

Parents as Role Model for Social Behavior of Children: A Case Study of the Short Story “A Doll’s House” by Katherine Mansfield

Farahnaz Yousefi

Department of English Language and Literature, Zahedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Zahedan, Iran

Email: anitataheri@gmail.com

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Abstract

This research article investigates the parental influence on children's social behavior within the context of Katherine Mansfield's short story, "A Doll's House." The study primarily adopts a library-based approach and employs a descriptive analytical methodology. The research aims to explore the impact of parents and other family members on children's socialization and their conduct in society, with a specific focus on their interactions with peers and classmates. Additionally, the article examines the ramifications of social norms and social classes on parental figures. The involvement of school officials, peers, classmates, and their interactions with other children is also examined. The findings of the study indicate that the parents depicted in the story do not serve as positive role models for the socialization of their children. While the majority of children tend to imitate and perceive their parents as positive role models, one child does not blindly imitate the parents and may exhibit behaviors that deviate from parental expectations. These findings are useful as they contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between parental influence and children's social behavior, especially in the literary context of the short story. They shed light on the complex relationship between parents, children, and societal expectations as portrayed in the story, which can be relevant for literary analysis, child psychology and sociology. The findings may have implications for understanding the potential consequences of negative role modeling by parents and how it can influence a child's behavior and choices.

Keywords: Social Behavior, Children, Parental Role, Katherine Mansfield, Short Story

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

During British migration to New Zealand, a British colony, the migrants brought not only their property but also their deeply ingrained social prejudices, resulting in the division of New Zealand into distinct social classifications. This division created an environment ripe for the application of the Social Learning Theory. According to this theory, individuals acquire behaviors and attitudes through observing and imitating significant figures in their lives. In such a society, social classes held significant importance, and individuals diligently strived to adhere to the norms dictated by their respective classes. Social status was widely believed to be primarily determined by birth, making upward mobility to higher social classes a challenging endeavor. The affluent and aristocratic classes refrained from associating with the working class and the impoverished, underscoring the significance of adhering to social distinctions. This matter of social class and its associated expectations was of such significance that parents and elders within each family served as primary models for their children.

According to the Social Learning Theory, parents play a crucial role in transmitting not only behaviors but also attitudes and beliefs to their offspring. Children observed the behaviors of their parents and absorbed their attitudes concerning class differences, leading to the internalization of these norms.

Katherine Mansfield, the author of "The Doll's House," was born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1888, within the same societal milieu. She was the third child of a wealthy family and, at the age of five, relocated with her family to the rural village of Karori, where she spent her early school years. Within the framework of Social Learning Theory, Katherine Mansfield can be seen as exploring the influence of parental modeling on the social behavior of children against the backdrop of the rigid social structure of New Zealand society. Mansfield, having grown up within the same societal context, experienced firsthand the impact of parental teachings and the pressures to conform to social expectations. Her short story, "The Doll's House," provides a compelling case study to examine the mechanisms of social learning and the replication of social class attitudes and behaviors among children. The characters within the story can be analyzed through the lens of Social Learning Theory to understand how parental modeling shape the children's social behavior, their attitudes towards others of different social backgrounds, and their adherence to societal norms. By employing Social Learning Theory as the conceptual framework for this study, a deeper understanding can be gained regarding the influence of parents as role models and the mechanisms through which social behavior is transmitted from one generation to the next. This framework allows for an exploration of how parental teachings regarding social class distinctions impact children's social behavior, shedding light on the dynamics of social learning within the context of Katherine Mansfield's "The Doll's House" and the societal milieu in which it was conceived.

The story titled "The Doll's House," penned in 1922, revolves around the experiences of three sisters, Isabel, Lottie, and Kezia, belonging to the affluent Burnell family. The girls receive a splendid doll's house from a family acquaintance, a charming toy abode equipped with all amenities that excites them immensely, compelling them to share it with their friends. Thus, the following morning, during playtime, Isabel eagerly divulges news of the doll's house, causing its popularity to spread rapidly. It is agreed that two girls will be allowed to view the house simultaneously, affording the opportunity to most girls except the Kelvey sisters, hailing from a financially disadvantaged family, leading to their ridicule by others. However, defying her mother's disapproval, Kezia clandestinely invites the Kelvey sisters to behold the doll's house.

