

**REVISITING JESSE STUART'S SHORT FICTION: JUXTAPOSITION OF NATURE  
AND PERSON**

**Ganieva Orzigul Khayriddinovna**

Doctor of philosophy in Philological Sciences, Associate Professor

E-mail: [ganievaorzigul494@gmail.com](mailto:ganievaorzigul494@gmail.com)

The Department of English Literature and Translation Studies, Foreign Languages Faculty,  
Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan

**Abstract:** Jesse Stuart is an American regional writer who made significant contributions to the development of twentieth-century American short fiction. His short stories set in rural Appalachia, where he grew up, are well-known. His works frequently address the link between people and the natural environment, emphasizing the contrast between nature's strength and beauty and the challenges and aspirations of the people who inhabit it. Nature provides as a backdrop for the protagonists' lives in most Jesse Stuart's short stories. The following paper explores how the author describes the natural scene in amazing detail, capturing its magnificence, severity, and unpredictability in the stories "Another April" and "Love". This contrast highlights the characters' connection to their surroundings and the impact it has on their lives. Nature is frequently portrayed as a force that can both nourish and confront individuals, mirroring the human experience's dualities. Furthermore, Jesse Stuart's characters frequently find peace, inspiration, and a sense of self in their relationships with environment. They derive strength from the earth, taking solace in its familiarity and ageless quality. At the same time, the character's difficulties and conflicts are juxtaposed with nature's immutable cycles, emphasizing the fleeting essence of human existence. Overall, Jesse Stuart's short fiction examines themes of resilience, the human condition, and the interconnectedness of humans and their environment through the juxtaposition of nature and person.

**Key words:** significant, regional writer, short story, Jesse Stuart, nature, character, relation, juxtaposition, "Another April", "Love".

---

**Introduction** Any author has a considerable influence of the time he lives, and there is no doubt that he shows the spirit and character of the prevailing era. According to Umarali Normatov, the level of artistry is the level, scale, and impact of the artist's love for his subject, the object of the image, as well as the deep inner emotional tone embedded in the blood and flesh of the work. Jesse Stuart also became one of the writers who achieved individuality in the 20th century US realistic storytelling with his unique creativity, poetic thinking breadth of observation, realistic approach to the depiction of life reality, adherence to objectivity in artistic reality, and the depth of his point of view, and fluency in the angles of poetic expression.

The unique aspect of the author's prose is that his works portray his personal life and career. In the examples of literary prose works, the Appalachian Mountains, landscapes typical of local farms located far from the city, or rather rural areas, small settlements, and their unique nature, lifestyle, culture, and values of the inhabitants were deeply looked at. The experience of the writer, who grew up in a family of farmers on the slopes of the Kentucky state as a child, served as a source of inspiration for his work. Along with the sorrows, complications, and conflicts in the society, Jesse Stuart wrote the joys and happiness of the rural people, in a word, the way of life and the beautiful scenery of the indigenous people living in this area. In each example of his work, love, deep respect and respect for the people and nature of this land were shining, and the leading

themes in his small prose works were the sincerity of the village people, childhood, respect for the elders, honor for the children, love for the gifts of nature and it was sad.

**Literature review** Jesse Stuart, an American writer, has published a number of short stories over the course of his career. He was born in Kentucky and drew inspiration from his rural Appalachian background frequently. The short stories by Jesse Stuart have been researched by literary scholars such as R.I. Foster, W. Hall, J.W. Miller, K. Clark, M.W. Clark, J.R. LeMaster, H.P. Taylor, E.L. Blair, G. Brosi and J.A. Herndon. Especially the subject of education, the structure of stories, literary style, and skillful use of folklore samples in the author's small prose works, opinions on the cultural-historical context were expressed in this research.

**Results and discussion** Along with his many poems, Jesse Stuart has also created a considerable amount of prose works. In his more than four hundred short stories, he has been able to embody with authenticity and deep sympathy the character, spirit, and cultural peculiarities of the indigenous people who live in the majestic Appalachian Mountains which have passed through several states of the country and lie as far as Kentucky. These works entered the literature as an echo, as the writer has paid attention to the social stratum that has been neglected in most of the creative works. Furthermore, the writer has highlighted that they have a place in the history and culture of the country as people with several centuries of culture.

