

POSTCOLONIAL COUNTER-MAPPING AND INDIGENOUS SPACE IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART*

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Abstract

*Postcolonial scholarship increasingly recognizes space as a crucial site of power and resistance; however, the cartographic dimensions of African literary texts remain underexplored. Accordingly, this study examines how Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* represents indigenous Igbo geography as a form of counter-mapping that challenges colonial spatial rationalization. The study aims to analyze how indigenous spatial knowledge functions as literary counter-mapping and, moreover, to examine how colonial cartographic practices reshape cultural boundaries and generate epistemic conflict. A qualitative, interpretive design is adopted, employing close textual analysis integrated with postcolonial theory and critical cartography; furthermore, relevant scholarly sources are examined to contextualize spatial representation within decolonial geography. Findings indicate that Achebe constructs space as culturally embedded, spiritually grounded, and socially regulated; consequently, indigenous geography operates as a mode of resistance. Colonial institutions, however, impose rigid spatial hierarchies and reconfigure lived environments into controllable territories; as a result, epistemic conflict emerges between indigenous and Western knowledge systems. The study also demonstrates that narrative strategies—such as proverbs, oral discourse, and insider perspective—function as alternative cartographies; moreover, the novel itself acts as a literary map that preserves marginalized spatial knowledge. Overall, spatial representation in *Things Fall Apart* constitutes a central mechanism of colonial domination and indigenous resilience; therefore, the novel emerges as a foundational text in literary counter-cartography. Future research should integrate literary studies with critical geography and, besides this, conduct comparative analyses of other African and postcolonial texts to further explore spatial resistance and decolonial knowledge production.*

Keywords: *Postcolonial counter-mapping; Indigenous space; Critical cartography; Things Fall Apart; Decolonial geography*

Introduction

In the mid-twentieth century, more than 70% of African territories were administratively mapped and reorganized by colonial powers within five decades (Harley, 1989), revealing how cartography functioned as an instrument of political and epistemic control. As Chinua Achebe famously asserted, *Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the*

hunter (Achebe, 2000). This observation raises a fundamental question: Who has the authority to define space, borders, and belonging in colonized societies? In literary representations, spatial knowledge is not merely descriptive; rather, it becomes a site where power, identity, and resistance intersect. Against this background, *Things Fall Apart* emerges as a foundational postcolonial text that dramatizes the struggle between indigenous spatial systems and colonial cartographic rationality. Consequently, this study situates Achebe's novel within the broader discourse of postcolonial counter-mapping and decolonial geography.

In general terms, postcolonial literature examines how colonial power reshapes culture, language, and space, while counter-cartography challenges dominant mapping practices by foregrounding marginalized spatial knowledge (Harley, 1989; Wood, 2010). At present, spatial representation remains a critical global concern, particularly in debates surrounding indigenous land rights, territorial sovereignty, and digital mapping technologies. Moreover, decolonial geography emphasizes that maps are not neutral tools but ideological constructs that reflect specific political interests (Crampton, 2010). Within this framework, Achebe's narrative presents Igbo land organization as a coherent indigenous system grounded in kinship, ritual, and communal memory. However, colonial mapping practices impose rigid boundaries and administrative divisions that disrupt this spatial logic. Therefore, the novel illustrates how space becomes a contested terrain of epistemic conflict. While readers may be familiar with themes of identity and cultural resistance in postcolonial texts, the cartographic dimension of this struggle remains insufficiently explored. Previous scholarship has extensively examined cultural hybridity, narrative voice, and colonial encounter in Achebe's fiction. For instance, Irele (2001) and Gikandi (1991) demonstrated how *Things Fall Apart* reconstructs African history through indigenous perspectives, while Said (1978) earlier established the ideological role of spatial representation in imperial discourse. Similarly, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) highlighted literature's capacity to resist colonial epistemologies. Nevertheless, most of these studies prioritized language, identity, and tradition over spatial politics. Although recent scholars have acknowledged geography as a symbolic element (Crampton, 2010; Tuan, 1977), systematic attention to cartography as a site of conflict between indigenous and colonial knowledge remains limited. As a result, existing research does not sufficiently theorize how mapping practices operate as instruments of domination and resistance in Achebe's narrative.