Biographical parallels can be discerned between the Burnell family and Mansfield's own Beauchamp family, as well as between Kezia and a young Mansfield. As previously mentioned, Mansfield herself lived amidst aristocracy, albeit she harbored an admiration for rural living and felt confined by her family's traditional values. Her stories boldly challenged the elitist system, with "The Doll's House" bearing evident connections to Mansfield's upbringing and her family in New Zealand. Notably, Mansfield's educational experience in a rural New Zealand school exposed her to class distinctions, leading her to model the fictional Kelvey girls after the real-life daughters of a washerwoman, Lil and Else McKelvey.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

The Social Learning Theory is a psychological framework that focuses on the idea that individuals learn not only from their direct experiences but also by observing and imitating the actions, attitudes, and behaviors of others within their social environment (Bandura, 1977). This theory suggests that learning is a dynamic, ongoing process influenced by cognitive, environmental, and behavioral factors."

Key concepts within the Social Learning Theory include:

Observational Learning (Bandura, Ross., & Ross., 1961): This is also known as modeling or vicarious learning. It refers to the process of acquiring new behaviors or knowledge by watching the actions and outcomes of others. People can learn by observing the consequences of someone else's actions, which can influence their own decision-making.

Reinforcement and Punishment (Bandura, 1986): Bandura emphasizes the role of reinforcement and punishment in the learning process. Positive reinforcement (reward) and negative reinforcement (removal of an aversive stimulus) encourage the repetition of behaviors, while punishment discourages them. Observational learning involves understanding the consequences of others' actions and how they are reinforced or punished.

Self-regulation and Self-control (Bandura, 1986): The Social Learning Theory also highlights the importance of self-regulation. Individuals learn not only through observing others but also by regulating and controlling their own behavior based on their expectations of rewards and punishments. This involves setting goals, self-monitoring, and evaluating one's own actions.

Modeling and Imitation (Bandura, 1986): Individuals often choose role models to imitate. They may select models who possess characteristics or behaviors they admire or who demonstrate competence in certain areas. The process of imitation can be deliberate or unconscious.

Reciprocal Determinism (Bandura, 1977): Bandura introduced the concept of reciprocal determinism, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between personal factors (e.g., cognition, beliefs), behaviors, and the environment. These factors constantly influence and shape each other.

1.3. Children's Socialization

Socialization is a lifelong process encompassing the acquisition of social expectations, language, culture, values, norms, attitudes, and accepted behaviors within specific social groups or situations. It shapes an individual's personality and social being. According to Daniel and Dustin (2013, 571-579), "Social behavior characterizes the interactions that occur among individuals. These can be aggressive, mutualistic, cooperative, altruistic, and parental. When individuals interact repeatedly, social relationships develop and these can form among strangers, relatives, members of the same or opposite sex, and members of the same or different generations. Childhood is a critical period for socialization, and the family plays a crucial role in children's learning and development, significantly influencing their personalities. Grusec (2011, 243-269) highlights that "every

family is a unique system with its own rules and traditions. When a child is born, he or she becomes a part of this system and gradually adapts to it. In most societies, parents are the ones assigned primary responsibility to train children in desirable directions, by supervising, teaching, and disciplining them as they grow up. Children learn moral values through the process of socialization, much of which involves parenting.” Consequently “from one side they (parents) should never stop to motivate and aid their children and from the other side they should attempt to be the best tutor in the children’s life”. (Cláudia and Filomena 2012, 693-705) During infancy, when children are entirely dependent on others, parents or parental figures teach them essential skills for self-sufficiency and care. (Ceka and Murati, 2016). Other agents such as schools, peers, classmates, and the virtual realm also influence children's socialization.

