

THE IRONY OF INDEPENDENCE IN SARAH LADIPO MANYIKA'S IN DEPENDENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article critically explores the irony of independence in Africa as depicted in Sarah Ladipo Manyika's *In Dependence*, questioning whether the continent has truly attained autonomy or remains ensnared by colonial legacies. While post-independence discourse often assumes sovereignty, little attention has been paid to how colonial structures persist. Employing postcolonial theory, the study frames independence as an ongoing negotiation rather than a completed event. It interrogates the irony of independence and the continuities of power after colonialism. Through qualitative textual analysis and close reading, the paper examines the novel's representation of historical structures, cultural narratives, and political—economic systems. The analysis reveals that African states remain constrained by neocolonialism, as external powers continue to influence them through trade agreements and political alliances. It further shows how enduring colonial structures and narratives compromise national sovereignty and limit self-determination, despite some post-independence advancements. Ultimately, the article argues for the necessity of a critical reassessment of pathways toward empowerment and authentic autonomy for African countries.

Keywords: Independence, Dependence, Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Irony.

1. INTRODUCTION

The debate over Africa's independence is a critical discourse that examines whether the continent has truly liberated itself from the shackles of colonialism or if it remains entangled in various forms of dependency. Despite the wave of decolonization that swept across Africa in the mid-20th century, many nations continue to face systemic challenges that raise questions about their sovereignty and self-determination. This inquiry is particularly urgent in the context of globalization, where economic and political influences from former colonial powers and multinational corporations often overshadow local governance and agency.

Thus Walter Rodney's influential work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), argues that the historical exploitation of African resources by colonial powers has led to a persistent state of economic dependency, inhibiting the continent's development. Rodney's analysis of the economic structures imposed during colonialism underscores the ideological and material constraints that continue to affect African nations. Similarly, André Gunder Frank's *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (1967) lays the groundwork for Dependency Theory, positing that the global capitalist system inherently perpetuates inequality and dependency, a framework that can also be applied to the African context.

Critically, Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) emphasizes the importance of cultural independence, asserting that true freedom involves not only political autonomy but also the reclamation of identity and language. His work highlights the psychological dimensions of colonialism and the necessity for African countries to redefine their narratives beyond colonial legacies. Similarly, in his discourse titled "Resistance to Damnation: The Role of Intellectual Workers", Ngugi posits that "a community is genuinely liberated when it has control over the tools, instruments, and all essential means necessary for its physical, economic, political, cultural, and psychological sustenance" (N. W. Thiong'o, 1993, p. 46). This translates to having authority over both the methods and the conditions that underpin its comprehensive survival and progress. Thus, the declaration of independence in many African nations occurred at the onset of the 1960s. A significant number of countries successfully reclaimed their societal and political standings along with their independence, particularly in economic aspects, enabling them to govern their territories autonomously.

The persistence of this dynamic has far-reaching implications for Africa's development, as external actors continue to shape the contours of the continent's economic and social landscape. The lack of autonomy in critical decision-making processes has stifled the ability of African nations to chart their own course, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and underdevelopment. As a matter of fact, the legacy of colonialism continues to cast a long shadow over Africa's progress, underscoring the imperative of reevaluating the power dynamics that govern relations between Africa and the Western world. This brings us to pose the question: Is African countries independence mirage or reality?

In an interview with Oyo Adagha (2009), Manyika points out that contemporary Africans are not truly free when it comes to making significant decisions in their lives. She admits that "we [Africans] are in fact never really free and independent when it comes to the big choices in our lives". From Manyika's perspective, the euphoria of independence has given way to a sobering reality, as the entrenched power dynamics between Western nations and Africa have endured, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and subjugation. This euphoria was provoked by the fact that, for the first time, Africans were going to administer their own affairs. However, this was not possible since the newly African rulers ended up worsening the gravity of the situation that prevailed during the period of European colonization in Africa.

