine hierarchy. In this sense, *Odeshi* is not accidental to Igbo life but flows directly from the Igbo understanding

of existence itself.

Being-as-Force in African and Igbo Metaphysics

African metaphysics departs fundamentally from Western substance ontology. Whereas Western metaphysics, drawing from Greek philosophical traditions, often defines being as static existence, African metaphysics conceives being as dynamic force. Tempels (1959) famously articulated this worldview by arguing that, in African thought, *being is force and force is being*. Force is not an accidental attribute of being but its very essence.

Igbo metaphysics exemplifies this dynamic conception of reality. Existence is understood as a hierarchy of forces emanating from God, the supreme and ultimate force. Beneath God are the spirits of the ancestors, other spiritual entities, human beings, animals, plants, and inanimate objects, each possessing varying degrees of vital force. No being exists in isolation; all beings interact, influence, and modify one another within this hierarchical structure.

This metaphysical orientation radically alters how protection and vulnerability are understood. Objects such as leaves, roots, stones, and animals are not inert matter but ontologically charged entities endowed with force. These forces can be strengthened, weakened, or redirected depending on their interaction with other forces. *Odeshi* operates within this metaphysical logic as the intentional harnessing and intensification of protective forces inherent in created beings. Its efficacy is therefore grounded not in magic but in the ontological structure of reality as understood in Igbo thought.

Odeshi as Ontological Resistance to Destructive Forces

Ontology concerns not only what exists but how existence is sustained, threatened, and defended. In Igbo metaphysics, destructive forces (whether physical violence, spiritual attack, or moral transgression) pose direct threats to being itself. Ontological resistance thus becomes a necessary condition for survival.

Odeshi functions as a form of ontological resistance. Rather than denying the material potency of weapons such as bullets, it reorders the hierarchy of forces in such a way that destructive forces are rendered ontologically weaker. A bullet may retain its physical properties, but its force becomes ineffective when confronted by a fortified vital force (Ibrahim, 2023).

These understanding challenges mechanistic accounts of causality that reduce all interactions to physical processes. In Igbo ontology, causation operates simultaneously at physical and metaphysical levels. The neutralization of destructive force through *Odeshi* exemplifies this dual causality. It is not a suspension of natural law but an expression of a broader

metaphysical order in which force interacts with force.

Odeshi and Ontological Security in Pre-Colonial Igbo Society

Odeshi was not merely an individual practice but part of a broader indigenous security framework in pre-colonial Igbo society. Traditional Igbo communities developed complex systems of protection aimed at safeguarding life, property, and communal stability. These systems included mystical barricades, oath-taking, divination, and protective charms, all of which functioned within a shared ontological worldview (Anedo & Anedo, 2019).

Within this context, *Odeshi* served as an ontological infrastructure for communal security. It was deployed in times of war, territorial defence, and communal crisis. The protection it offered was understood not as personal invincibility but as participation in a collective metaphysical defence mechanism. This communal dimension underscores the fact that *Odeshi* was never conceived as irrational individual magic but as a socially embedded ontology of protection.

Nommo and Ontological Causality in Igbo Metaphysics

A proper ontological appraisal of *Odeshi* is incomplete without a sustained engagement with the principle of *nommo*, understood in African philosophy as the generative and performative power of the spoken word. In Igbo metaphysics, speech is not a neutral medium of communication but a force-laden act capable of initiating, directing, and transforming reality. Words do not merely describe events; they participate in causation.

African philosophical scholarship has long emphasized that the universe is responsive to speech because speech itself is ontologically charged. As articulated in African orature, *nommo* refers to the capacity of uttered words (especially within ritual contexts) to activate latent forces embedded in beings (Asante, 2011). In the Igbo worldview, silence and speech are not equivalent; silence preserves force, while speech releases and directs it.

Within the ritual economy of *Odeshi*, *nommo* functions as the ontological trigger that transforms ordinary substances into active protective forces. Leaves, roots, animals, and objects possess dormant vital force, but without verbal activation they remain metaphysically inert. It is through incantation, invocation, prayer, and ritual speech that these forces are awakened and oriented toward protection (Knowles-Borishade, 1991). *Odeshi*, therefore, is not reducible to material components but is fundamentally dependent on linguistic causality.

These understanding challenges Western metaphysical assumptions that treat language as symbolic rather than

causal. In Igbo metaphysics, words *do things*. They summon, command, redirect, and restrain forces. The efficacy of *Odeshi* thus depends not only on correct materials but also on correct speech- speech that is ritually appropriate, morally grounded, and cosmologically aligned. Any failure in linguistic precision weakens ontological efficacy.