Literary works often explore themes of socialization and parental roles, recognizing the family as the primary social group for children. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that while parents have significant influence over their children's upbringing, they may not always serve as positive role models. Factors like selfishness, social prejudices, religious beliefs, and personal issues can lead parents astray, potentially influencing their children negatively. In this article, the researcher aims to examine the role of parents in children's socialization within the selected short story "The Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield. Despite being a fictional narrative, the story reflects the author's real-life experiences and provides a focused analysis of parental influence on children's social behavior. By delving into this literary work, one can gain deeper insights into the complexities of parental modeling and its impact on children's socialization experiences.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The present research delves into the pivotal role parents play in shaping children's social behavior, with a specific focus on the selected short story "A Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield. Within the context of this narrative, the study explores complex issues such as social discrimination and its profound effects on individuals, encompassing the reactions of parents and children, which are critically examined in terms of the parents' behavioral influence on their children and the innocence of youth. Additionally, the study sheds light on the contributions of school officials, peers, and other elder figures to children's social behavior. Through a comprehensive analysis, this research section concludes by comparing, analyzing, and drawing final insights from the discussed issues, synthesizing the findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the parents' role in shaping the social behavior of children within the context of "A Doll's House."

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The central theme of this research centers on investigating the impact of parents as role models on children's social behavior, with a specific focus on the short story "A Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield. The primary objectives of this study are to elucidate the extent to which parents and other family members influence children's socialization and behavioral patterns within society. The emphasis lies on comprehending the behaviors exhibited by children in their interactions with peers and classmates. Additionally, this research endeavors to explore how prevalent social laws, particularly social class distinctions, have shaped parental behaviors within families during the story's timeframe. Furthermore, this article aims to ascertain whether children invariably adhere to their parents' guidance in their social conduct. Additionally, the study endeavors to shed light on the roles of school officials, peers, and classmates, as well as the dynamics of their interactions with other children, within the context of children's socialization. Lastly, the research aims to discuss the impact of other elder figures, who assume parental roles, on children's socialization processes.

1.6. Research Methodology

This study is essentially a library work and employs a descriptive analytical approach to explore how parents influence children's social behavior within the context of the selected short story. The necessary data for this research has been obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source for the analysis is the chosen short story, which serves as the central focus for examining the role of parents in shaping children's social conduct. Secondary sources are collected from reference books, publications dedicated to the short story author, academic journals, magazines, websites, and newspaper articles related to the narrative. To enhance the depth of the research, relevant theories and online libraries have been consulted to obtain contemporary reference material. This comprehensive approach allows the researcher to provide a well-rounded exploration of the topic.

2. Social Discrimination and Its Impact on Individuals

Social discrimination “is the idea of treating an individual differently because of a specific bias that is felt against them. This acts as a theory of grouping based on the party, class, or category in which everyone is judged” (Mille 2020, 1). This phenomenon constitutes a significant challenge that has contributed to the prevalence of poverty, social disparity, and the widening of social gaps within human societies. These pronounced social variances, encompassing disparities in lifestyles, income levels, and individual rights, can result in the institutionalization of inequality among the constituents of any given society. The Individuals’ conduct and “Parenting behaviors are majorly shaped by social norms and expectations such as community, cultural values and the associated social and legal policies in which they are embedded.” (Popov and Ilesanmi 2015, 256) The fundamental right of social and economic well-being is inherent to every individual within society. However, the working class populace often experiences exclusion due to prevailing inequalities. Upper-class individuals, perceiving themselves as superior, deliberately distance themselves from those of lower social standing. This sense of superiority is perpetuated through intergenerational transmission, as it is reinforced in the upbringing of their offspring. The short story "A Doll's House" effectively illustrates this social disparity, wherein individuals are categorized into two classes based on their economic status - the working class and the

aristocrats. The narrative centers on the Burnell and Kelvey families, providing insights into the perspectives of both adults and children.

