

Love for Children in the Short Stories Collection “*Cloud and Sun*” by Rabindranath Tagore

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Abstract Rabindranath Tagore is known as a magical genius of Indian literature. During his life, R. Tagore has raised morality lessons to honor, pay his respects to humans. His works are always written from human love and the “*Cloud and Sun*” is a collection of successful short stories in many ways, especially the love for children. R. Tagore often deeply looks into the inner world of human beings with the eyes full of love and accordingly, the reader sees R. Tagore's art and human opinions on human and life.

Keywords: love for children, cloud and sun, Rabindranath Tagore

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1. Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore and his works were translated and introduced by many interested researchers relatively early. There are many studies and reviews on Tagore, such as: *R. Tagore- life lover* by Nhat Chieu, Hoang Huu Dan [1]; The coursebook *Indian Literature* by Luu Duc Trung, by which the Indian Literature in general and R. Tagore in particular have been officially included in colleges' and universities' programs in Vietnam [2]; The *Tagore – Literature and man* by Do Thu Ha brought a deep insight into the short stories of Tagore from the “reality of the short story” to the “real picture” of society, which has brought to the reader “different portraits of characters within a short story” [3]; 119-120] that derived from life itself. The author affirmed that “Tagore is considered to be a great poet and a great short story writer. This is a rare combination in history of world literature” [3]; 119]; Author Nguyen Van Hanh in *Rabindranath Tagore with the Renaissance* asserted Tagore's contributions to Bengali and Indian literature through his short stories: “Before R. Tagore and at his time, there seemed to be no Indian authors successful with prose writing in native language” and thought that R. Tagore “established a clear position for Indian prose writing genre in native language during the modernization of Indian literature” [4]; 106-107]; Some researches have focused on short stories of R. Tagore and *Clouds and sunshine* short stories collection such as: *Works and Author of Foreign Literature in the Classroom - Tago* by Le Nguyen Can as chief author, compiled and selected by Nguyen Thi Mai Lien, which spent a significant part to talk about the content and art value of the Tagore's short stories. The authors focused on clarifying the realistic values, humanistic values, and

artistic methods used by the author in the selected short stories [5]; Author Luu Duc Trung selected and introduced *R. Tagore - a collection of works* including two volumes. Of the 35 short stories presented, there are 21/35 short stories under the *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection. In the introduction, the author commented, “Tagore's short stories contain the great humanistic spirit” [6]; 7] and affirmed: “Tagore's short stories are very diverse, some stories are very short with only a few dozen lines, some are very long stories with quite complex structure and deeply realistic contents. He often combines fiction and realism into the story, making the work emotional and attractive” [6]; 8]. In *An Anthology of Asian Literature*, alongside the poetry and drama quotes of R. Tagore, the author quoted two short stories of Tagore in *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection: *Mahamaya* and *The Cabuliwallah* [The Fruitseller from Kabul] [7]. In *Entering the Asian literary garden*, the author made remarkable comments on *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection and claims that realistic value and humanistic value are the core values of this collection. “Short plot, some stories have just only a few pages but the contents are concise, closely structured, dramatic, creating attractive stories” [8]; 152].

Children are always the subject of R. Tagore to be portrayed with depth, viewed from the pure, innocent and beautiful aspects, comes from the “sincere feelings of their grandfather, father, teacher, who love them, believe in their future and teach everyone to keep the true, the good and the beautiful in children” [2]; 157]. In the *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection, there are 12/25 stories with child characters and most of the child characters play the central role of the work. In these works, the child characters are usually the most focus point of important details, central issues, conflicts, artistic and philosophical views of the works. At the same time, they are also the

central characters of great influences on the flow of details in these works.

2. Content

Rabindranath Tagore was a person who understands the psychology, emotions and dreams of children so he described the diversity, richness of children's personality. In particular he paid attention to the children's innocence, playfulness, purity, full of love and desire to explore the world. It is the innocence and playfulness of Mrinmoyi in *Samapti* [The Conclusion] who, together with Rakhai, often put the wise Aupurbo in embarrassing situations for fooling round, and the gentle, lovely little girl Giribala who teased Shasibhusan to get his attention in *Clouds and Sunshine*. The open-mindedness, cheerfulness, sociability of Tara in *The Runaway*. The quick-witted Nitai Pal in *The Trust Property*. The sincere, innocent, warmly emotion of Venu in *Master Mashai*. The gentle, subtle character of Prabha and Ratan who always cared for and shared with their loved ones in *The Editor* and *The Postmaster*. However, there are still children who were shy, quiet and did not know how to express their feelings to others such as young girl Subha in the work of the same name, little boy Nilkanta with a face of both young and old combination, "his lips puckered into lines that showed him to be old and hard; but innocence and youth shone in his large eyes" in *The Castaway* seemed to be an autistic boy. On the other hand, Prabha and Ratan appeared to be gentle, sophisticated as adult women as they always cared for and shared with their loved ones in *The Editor* and *The Postmaster*, etc. R. Tagore often put the child characters in relationships and aspects so that they can express their different emotions and personalities, while also reveals the children's innocent beauty and mind, the rich love, playfulness, curiosity and the desire to explore the world.