Moral Disposition and the Ethics of Ontological Power

The ontological potency of *nommo* introduces an ethical dimension into the practice of *Odeshi*. In Igbo thought, power is never morally neutral. Ontological force, when divorced from ethical discipline, becomes unstable and self-destructive. Consequently, *Odeshi* is governed by moral constraints that regulate its use and effectiveness.

Igbo metaphysics maintains that misuse of protective force- especially for aggression, injustice, or communal harm- results in the weakening or reversal of that force. This explains why *Odeshi* is believed to fail when deployed for morally corrupt ends. Such failure is not accidental but ontologically necessary, since moral disorder disrupts metaphysical harmony.

This ethical regulation distinguishes *Odeshi* from arbitrary magical practices. It situates the phenomenon within a moral ontology in which self-preservation is legitimate only insofar as it aligns with communal well-being and cosmic balance. The bearer of *Odeshi* is therefore not merely protected but morally accountable. The system enforces restraint, humility, and responsibility, thereby integrating ethics into ontology.

Hierarchy of Beings and the Logic of Protective Alignment

The Igbo conception of hierarchy of beings provides the structural logic underlying *Odeshi*'s protective efficacy. Reality is not egalitarian; beings differ in degrees of force, authority, and influence. Protection is achieved not by opposing this hierarchy but by aligning oneself with higher or more potent forces.

Within this hierarchy, God occupies the apex as the ultimate source of all force. Beneath God are ancestral spirits, deities, humans, animals, plants, and inanimate entities. Each level possesses force appropriate to its ontological status. Humans occupy a mediatory position: though not the strongest beings, they possess consciousness and agency that enable them to manipulate force through ritual knowledge.

Odeshi exploits this mediatory capacity. Through ritual alignment, humans draw upon forces embedded in lower beings (plants, animals, objects) while invoking higher authorization from spiritual entities and the divine. The resulting configuration produces a fortified ontological state in which destructive forces encounter resistance not from matter alone but from a restructured hierarchy of force.

This logic also explains the existence of different grades of

Odeshi- temporal and permanent, limited and unlimited. Variations in potency correspond to variations in the depth of ontological alignment achieved. Rather than indicating inconsistency, such variation reflects the dynamic nature of force within Igbo metaphysics.

Odeshi and the Concept of Ontological Security

Beyond individual survival, *Odeshi* contributes to what may be described as *ontological security*- the assurance that one's being is stable, protected, and meaningfully situated within the cosmic order. Ontological security differs from physical security in that it addresses existential anxiety, fear, and vulnerability at the level of being itself.

In pre-colonial Igbo society, ontological security was maintained through communal rituals, moral codes, and metaphysical protections. *Odeshi* functioned as one such mechanism, reinforcing confidence, courage, and psychological stability. The belief that one's being is fortified against harm transforms one's engagement with the world, reducing fear and enhancing agency.

This transformation is not merely subjective. In Igbo ontology, belief itself participates in causation because belief aligns consciousness with force. The confidence associated with *Odeshi* reflects an ontological recalibration rather than psychological illusion. The individual understands himself as embedded within a protective network of forces, and this understanding reshapes behaviour, posture, and existential orientation.

Experiential Validation and Communal Epistemology

One of the most persistent criticisms of *Odeshi* concerns the absence of laboratory verification. Such criticism presupposes that empirical experimentation is the sole criterion of knowledge. Igbo epistemology, however, recognizes multiple sources of validation, including lived experience, communal testimony, and historical continuity.

Odeshi is epistemically grounded in repeated experiential affirmation. Testimonies of protection- whether from warfare, vigilantism, or communal defence- serve as epistemic evidence within Igbo knowledge systems (Okeke & Anjorin, 2021). These testimonies are not isolated anecdotes but part of a collective memory transmitted across generations.

Communal validation operates as a form of epistemic regulation. Claims that fail to produce consistent experiential outcomes are abandoned or revised. In this sense, *Odeshi* is subject to internal standards of verification, albeit different from Western scientific protocols. To dismiss such standards as irrational is to

impose epistemic monoculture upon plural knowledge systems.

Phenomenon, Noumenon, and the Ontological Status of *Odeshi*

A central philosophical challenge in interpreting *Odeshi* concerns its ontological status: is it a phenomenon accessible to sense perception, or a noumenon that transcends empirical verification? This question mirrors a long-standing debate in Western philosophy, particularly in Immanuel Kant's distinction between *phenomenon*- that which appears to the senses- and *noumenon*- the thing-in-itself, which exists independently of sensory experience.