In the story, the children of the affluent Burnell family exhibit disrespectful behavior towards the family servant, disregarding his age and referring to him informally. From a humanistic and socially educational standpoint, the children should have demonstrated respect for the elderly man and refrained from such informal address. However, the man's working-class background renders his treatment inconsequential to others, including the parents, who neglect to address this issue. The parents, especially the mother, bear the primary responsibility for socializing their children. Consequently, the mother's snobbish attitudes towards the lower class lead to dehumanizing behavior towards the working class, a trait that her children adopt. The mother's snobbery is also evident in her refusal to allow the Kelvey sisters, from a lower social standing, to view the doll's house. This act of exclusion highlights her desire to maintain the appearance of aristocratic status and dignity in front of other privileged individuals. The underprivileged girls are cruelly deprived of the simple pleasure of viewing a toy, emphasizing the influence of class differences on adult behavior within the family. Furthermore, class distinctions extend to the realm of education, as the Kelvey sisters, despite attending the same school as the Burnell children, are systematically segregated due to their impoverished circumstances. The teachers' deliberate disregard for them illustrates the pervasive influence of social discrimination and the belief in their own superiority.

3. Parental Influence on Children's Responses

As delineated in the preceding discussion, the sociocultural context in which individuals dwell exerts a powerful influence on their interpersonal relationships and behavioral patterns. "Parent-child relationships constitute a very special type of relationship in which every human is personally involved." (Popov and Ilesanmi 2015, 253) This "parent-child relationship is specific in nature and differs from all other kinds of relationships (such as partners, family and friends) because of its degree of intimacy." (Troll and Fingerman 1996, 185-205) This story portrays how the norms and stratification of social classes within the given society mold parent-child dynamics and subsequent behavioral patterns within the societal context. Specifically, the mother figure in the Burnell family, adhering to prevailing social conventions, strictly prohibits any form of association between her children and individuals belonging to lower social strata. According to Samiullah Sarwar "The (se) authoritarian parents attempt to evaluate, shape and control the attitudes as well as behavior of their children in line with set standards of conduct, known as absolute standard. In the light of this absolute standard, children are supposed to follow very strict rules defined by their parents." (Sarwar 2016, 231) Despite the Burnell sisters receiving a delightful gift and sharing the news with their peers, their autonomy in decision-making remains constrained, with the ultimate authority resting in the hands of the matriarch within the family. The mother seeks to enforce societal norms and regulations upon her children's interactions with their classmates. Notwithstanding their authoritarian disposition and preconceptions, the Burnell parents are compelled to send their offspring to a single school accommodating students from diverse social backgrounds due to the limited educational options available in their rural vicinity. In response to the behaviors displayed by their family members, particularly influenced by the mother's conduct, the children in this narrative exhibit a range of reactions because "It has been shown that a given parent behavior may have different effects on different children, depending on factors such as age, sex, temperament and distinctive prior experiences." (Maccoby 2000, 1-27) The children's responses shall be expounded upon in the subsequent sections.

3.1. Parental Behavior as a Reflective Paradigm for Children

The Burnell sisters opt to exhibit their exquisite gift to their classmates. As evidenced in the above citation, Isabel, being the eldest sibling, assumes the role of both decision-maker and imitator, following the mother's guidance by inviting two girls, on each occasion, to view the dollhouse. Isabel adheres to her mother's directives, and "it has been shown that closer relationship tend to exist between adult children and their parents" (Dykstra and Fokkema 2010, 456), particularly mothers. The exclusionary stance adopted by the mother, driven by her class-based biases, prohibits schoolchildren from entering her household. Furthermore, her daughters are also restricted from inviting the working-class Kelvey children to view the dollhouse, and she forbids any communication with them. Regrettably, the elder children, Isabel and Lottie, dutifully comply with their mother's instructions without raising objections or contemplating the adverse impact of such actions on the less privileged Kelvey sisters. This behavior exemplifies the manifestation of adult perspectives, notably the mother's impact on children's conduct. Scholars posit that "Family stability and actions depend highly on the communication and interaction of its members. Human interaction represents a mutual and fundamental dependence process between individuals, in which the actions of one member reflect upon the behavior of others." (Ticuşan 2015, 1680-85) The familial interplay assumes a pivotal role within the narrative. The mother exhibits conformity to societal norms, while Isabel dutifully adheres to her mother's directives, and Lottie, the middle sibling, succumbs to Isabel's influence. Consequently, the mother and other elders are swayed by prevailing social conventions, and the children unreservedly obey the elders' instructions without critically considering humanitarian aspects. The mother's perspective serves as the impetus behind the children's inclination to pass judgment on their classmates solely based on external appearances, thereby neglecting crucial elements of their individual personalities as fellow human beings. So in this "authoritarian parenting style, parents are more concerned with the traditional family structure; therefore, they limit the child's autonomy along with the parent-child relationship. Since the foremost concern of this parenting style rests within the traditional family structure, the child is demanded to adhere to parent's orders without any questions; therefore, it can be argued that authoritarian parenting style tends to rely on rules that are considered as concrete." (Sarwar 2016, 231-232) A robust and nurturing parent-child relationship significantly influences the subsequent social, cognitive, and emotional development of the child (Antonucci et al., 2004).

