

## **Edward P Jones's Style Of Geo-Tagging: An Approach to Analytical Narration**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The paper aims to analyse the two short stories books by Edward P. Jones. The paper involves the analysis of the special ability of the Edward P. Jones in the writing of the both short stories. In 'Lost in The City' and 'All on Hagar's Children' Edward P. Jones have used unique style of the geo tagging in the Washington DC. The paper will talk about the importance of Jones's meticulous attention to geographic details. Edward P. Jones compiles fourteen short stories in his fiction collection Lost in the City and 'All on Hagar's Children'. The paper aims at giving the analytical description of the unique style of the Edward pigeons in both short stories. The paper involves use of descriptive approach to the study. The research is analytical in nature and involves use of secondary data. The researcher has been critically analysing the literature of both short story books and discuss about it in the analysis section. The findings reveal that some of the sites are depicted in the stories because Jones drew on his personal memories of the location. His tales depict a DC of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. While Jones tries to reinvigorate and recover this geography via his writing, much of it has been removed from the communities he writes about in the twenty-first century. This relocation, and even eradication, of landmarks in the Black communities and neighbourhoods in today's DC confirms this. Jones appropriates Chocolate City through the numerous cultural geo-tagging activities in his literature, similar to how Black artists currently tag the city with murals and street art.

**Keywords:** Edward P. Jones, The lost in The City, 'All Aunt Hagar's Children, Geotagging

### **Introduction**

African-American novelist Edward P. Jones published his first book, All Aunt Hagar's Children (2006), a collection of short tales, after receiving the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for The Known World. The 14 stories in this book are all about African Americans in Washington, D.C., in the 20th century. The protagonists' weights from their families, society, and themselves can be used to categorize the stories. Each tale follows a trip, whether it was intended or not, successful or unsuccessful, and there is a clear route symbolism running across the whole book. Jones is known for creating lengthy short tales, and these are no exception; they include fully developed characters and have been referred to be "novelistic." His first and third books 'Lost in the City' and 'All Aunt Hagar's Children' contain interconnected storylines. According to Neely Tucker, there are 14 stories in "Lost" and 14 stories in "Hagar's," all of which are arranged in chronological sequence from the youngest to the oldest character. A connection exists between the first tale in the first book and the first story in the second book, and so on.

One must read the first narrative in each volume, then move on to the second story in each, and so forth, to learn the entire history of the characters (Kermond, Richard, 2010).

All Aunt Hagar's Children, Jones' third book, was released in 2006. It is a collection of short stories, similar to *Lost in the City*, about African Americans, mostly in Washington, D.C. The *New Yorker* magazine has already published a few of the articles. The lives of supporting characters from *Lost in the City* are depicted in the book's short tales. It was a contender for the PEN/Faulkner Award in 2007, which Philip Roth's *Everyman* won.

There are connections between Jones' first and third books' narratives. The fourteen stories in *All Aunt Hagar's Children* revisit not just the city of Washington but also the fourteen tales from *Lost in the City*, as Wyatt Mason stated in *Harper's Magazine* in 2006. Each new tale is related in the same order, as if by an umbilical cord, to the equivalent story in the first volume. Many of the new stories feel like completely formed short novels due to their completeness. Of all, there are countless sequels in literature—there are *Zuckermans*, *Kepeshes*, and *Rabbits*—but this isn't often how Jones envisions a reprise. Each iteration offers a unique way for the two groups to interact with one another (Torday, Daniel, 2009). The objective of the Study is to study the writing style of Edward P Jones. The study also explores the unique style of geo-tagging used in the *All Aunt Hagar's Children* and *Lost in the City*.

## Literature Review

(Graham, Maryemma, 2006) claims that Jones is at his finest when he plays God in his short works as well. As an omniscient narrator, he has a firm understanding of the Washington, where he was born and reared, that he talks about. The majority of the 14 tales in his most recent book, "*All Aunt Hagar's Children*," as well as those in "*Lost in the City*," his first collection from 1992 that pays tribute to Joyce's "*Dubliners*," take set in more or less modern-day Washington. The first narrative here serves as a link between urban life in the capital and rural life in "*The Known World by Edward P. Jones*." Ruth and Aubrey Patterson are young newlyweds in "*In the Blink of God's Eye*," who cross the Potomac and leave rural Virginia to begin over in the metropolis. Ruth is homesick and confused about Washington, in large part because she discovers an abandoned infant soon after arriving. She absorbs it, and their young marriage's issues start as a result. But before that night, they spend their time savoring their union and taking in the late-evening cityscape.

Both "*Lost in the City*" and "*All Aunt Hagar's Children*" are lauded as outstanding examples of empathy and creativity (Jones, Edward P., and Maryemma Graham, 2017). This collection is similarly important despite its sporadic errors, even if the first one could be more constant. It was short-listed for a National Book Award, but it is still underread. In the title tale, Jones dabbles in noir, of all things, and the outcome is inconsistent. It is narrated from the perspective of a young guy tasked with uncovering a murder. In "*A Poor Guatemalan Dreams of a Downtown in Peru*," a tale concerning the presence of the paranormal in witnesses to significant calamities, there is hesitancy. Although there are too many stunning lines to mention, the collection manages to astound on every page. If Jones has a flaw, it may be that he longs too much for the middle ages, the time after the northern exodus of the descendants of "once-upon-a-slaves," and before city life made it harder to maintain a sense of community.