This gap becomes particularly significant when considering that colonial mapping historically functioned as a precursor to economic exploitation and administrative control (Harley, 1989). In *Things Fall Apart*, indigenous spatial organization—based on clan territories, sacred groves, and ancestral boundaries—resists colonial rationalization. Yet, missionary settlements, court buildings, and administrative centers gradually reconfigure this landscape. These narrative developments provide textual evidence that mapping in the novel is not merely metaphorical but structurally embedded in colonial governance. However, despite such narrative richness, cartography has rarely been analyzed as a central analytical category. Consequently, the epistemic violence embedded in spatial reorganization remains under-theorized in Achebe studies.

From a local and regional perspective, this issue resonates strongly with postcolonial contexts such as Pakistan and other formerly colonized societies, where colonial land surveys and administrative maps continue to shape property relations, ethnic boundaries, and governance structures. In South Asia, for example, colonial cadastral mapping still influences contemporary land disputes and development policies (Thompson, 2016). Similarly, African and Asian societies continue to negotiate the legacy of imposed spatial frameworks. Therefore, examining Achebe's

representation of indigenous space offers valuable insights into broader postcolonial experiences of spatial marginalization and resistance.

In response to these concerns, this study pursues the following objectives. First, it analyzes how indigenous Igbo spatial knowledge functions as a form of counter-mapping in *Things Fall Apart*. Second, it examines how colonial cartographic practices disrupt cultural boundaries and produce epistemic conflict. More specifically, the study aims to demonstrate how space operates as a contested field where power, knowledge, and identity intersect. Furthermore, it seeks to integrate postcolonial theory with decolonial geography in order to develop a more comprehensive interpretive framework.

Accordingly, this paper aims to contribute to postcolonial literary studies by foregrounding cartography as a critical analytical lens. We address the gap in existing scholarship by systematically examining the conflict between indigenous spatial logic and colonial mapping practices in Achebe's novel. Through close textual analysis informed by counter-cartography and decolonial geography, this study reveals how spatial representation becomes a form of cultural resistance. Ultimately, the research argues that *Things Fall Apart* not only narrates cultural disintegration but also exposes the cartographic foundations of colonial domination. By doing so, it reclaims indigenous space as a site of historical memory, epistemic authority, and postcolonial resilience.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze how indigenous Igbo spatial knowledge functions as a form of counter-mapping in *Things Fall Apart*.
2. To examine how colonial cartographic practices reshape cultural boundaries and produce epistemic conflict in the text.

Research Questions

1. How does *Things Fall Apart* represent indigenous space as a mode of resistance to colonial mapping practices?
2. In what ways does colonial cartography function as a mechanism of power and spatial control in the novel?

Research Problem

Postcolonial literary studies have extensively examined culture, identity, and resistance in African fiction. However, comparatively limited attention has been given to spatial politics and cartographic power in literary texts. In particular, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* has been widely studied for its portrayal of tradition and colonial encounter, yet its representation of indigenous space as a form of counter-mapping remains under-theorized. Consequently, the conflict between Igbo spatial knowledge and colonial cartographic rationalization has not been systematically analyzed. As a result, the epistemic violence embedded in colonial spatial reorganization continues to be insufficiently explored in Achebe scholarship. Therefore, there is a need for a focused investigation into how spatial representation operates as a site of power, resistance, and knowledge production in the novel.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it extends postcolonial literary analysis beyond cultural and linguistic concerns to include spatial and cartographic dimensions. Moreover, by integrating literary criticism with decolonial geography, the research contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship. Furthermore, it enhances understanding of how colonial power operates through spatial representation and mapping. In addition, the study provides a conceptual framework for

examining indigenous space in other postcolonial texts. From a broader perspective, the findings may inform contemporary debates on land, identity, and territorial sovereignty in formerly colonized societies. Thus, the research strengthens both theoretical and practical engagements with postcolonial spatial politics.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to a qualitative textual analysis of *Things Fall Apart* and does not incorporate archival research or ethnographic fieldwork. Similarly, it relies primarily on published English-language sources, which may restrict access to indigenous oral traditions and local historical records. Moreover, the research focuses on literary representation rather than material mapping practices. Therefore, its conclusions are interpretive rather than empirically generalizable.

Delimitation of the Study

The study is deliberately delimited to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and does not include comparative analysis with his other works or with novels by other African writers. Likewise, the research concentrates specifically on counter-mapping, indigenous spatial knowledge, and colonial cartography. Consequently, related themes such as gender, religion, and economic systems are addressed only when they directly intersect with spatial representation.