In the light of the above, it becomes quite true that the quest for independence in Africa has long been framed as a triumphant narrative of liberation, yet the realities on the ground tell a more complex story. Using postcolonial critical theory, the purpose of this paper is to critically analyze the current state of independence in Manyika's *In Dependence* where this paradox is vividly illustrated, prompting a critical examination of what autonomy truly means for African nations. While many countries have officially gained independence, the enduring legacies of colonialism continue to shape their political, economic, and social landscapes. This paper seeks to unravel these complexities, questioning whether independence has led to genuine self-determination or if African nations remain ensnared in a web of colonial influence. This article also aims to identify the structural inequalities that persist in the post-colonial era while also showcasing the resilience and agency of African nations in their efforts to achieve genuine autonomy. This exploration aspires to contribute to a nuanced understanding of Africa's independence, offering insights into the pathways towards sustainable development and self-determination amidst ongoing challenges.

2. AFRICA, "INDEPENDENCE" OR "IN DEPENDENCE"?

Manyika's *In Dependence* examines the aftermath of independence which has been marked by a multitude of complexities, as numerous attempts at self-governance have been

hindered by profound misunderstandings between the emergent leadership and the general populace. The new leaders, who had assumed authority from colonial powers, found themselves grappling with the legacy of colonialism, struggling to address the myriad challenges that had been left unaddressed. Their inability to devise and implement meaningful reforms, coupled with a dearth of financial resources, led to a reliance on their colonial predecessors, thereby perpetuating a dependence on external expertise. This dependence has enabled the West to maintain a powerful grip on the economic framework of Africa, with local leaders beholden to their erstwhile colonial masters. The West's control over critical infrastructure, institutions, and resources has allowed them to exert significant influence over various aspects of life in Africa, including language, education, healthcare, monetary policy, natural resource management, and security apparatuses. This pervasive influence has effectively compromised the sovereignty of African nations, relegating them to a state of neocolonial subjugation. A critical reassessment of the pathways toward empowerment and autonomy is essential for understanding the ongoing challenges faced by African countries as they strive for genuine independence in a contemporary context.

Thus, *In Dependence* is a scathing critique of Africa's lingering reliance on Western powers despite the attainment of independence. Through this work, Manyika sheds light on the myriad challenges confronting modern Nigeria, a nation struggling to extricate itself from the shackles of external dependency. The title of the novel "In Dependence" carries significant thematic weight, reflecting the intricate relationship between personal and political autonomy. At its core, the term "dependence" suggests a state of relying on others, which can be interpreted in various contexts throughout the narrative. This duality highlights the struggle between the desire for independence and the societal or relational ties that often bind individuals. The title prompts readers to consider how "dependence" can manifest in both healthy and unhealthy forms, influencing characters' choices and relationships.

The title of the novel, "In Dependence," is a deliberate linguistic maneuver, which underscores the abdication of responsibility that has accompanied Africa's independence. The deliberate separation of "in" and "dependence" starkly contrasts with the single word "independence," highlighting the binary opposition between the two concepts. The title's phrasing evokes a sense of nuance and complexity. The preposition "In" implies an ongoing process rather than a definitive state, suggesting that dependence is not merely a static condition but a dynamic aspect of human experience. Thus, characters may oscillate between dependence and independence, revealing the fluidity of these concepts in their lives. This ongoing negotiation of identity and belonging resonates throughout the narrative, making "In Dependence" a fitting title that encapsulates the broader themes of the novel while inviting deeper reflection on the nature of freedom and connection.