The innocence and virtuous soul of children has a profound and strong impact on the soul of the adult and becomes a magical connection of love among hearts and warms the withered souls. The sincere and innocent feelings of Venu for Haralal in *Master Mashai* were the great joy and comfort during the teaching life of the poor teacher. The innocence and purity of Mini in *The Cabuliwallah* had warmed the heart of the expatriate Rahmun. The love and care of Ratan had become the joy and comfort for the postmaster in *The Postmaster*, etc. In addition, the author described the pure soul and nature of the true, the good and the beautiful existing in children as opposed to the evilness, stinginess and greediness of the society driven by money and power. The quick-wittedness of Nitai Pal as opposed to the stinginess of Jaganath in *The Trust Property*. The love for his daughter Prabha in *The Editor* had helped he escape from the temptation of glory and fame, etc. Furthermore, R. Tagore also criticized the heartless attitude of adult which hurts children and causes the deaths of innocent children. The dumb girl Subha of the work with the same name was shunned by surrounding people and rejected by her own mother, therefore, her only friend was Mother Nature and pets. The little boy Nilkanta in *The Castaway* was an unloved child who has just found the loving embrace and received "warm interest", however, not long after, because of the

lack of love and protection of adults, he had been pushed out. He left as a criminal with deep wounds in his soul. The blindness of stingy man Jaganath in *The Trust Property* had indeliberately killed his own nephew, Nitai Pal without knowing. The death of the child that due to the straitened circumstances of Khiroda, the mother in *The Judge*. The little girls with stolen happy childhood became brides, widows such as Mrinmoyi in *Samapti*, Giribala in *Clouds and Sunshine*, etc.

In his works, R. Tagore also depicted child figures as villains despite their incomplete villain nature. The interest and love of the author for children had helped him see clearly in the inner world to recognize the nature of innocence, purity, beauty, full of love in each child character such as Charu in *The Runaway* was an innocent girl who was born into a rich family and was spoiled at young age so she became selfish and jealous to other people, Charu was jealous of Tara because he was loved by her parents, and was jealous of Sonamani because she was loved by Tara, etc.; Venu was a remorseless, lazy rogue, but in the past he was a innocent and affectionate boy in *Master Mashai*; the unruly children due to lack of love and protection from adults and was pushed out to society in *The Castaway*, etc. R. Tagore not only described personality development and change in the fate of children in different directions from naughty, hyperactive to loving, adorable children, and from innocent, pure to spoiled, mean children due to over-indulgence in wealthy families, orphans, unruly, resigned, disadvantaged children with stolen happy childhood to become the brides, widows, etc., but also analyzed, evaluated with a gracious, loving view to children and gave the message that children are only truly happy, become good persons when they are given love and education in a good family and social environment.

R. Tagore was succeeded in directly depicting characters' psychology by capturing the individual psychological traits of each character and the psychological development of the character through objective and subjective causes. In the short stories, children are the deeply depicted subjects by R. Tagore, which can be seen from the pure, innocent and beautiful aspects. In order to bring the reader a better understanding of the world of children souls, R. Tagore used the method of direct description of character psychology. This description often lies in the narrator's comments or the direct half-words attached with descriptions of language, actions, and gestures of the character. For the children who had a good and peaceful life as in *The Editor*, *The Cabuliwallah*, etc. it was very easy to describe and grasp their inner world. However, for the characters of unfortunate children, there were many torments, suffering, conflicts in their inner world, such as in *The Runaway*, *The Castaway*, *Subha*, etc. the author had to use more direct description of the character psychology. R. Tagore directly described the painful and misery psychology of Nilkanta in *The Castaway* when he found himself abandoned and left out since the appearance of Satish - Sharat's younger brother. "He was suddenly filled with a bitterness which he must avenge on somebody or something" ([9]; 281). Therefore, Nilkanta became pesky and undisciplined. He beat his friends, the mongrel and roadside trees and then he refused to eat and cried silently in the darkness after many efforts to get