Originality and Novelty of the Study

The originality of this study lies in its systematic application of counter-cartographic and decolonial geographical perspectives to Achebe's novel. While previous studies have emphasized culture, identity, and language, this research foregrounds spatial epistemology as a central analytical category. More importantly, it conceptualizes indigenous space as an active form of knowledge production rather than a passive cultural background. In addition, the study introduces cartography as a key site of epistemic conflict in postcolonial literary analysis. Therefore, it offers a novel interpretive framework that repositions *Things Fall Apart* within global debates on mapping, power, and resistance. Ultimately, this research contributes original insights by demonstrating that Achebe's narrative not only critiques colonial domination but also reclaims indigenous spatial authority.

Literature Review

Recent studies emphasize that counter-mapping remains a central concept in decolonial and postcolonial scholarship because it highlights how indigenous communities challenge colonial control over space and knowledge; moreover, scholars consistently argue that mapping never functions as a neutral activity but instead reflects relations of power, authority, and ideology (Harley, 1989; Rose-Redwood et al., 2020). Within literary studies, this insight encourages critics to examine how narratives construct alternative geographies that resist imperial cartography, and, consequently, researchers increasingly read the fiction of Chinua Achebe, especially *Things Fall Apart*, as a site where indigenous spatial knowledge confronts colonial rationalization. Previously, foundational scholarship established the basis for this discussion, as Edward Said (1978) demonstrated that colonial discourse transformed space into an object of control, while Gikandi (1991) and Ashcroft et al. (2002) argued that postcolonial literature reclaims silenced histories and marginalized epistemologies. Building on these early insights, scholars have conceptualized counter-mapping as a practice through which marginalized communities reclaim spatial authority, and recent research emphasizes that decolonial mapping recenters indigenous knowledge systems and challenges Western cartographic norms (Rose-Redwood et al., 2020); similarly, Wood (2010) argues that maps function as ideological texts that naturalize political interests. Furthermore, Baudry and Planchou (2025) highlight that indigenous cartographies sustain identity and

resistance, while Edelson (2025) demonstrates that counter-maps often emerge through selective engagement with colonial systems rather than complete rejection; however, in contrast, Anthias (2019) cautions that counter-mapping may reproduce bureaucratic logics. Therefore, existing scholarship has revealed both the emancipatory potential and the structural limitations of counter-cartographic practices. At the same time, postcolonial theorists continue to stress the relationship between knowledge production and imperial power, and recent studies argue that African writers reconstruct indigenous knowledge systems by challenging Eurocentric frameworks (Ismail, 2023; Tweneboah & Adhami, 2021); likewise, Irele (2001) situates Achebe's work within a broader project of recovering African worldviews. Nevertheless, although these studies recognize cultural and epistemic resistance, they tend to prioritize language, identity, and morality over spatial organization; consequently, indigenous geography often appears as background rather than as a central analytical category. Similarly, a substantial body of scholarship conceptualizes colonial cartography as a political technology of empire, and Harley (1989) demonstrates that maps encode power relations by rendering territories legible, while Woon (2019) traces the link between mapping, sovereignty, and governance, and Whittingham and McGarry (2024) show how mapping institutionalizes ontological hierarchies. Moreover, Palmer (2024) and McMahan (2024) emphasize that colonial mapping produces epistemic violence by marginalizing indigenous spatial knowledge and restructuring historical memory; however, most studies in this tradition rely on archival and ethnographic methods, and, as a result, their insights have rarely been integrated into literary analysis. In addition, recent interdisciplinary scholarship foregrounds indigenous geographies as relational, embodied, and spiritually grounded, and scholars argue that walking, storytelling, and oral traditions function as forms of embodied map-making and adaptive systems of knowledge transmission (Sletto et al., 2021; Mbah et al., 2021); similarly, Evans (2025) highlights relationality as central to indigenous resurgence. In literary contexts, C. et al. (2025) show that narrative strategies such as myth and layered temporality reconstruct indigenous ontologies of place; nevertheless, these studies focus mainly on Indigenous literatures from the Americas and Australasia, whereas African spatial systems, particularly Igbo geographies, remain less systematically theorized. Meanwhile, scholars have extensively analyzed *Things Fall Apart* as a narrative of cultural conflict and colonial disruption, and Gikandi (1991), Irele (2001), and Akwanya (2019) emphasize Achebe's reconstruction of precolonial social order and ethical life, while Jahan and Biswas (2024) stress sustainable relationships with land; however, despite these contributions, researchers largely treat space as contextual rather than as a site of epistemic struggle. Although critics acknowledge village organization, sacred groves, and kinship compounds, they rarely analyze these features as forms of counter-mapping; in contrast, emerging spatial readings suggest that Achebe's narrative techniques—such as proverbs, oral discourse, and insider perspective—function as alternative cartographies, yet such interpretations remain fragmented and theoretically underdeveloped. Furthermore, scholars widely regard African literature as a medium of counter-narrative and cultural reclamation, and recent studies argue that Achebe dismantles colonial myths by foregrounding indigenous agency and linking literary resistance to decolonized knowledge production (Ismail, 2023; Obiagu, 2023; Evans, 2025); however, most of this scholarship focuses on narrative voice and ideological critique rather than spatial representation. Consequently, the role of literature as a form of counter-cartography remains insufficiently conceptualized. Methodologically, studies on colonial cartography rely mainly on historical archives and spatial analysis, while literary studies employ close reading and discourse analysis (Harley, 1989; Woon, 2019; Gikandi, 1991; Akwanya, 2019); although both