It is notable that nearly ten short story collections have been published throughout the author's oeuvre. The short story collections as "Head o' W-Hollow" (1936), "Taps for Private Tussie" (1943), "Men of the Mountains" (1944), "The Thread that Runs So True" (1949), "Kentucky Is My Land" (1952), "Tales from the Plum Grove Hills" (1961) feature stories set in the Plum Grove Hills, a fictionalized representation of writer's own hometown in Greenup County, Kentucky. The stories provide a glimpse into the lives of the people in this rural community. They showcase his deep connection to the Appalachian region and his ability to capture the essence of its people and landscapes in his writing.

Furthermore, person and nature juxtaposition is one of the leading themes in Jesse Stuart's short fiction. Through the discussion of the stories "Another April" and "Love" by Jesse Stuart, it is possible to state that the writer more often focused on the revelation of characters' behavior and inner world with the means of trees, animals, insects, or flowers. Description of flora and fauna helps the reader grasp the author's aim that he conveys.

"Another April" is the story told by a boy whose immediate family members, his mother and grandfather, are closely related to one another, and his mother cares more than anyone else in the family for his elderly father, who is more than ninety years old. The story is about attention and respect for the elderly, family unity, and the family values in one's life experience. It is not only a story about parent-child relations or human's love to nature, but also meaning of life, every single day, making conclusions from the people around us, the power of maternal love and friendship with animals.

"Love" is a story about a small boy, his father, and their dog Bob, which describes an incident with a female snake. To the boy's disappointment, the father orders the dog to kill the snake when they discover how she protects her eggs when she dies. The boy becomes depressed, but he reminds himself that everything comes full circle. The father and son return to the dead snake's body the next day and discover her mate near her. The male snake tries to protect the deceased snake, and the father orders the boy to hurl the male snake over the bank with a stick. The child obeys, and the snake's display of affection for his deceased companion teaches him about the power of love.

Both short stories feature a juxtaposition of nature and person. Jesse Stuart's writing explores the relationship between individuals and the natural world, particularly in the rural Appalachian setting that he often depicted. The author portrays the natural environment as a powerful force

that shapes and influences the lives of his characters. He often highlights the beauty, harshness, and unpredictability of nature, contrasting it with the struggles, desires, and aspirations of human beings.

In the stories Jesse Stuart uses a great number of trees and plants namely chestnut oak, chestnut, pine, greenbriar, greenweed, percoon, wild plum, wild crab apple, cane, dogwood, redbud, windflower, sassafras. The author's characters find themselves in close proximity to nature, through their work in the fields as it is described in the story "Love", their interactions with wildlife, or their reliance on the land for sustenance as it is depicted in the story "Another April". The natural world serves as a backdrop against which the characters' lives unfold, impacting their choices, relationships, and overall experiences. The writer aims to convey several purposes through utilizing these plants and trees. Firstly, it gives the story the authenticity of the environment and the reader can feel atmosphere peculiar to Kentucky fields and hills. As an example: percoon is a perennial herb in the buttercup family which belongs to the flora of the Kentucky hills. In "Courier Journal" (1955) Jesse Stuart gives information about this flower claiming that this flower's actual name is bloodroot, but the early Kentuckians took the name "puccoon" from the Indians, who used the juice its roots give for their ceremonial body paints. Moreover, the author points out that percoon the name given by the people living in this area and very few people use the name bloodroot for it. It becomes clear that the early inhabitants of the area borrowed the name of the flower altering it to percoon, but not puccoon. The author states that percoon 'announces the beginning of a Kentucky spring and is one of the most beautiful wild flowers in the word'. Additionally the writer contemplates that 'there is something magic about its tender blossoms quivering in the chilly winds of the late March and early April'. [<https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-courier-journal-percoon/47984461/>]. In the story "Another April" Jesse Stuart describes his character's facial expression where he resembles his eyebrows to percoon petals. "Above his eyes were long white eyebrows almost as white as percoon petals and very much longer". This example shows that grandpa is very old of age and he needs special attention and respect in the family. Furthermore, white symbolizes pureness, humbleness, modesty and wit. Additionally though the season of percoon blossom is not depicted in the story, but through the grandpa's description Jesse Stuart gives hint to that season expressing the culture and history of the place he lives.