However, within the context of this narrative, the adoption of an authoritarian parenting style not only cultivates biases in children and erodes their innocence but also exposes them to potential enduring challenges in their interactions with society. Moreover, such parenting practices “can further lead to antisocial behavior in children.” (Popov and Ilesanmi 2015, 254)

3.2. *The Innocence of Youth*

It was previously examined that Isabel and Lottie exhibit a propensity for uncritically adhering to their mother's directives, displaying a genuine emulation of her biased mindset, and demonstrating indifference towards the well-being of the Kelvey sisters, akin to their mother's stance. Conversely, Kezia, the youngest sibling, manifests a distinct temperament in comparison to her sisters, as evidenced by her divergent manner of interacting with her parents and the discernible differential impact of parental influence upon her.

In stark contrast to her sisters and other family members, she does not prioritize or value opulence and stylish possessions. While the entire family is enamored by the doll's house's appearance and its lavish contents, her attention is singularly drawn to the modest “amber yellow lamp”. Furthermore, her distinctive behavior and outlook are underscored by her attentiveness and concern for the well-being of the Kelvey sisters, setting her apart from the rest of the family members. In her ruminations, she grapples with an inner conflict upon witnessing the exclusion of the Kelveys from viewing the doll's house. Despite the prevailing indifference towards the Kelveys, she empathetically grasps their emotions and eagerness to partake in the experience. As a benevolent and courteous young girl, despite her junior position within the family, she endeavors to persuade her mother to permit the Kelveys to view the doll's house. This endeavor can be observed when she respectfully inquires of her mother, “can't I ask the Kelveys just once?” (Mansfield, 1922, p. 4), demonstrating a tone of request without any hint of defiance. Nevertheless, her mother firmly dismisses the suggestion with the response, “Certainly not, Kezia,” which she finds dissatisfying and proceeds to innocently inquire, “But why not?” In this exchange, it becomes evident that the mother has already imparted to her children the prevailing societal norms, including the concept of social discrimination. Nonetheless, due to her tender age, Kezia fails to fully comprehend the existing social distinctions that lead to the exclusion of the Kelvey sisters. Consequently, in regard to the Kelveys, she defies her mother's instructions and invites them to see the doll's house when the rest of the family members are occupied upstairs, partaking in a celebratory gathering, leaving her alone in the yard:

Nobody was about; she began to swing on the big white gates of the courtyard. Presently, looking along the road, she saw two little dots.... Now she could see that they were the Kelveys. Kezia stopped swinging. ...“Hullo,” she said to the passing Kelveys.... “You can come and see our doll's house if you want to,” said Kezia, and she dragged one toe on the ground. But at that Lil turned red and shook her head quickly. “Why not?” asked Kezia. Lil gasped, then she said, “Your ma told our ma you wasn't to speak to us.” “Oh, well,” said Kezia. She didn't know what to reply. “It doesn't matter. You can come and see our doll's house all the same. Come on. Nobody's looking. (1922, 5)

