

A psychological study of Fate in Arthur Miller's *The Man Who Had All the Luck*

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Abstract

Fate plays a big role in human life. It is also known as luck, destiny, and fortune. People believe that fate is not under the control of man. They have a wrong interpretation of fate because they connect the entire situation with fate. This paper explains the psychological concept of fate revealed in the play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, written by Arthur Miller. Miller tells the power of mind brilliantly rather than the fate in this play. This play is not only a social study but also a psychological study. This paper focuses on the fate and chance of man. People value fate without knowing the power of mind which is responsible for their destruction. Through the characters of the play, we can understand the importance of choices in our life. Fate is not responsible for our failure or success but our choices or decisions are responsible. That is why, Arthur Miller has said about the play, "trying to weigh how much of our lives is a result of our character and how much is a result of our destiny" (Arthur Miller, xix).

Keywords: Psychology, Arthur Miller, Fate, Choices, and Failure.

Everyone is struggling for success in modern times because there is a lot of competition in day to day life. Arthur Miller's play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* is related to the common man and his struggles for success. It is related to the period of depression in America when everyone was struggling for success after the Second World War. This play is related to the real story of Peter who hanged himself in his barn during the Great Depression

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in America. Peter was the uncle of Miller's first wife, Mary Slattery. Miller originally wrote *The Man Who Had All the Luck* as a novel but later he wrote it as a play. In the novel, its protagonist goes to suicide from his success but in the play, Miller highlights the power of the mind for which the protagonist lives his whole life with his family after so many struggles at the end of the play. Miller's play is famous in comparison to the novel because of his talent. He presents his protagonist as an inspiration to the modern period. Luck, personal agencies and fate are the central themes of the play. David Beeves is the central character of the play who is a very lucky man because he achieves everything without any risk while others are struggling. This play is the real picture of modern times where everyone is struggling for good fortune. Some people believe that success is completely dependent on Fate but psychologically, it is not the whole truth because our success or failure depends on our choices or decisions. David finds success in his love, business, and in his married life in comparison to others in his life like J.B. Feller, Shory, and Amos. There are many facts in the play which prove the reality of fate and the choices of man. Fate is not in our control because it is related to our birth and death. The birth and death of man are not in our control but our success and failure depend on our decisions or choices. Our hard work and our thinking shape our fate as in this play Arthur Miller shows the power of the mind through David Beeves. Many psychologists gave different concepts of fate. They believe that there is no value of fate because it depends on your thinking or actions. Words of Carl Jung prove the reality of fate, "You see, in the actual functioning of the psyche, it does not matter whether you do a thing or whether it happens to you; whether it reaches you from without or happens within, fate moves through yourself and outside circumstances equally" (Carl Jung, 896).

In *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, we can see everyone calls him a lucky man. Amos, his brother tells him, "You're movin' like a daisy cutter, Dave, you know how to do" (11). Amos fails to be a successful baseball pitcher but David is a successful mechanic. That's why Amos calls him a lucky man but Amos ignores the reality behind his failure. In the middle of the play, we know the reality of Amos's failure through his friend. His friend Augie helps him to realize his fault. David and his father unable to accept the truth of Amos. Amos is a good person and a hard worker but he has a big weakness to face the audience and for a player, it is necessary to face the audience. It is the reason for his failure. That's why we

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can say after explaining this fact that there is no work of fate in the failure of Amos. Behind the failure of other characters, there is also a fact as we can see the character of J. B. Feller, a friend of David who expresses his misfortune before David. J. B. has unsatisfied married life and he blames fate for his failure without knowing his responsibilities towards his wife. He ignores his excessive drinking habit for which his wife becomes angry. J. B. can change his fate but he chooses his bad habits. He lost his wife and child because of his bad habits. Thus, his wrong desires make him unlucky not fate is responsible for his misfortune. He calls David a lucky man and also warns him for fate. He warns David after saying, "I'm not as drunk as I look, David! You're a good man, yes. You know how to do it. But you've had a phenomenal lot of luck in your life, Dave. Never play luck too hard. It's like a season, and seasons go away" (47). It is correct to say that fate can change anytime like the seasons but psychologically, fate depends on our decisions or thinking. We have to see our faults and improve them at the time which can make us successful. According to the social interpretations, there is a big role of fate behind the success and failure of man but we can change our fate with our hard work and choices. Through the characters of this play, we can understand the real work of our minds. The character of David Beeves proves that we can make our fortune with our hands and it depends on us. Another character, Shory also an example who fails because of his fault but he is also unaware of it. He always tells that he had lost his leg during the war due to which he is unable to find a girl. But after a long time, he informs the truth that he had lost his leg because of a woman after losing his sense. He knows the truth yet he blames his fate. Shory calls man, a jellyfish. According to him, a man can't survive his life in his ways but David proves him wrong in the ending with his right choices.