This nuanced distinction in terminology serves to underscore the pervasive perception that contemporary Africa's independence is, in reality, a state of "in" dependence, wherein the continent remains inextricably linked to and reliant upon external entities for its very survival. Manyika's portrayal of the fictional postcolony paints a stark picture of a continent held hostage by internal and external dependencies, with citizens beholden to ineffectual leaders and nations beholden to former colonial powers for developmental guidance. This narrative thread expertly exposes the complex web of dependencies that stifle Nigeria's progress, laying bare the tensions between the aspirations of independence and the harsh realities of neocolonialism. *In Dependence* may also reflect the historical and cultural context from which the characters emerge. It evokes themes of colonialism and post-colonial identity, emphasizing how the legacy of dependence on colonial powers continues to affect the individuals within the story. The title suggests a journey towards self-determination, where characters grapple with their

past dependencies while striving for a more autonomous future. This interplay between personal and collective histories invites readers to reflect on how societal structures shape individual lives and the quest for identity.

Manyika's fictional Nigeria's independence has not necessarily translated into genuine autonomy. This is starkly underscored by the patronizing attitude of Venessa's parents, particularly Mr. and Mrs. Richardson (Nancy). Their entrenched mindset serves as a potent symbol of the lingering colonial mentality that continues to view emerging nations in Africa as ephemeral entities, lacking the capacity for self-sustenance and stability. Manyika sheds light on the irony of Nigeria's independence in the novel *In Dependence* through the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, who say:

Venessa's very interested in Africa," Mother added. "She supports all their independence movements."
Well, she might not be supporting them for long. Wait and see if they last," Father added, dryly. (ID, 43).

This is the paradox of Nigeria's independence, which highlights the entrenched mindset of dependency that pervades the psyche of its erstwhile colonizers. Mr. Richardson's dismissive remark, "Wait and see if they last," betrays a profound skepticism regarding the fledgling nation's capacity for self-governance, echoing the paternalistic attitudes that legitimized colonial rule. This sentiment is particularly striking, as it reveals the lingering perception of Africa as a continent in perpetual need of external validation and guidance. The character of Mr. Richardson's prediction that the independent movements will not last proves eerily prophetic, as Nigeria and many other African countries have indeed struggled with dependence, corruption, and misrule. This tragic trajectory lends credence to the notion that the legacy of colonialism continues to shape the destinies of these nations, with external perceptions and internal realities reinforcing a cycle of dependency. Moreover, Richardson's characterization of Africa's emerging nations as ephemeral or insubstantial serves to reinforce the dominant narrative of Western supremacy. This narrative posits that Western nations are the arbiters of stability, progress, and modernity, while African nations are relegated to the role of supplicants, dependent on external benevolence for their survival. This implies that Western nations are the arbiters of stability, progress benevolence.

Manyika constructs the disconnect between the ideals of independence and the harsh realities of post-colonial Africa. Vanessa's enthusiasm for Africa's independence movements is met with her father's cynicism. This shows the chasm between the optimism of a new generation and the jaded worldview of those who cling to outdated notions of Western supremacy. This juxtaposition serves to underscore the complexities of Nigeria's independence, which, despite being a milestone in the nation's history, has not necessarily translated into genuine autonomy or self-determination. Manyika further offers a searing critique of the neocolonial paradigm that continues to govern relations between Africa and the Western world. The fact that Nigeria has struggled to assert its independence in the face of external pressures and internal contradictions serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle for true decolonization. The legacy of colonialism continues to cast a long shadow over Manyika's fictional Nigeria's development, perpetuating a cycle of dependency that threatens to undermine the country's progress towards genuine self-determination.

As the novel unfolds, it becomes evident that while there have been strides towards progress, significant structural barriers remain. These barriers are not merely remnants of the colonial past but active forces that continue to shape the realities of life in African nations.

Richardson's reference to Nigeria as "our colonies" (ID, 73) during a conversation with his daughter, Vanessa, reveals a lingering colonial mindset that underscores the complexities of identity and belonging. This phrase suggests that Richard views Nigeria not just as a geographical space but as an extension of his personal and familial heritage, reflecting the historical context of colonialism where European powers considered colonized nations as possessions. The use of "our" implies a sense of ownership and connection, which can be interpreted as both a nostalgic attachment to the past and a reluctance to fully acknowledge the independence and agency of the Nigerian people. This perspective influences Vanessa's understanding of her own identity, as she navigates her father's historical associations while forming her own views on colonialism and its lasting impacts.