Kezia perceives an opportune moment when she believes everyone is upstairs, and she endeavors to extend a generous gesture to the less privileged Kelvey sisters, without harboring any sense of superiority over them. Her intention is to ensure their privacy while granting them the chance to view the doll house. However, an unforeseen occurrence transpires as Aunt Beryl accidentally enters the yard and becomes incensed upon discovering the Kelveys present. Undeterred by Aunt Beryl's rude behavior, the younger Kelvey sister, Else, naively perceives the aunt as “the angry lady,” finding delight in the sight of the doll house, particularly the small lamp in the dining room. Being of tender age and innocence, Else remains oblivious to the prevailing social distinctions that form the basis of their exclusion. Although the elderly woman forcefully dismisses them, Kezia neither protests nor apologizes. Her paramount concern appears to lie in the fact that the Kelvey sisters have had the opportunity to behold the doll house. While she lacks a comprehensive understanding of class discrimination, she defies her family's objections and circumvents the social restrictions of that era, clandestinely inviting the Kelveys to view the doll house. This action can be seen as an expression of her resistance to the elders' negativity. Despite her status as a child, Kezia exhibits a heightened sensitivity to the inherent value of individuals around her, emphasizing humanity as the paramount criterion for assessing one's worth and advocating for equality among people. Consequently, while she remains polite and obedient, she diverges from her mother's attitudes concerning the Kelveys, as she does not endorse her mother's treatment of them.

3.3. *School Officials, Peers and Small Potatoes*

In societies characterized by social inequality, individuals belonging to the lower strata face a diminished sense of social security, a decline in empathetic connections, and limited opportunities for positive social interactions. Some members of the lower class may engage in forms of protest against the prevailing injustices, which can result in increased societal pressures or potential advancements in their personal lives. On the other hand, another faction may adopt a passive stance, enduring their social status without voicing any dissent. As previously discussed, this form of social discrimination significantly impacts familial dynamics. In the case of the affluent Burnell family, the mother diligently endeavors to prevent her daughters from associating with children from the lower class, specifically the Kelvey family's daughters, in order to safeguard her social status and reputation. As per Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory, specifically the “Industry versus Inferiority” stage, which is the fourth stage, the ages of six to eleven years are crucial in terms of school involvement and social interactions for children. This stage emphasizes the significance of friends and classmates in influencing a child's progression. By demonstrating proficiency in both play and academic endeavors, children can foster a sense of competence and take pride in their abilities. Moreover, social interactions with peers enable some children to recognize that their skills surpass those of their friends or that their talents hold significant value in the eyes of others. (Storage et al. 2016) In this story when Isabel shares information with her classmates about the gift “The girls of her class nearly fought to put their arms round her, to walk away with her, to beam

flatteringly, to be her special friend” (Mansfield 1922, 2). She invites them to see the doll’s house but “the only two who stayed outside the ring were the two who were always outside, the little Kelveys”²¹(1922, 2). Among the girls who warmly embraced Isabel, it becomes evident that they exhibit robust self-confidence, firmly believing in the superiority of their abilities over their peers or recognizing the high value placed on their unique talents by others. (Storage et al.2016) The Kelveys' siblings, while displaying keen enthusiasm for witnessing the dollhouse, are subject to neglect from their peers. Nevertheless, they exhibit no protest because they have accepted “that they are not quite as capable as the other kids” (Mansfield 1922, 2). They have embraced their social status as small potatoes, leading to potential experiences of inadequacy. Lena, a fellow member of the class, inquires Lil "Is it true you're going to be a servant when you grow up, Lil Kelvey?" (1922, 2) This question elicits significant feelings of humiliation and insult, yet regrettably “instead of answering, Lil only gave her silly, shame-faced smile. She didn't seem to mind the question at all” (1922, 3). This response stems solely from Lil's perception of "inadequacy" and lack of self-confidence, leading her to maintain silence. Similarly, the younger sister remains reticent and unsmiling, merely following the lead of her elder sibling. Both exhibit a compliant and passive demeanor, adhering strictly to their mother's directives. Despite nurturing a deep desire to witness the dollhouse, when Kezia discreetly inquires if they would like to see it, Lil declines, citing, "Your ma told our ma you wasn't to speak to us" (1922, 5). In addition to parents, who assume a fundamental role in children's socialization, school authorities also play a crucial function in this process. It is widely recognized that “unlike the family, the school uses a wider range of ways and means of education, in terms of child's personality such as the development and consolidation of sustainable moral skills and beliefs meant to facilitate the child’s integration in society” (Ticușan 2015, 1680-85). In this narrative, an observation arises concerning the influence of social discrimination on the conduct of school officials, whose focus lies predominantly on the welfare of upper-class students rather than fostering the personality development of all students within the societal context. Unfortunately, school educators “had a special voice for them (upper class students) and a special smile for the other children (lower class students) when Lil Kelvey came up to her desk with a bunch of dreadfully common-looking flowers” (1922, 3). Students commonly regard their teachers as role models, and within the context of this narrative, they tend to adopt negative behaviors from their instructor. These impressionable students conscientiously observe and mimic the actions of their educators, perpetuating a cycle of unhealthy behavior. By emulating the conduct of adults, particularly prominent high-class students such as Emmie Cole and Lottie, they engage in ridiculing children hailing from impoverished backgrounds, notably Else and Lil Kelvey. Consequently, the Kelveys become ostracized and excluded by their peers, enduring social isolation as they are "shunned by everybody." Strikingly, the humiliation of the Kelveys has evolved into a form of amusement for the other school children, who take pleasure in this disheartening spectacle. The mere act of witnessing the doll's house, a simple aspiration for the Kelveys, carries no material cost and could easily fulfill their modest wish. Nonetheless, these underprivileged girls find themselves deprived not only by their elders but also subjected to the cruel humiliation and mockery of their classmates:

