

Predestination and the metaphysics of identity: a Yoruba (African) case study

*Yunusa Kehinde Salami**

Abstract: Predestination, as a metaphysical issue, carries the idea of prenatal choice or ascription of the purpose or end to which any person or thing is created. Destiny as chosen or ascribed to a person represents what the person has to unwind in the world. In Yoruba account of predestination, a moulded body, already infused with the spirit of life by Olodumare (the supreme being), goes to pick an Ori (the bearer of destiny). Sometimes, such a destiny is considered imposed on the self. The destiny, so chosen or so ascribed or imposed, encapsulates the successes and failures which the human being is meant to unravel during his or her course of existence in this world. Considering some arguments on personal identity, the paper observes that a case of identity cannot be established between the person who chose a destiny in heaven and the one who is assumed to be unraveling it in the world. Given the fact that the relationship of identity cannot be established between the two entities, the paper concludes that the notion of predestination, with special focus on the Yoruba account, cannot stand rational scrutiny.

Keywords: predestination, destiny, human person, personal identity, supreme being, bearer of destiny.

INTRODUCTION

Predestination, as a metaphysical issue, carries the idea of prenatal choice or ascription of the purpose or end to which any person or thing is created. Destiny as chosen by or ascribed to a person represents what the person has to

* Dept. of Philosophy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

unwind in this world. In Yoruba account of predestination, a moulded body, already infused with the spirit of life by *Olodumare*, goes to pick an *Ori* (the bearer of destiny). Sometimes, such a destiny or *Ori* is considered imposed on the self. The destiny, so chosen or so ascribed or imposed, encapsulates the successes and failures which the human being is meant to unravel during his or her course of existence in this world.

The question may be raised concerning the identity of the being who chose a destiny or upon whom a destiny was imposed in heaven, and the human being, on earth, who is expected to manifest or actualize the destiny. Unless the relationship of identity can be established between the two entities, it may be difficult, if at all, to talk of predestination.

Given some arguments on personal identity, it seems problematic to establish the position that a specific human being was prenatally destined to do some things and not others while on earth. The interest of this paper is to examine the tenability or otherwise of predestination within the metaphysical question of personal identity.

YORUBA ACCOUNT OF PREDESTINATION

In the Yoruba conception of human person¹, a human person is made of *Ara* (body), *Emi* (soul), and *Ori* (the inner head). This *Ori*, the inner head, is the bearer of destiny. This account of human person emphasizes the importance of *Ori* and by implication, makes destiny or predestination a necessary component of a human person.

¹ See ABIMBOLA, Wande. *La notion de personne en Afrique Noire*. Colloques Internationale du C.N.R.S., 544: 73-89, 1973; GBADEGESIN, Olusegun. Destiny, personality and the ultimate reality of human existence: a Yoruba perspective. *Ultimate Reality and Meaning*, 7(3): 173-188, 1984. MAKINDE M.A. An African concept of human personality: The Yoruba example. In: *Ultimate reality and meaning* 7(3): 189-200, 1984; BARRY, Hallen. Eniyan: A critical analysis of The Yoruba concepts of person. In: MOMOH, C.S. (ed.). *The substance of African philosophy*. (Auchi: African Philosophy Projects), 1989, p. 328-354; BARRY, Hallen. *The good the bad and the beautiful: discourse about values in Yoruba culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 45-46; OLUBI, Sodipo and BARRY, Hallen. *Knowledge, belief, and witchcraft: analytic experiments in African philosophy*. London: Ethnographica Publishers, 1997, p. 105; SALAMI, Yunusa Kehinde. Human personality and immortality in traditional Yoruba cosmology. In: *Africana Marburgensia* XXIV(I): 4-13, 1991; SALAMI, Yunusa Kehinde. Human person, death, re-incarnation and immortality, a case in Yoruba (African) metaphysics. In: *ODU: A Journal of West African Studies*, 40: 207-214, 2000, among others.