Furthermore, Richardson's language serves as a bridge between generations, highlighting the differing perceptions of colonial history between him and Vanessa. While his terminology may stem from his upbringing and experiences during a time of colonial rule, Vanessa's reactions could reflect a more contemporary understanding that is critical of colonial legacies. This dynamic illustrates the tension between inherited beliefs and the evolution of social consciousness, as younger generations often reassess historical narratives in light of modern values. In his ability to maintain this colonial lexicon, Richardson inadvertently shapes Vanessa's worldview, prompting her to grapple with the implications of such language in a post-colonial context, ultimately fostering a dialogue about identity, history, and the shifts in power dynamics over time.

In the midst of a profound intellectual debate about the nature of historical narrative and the agency of non-Western societies, the character of Hugh Trevor-Roper comment on African history serves as a paradigmatic example of Eurocentric bias. He made an assertion rooted in a profound misunderstanding of the complexities of African cultures and civilizations which starkly underscores the entrenched prejudices that have historically characterized Western perceptions of Africa. Trevor-Roper says that: "Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none, or very little: there is only the history of Europe in Africa. The rest is largely darkness, like the history of pre-Columbian America, and darkness is not a subject for history" (ID, 153). This nebulous and disparaging assumption betrays a profoundly Eurocentric perspective, one that negates the existence of a rich and complex African history prior to European intervention. It starkly demonstrates the entrenched Eurocentric bias that pervades historical discourse, relegating Africa's agency and experiences to the periphery. The pronouncement that "there is only the history of Europe in Africa" serves as a telling indictment of the dominant narrative, which persistently foregrounds European presence and influence while rendering Africa's own history opaque and marginal. This perspective perpetuates a flawed paradigm that situates Western powers as the primary architects of history, effectively erasing the complexities and richness of African experiences. In the context of Nigeria, this Eurocentric worldview has contributed to a debilitating dependency on Western powers, stifling the nation's capacity for genuine self-determination. The legacy of colonialism continues to cast a long shadow over Nigeria's development, perpetuating a cycle of subservience to external influences that undermines its progress towards true independence. Nigeria's failure to assert its agency and chart its own course is a stark testament to the enduring impact of this historical narrative, which has consigned the nation to a position of perpetual marginality.

The comparison of precolonial Africa to darkness serves to reinforce the dominant narrative of European enlightenment and African primitivism. This dichotomy between "light" and "darkness" (ID, 153) is potent metaphor for the colonial project, which sought to impose knowledge and values on non-European societies under the guise of "civilisation" and

“progress”. His assertion that “darkness is not a subject for history” reveals a fundamental ignorance of the complex societies, cultures, and historical narratives that have shaped the African continent. This statement shows the need for a radical rethinking of the way history is constructed and presented, one that acknowledges the diversity of human experiences and the multiple forms of knowledge that exist across cultures.

In Manyika’s created society, resembling Nigeria, the ruling class people have the possibility to do what its people want with the means that it has. This shows that Manyika’s society does not need any aid, whether military, financial, or otherwise. There is no denial of the bilateral relationship between Western powers and Nigeria due to globalization. What Nigeria really requires is partnership. It is a country full of intellectuals, people with a decent mindset, morals, and ethics, but still, “why must [Africans] always invite [Western] people to talk about Africa’s future?” (ID, 16). The narrator’s own response to this question consists of shifting this dynamic and empowering African voices in discussions about Africa’s future. While the invitation of Western voices brings valuable insights, it also risks perpetuating a narrative that undermines African agency.