Lil Kelvey’s going to be a servant when she grows up.”

“O-oh, how awful!” said Isabel Burnell, and she made eyes at Emmie. Emmie swallowed in a very meaning way and nodded to Isabel as she’d seen her mother do on those occasions. “It’s true—it’s true—it’s true,” she said. Then Lena Logan’s little eyes snapped. “Shall I ask her?” she whispered. “Bet you don’t,” said Jessie May.

“Pooh, I’m not frightened,” said Lena. Suddenly she gave a little squeal and danced in front of the other girls.

“Watch! Watch me! Watch me now!” said Lena. And sliding, gliding, dragging one foot, giggling behind her hand, Lena went over to the Kelveys.

Lil looked up from her dinner. She wrapped the rest quickly away. Our Else stopped chew-ing. What was coming now?

“Is it true you’re going to be a servant when you grow up, Lil Kelvey?” shrilled Lena. (1922, 4)

This exchange among the students within the educational institution serves to illuminate that their irrational and impolite demeanor emanates as a reflection of the erroneous conduct and inappropriate convictions inculcated by their teachers and elders. Consequently, the behavior demonstrated by Kelvey's sisters and their responses toward others are also traceable to the influence of these authoritative figures, who have instilled a sense of inferiority in them. As a result, they harbor a belief that they are undeserving of a fulfilling life, lack agency in expressing their own opinions, and suffer from an acute deficit of self-assurance. Their presence within society appears to be solely based on their survival, bereft of any semblance of empowerment or confidence.

4. Other Elders

In the realm of child education and upbringing, as previously elucidated, the role of elder individuals, apart from parents, assumes considerable significance in shaping children's behavior. While the mother of the family exercises a significant influence in preventing her daughters from associating with the Kelvey sisters, she refrains from direct involvement in their relationship, potentially due to the absence of appropriate opportunities. Within the narrative, Mrs. Beryl, the Burnell children's aunt and resident of their household, inadvertently wields substantial influence over the socialization and conduct of the Burnell girls. Consequently, when a suitable occasion arises, she expels the Kelveys from the residence with evident anger, signifying her short-sighted and vindictive disposition. This behavior suggests an inclination to derive satisfaction from social distinctions and the humiliation of the less fortunate girls. Accordingly, akin to other haughty members of the family, she harbors reluctance

for the Burnell girls to associate with their economically disadvantaged peers, especially the Kelveys. This aversion manifests in her acknowledgment of the Kelveys' low status and an unwavering refusal to accept them within their home:

How dare you ask the little Kelveys into the courtyard?" said her cold, furious voice. "You know as well as I do, you're not allowed to talk to them. Run away, children, run away at once. And don't come back again," said Aunt Beryl. And she stepped into the yard and shooed them out as if they were chickens. (1922, 6)

This excerpt underscores her disdain towards the impoverished Kelveys and her strict prohibition of Kezia from exceeding the established boundaries and regulations of the household. Though for aunt Beryl, because of receiving "a terrifying, threatening letter" her "afternoon had been awful... But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming" (1922, 6). Her disagreeable demeanor and the gratification she derives from mistreating the Kelveys unveil a tendency where, while feeling powerless in confronting individuals of higher social standing, she channels her frustration towards the impoverished lower-class individuals as a means of finding solace and fulfillment.