Yoruba generally refer to *Ori* as the unconscious self, as inner head, as one's guardian spirit, and as the bearer of destiny. According to Gbadegesin, "(...) it is the *Ori* that selects the destiny of the person before *Olodumare* (the Supreme deity) who normally endorses such a choice".² Another account of Yoruba concept of *Ori* is given by Idowu, who claims that Yoruba regard *Ori* as the personality Spirit. For Idowu, *Ori* "is the very essence of personality (...) it is this *Ori* that rules, controls, and guides the 'life' and activities of the person".³

The question, however, is about the status of *Ori* vis-à-vis other causal agents. Can we regard *Ori* as the antecedent cause of all other possible causes? In other words, do we see other causes as mere causal manifestations of one underlying cause – *Ori*? If the answer is yes, then we can correctly argue that there is a connection between the Yoruba concept of *Ori* and destiny. This takes us to the other Yoruba related notions of *Ipin* (that which is allocated to someone), *Ayanmo* (that which is affixed to someone), and *Akunleyan* (that which is chosen kneeling). All of these concepts convey the idea of destiny which, if critically examined, could be seen to convey some important differences. For Idowu, "(...) we have a trimorphous conception of destiny."⁴

Going by these related terms, a little clarification may be warranted. For instance, *ayanmo* and *ipin* imply something that was imposed on human persons, without any enquiry on whether they wanted it or not. *Ayanmo* and *ipin* are predominantly suggestive of the influence of an external factor against which we are powerless. Consequently, one may, it seems to me, argue that what becomes one's destiny is not within one's ability to choose. Given this account, the action one finds oneself performing here on earth, is independent of one's choice or wishes. The account renders human beings as mere toys in the hands of the gods. On the other hand, *akunleyan* is suggestive of one's conscious choice, most probably, without any external compulsion. Whichever way, the person comes into the world with his destiny doubly sealed, and whatever a

² GBADEGESIN, Olusegun, *ibid.*, p. 175.

³ IDOWU, Bolaji. *Olodumare: God in Yoruba belief*. London: Longman, 1962, p. 170 and 180.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183. For more on this, see MORAKINYO, Olufemi. The *Ayanmo* myth and mental health care in West Africa. *Journal of Culture and Ideas*, 1: 68-73, 1983.

person does achieve, or whatever happens to him, is a precise working out of his destiny.⁵

The upshot of this is that in Yoruba universe, each human being is predestined to lead a kind of life and not others. That is, each human being while in *isalu orun* (heaven), chose or found affixed on him or her, a particular kind of destiny which he or she is expected to actualise, unravel, or manifest in this world. On this account, destiny represents the kind of choice or affixation in *isalu orun* which will invariably determine the earthly success or failure. It is believed that the choice or affixation of a good *Ori* ensures that the individual concerned would lead a successful and prosperous life on earth, while the choice or affixation of a bad *Ori* condemns the individual concerned to a life of failure.⁶

THE YORUBA ACCOUNT OF PREDESTINATION AND PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

‘Personal identity’ invokes a relation between a person who is known to exist at one time, and a person who is known to have existed at another time.⁷ Identity in this sense presupposes “an uninterrupted continuance of existence”.⁸ The reasoning here according to Reid, is that; that which has ceased to exist cannot be the same with that which afterward begins to exist; for this would be to suppose a being to exist after it ceased to exist, and to have had existence before it was produced.⁹

If examined in view of the problem of personal identity, questions can be raised about the authenticity and validity of beliefs in predestination. It will interest philosophers to know whether the figure which picked a destiny or on whom a destiny was affixed at *isalu orun* is the same person as, or, identical to,

⁵ See IDOWU, Bolaji, p. 194, and SALAMI, Yunusa Kehinde. Predestination, freedom, and responsibility: a case in Yoruba moral philosophy. *Research in Yoruba Language and Literatures*, 7: 6, 1996.

⁶ ABIMBOLA, Wande. *Ifa: an exposition of Ifa literary corpus*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 113.

⁷ See LOCKE, John. Of identity and diversity. In: WOOLLEY A.D. (ed.). *Essay concerning human understanding*. London: Fontana Library, 1964, QUINTON, Anthony. The Soul. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 59, n. 15, 1962; PERRY, John (ed.). *Personal identity*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975.

⁸ REID, Thomas. Of the nature and origin of our notion of personal identity. In: EDWARDS, Paul and PAP, Arthur (eds.). *A modern introduction to philosophy: readings from classical and contemporary sources*. New York: The Free Press, 1973, p. 195.

⁹ REID, Thomas, *ibid.*

the human being who is in this world unraveling the earlier chosen or affixed destiny. Can a case of uninterrupted continual existence be established?