Kiran's concern had failed: "And from whom did he expect redress? At last, when no one else came, Mother Sleep soothed with her soft caresses the wounded heart of the motherless lad." [9]; 282]. Especially, Nilkanta had a complicated mood full of disturbing thoughts and turns as he saw Kiran discovered the lost belongings in his box. It was the shame of a thief when being found and the mood of resentment when being unable to explain that his behavior of stealing Satish's inkstand was not from greed and especially his sadness and self-pity when being spied on by Kiran like a thief. R. Tagore described this complex emotions of panic, confusion and misery by mixing questions, narrative and imperative sentences with the dialogues of assumptions: "He was not a thief," his heart cried out, "not a thief!" Then what was he? What could he say? That he had stolen, and yet he was not a thief? He could never explain to Kiran how grievously wrong she was. And then, how could he bear the thought that she had tried to spy on him? [9]; 286]. By a good understanding of child psychology, description of jealous and disillusioned psychology, R. Tagore made readers understand that the actions of children all comes from the need and lack of love. R. Tagore's understanding of human psychology is also reflected in the detailed description, thorough analysis of the realization moments in the mind of each character, the logically stages of psychological development of character under the influence of objective and subjective reasons.

In order to describe the children's diverse, rich and complex inner world, R. Tagore used interior monologue and dialogue of character. Through this interior monologue, the readers are shown all shapes of emotions and feelings in characters' inner world. In stories with child characters, R. Tagore often let them express their feelings through their monologue and dialogue. Through the interior monologues, R. Tagore let the children speak out their own mood of extreme loneliness, distress, frustration when not supported and encouraged by the adults. It was being speechless, the heart wanted to cry out "I am not a thief" because Nilkanta could not share and explain the reason when Kiran found Satish's inkstand in his box. It was the bitterness of the dumb girl Subha "What have I done to you", or clinging to the Earth as if clinging to her only mother "Do not let me leave you, mother. Put your arms about me, as I have put mine about you, and hold me fast" [9]; 305] or the anger of Charu - a jealous and self-fish girl when she thought: "If our family does not bring him here, and take great care of him, how come Sonamani and her mother can see him" [9]; 211], etc.

R. Tagore also used the form of dialogue to describe the complicated psychological states that characterize the personality of characters in his works. For child characters, because of their limited language use, in the *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection, the children spoke less than adults. Their spiritual world were mainly exposed through gestures and actions. However, whether the children spoke more or less, their character were still expressed in a quintessential and fullest manner. It is the the vocative in the dialogues that has expressed the nuances of mood and personality of the character. Nitai Pal's short sentences and answers: 'What's your name, my boy?' 'Nitai Pal.' 'Where's your home?' 'Won't tell.'

'Who's your father?' 'Won't tell.'... [9]; 190] reveals the naughty character of a boy who was not well-educated. Mrinmoyi's responses to Aupurbo as "no", "yes", "right", etc. expresses the naughty and undaunted attitude of the little girl toward her brother-in-law. However, her loving words to her father who worked far away, expresses her love, missing and strong desire to meet her father despite her naughty appearance. Through dialogues with different people, readers can realize that different levels of emotions and feelings of the children should be from love and sympathy instead of forcing or threatening. The deep understanding of the world of child psychology is also expressed by the author through naive, lovable questions and intelligent answers with the good-humored laughter or closed-eye smile of the children when playing or chatting with adults. Author R. Tagore had successfully used the form of dialogue to portray the beauty of their immature soul in his works.

Human understanding is demonstrated by the way he portrayed character psychology indirectly through images of the nature. In *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection, nature is seen as a big stage "the sky stage", "the great stage of nature", etc. to show the inner thoughts of characters. The author describes nature in the analogy between man and the scenery, sometimes as a reflection of the disturbance within the mind of the character. Nature as a great mother - "Mother Nature", "Mother Earth" always listens to the human heart and respond in nature's own language.

The images of nature are closely linked with the inner thoughts of the character, reflecting the changes in the mood of the character: "nature is everywhere, at every time and always carry the heart, all the nuances of the scene reflect the changes of the soul" [9]; 11], "the clouds and the sunshine are the two prominent players in the firmament, on the earthly stage below are many other plays, and at different places of the world" [9]; 13]. Nature looks different through the mood of the character "the moon is dark, no birds singing. The litchi next to the pond looks like a spot on a faded background. The southern wind was blowing around in the darkness like a sleepwalker; the stars in the sky stay awake all night in the darkness trying to trace some kind of deep mystery" [9]; 131], sometimes sympathetic, sheltered, as light as "playing sunshine and clouds" and eager, bright, beautiful after the storms, ups and downs like "the gentle light of rainy morning" [9]; 49].