5. Discussion

In this narrative, the characters' behaviors are deeply influenced by the principles of the Social Learning Theory, which suggests that individuals learn and model their actions based on observations and interactions within their familial and societal contexts. The Burnell family serves as a prime example of these dynamics. Isabel, the eldest sister, emerges as a faithful imitator of her mother, who clearly plays a central instructive role within the household, while the father's absence suggests his limited influence. Isabel's decisions primarily stem from her mother's teachings, lacking independent thought or personal agency. This aligns with the concept of observational learning, where individuals adopt behaviors they witness in their immediate environment. In this case, Isabel is mirroring her mother's behaviors and values. The school officials and teachers, who share similar beliefs to Isabel's mother, are unable to correct her behavior. This can be understood through the concept of reinforcement in Social Learning Theory. If a behavior is not corrected or is met with approval, it is likely to persist. Isabel perceives her mother and schoolteacher as true role models and follows their path with a flawed sense of self-assurance. She regards them as authoritative figures, reinforcing the idea that children often model their behaviors after individuals they perceive as role models. Lottie, the middle sister, takes a neutral stance and offers opinions that align with her elder sister's. Her unquestioning compliance can be attributed to the principles of imitation and reinforcement, as she is emulating the behavior she observes in Isabel, who she sees as a role model. The behavior of other girls from affluent backgrounds, such as Cole and Emile, closely mirrors that of Isabel. They consider Isabel as their role model and unreservedly comply with her instructions. This phenomenon can be explained by the principles of modeling and reinforcement. Children often model their behaviors after those they admire or perceive as authoritative figures. If Isabel's behavior is met with compliance or approval, it reinforces her role as a model for others. Kezia, in contrast, displays distinct behaviors within society, particularly in her interactions with the Kelvey sisters. Her compassionate and empathetic nature aligns with the notion that individuals can challenge and transcend the norms and values instilled by their families. Kezia's reluctance to emulate her mother's actions suggests her independent thinking and a desire to uphold humanity and equality, transcending societal classifications. This is an example of how individuals can learn and adopt alternative values and behaviors, even if they differ from those of their parents. The Kelvey sisters exhibit a distinct demeanor towards their classmates, marked by remarkable passivity and submission, reflecting their parents' influence. This behavior can be understood through the concept of observational learning, where children model their behaviors based on what they observe from their parents, internalizing their beliefs and attitudes. Therefore the characters' behaviors in this narrative are intricately shaped by the principles of the Social Learning Theory, emphasizing the importance of observation, modeling, and reinforcement in the development of their actions and attitudes within their familial and societal contexts.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the characters in "The Doll's House" vividly illustrate the profound impact of parental influence on children's behaviors and attitudes in both family and society. Isabel, driven by her mother's teachings, becomes a faithful imitator and exhibits a sense of superiority over her less privileged peers. Lottie and other affluent girls, while not explicitly examined in relation to their parents, seem to mirror Isabel's behavior and uphold societal class divisions. The parents' influence tends to be negative, except for Kezia, who somehow challenges societal norms. She stands as a striking contrast, demonstrating independent and compassionate behavior that challenges the conventional norms of her privileged family. Her actions reveal a genuine empathy and a reluctance to emulate her parents, suggesting that children possess inherent kindness and should not be hindered by societal classifications. The Kelvey sisters, shaped by their lower-class parents, obediently follow their mother's directives and endure derogatory treatment from classmates. They embody the internalized sense of inferiority passed down through generations. In summary, while parental influence undeniably molds the characters' behaviors, Kezia emerges as a unique figure, breaking free from the confines of societal norms. "The Doll's House" serves as a powerful commentary on the complexities of upbringing and societal expectations, ultimately highlighting the potential for individuality and kindness to prevail even in the face of rigid social hierarchies.

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