The issue here is that unless there is an identity between the body which chose a destiny, or on which a destiny was affixed, and the person whose life manifests the destiny, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to talk of predestination and the later unraveling of such a destiny. My point is that if there is actually no identity or sameness, the talk of destiny or predestination becomes otiose. This takes us to the discussion on what the idea of personal identity entails. In other words, what properties or qualities should be obtained in order to establish personal identity?

Philosophers have variously attempted to tackle the problem of personal identity. The problem of personal identity, like all other metaphysical problems, has almost been intractable. While most philosophers tend to agree that personal identity involves an uninterrupted continual existence, they differ on what it is that uninterruptedly continues to exist. What each philosopher takes as the subject of uninterrupted continual existence depends largely on his or her general metaphysical standpoint on the question of the ultimate constituent of personhood.

While for some, mind or soul (mental event), is the essential component of a person, some others argue that body or the physical is the essential constituent of personhood. The third possibility is to talk of person as person. This third position argues that a person is a whole entity, an indivisible whole. This means that a person cannot be divided into body on one part and mind on the other.

For those who consider mind, soul, or the mental aspect as the essential element of a person, personal identity requires sameness of consciousness, remembrance or memory. While a variant of this version strictly maintains that sameness of consciousness is all that is required for personal identity, some other variant argues that sameness of consciousness must be conjoined to sameness of body in order to allow for talk of personal identity.

For the strict memory thesis, personal identity holds and different person-stages belong to the same person if and only if the later could contain an experience which is a memory of a reflective awareness of an experience contained in the earlier.¹⁰ For John Locke, for instance;

¹⁰ See LOCKE, *op. cit.*; QUINTON, *op. cit.*, p. 3-98.

(...) since consciousness always accompanies thinking and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things: in this alone consists personal identity, i.e.; the sameness of a rational being; and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person (...).¹¹

In this passage, Locke makes reflective consciousness the basis for personal identity. By reflective consciousness, Locke meant the conscious act of introspection through which a person critically looks inward and reflect on his or her experiences. For Locke, a person who, through introspection, is able to link the series of experiences at the different levels of his person-stages is identical to the person of the different person-stages.

A Quintonian reformulation of Locke's memory thesis can be read to mean that there is a sequence of person-stages (not necessarily in the order they occur in time and not excluding repetitions), the first of which is A and the last of which is B, such that each person-stage in the sequence either (i) contains or could contain a memory of an experience contained in the next or (ii) contains an experience of which the next person-stage contains a memory, or could contain a memory.¹²

In spite of the criticisms against this thesis on personal identity, the emphasis is on the continuance in the memory chain of experiences attributable to same individual. As this argument goes, personal identity arises when a person at a point in time can link his or her present experience to a whole sequence of past memory chains.

One problem is that not all philosophers would base personal identity on sameness of memory or consciousness. Some maintains that sameness of consciousness must be conjoined to sameness of body in order to have personal identity. For the proponents of this second view, sameness of consciousness and bodily identity are both important criteria to personal identity. Thus, the argument goes, neither of both can be regarded as the sole criterion of personal identity. It is in line with this view that Sydney Shoemaker maintains that:

¹¹ LOCKE, *op. cit.*, p. 39-40.

¹² PERRY, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

(...) whether or not memory is a criterion of personal identity, it is not the criterion... it cannot be the sole criterion that we use in making identity statements about other persons (...) Bodily identity is certainly a criterion of personal identity... But I do not think that it can be the sole criterion (...).¹³

While these two positions emphasise sameness of consciousness and or bodily identity, there is another position that emphasises the necessary presence of some underlying substances for personal identity to obtain. Yet, some other scholars consider the talk of personal identity a mis-direction of energy.¹⁴

These positions are quite relevant to our discussion of predestination and personal identity. The issue to be examined is whether the chooser or the one who picked the *ori* in *Isalu-orun* (heaven) is identical to the one who is supposed to be unraveling the destiny here in *Isalu-aye* (earthly world). The point we may want to push is that if personal identity between the one who picked an *ori* in heaven and the person meant to unravel what the *ori* portends here on earth is illusory, then, the problem easily dissolves because there would not be any talk of identity between the two different personalities.