In the middle of the play, David's psychology is affected by the depression of his friends because his friends always call him a lucky man. David feels anxious because of the failure of his friends. His friends also warn him that one day, he will lose his fate due to which his mind fills with fear of failure. Before the birth of his son, he thought that he has lost his child in return for fate. David feels that he will have to pay something for his good luck but Gus, his business partner, is the only man who proves him wrong. David tells, "God help me, we're paid for now. I'm not afraid of my luck any more, and I'm going to pay it for everything it's worth" (69). His words prove his fear of failure because of his surroundings.

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Gus and Hester believe in hard work. That's why they help him to understand the facts regarding his fear. Gus tells him that everything is possible with our hard work and confidence. It depends on us how we can make our fortune. Hester gives birth to David's son who proves him wrong but his fear stays until the end of the play. Gus knows his inner condition for which he tells David, "Well? You see? A good man gets what a good man makes. Wake up now! Good luck!" (71). The words of Gus prove the power of hard work and consciousness. Due to the depression of his friends, David becomes unconscious. David's fear makes him uneasy and weak. Whenever we work with our will power, we get success in that work but when we fear something that is our weakness which is responsible for our destruction. Fear is an element of the unconscious mind that makes us weak and lose our self-confidence. David also becomes unconscious which makes his married life uncomfortable. Gus and Hester help him to realize his will power again as he was in his early life.

In Act Three of the play, we can observe the role of hard work and good decisions in the life of David. David starts mink farming but suddenly, he is losing his minks. He is busy saving them and his wife wants some cheerful moments with him. David does hard work to save them. In the starting, David thinks, he is losing his minks because of his bad luck but with his will power, he finds a solution to save them. To save his minks, he ignores his wife and son. He also neglects his son and never touches him because he thinks that he will lose his son in return for his fate. According to the social interpretation, Fate is powerful in human life but psychologically, on the bases of the above examples, it is wrong because our hard work or choices are responsible for our outcomes. David realizes the power of mind after the sudden presence of his boss, Dan Dibble. David accepts his hard work before Dibble after saying that he examined every piece of fish before feeding which saves his minks. To check every piece of fish is not easy but David does and saves his minks. His hard work changes the worst condition in his business. He makes his fortune with his consciousness. Hester also expresses to tell him the power of hard work, "This wasn't something from the sky, dear. This was you only. You must see that now, don't you?" (82). He achieves success in his mink farming but still, he is not ready to understand the power of his mind. His mind fills with one thought that his all friends are unlucky after a big struggle but he is lucky. David expresses

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his feeling for the bad luck of his friends before Gus after saying, “But they couldn’t all have made their own luck! – J.B. with his drinking, Shory with his whores, Dad and Amos ... and you losing your shop. And I could never have fixed that Marmon if you hadn’t walked in like some kind of an angel! – that Marmon wasn’t me! (82) Gus answers him positively that all are self-responsible for their bad luck.

On the bases of the above discussion, we can say that Fate has no importance in comparison hard work and choices. Fate has its theory which is not in our hands as birth and death. We can’t choose our mother and father that is fate. Some people have blind faith in destiny because they connect all the situations in life with it without knowing the facts. The people with consciousness never blame fate but do hard work with will power and become a success in their goals. We have to know our self-power through which everything is possible. David succeeds in his whole life only because of his senses and kindly choices. David’s good luck unnerves him in the middle of the play but he continues his life with his family as a wealthy man at the ending of the play. David’s character tells the difference between fate and choices. One of the best known and spiritual teachers of the modern time, Osho tells regarding self-realization, “Life must be a seeking – not a desire but a search, not an ambition to become this, to become that, a president of a country, but a search to find out “Who am I?” (Osho, xv) These words are true because self-realization is very important to be a successful person. Therefore, when we become aware of our self, we can handle all the problems of our life by removing our own faults, not by blaming others.

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