The paper involves analytical approach to the study. The researcher has studied the short stories by Edward P. Jones which have been compiled in the form of different books namely *All Aunt Hagar's Children*. The secondary data have been used. The researcher has analysed the unique style of geo tagging done by the Author in his both story books. The

geographical location and their importance in the stories have been discussed in the analysis portion of the research.

## **Jones Style of Writing**

The primarily black communities of Washington, DC are the subject of Jones' short stories for *The New Yorker*, which were published between 2003 and 2011. These stories provide exceptional and nourishing possibilities for analysis and interpretation, or more precisely, "geocoding," an African American author's repeated treatments of a geographical area in a high-profile publication venue (Harrison, John, 2006). His short tales frequently include African American neighborhoods because the everyday lives of his characters and the major arcs of his narratives mirror relationships amongst black people. Jones is able to accomplish the objective of giving perspectives of the District that go beyond political and national politics because to his identification of streets and landmarks, or, to put it another way, his use of literary geo-tagging

Also Jones have been quite open on racial discrimination in South. His work 'The Known World' elaborates on the discriminatory treatment of slaves in Virginia throughout the 19th century. The Whites, who saw themselves as superior, have the authority to judge and govern anything, even the lives of Black people. Whites frequently resided on the plantation area in the 19th century because the plantation owner believed that Blacks were powerful and would assist run the plantation more rapidly. Due to being purchased or abducted by White community members, some Africans became weaker (Andersson, Tobias, 2006).

As a result, it gives the Whites the ability to manipulate the Blacks in every way. A wealthy individual, the majority of whom are White, is the most powerful person with the ability to seize power. The *Known World's* depiction of racial inequality under the guise of slavery in the 19th century is not limited to the relationship between the White master and the Black slave. The *Known World* by Jones is an example of internal racism, or racism committed by Black people against other Black people. After being free, Blacks try to advance in society by owning slaves, which is a kind of racial discrimination. They are not placed in an equal position with Whites despite their endeavours to achieve dominance to the Whites. Blacks mimic what Whites do in terms of slavery, but they continue to be seen as inferior since they are not only physically tortured by Whites but are also under the intellectual influence of the idea of racial discrimination. (Andersson, Tobias, 2006).

Notwithstanding its lengthy history and substantial African American population, particularly in its predominantly black quadrants, the nation's capital has received very little attention in research on African American literature. Jones' short works mention Washington, D.C., streets and quadrants. To explain how setting affects characterizations, race-based character relationships, and plot development, he must thus implement a form of geo-tagging or location-identification technique that gives his works a feeling of reality. What we can call Jones' "literary geo-tagging," in which he emphasizes the racial-spatial aspects of the nation's capital in his stories and offers a variety of depictions of Washington and portrayals of black men and their experiences in a particular geographic area. Black characters, particularly male protagonists, who fight against being invisible in one of the most politically charged cities in the world are shaped by the complex, vibrant, yet frequently ignored black neighbourhoods of Washington, DC, which are vividly depicted in Jones' short stories.

## **Jones Style of Geo-Tagging**

The relevance of the repeated cityscape in the bulk of Jones' short tales has been noted by reviewers, who have brought up the subject of Jones' DC locations. Washington isn't described in Jones' stories. It is only a collection of places and addresses that evoke remembrance. Jones's portrayals of Washington are not fully developed; instead, they are based on his coming-of-age stories and memories of city life. Maybe Pinckney is implying that Jones is so well-versed in the DC neighborhoods that he does not feel compelled to go in great length in his stories on the significance of each crossroads or cross-street.

Jones's many allusions to place names, historical individuals, and cultural icons evoke social and historical memories of DC for each character. These recollections show how a particular place may evoke a variety of feelings, which makes it important to Jones's individual stories and overall collections. Although though *Lost in the City* and *All Aunt Hagar's Children* are works of fiction, Jones's stories provide readers a window into the lives of Black individuals in settings that, for the most part, no longer exist. Although though Jones' stories take place in locales that are still recognisable on a map, people and places have changed with time. The majority of Jones' works are set in homes and neighborhoods. Yet, due to the rising rent prices brought on by gentrification attempts, Washington has seen a major decline in the number of African American inhabitants over the previous few decades. The extent to which social and residential spaces for Black DC residents have altered can be better understood by reading Jones' anecdotes with the graphics in this compilation.