Looking at the position emphasizing the significance of an underlying substance in the determination of personal identity, there is the problem of determining what the substance (that which I know not what)¹⁵ is, or can be taken to mean. If we grant the existence of the substance, there is the problem of how to identify it. Greater still is the problem of using what cannot be identified as the link between one person-stage and the other.

To serve as a criterion for personal identity, the criterion itself must be identifiable. Since substance is something unknowable, or at least, something 'I know not what', it cannot be the basis for an empirical question of personal identity. After all, unless we know what the substance is, we would not know whether the different person-stages share the same substance or not. Since sameness must be sameness of something, it stands to reason that the sameness

¹³ SHOEMAKER, op. cit., p. 124-129.

¹⁴ See BUTLER, Joseph. Of personal identity. In: PERRY, op. cit., p. 99-105, and HUME, David, In: PERRY, op. cit., p. 161-172.

¹⁵ LOCKE, John. *An essay concerning human understanding*. London: Fontana Library, 1964, p. 185-187. (ed.: A. D. Woozley).

of something 'I know not what' cannot be determined, and so unhelpful in the resolution of the problem of personal identity.

Given the problem associated with the use of substance as criterion for personal identity, efforts should be concentrated on more empirical criteria.

If we talk of sameness of body as a criterion of identity between the one who picked an *ori* in heaven and the person who is assumed to be unraveling it here on earth, there will be a serious problem. For instance at the time when an individual being chose an *ori*, the individual was in the world of spirit. The individual was at then, a spiritual being, yet to come to the world of matter. Consequently, talk of bodily identity between the chooser and the one who unravels the destiny does not arise.

This shifts the discussion to the realm of consciousness. The question now is whether an identity can be established using the criterion of sameness of consciousness. For those who adopt the consciousness as the basis of personal identity, the emphasis is on the capacity to reflectively connect our memory-phases. In other words, personal identity is established between persons P_1 and P_2 at different times t_1 and t_2 if P_2 at t_2 can reflectively call to memory, the experiences of P_1 at t_1 . This, for the consciousness theorists,¹⁶ is the basis for establishing personal identity.

The question now is, 'can the human person, here on earth, whose responsibility it is to unravel the destiny chosen or ascribed in heaven, reflectively connect the memory-phases of the experience of ever choosing a particular kind of *Ori* or destiny? The point here is that unless the person on earth, who is meant to unravel the destiny earlier chosen, can be rationally conscious of or recall, the memory of the experience of choosing a particular kind of *Ori* in heaven, there would be no justifiable ground to talk of someone having chosen one destiny or the other in heaven. After all, to talk of a destiny belonging to a particular person is to presuppose that the person to unravel a destiny and the chooser of the destiny both refer to one and the same individual.

If we go by the position that rests personal identity on consciousness or memory, there is bound to be an initial problem. The initial problem is that it

¹⁶ LOCKE, op. cit., p. 33-52; QUINTON, op. cit., p. 53-72, GRICE, H.P. Personal Identity. In: PERRY, op. cit., p. 73-98.

is already contained in the Yoruba account of predestination that the chooser of destiny in *isalu orun* (heaven) passed through or crossed the river of forgetfulness while coming to ode *isalaye* (the human world) and so cannot remember or have a reflective memory of having ever picked an *Ori*.

The question is how to link a destiny to a man who never remembered anything in connection with the destiny or the fact of choosing it. If the destiny and its choice are to be of principal relevance to the life of a person, that person must be able to link himself or his life to the destiny and its choice.

One possible way of linking the person with his chosen destiny can be traced in a version of Yoruba cosmology according to which *Ifa* oracle was present when individuals were choosing *Ori*.¹⁷ Based on the supposed presence of *Ifa* oracle, it is believed that *Ifa* divination can help to reveal the sort of *Ori* which was chosen and, perhaps, what can be done to change a bad one for good.

The argument is that if we grant the authenticity of *Ifa* as a plausible means to the knowledge of the transcendent, then, we are likely to acknowledge the possibility of linking a person to his destiny through the revelatory knowledge of *Ifa* oracle. Given this account, it is assumed that anyone who wishes to have his destiny revealed to him would simply seek the assistance of *Ifa* oracle and its priest.

One problem with this approach is that it does not help the individual concerned to reflectively recollect a forgotten experience. Rather, it seems to merely impose a piece of information on an individual. The imposed piece or pieces of information cannot be correctly taken to be a coherent part of a cohesive memory chain. The information from *Ifa* oracle is extraneous to, and does not form a system with the past and present memory-phases of the individual concerned.