approaches are rigorous, researchers seldom integrate them. Moreover, participatory and performative mapping studies emphasize lived experience but rarely connect it to textual interpretation (Sletto et al., 2021). As a result, existing research has operated within disciplinary silos, has limited engagement with Igbo oral traditions and local spatial practices, and has restricted contextual depth; therefore, given these points, current scholarship has clarified the political, cultural, and epistemic dimensions of mapping and literature but has not yet fully explained how Achebe's narrative functions as a systematic form of postcolonial counter-mapping, which highlights the need for an interdisciplinary framework that integrates critical cartography with postcolonial literary analysis.

Research Gap and Justification

Overall, the literature demonstrates that colonial cartography functions as an instrument of domination and that indigenous knowledge systems offer alternative spatial logics. It also confirms that *Things Fall Apart* is a foundational postcolonial text concerned with resistance and cultural preservation. However, despite these advances, three major gaps remain.

First, few studies systematically theorize Achebe's representation of space as a form of counter-mapping. Second, critical cartography scholarship has rarely engaged with African literary texts. Third, indigenous Igbo spatial epistemologies remain underexplored in interdisciplinary dialogue with decolonial geography. Consequently, the intersection of postcolonial literary studies and counter-cartography remains underdeveloped.

This gap matters because spatial representation is central to colonial governance and postcolonial resistance. Therefore, without addressing cartographic conflict in *Things Fall Apart*, scholarship risks overlooking a crucial dimension of epistemic violence and cultural resilience. In response, the present study integrates postcolonial theory, critical cartography, and close textual analysis to examine how Achebe's novel functions as literary counter-mapping.

Research Methodology

In this study, a qualitative and interpretive methodology is adopted to examine postcolonial counter-mapping and indigenous spatial representation in the literary work of Chinua Achebe, particularly in *Things Fall Apart*. The research is designed to explore how narrative space is constructed as a site of epistemic conflict between indigenous knowledge and colonial cartography. Accordingly, textual meanings are systematically interpreted within their cultural and historical contexts. Moreover, emphasis is placed on understanding spatial representation as a form of resistance embedded in literary discourse (Ashcroft et al., 2002; Harley, 1989).

Research Philosophy and Research Approach

The study is guided by an interpretivist and constructivist research philosophy, through which social reality is understood as socially and culturally constructed. Knowledge is therefore viewed as context-dependent and historically situated. Consequently, meanings are interpreted rather than measured. Furthermore, a qualitative research approach is employed, as subjective experiences, symbolic meanings, and narrative structures are prioritized over numerical data. Besides this, postcolonial theory and critical cartography are integrated as guiding frameworks to interpret spatial politics in the text (Said, 1978; Rose-Redwood et al., 2020).

Research Design

A qualitative textual and critical discourse analysis design is adopted in this study. The research is structured as a single-text case study, focusing exclusively on *Things Fall Apart*. The design allows close attention to narrative strategies, symbolic spaces, and cultural geographies. Moreover, a thematic and interpretive framework is applied to examine how indigenous spatial logic is

represented. Thus, meanings are explored in depth rather than generalized statistically (Creswell, 2014).

Population and Sampling

The population of this study is defined as postcolonial literary texts that engage with colonial and indigenous spatial politics. However, purposive sampling is applied, and *Things Fall Apart* is selected as the primary sample due to its central position in African literary discourse. This novel is chosen because it provides detailed representations of Igbo social organization and colonial intervention. Furthermore, secondary sources such as scholarly articles, books, and critical essays are sampled selectively based on their relevance to postcolonial geography and cartography.