Odeshi resists strict classification within either category. Its metaphysical core belongs to the noumenal realm insofar as its force cannot be directly observed, quantified, or isolated through sensory instruments. Yet its effects- resistance to injury, confidence in battle, and physical survival- manifest phenomenally within lived experience. It thus occupies a liminal ontological space in which noumenal force produces phenomenal consequences.

Igbo epistemology accommodates this duality without contradiction. Knowledge is not restricted to sensory immediacy but includes insight gained through ritual, moral attunement, and experiential continuity. The failure to empirically isolate *Odeshi* does not invalidate its ontological reality; rather, it reveals the limits of empiricism when confronted with force-based metaphysics. In this respect, it challenges the epistemological assumption that only what is measurable is real.

***Odeshi* as Experiential Ontology Rather Than Empirical Science**

Modern critiques of *Odeshi* often demand experimental repeatability and laboratory validation as conditions for legitimacy. Such demands presuppose that all valid knowledge must conform to the methodological standards of modern science. However, Igbo metaphysics operates within a different ontological and epistemological horizon.

Odeshi is best understood as an *experiential ontology*- a system of being whose validity is affirmed through lived engagement rather than experimental abstraction. Its knowledge is embodied, contextual, and situational. The bearer of *Odeshi* does not encounter it as an external hypothesis to be tested but as an ontological transformation to be lived.

This mode of knowing parallels other domains of human experience that resist strict empirical reduction, such as moral conviction, religious faith, and aesthetic judgment. While these domains lack laboratory verification, they nonetheless exert real causal influence on human behaviour and social organization. *Odeshi* belongs to this broader category of

existential knowledge that operates through participation rather than observation.

Colonial Disruption and the Ontological Misreading of *Odeshi*

The contemporary marginalization of *Odeshi* cannot be fully understood without reference to the colonial encounter. Colonialism introduced not only political domination but also epistemic disruption, redefining African metaphysical systems through Western categories that rendered them inferior, irrational, or obsolete.

Christian missionary activity and colonial education systematically delegitimized indigenous protective systems, including *Odeshi*, by labelling them fetishistic or demonic. This process did not disprove the ontological foundations of *Odeshi*; rather, it replaced Igbo metaphysical categories with Western theological and scientific frameworks incapable of interpreting force-based ontology.

The result was an ontological misreading. *Odeshi* was judged not on its own terms but against alien criteria. What Western metaphysics interpreted as superstition was, in fact, an indigenous articulation of being, force, and protection. This misreading persists in contemporary discourse, where calls for "scientific proof" ignore the metaphysical premises underlying Igbo knowledge systems.

Epistemic Injustice and the Marginalization of Indigenous Ontologies

The dismissal of *Odeshi* exemplifies what may be described as *epistemic injustice*: the systematic devaluation of certain forms of knowledge due to cultural or conceptual bias. Indigenous African epistemologies are often denied legitimacy because they do not conform to Western standards of rationality and evidence.

Such injustice has profound consequences. It silences indigenous voices, erodes cultural confidence, and perpetuates the illusion that Western epistemology represents a universal norm. In the case of *Odeshi*, epistemic injustice manifests in the refusal to recognize experiential validation, communal testimony, and metaphysical coherence as legitimate sources of knowledge.

Recognizing *Odeshi* as an ontology rather than superstition is therefore not merely an academic exercise but an act of epistemic restoration. It affirms the plurality of ways in which human beings understand and negotiate reality.

Ontological Failure, Limitation, and the Logic of Imperfection

Another frequent objection raised against *Odeshi* concerns instances of failure- cases in which individuals believed to possess *Odeshi* nonetheless suffered injury or death. Critics interpret such failures as evidence of falsehood. However, this objection rests on an unrealistic expectation of absolute efficacy.

In Igbo metaphysics, no created force is infinite or infallible. Only God possesses absolute force. All other beings operate within ontological limits and are subject to interaction with stronger or opposing forces. Failure, therefore, does not negate ontological reality; it merely reveals the hierarchical and dynamic nature of force.

This logic parallels modern technological systems. Bulletproof vests, military defences, and even advanced missile shields are known to fail under certain conditions. Yet their occasional failure does not invalidate the scientific principles upon which they are based. By the same reasoning, the limitations of *Odeshi* do not undermine its ontological legitimacy.

Comparative Ontology: *Odeshi* and Western Security Technologies

A productive way to further clarify the ontological status of *Odeshi* is through comparison with Western security technologies such as bulletproof vests, armoured vehicles, and missile defence systems. Such comparison is not intended to subordinate indigenous ontology to Western science but to illuminate the different metaphysical assumptions underlying both systems.