Apart from the problem associated with merely mentioning an occurrence true or an integral part of the individual's psychological system, there is also the problem of inter-subjective verifiability. The *modus operandi* of *Ifa* as a source of knowledge is not open to the scientific methodology of verifica-

¹⁷ MAKINDE, M. Akin. *Ifa as a repository of knowledge*. in *The proceedings of the 17th World Congress of Philosophy*, Montreal, 1983, and MAKINDE, M. Akin. *The Yoruba concepts of Ori and human destiny*. *Journal of International Studies in Philosophy*, p. 57, 1985.

tion.¹⁸ It does not allow cross-checking of facts. In fact, two *Ifa* priests may differ or disagree on what destiny belongs to a particular individual.

In case of any disagreement among *Ifa* priests or among *Ifa* priests and other people, there is the problem of finding a final arbiter whose opinion is respected as the final expression of what the destiny of an individual is. The upshot is that the prediction by the *Ifa* priest is not often based on any repeatable and ratiocinative process. This traditional account seems not scientifically demonstrable. There is little likelihood, if any, for *Ifa* to provide the supposed missing link in the memory-phases of a person P_1 at t_1 who picked an *Ori*, and by extension, destiny, and, the person P_2 at t_2 who unravels the destiny as encapsulated by the chosen *Ori*.

A Yoruba predestinationist may take succour in the Freudian psychoanalytic theory. According to this theory, human consciousness is like an iceberg on the surface of an ocean. The part beneath the water surface is of greater proportion than the one that is presented to human perception. In other words, the unconscious and the forgotten part of human consciousness are greater in proportion to the conscious part. Moreover, the unconscious *libido*, to a very noticeable extent, constitutes the basis for human consciousness. Freudian psychoanalysis like Plato's account of knowledge in *Meno*¹⁹, suggests that an individual would be able to recollect the forgotten part of his consciousness with the aid of serious and methodical questioning.

The outcome of this is that it would be wrong to deny an individual of the forgotten phase in his memory chain simply because he could no longer recollect such a phase. Moreover, the theory suggests some steps toward recalling such a phase. The question to be raised is whether this Freudian account can help to bridge this missing gap in the Yoruba account of destiny and predestination.

¹⁸ While one may not be justified to claim that science can provide answers to all problems it still behooves us to say that science has provided the most reliable source of knowledge about the world. In some sense, the disagreement among *Ifa* Priests may be due to the limitations on the parts of the Priests.

¹⁹ See PLATO, *Meno*. In: JOWETT, B. (trans.) *The dialogues of Plato*. v. 11, London: Oxford University Press, 1931; TAYLOR, A.E. *Plato: the man and his work*. Edinburgh: Methuen, 1969; BEDU-ADDO, J. T. Sense—experience and recollection in Plato's *Meno*. *American Journal of Philology*, 104: 228, 1983; BEDU-ADDO, J.T. Recollection and the argument from a hypothesis' in Plato's *Meno*. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, IV: 1-14, 1984; GULLEY, N. *Plato's theory of knowledge*. London: Methuen, 1962, p. 17-18; HAROLD, zyskind and STERNFIELD, R. Plato's *Meno* 89c: virtue is knowledge a hypothesis? *Phronesis*, XXI: 130-34, 1976, and FREUD, Sigmund. *Introductory lectures on psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1966.

As interesting as the Freudian argument and the argument from *Ifa* may seem, they both lack the required strength to solve this problem of destiny and personal identity. It may be interesting to note, for instance, that Freudian psychoanalytic theory does not represent the view of all psychologists. It is difficult to imagine how Freudian psycho-analytic theory or Plato's idea of knowledge as recollection can help an individual to remember a choice of *Ori* which he ought to have forgotten when crossing the river of forgetfulness before coming to this world.²⁰ It will require an infinite number of questioning for someone to recollect experiences which, if ever existed, have been totally erased from the memory chain. On this account, it seems a gratuitous assumption to base a continuity of memory-phase solely on the Freudian psychoanalytic account or the account of possible revelation through *Ifa* divination.