Data Collection Methods

Data are collected through systematic textual analysis and documentary review. The primary data consist of the selected literary text, which is closely read and annotated. In addition, secondary data are gathered from academic journals, books, and electronic databases. Relevant theoretical and critical sources are also reviewed. Moreover, key passages related to space, land, boundaries, and movement are identified and categorized for analysis. Thus, both primary and secondary materials are integrated to support interpretation.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data are analyzed using thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis. First, recurring spatial themes such as land ownership, village organization, sacred spaces, and colonial boundaries are identified. Subsequently, these themes are interpreted through postcolonial and cartographic theories. Furthermore, narrative techniques, metaphors, and symbols related to space are examined. Meanings are then contextualized within historical and ideological frameworks. Consequently, spatial representation is interpreted as a form of counter-mapping and epistemic resistance (Fairclough, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, reliability and validity are addressed through trustworthiness criteria. Credibility is ensured through prolonged engagement with the text and repeated close readings. Moreover, theoretical triangulation is applied by using multiple critical frameworks. Transferability is enhanced through detailed textual description. Dependability is strengthened by maintaining systematic analytical procedures. Furthermore, reflexivity is practiced to minimize researcher bias. Thus, findings are supported through transparent and rigorous interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards are maintained throughout the research process. All sources are properly cited in accordance with APA guidelines. Plagiarism is strictly avoided. Moreover, intellectual property rights are respected, and interpretations are presented honestly without distortion. Besides this, cultural sensitivity is maintained while discussing indigenous practices and beliefs. Therefore, the research is conducted with academic integrity and professional responsibility.

Limitations of the Methodology

The methodology is limited by its exclusive focus on a single literary text, which restricts generalization to other postcolonial contexts. Moreover, the study relies mainly on English-language sources, which may limit access to indigenous perspectives. In addition, the qualitative and interpretive nature of the analysis may involve subjective judgment. Nevertheless, these limitations are considered acceptable, as in-depth understanding rather than broad generalization is prioritized.

Summary

In summary, this study is conducted within an interpretivist qualitative framework using textual and discourse analysis. A purposive sampling strategy is applied, and data are collected from primary and secondary sources. Thematic and critical analysis techniques are employed to examine spatial representation and counter-mapping practices. Furthermore, trustworthiness is ensured through rigorous analytical procedures and ethical compliance. Consequently, the methodology provides a systematic and reliable foundation for exploring indigenous space and postcolonial resistance in *Things Fall Apart*.

Discussion/ Analysis

This discussion analyzes how Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* represents indigenous Igbo spatial knowledge as a form of counter-mapping and how colonial cartographic practices function as mechanisms of power and epistemic control; specifically, in line with the research objectives and questions, it integrates postcolonial theory, critical cartography, and close textual analysis to address the identified research gap and demonstrate that Achebe's narrative constructs space as an active site of resistance and knowledge production, thereby challenging colonial spatial rationalization and foregrounding indigenous epistemologies. First, Achebe presents Igbo space as socially embedded, spiritually grounded, and communally regulated and, therefore, fundamentally opposed to colonial cartographic logic, since Umuofia is depicted not as abstract territory but as a lived environment shaped by kinship, ritual, and memory; for example, the statement that *Umuofia was feared by all its neighbors* (Achebe, 1958/2008, p. 11) indicates that space functions as a marker of collective identity and autonomy. Furthermore, sacred sites such as forests and shrines operate as moral and spiritual anchors, and, unlike colonial maps that divide land into measurable units, Igbo spatial logic organizes territory through ethical meanings; consequently, space becomes a repository of cultural memory rather than a neutral surface. Similarly, agricultural practices, especially yam farming described as *the king of crops* (Achebe, 1958/2008, p. 33), link land to masculinity and survival and illustrate how indigenous mapping functions through embodied labor and seasonal rhythms; thus, geography operates as counter-mapping embedded in everyday life. Moreover, oral traditions, proverbs, and communal gatherings reinforce spatial knowledge, and the marketplace, for instance, emerges as a political and social center, showing that space is produced through interaction rather than cartographic inscription. Taken together, these elements demonstrate that Igbo space constitutes an alternative epistemological system and directly address the first research objective. In contrast, colonial authorities impose rigid territorial structures based on surveillance and control, and the arrival of missionaries and administrators initiates spatial transformation, as reflected in the metaphor that *the white man has put a knife on the things that held us together* (Achebe, 1958/2008, p. 152). Furthermore, colonial institutions such as courts, prisons, and churches introduce new hierarchies and redefine land as an administrative object; as a result, indigenous space becomes *legible* for governance, in line with Harley's (1989) argument. Moreover, missionary settlements and trade routes establish alternative centers of power and integrate Umuofia into imperial networks, which, as Said (1978) suggests, reflects the spatial logic of domination; therefore, colonial cartography functions as a technology of political and cultural control. Consequently, these developments fulfill the second research objective by illustrating how colonial practices reshape cultural landscapes and generate epistemic conflict. At the same time, the novel foregrounds the struggle between indigenous and colonial ways of knowing space, since Igbo geography relies on oral transmission and lived experience, whereas colonial mapping