Both stories mention several animals and insects which is peculiar to Kentucky fields and hills. These are: butterfly, hog, bumblebee, terrapin, Collie, lark, blacksnake, copperhead, mice, squirrel and quail. Especially it attracts the attention that both stories showcase close relationship of characters with nature. In the story "Another friendship of Grandpa and terrapin, in the story "Love" boy and his dog's friendship, intimate relationship of snakes are masterfully depicted by Jesse Stuart. In "Another April" grandpa talks to every animal, insect and flower as if they are alive. The author wants to point out that everything around us is alive and they can hear and feel us. Moreover, images of terrapin and Grandpa are both the symbols of wit, experience and dignity. The story "Another April" is narrated by the first person and the narrator is a young boy. Investigations has showed that Jesse Stuart wrote about his own experiences as a boy, for his grandfather Nathan Preston Hilton died at the age of 91 in 1943 and was buried in Plum Grove Cemetery which is mentioned in the story. At the end of the story the narrator states: "Grandpa looks like the terrapin" which conveys the main message of the story. Due to the long lifespan, terrapins are sometimes associated with wisdom and ancient knowledge, a terrapin represents Grandpa who possesses deep understanding and insight. When Grandpa mentions him as 'an old friend', it shows that that character has lived with respect and care towards the nature through all his life.

The story “Love” is constructed on the plot which showcases love between the animals in nature. Jesse Stuart masterfully portrays mother’s care and love to children, love between two couples and the value of respect in this relationship. In this story the narrator also a young boy who experiences an accident which teaches a good life lesson to him. ‘It is life. Stronger devour the weaker even among human beings. Dog kills snake. Snake kills birds. Birds kill the butterflies. Man conquers all. Man, too, kills for sport’. [McConochie, J.A. (1979), Twentieth Century American Short Stories, Высшая школа, Москва, С.91]. The boy gains a deeper understanding of the natural order and the cycle of life and death.

The motives as ‘sunshine, sunrise and sunset’ also play an important role in settling down the mood of characters and the story itself. In the story “Another April” ‘sunshine’ and April (spring season) month symbolize hope, renewal, optimism, new beginnings, the promise of a better future, vitality, and life force. In the story “Love” ‘sunset’ provides an opportunity to pause, look back on the events of the day, and consider the characters’ actions, choices, and experiences. Both the boy and his father regret of the accident they faced and the next day his father becomes totally different person which is mentioned in the story as ‘Did you ever see anything to beat that?’ meaning more astonishing than that (colloquial).

Through the juxtaposition of people and nature, Jesse Stuart explores themes such as the interconnectedness of all living things, the resilience of nature, the challenges posed by the environment, and the ways in which individuals navigate their place within it. His stories often delve into the tension between human desires, ambitions, and limitations in the face of the natural world's power and indifference.

**Overall,** Jesse Stuart's portrayal of the juxtaposition between nature and person in his short stories adds depth and richness to his narratives, illuminating the complex dynamics between human beings and the environment they inhabit.

### **References:**

1. Adabiy turlar va janrlar (Tarixi va nazariyasiga oid) 1-jild, (1991), Fan, Toshkent.
2. Blair, E.L. (1967), Jesse Stuart; his life and works, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, The USA.
3. Clarke, M.W. (1968), Jesse Stuart’s Kentucky, McGraw-Hill, N.Y.
4. Herndon, J.A. & Brosi, G. (1988), Jesse Stuart, the man and his books, The Jesse Stuart Foundation, The USA.
5. Jesse Stuart. Essays on his work. Ed. J.R. LeMaster & M.W.Clarke. (1977), The University Press of Kentucky, The USA.
6. Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism. Ed. J.R. LeMaster (1978), Valkyrie Press, The USA.
7. Foster, R.E. (1968) Jesse Stuart, Twayne Publishers, NY.
8. McConochie, J.A. (1979), Twentieth Century American Short Stories, Высшая школа, Москва.
9. Miller D. L. Jesse Stuart’s “Dawn of Remembered Spring”. // Border States. Online: Journal of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association, No. 8, 1991. // <http://spider.georgetowncollege.edu/htallant/border/bs8/dmiller.htm>
10. Myers, M. (2001), The Best Loved Short Stories of Jesse Stuart by Jesse Stuart. (Review), Appalachian Heritage, Vol.29, Number 2, pp. 64-66.
11. Spurlock, J.H. (1986), A sociocultural and rhetorical analysis of Jesse Stuart’s fiction. A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
12. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-courier-journal-percoon/47984461/>