From the foregoing, it can, to a large extent, be argued that an identity cannot be established between the agent who chose an *Ori*, and the actual human being who is expected to unravel the destiny which the *Ori* bears. There is no case of physical continuity or memory sameness between the chooser and the one who is assumed to be unraveling the choice. If this identity cannot be established, it may not be rationally defensible to talk of predestination. After all, for predestination to be meaningful there must be someone who is predestined. The difficulty in establishing an identity between the person who chose a destiny and the one who is expected to bear the consequences of the destiny makes it difficult or impossible to rationally identify someone with his destiny; and, consequently, to strongly effect any support for the idea of destiny and predestination.

In spite of the fact that the idea of destiny and predestination portends some social and moral benefits for the society and the individuals²¹, it turns out to be one of the problems that are not easily resolved on the strength of rational assessment.

²⁰ There are various hints in Yoruba mythology about how human beings were made to forget all that they previously knew in heaven when they passed through the river of forgetfulness just at the boundary between heaven and earth. As the myth goes, once individuals have crossed this river, they are made to forget all they had known earlier in heaven. There are a lot of similarities between this Yoruba account and the accounts of several earlier Greek Philosophers including Plato.

²¹ GBADEGESIN, Olusegun. Destiny, personality and the ultimate reality of human existence: a Yoruba perspective. *Ultimate Reality and Meaning*, 7(3): 173-188, 1984.

One cannot overlook the benefits derived from the idea of predestination in the social and moral spheres of life. There is no doubt that the idea of choice of *Ori* and the destiny it bears has enabled some traditional Yoruba indigenous thinkers to take, with ease, the daily vicissitudes of life and to appreciate and live with the differences in the structure of human existence. Whether or not the choice of *Ori* is true or accepted to be true, the traditional Yoruba believes that he chose an *Ori*, and also that this *Ori* is the bearer of his destiny. While he works hard to realise his destiny, the idea relieves him of the agony of the inequality in the society. The traditional Yoruba respects others and avoids offending others around who may change a good *Ori* to a bad one.

Nevertheless, as desirable as the idea of predestination may seem, it does not make predestination real if it is actually not real. Thus, no matter how re-assuring our reasons for desiring predestination may be, it is most unlikely that such reasons can rationally meet the rigorous criteria of personal identity.

CONCLUSION

The paper examines the metaphysical issues of destiny and predestination with special focus on the Yoruba notion of destiny and predestination according to which everyone, while in heaven, picked an *Ori*, or found imposed on him, an *Ori*, which encapsulates the successes and failures which the human being is meant to unravel during his course of existence in this world.

The paper notes the social and moral benefits of the notion of predestination in regulating the social and moral activities in Yoruba traditional culture. The paper observes that a case of identity cannot be established between the person who chose a destiny in heaven and the one who is assumed to be unraveling it in the human world. Given the fact that the relationship of identity cannot be established between the two entities, the paper concludes that the notion of predestination, with special focus on the Yoruba account, cannot stand rational scrutiny.

Resumo: A predestinação como uma questão da metafísica tem a ver com a idéia de uma escolha ou uma atribuição pré-natal do objetivo ou da finalidade pela qual uma pessoa ou um objeto foi criado. O destino como algo escolhido ou atribuído representa aquilo que a pessoa deve cumprir ao longo da sua vida terrestre. Conforme alguns relatos iorubanos acerca da

predestinação, após a infusão do fôlego da vida que Olodumare (o ente supremo) deposita em cada pessoa criada, a pessoa tem que escolher o seu *ori* (destino) que o vai acompanhar ao mundo. Outros relatos acreditam que esse destino é imposto à pessoa. Seja qual for a maneira da aquisição, os iorubas acreditam que é dentro desse destino que se encontra impresso os sucessos e fracassos que a pessoa vai ter que vivenciar durante toda a sua vida.

Baseado em alguns argumentos propostos sobre a identidade pessoal, este artigo observa que não se pode estabelecer *a priori* uma relação de identidade entre aquela pessoa que escolheu um destino numa existência pré-natal e aquele que, supostamente está cumprindo esse mesmo destino no mundo físico. Devido a essa impossibilidade de provar que se trata nos dois casos duma e mesma pessoa, o artigo conclui que a noção de predestinação proposta pelo código iorubano não pode ser sustentado de um ponto de vista racional.

Palavras chave: predestinação, destino, pessoa humana, identidade pessoal, o ser supremo, *Ori* – o portador do destino.