The reliance on external expertise homogenises African experiences, and obscures the diverse realities and aspirations of the continent’s people. Moreover, this issue raises ethical questions about representation and the responsibilities of both African and Western scholars. As Africa continues to navigate its path towards sustainable development, the question invites Africans to prioritize indigenous voices and perspectives in discussions about the continent’s future by challenging the assumption that Western voices are inherently more credible or knowledgeable and recognizing the value of diverse perspectives in shaping a more inclusive and representative dialogue. It is to debunk the perception that Western scholars, policymakers, and experts are often seen as possessing a level of knowledge and experience that can provide valuable insights into the complex issues facing Africa.

Western perspectives are often given more weight in global discourse, leading to a reliance on these voices to lend legitimacy to discussions about Africa’s future. However, this reliance on Western voices perpetuates a power imbalance that marginalizes African perspectives and reinforces a narrative of dependency. Then, by constantly seeking validation and approval from Western individuals, Africans risk undermining their own agency and perpetuating a narrative that positions them as passive recipients of external guidance. This dynamic hinders efforts to develop homegrown solutions to the challenges facing the continent and limit the potential for African voices to drive meaningful change. The tendency to prioritise Western voices in discussions about Africa’s future perpetuates stereotypes and creates a narrative of Africa as a passive and helpless continent in need of external intervention:

‘What do you propose?’ Francis challenged Ike. ‘You want Nigerians to seize control, just because they’re Nigerians. You can’t just take Africans with no experience of Westminster-style democracy and expect them to step in overnight. If you ask me, independence came far too early.’

‘Well, the question surrounding the timing of independence is certainly a topic for future meetings,’ Simon interjected (ID, 16).

The excerpt presents a compelling dialogue that encapsulates the irony of Nigeria’s independence. Francis’s skepticism about the readiness of Nigerians to govern themselves reflects a broader historical narrative regarding post-colonial states. The assertion that independence may have come “far too early” raises questions about the implications of sudden

political autonomy without the necessary infrastructure, experience, or political culture to support it. This sentiment resonates with many critiques of decolonization, where the abrupt transition from colonial rule often left nations grappling with governance challenges.

Ike's counterpoint, advocating for Nigerian control, highlights a critical theme in the independence discourse: the inherent right of nations to self-determination. Despite Francis's doubts, Ike's perspective shows a profound irony; while colonial powers justified their rule on the premise of civilization and governance, the immediate withdrawal often left a vacuum filled by instability. This irony is further compounded by the expectation that a population, long subjected to colonial rule, could instantly adapt to democratic practices. The dialogue exemplifies the tension between aspiration and reality in post-colonial governance. Furthermore, Simon's interjection about the timing of independence signals an awareness of the complexities involved in transitioning to self-governance. The suggestion that this topic merits future discussion indicates that the ramifications of independence are not merely historical but remain pertinent to ongoing political discourse. This reflects the irony that while independence promised liberation, it also unveiled deeper issues of governance, identity, and societal cohesion that continue to challenge Nigeria today.

In Manyika's fictional world, there is a significant failure within the framework of the educational, which remains heavily reliant on Western paradigms. This reliance creates a pronounced imbalance, wherein characters like Ike in the novel *In Dependence*, demonstrate an extensive knowledge of English history while neglecting their own cultural and historical heritage. The mastery of English law, emblematic of colonial influence, highlights the inadequacies of an educational system that prioritizes foreign narratives over indigenous knowledge. Such an educational structure disconnects most of the characters especially, Ike from local histories and legal traditions, which are essential for a comprehensive understanding of his own cultural identity and indigenous responsibility. The narrator questions Ike:

I'm willing to bet that you (Ike) know English history better than your own Ghanaian history. You spout English law, but what can you tell me about the Akan and their legal system? And if colonialism is finished, why do British people still speak for us as though we are children? (ID, 15).