Nature also sometimes triggers the mood, speaks for the thoughts, concerns deep in the soul of the character such as the image of "heavy rain at the beginning of season" expresses the mood, the suffering of the character when was being away from lover, "the bungalows on the edge of Kolkata seem to be softened and the city's shrill sounds seem to be choked up with tears." [9]; 131], etc.

The characters in *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection are multiform with many different personality features. These character features are revealed not only in appearance, language but also clearly gestures and actions of the characters. By description of the gestures and actions of the characters, the writer gives the readers the psychological status which dominates such actions of the characters. Children always desire to be loved, protected and R. Tagore praises the power of love that can help

them overcome the difficult stages, desperate situations, support and improve the soul of the children. The author condemns the ignorance of the adults, backward conceptions of society that kills the innocence in the soul of the children. Besides, the author also asks the right to be loved for children and affirms the development and perfection in the personality of each child for becoming good citizens when being received love, care and education from the adults.

The gestures and actions of expressing love and compassion make up the highest number in the whole work. Expression of love is the care of the character for the person whom they love. It could be just a handshake, mellow whispered words, or a merciful look. Sometimes, it is also a careful meal preparation for the husband and the children when coming back home after the work, care for dressing, etc. as Giribala gives small gifts to Shasibhusan, Prabha takes care of his father thoughtfully, Ratan takes care of the postmaster carefully. The love and compassion is also forgiveness, tolerance and sharing for the people around like Anapocna and Babu, they do not know who Tara is but have open-hearted to welcome the boy, the father of Mini is willing to reduce some of the cost of the wedding to present Ramun in order to help him return to the countryside to meet the girl after many years away

R. Tagore praises love and critiques the ambition, the radical thoughts of the human that causes the pain, hurt others, etc. all contrast with the innocence of the children. The author describes the soul of the children as a bright example for adults to look at. Throughout the length of the story, the author describes the gestures, the actions of the heartless, the blind expression of those who are influenced by the religious class, fame, status, money, power, selfishness, jealousy envy, etc. That is lord, lordess, because of jealousy, afflicted Bipin; Venu wanted to go to England, so he was willing to steal money from the teacher; Mahamaya's brother, because of his honor, was ready to take his sister to the crematorium; Xunetora is obsessed with the stars of fate so that he forbid the love of the daughter; Hariha, for fear of being kicked out of the class, forced her son to expel his wife; Jaganath, for keeping the property, killed his nephew; Xundari, because of greed, she treated cruelly with her husband; The girl did not want the lover get marriage other, so he killed the lover. Besides, the characters who are haunted by the illusion of the past always act in madness, delirium and paranoia. When Jaganath knew he had killed his nephew, he always heard the echoes of his nephew who was buried under the ground, and from there he become paranoid, acted insane, etc. With obsessive characters by jealousy, every gesture of action always shows rebellion, opposition as Nilkanta always made others angry. Sometimes, it is also possible that the rebellion also derives from the desire to be free from all religious constraints in order to seek the own happiness as the character of Hemsasi or the character

Mrinmoyi. At the same time the gestures and actions also express the desire for freedom and want to be freed as Hemanta renounced the class to receive love, Prabha was ready to burn out his articles to escape the obsessive fame, Tara left to live the life of freedom, Bipin Kixo left for the jealousy of his lord, etc.

With the love for children, R. Tagore observes the maturation of the children from childhood with changes in personality and fate, always try to look deeply into the world of their soul with eyes of love, from which the author depicts the world of children innocently, lovingly contrasted completely with the adult world with the attempted evil, rushed, scramble, pragmatic.

3. Conclusion

The characters in *Clouds and Sunshine* short stories collection are multiform with many different personality features. In which, R. Tagore devotes much of his attention to the characters of the children and always tries to look deeply into the world of their soul with the eyes of love. He created a world of children with different looks in character but have a clear soul, rich love, like to explore the world. To guide the reader into the colorful world of childhood, R. Tagore uses direct and indirect descriptive style, described through dialogue language, inner monologue, and gestures, actions of the character. Through the art of describing character psychology, the reader sees R. Tagore's concept on the human, the life and the efforts of the writer to look deeply into the interior world of the human with love. From there, the author praises the innocence of the children, and the right to be loved for children.

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