Western security technologies operate primarily within a materialist ontology. Protection is achieved through physical resistance- steel plates, synthetic fibers, and engineered barriers designed to absorb or deflect kinetic force. The efficacy of such systems depends on material composition, mechanical precision, and technological advancement. When these systems fail, failure is attributed to technical limitation rather than conceptual invalidity.

Odeshi, by contrast, operates within a force-based ontology. Protection is not achieved by blocking force with matter but by *reordering force relations*. The bearer of *Odeshi* is not shielded externally but fortified ontologically. This difference explains why *Odeshi* cannot be evaluated solely through material criteria. Its logic is metaphysical rather than mechanical.

Importantly, both systems acknowledge imperfection. Western bulletproof technology has yield points, just as *Odeshi* is believed to have metaphysical limits. The presence of failure in both cases demonstrates a shared ontological humility: all created systems are finite. The demand that *Odeshi* be infallible, while tolerating the fallibility of Western technologies, reveals an epistemic double standard rather than a philosophical objection.

***Odeshi*, Self-Consciousness, and the Ontological Formation of Personhood**

Beyond physical protection, *Odeshi* plays a transformative role in the constitution of selfhood and personhood. In Igbo philosophy, the self is not a static entity but a dynamic being continually shaped by its interaction with forces. Self-consciousness emerges from awareness of one's position within this network of relations.

The acquisition of *Odeshi* is believed to alter the bearer's ontological status. The individual comes to perceive himself as fortified, resilient, and less vulnerable to annihilation. This perception is not merely psychological but ontological, as it reflects a realignment of force relations surrounding the self.

This transformation has ethical and social implications. The bearer of *Odeshi* is expected to exhibit moral restraint, courage, and responsibility. Abuse of power is believed to weaken protection, reinforcing the idea that ontology and ethics are inseparable. In this way, *Odeshi* contributes to the formation of mature personhood, characterized by self-awareness, discipline, and communal accountability.

***Odeshi* as Communal Ontology rather than Individual Magic**

One of the most persistent misinterpretations of *Odeshi* is its reduction to individual magic. Such reduction reflects a misunderstanding of Igbo ontology, which is fundamentally communal and relational. In Igbo thought, being is never isolated; it is always embedded within a web of relationships.

Odeshi belongs to this communal ontology. Even when applied to an individual, its efficacy is understood to depend on communal norms, ancestral sanction, and cosmic harmony. The rituals, prohibitions, and moral codes associated with *Odeshi* are socially regulated, ensuring that protection serves communal stability rather than personal domination.

To describe *Odeshi* as magic is therefore a category error. Magic implies arbitrary manipulation of hidden powers for private ends, whereas *Odeshi* functions as a culturally regulated system of ontological balance. It is better understood as an indigenous metaphysical technology rooted in communal life and collective survival.

Toward the Philosophical Recovery of Indigenous Ontologies

The marginalization of *Odeshi* reflects a broader crisis in contemporary philosophy: the tendency to universalize Western metaphysical assumptions while dismissing alternative ontologies as inferior. Such tendencies

impoverish philosophical inquiry by narrowing the range of legitimate questions and answers.

Recovering *Odeshi* as an ontological system does not require rejecting science or modernity. Rather, it calls for epistemic pluralism- the recognition that multiple ontological frameworks can coexist and offer valid insights into human existence. *Odeshi* contributes to this pluralism by articulating a force-based understanding of protection, vulnerability, and survival.

This recovery is especially urgent in African philosophy, where indigenous concepts have often been overshadowed by imported categories. Philosophical engagement with *Odeshi* enriches global metaphysical discourse.

CONCLUSION

This research has argued that *Odeshi* constitutes a coherent and philosophically robust ontology of self-preservation within Igbo epistemology. Grounded in the African metaphysics of being-as-force, *Odeshi* represents an indigenous response to existential vulnerability that integrates ontology, ethics, language, and communal life.

By situating *Odeshi* within the hierarchy of beings, the principle of *nommo*, and the logic of force interaction, the research has demonstrated that dismissals of *Odeshi* as superstition result from epistemic bias rather than philosophical deficiency. The limitations and occasional failures of *Odeshi* do not negate its ontological validity any more than technological failures invalidate modern science.

In an era marked by epistemic homogenization and cultural erasure, the philosophical reclamation of *Odeshi* affirms the enduring relevance of indigenous African ontologies. Recognizing *Odeshi* as a legitimate system of self-preservation not only restores Igbo metaphysical thought to its rightful place but also expands the horizons of contemporary philosophy.

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