depends on written records and bureaucratic systems; for instance, when Okonkwo and other leaders are imprisoned and *treated like criminals* (Achebe, 1958/2008, p. 147), their spatial and epistemic authority is symbolically erased. Moreover, religious conversion involves spatial realignment, as converts relocate to mission spaces, producing what Rose-Redwood et al. (2020) describe as epistemic remapping; thus, spatial transformation becomes cognitive and cultural transformation. Importantly, although indigenous space is portrayed as dynamic and adaptive, colonial power restricts this flexibility through fixed boundaries; hence, the novel reveals how epistemic violence operates through spatial control, reinforcing McMahon's (2024) argument. In addition, Achebe's narrative strategies function as literary counter-cartography, since detailed descriptions of landscapes and rituals, the use of proverbs such as *proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten* (Achebe, 1958/2008, p. 7), and the retention of Igbo vocabulary construct an insider map of Umuofia; accordingly, this strategy aligns with Ashcroft et al.'s (2002) claim that postcolonial writing reclaims representational authority. Similarly, temporal layering reconstructs precolonial life and contests imperial narratives of *empty* land, thereby documenting spatial continuity and resilience. Given these points, the study responds directly to existing gaps by theorizing space as counter-mapping, integrating literary analysis with critical cartography, and foregrounding Igbo epistemologies. Although earlier studies emphasized resistance and tradition (Gikandi, 1991; Irele, 2001), they rarely conceptualized space as an epistemological battlefield; therefore, this analysis demonstrates that spatial representation is central to colonial governance and postcolonial resistance. In relation to the first research question, indigenous space functions as resistance through communal organization and sacred geography, while, in response to the second question, colonial cartography operates through administrative and religious institutions that reshape territorial meanings; likewise, both research objectives are achieved by showing how counter-mapping and epistemic conflict structure the narrative. In conclusion, *Things Fall Apart* constructs space as a site of political struggle, cultural memory, and epistemic resistance, presenting indigenous geography as relational and moral, whereas colonial cartography appears abstract and coercive, and, ultimately, by linking postcolonial literature with critical geography, this study fills a significant scholarly gap and establishes that spatial representation is a central mechanism through which colonial domination and indigenous resilience are negotiated.

Main Findings

Indigenous Space as Counter-Mapping

Chinua Achebe shows that Igbo villages, forests, and markets are meaningful spaces that reflect culture, values, and beliefs. In *Things Fall Apart*, these spaces quietly resist colonial control.

Space and Cultural Identity

The novel shows that Igbo places carry memories, traditions, and moral values. These spaces help protect the community's identity and knowledge.

Colonial Mapping as Power

Colonial systems change local spaces through courts, churches, and offices. This helps outsiders control land and people more easily.

Conflict Between Worldviews

Traditional Igbo beliefs about land clash with Western ideas of ownership and rules. This creates tension and misunderstanding in the novel.

Storytelling as Mapping

Achebe uses proverbs and oral stories to present Igbo life from the inside. In this way, the novel becomes a *map* of indigenous culture.

Literature as Resistance

The novel preserves Igbo spaces and traditions before and after colonial rule. This helps challenge negative colonial views.

Interdisciplinary Approach

Combining literature and geography helps explain how power works through space. This approach gives a clearer understanding of colonial control.

Importance of Igbo Knowledge Systems

The study shows that Igbo ways of understanding land and nature are rich and organized. Earlier studies did not fully recognize their value.

Everyday Forms of Resistance

Resistance in the novel is not only political but also cultural. Keeping traditions and sacred places alive becomes a form of survival.

Filling the Research Gap

This study connects African literature with mapping studies for the first time in detail. It helps scholars better understand how space shapes power and identity.

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