Jones maps the whereabouts of black males in the nation's capital using a similar geotagging approach. For instance, the nameless protagonist of the narrative in "All Aunt Hagar's Children," which is set in the mid-1950s shortly after the Korean War, regularly goes about his apartment around M and Sixth Street and also gathers with friends at Mojo's on North Capital near New York Avenue. Caesar Matthews, the main character in "Old Boys, Old Girls," leases an apartment on N Street after being released from jail and regularly hangs out in Franklin Park, which is located at Fourteenth and K Streets. Jones uses literary geotagging to inform his readers of his in-depth familiarity with the city, particularly with black communities. As a result of his active storytelling in authentic settings, Jones establishes his reputation as a credible narrator of the area. Given the past racial and economic segregation of individuals, Jones' emphasis on city navigation may be even more noteworthy.

Jones creates characters that are similarly knowledgeable about the city as a result of his familiarity with its geography and history. A twenty-four-year-old Korean War veteran who is unhappy with his life in the city and eager to depart on a gold-hunting trip in Alaska is the subject of "All Aunt Hagar's Children." "I was a veteran of Washington, DC, and there wasn't much else for me to learn," he mused (Jones, Edward P., and Peter Francis James, 2006). Geographical location becomes an identity marker that establishes identity group membership and governs mobility within neighborhoods in the *Lost in the City*. As a result, identity is framed by interactions and attachment to other members of the community, which culminates in a shared living experience. Jones' stories might be seen as attempts to retain the geographical identity of the Black DC in which he grew up.

Living in a given neighborhood not only influences identity but also regulates the geographical region within which a person may travel throughout their life. The majority of the characters' physical mobility revolves around their home locations, with the extent of those circles determined by their age, class, and gender. The limits of location are highlighted in "The

First Day (Lost in the City)," when the child is sent to the new public school, Walker Jones, which is closer to her house. Jones depicts how genuine geographical constraints, such as the location of the house and the neighbourhood, determine the quality of schooling and the formation of identity for this little girl and the Black community as a whole. Jones, on the other hand, avoids drawing broad generalizations about the Black experience. Jones employs street names and public places to provide a sense of direction in his stories and to identify various subgroups within Chocolate City's greater Black population.

Jones emphasizes the connection between race and class through literary geo-tagging in "All Aunt Hagar's Children" and "Old Boys, Old Girls," furthering his interest in connecting individuals to particular geographies. Although the descriptions of how they interact with their settings differ, the characters in "All Aunt Hagar's Children" and "Old Boys, Old Girls" all live in the northwest region of Washington and travel along the same paths, indicating a similarity between the two. Although they both live in the same neighborhoods, each character approaches and views his area differently: the anonymous narrator is eager to leave the restrictions of his boyhood, while Caesar utilizes the area to rekindle his relationship with the past. The distinctions between these two characters show how Jones connects a character's temperament to their mobility. Each character's familiarity with the city's neighborhoods appears to reflect how he communicates with locals and moves around the metropolis.

Jones's works heavily rely on geography since the social gathering places and neighborhoods the characters live in reflect many facets of their ethnic and cultural identities. The long histories of segregation in the United States and the propensity of families, particularly low-income families, to reside in certain segregated areas throughout generations are reflections of the frequent connections between race and geography. Depending on the location, places where people congregate for social events or leisure activities are frequently culturally different and home to particular racial groups. For instance, the frequently referenced Mojo's looks to be a neighborhood restaurant or tavern in the primarily African American neighborhood on North Capitol in "All Aunt Hagar's Children." Similarly, Jones describes the boarding home on N Street where many African Americans who live in the District dwell as well as the jail in Lorton where Caesar spent a good deal of time. These locales are used by Jones, and African American characters are not just randomly placed there. Instead, he subtly incorporates sociological elements into his narrative to highlight the connection between race and place.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of Washington, DC to Jones' characters in his short tales is also mentioned in John Harrison's (2006) review of *All Aunt Hagar's Children*. All of the stories are set in Washington, DC, or on the way there, and Jones makes many references to the city's street layout, so I advise having a map of the region on available. Every tale in the anthology follows a trip, whether it was intended or not, successful or unsuccessful. Harrison continues, "The only time I've been to Washington was on an 8th-grade field trip, and we surely did not visit the sites in issue." in the footnote to his assessment. The sites mentioned in Jones' tales are not well-known tourist spots. Instead, these are typical black neighborhoods or travel routes in the District. The numerous allusions to street names that are not commonly used by visitors broaden and deepen the readers' comprehension of Washington. Jones uses literary geotagging to create impressions of the city that are aimed toward the social connections of neighbors and community members. His characters interact with the city in ways that show their immersion especially in the northwest and southeast quadrants. The study of geography and migration has

long piqued the curiosity of experts on African American literature. Geo-tagging has become a fundamental aspect of contemporary life as a result of technological developments over time, such as the creation of the Global Positioning System (GPS) and its numerous applications on social media and mobile devices. Literary geotagging might shed light on placement, location, directional, mapping, and geographic themes in the writings of a writer like Jones, who is well aware of the particulars of streets, neighborhoods, and city landmarks. Our understanding of the creative depictions of actual locales and their relevance to the portrayal of African American culture can be improved by paying more attention to the type of literary geotagging that appears in short stories, novels, poems, and plays by black writers. An emphasis on literary geotagging also advances our understanding of how the frequency of place-specific phrases affects how an author depicts a neighborhood and establishes credibility as a narrator.

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