This dependency on Western education not only perpetuates a disconnect from African heritage but also contributes to a broader systemic issue of epistemic disempowerment. The inability to engage meaningfully with the Akan legal system, for instance, reflects a detrimental gap in educational curricula that fail to incorporate and value indigenous epistemologies. This gap engenders a generational deficit in cultural awareness and pride, manifesting in a pervasive sense of alienation from one's roots. The inquiry regarding the continued representation by British individuals highlights the persistent legacy of colonialism. It points to a troubling dynamic where the voices of African peoples are often overshadowed by external narratives that treat them as subordinate or lacking agency. This situation reflects a broader failure of African education to cultivate critical thinking and self-advocacy, essential components for challenging and redefining post-colonial discourse.

As noted by B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin (2002, p. 2), "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression." The rhetorical question posed: "if colonialism is finished, why do British people still speak for us as though we are children?", further amplifies the discourse on lack of

indigenous responsibility, agency and autonomy in the post-colonial era. It means that despite the formal end of colonial rule, the paternalistic attitudes of former colonial powers persist, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and disempowerment. It extends the notion of responsibility beyond the individual to encompass a collective accountability within post-colonial discourse. This inquiry implicates both external actors, such as British interlocutors, and internal agents, including the educated elites of formerly colonized nations, in the perpetuation of a paternalistic narrative that undermines the agency of the colonized. The insistence on “still speak for us” signals an enduring power imbalance, which suggests that the moral and political obligation to decolonize representation remains unaddressed. This extract thus delineates a dual responsibility: the personal duty of individuals like Ike to confront and bridge epistemic gaps, and the broader structural responsibility of both former colonizers and post-colonial institutions to dismantle the residual hierarchies of knowledge and voice.

The implications of this educational failure are profound. They extend beyond individual knowledge gaps, suggesting a collective responsibility to reassess and reframe educational priorities. A shift towards an inclusive curriculum that embraces African histories, legal systems, cultural narratives, realities, and responsibilities is imperative. This reorientation not only fosters a deeper understanding of identity but also empowers individuals to reclaim their voices in the broader socio-political landscape, ultimately dismantling the lingering effects of colonial dominance in both thought and representation.

In the context of Nigeria, the irony of independence is vividly illustrated by the juxtaposition of potential and reality. The initial euphoria surrounding independence gradually morphed into a struggle against corruption, ethnic strife, and economic mismanagement. This dissonance between the idealized vision of a sovereign nation and the practical challenges encountered upon achieving that sovereignty underscores the complexities of nation-building. While independence was a crucial step toward self-identity, it also laid bare the vulnerabilities of a nation still grappling with its colonial influence and the challenges of true independence. This irony is depicted as follows:

The independence celebrations (three years of independence now!) were quite fantastic. In short, there were many fireworks, dancing and eating, and general gaiety. We are proud and flow the government is working for increased Nigerian leadership. Indigenous responsibility is what we call it. rumour has it that a Nigerian will soon replace our Chief of Police, and we hope so. God willing. And yet some white men here are still thinking they own our land, not acknowledging that it is a new Nigeria. (ID, 16).

This extract reflects a complex interplay of pride and irony surrounding Nigeria's independence celebrations. It sheds light on the tension between the jubilant facade of independence and the underlying realities of continued dependence. While the festivities are described in vibrant terms—fireworks, dancing, and a sense of national pride—the mention of “three years of independence” underscores the fragility of this newfound autonomy. The exuberance of the celebrations, contrasts sharply with the lingering presence of colonial attitudes, suggesting that the transition to independence is not as complete as it appears. This irony is central to the narrative, as it reveals the struggle to assert genuine autonomy in a landscape still marked by colonial legacies. The narrator's emphasis on “indigenous responsibility” expresses the duality of the situation, where the government promotes the idea of self-governance while the reality does not fully align with this ideal. The optimism surrounding increased Nigerian leadership points to a desire for empowerment and self-

determination, yet the reliance on external validation—evidenced by the hope that a Nigerian will replace the Chief of Police—shows an ongoing dependence on colonial structures. This dependence is ironic; while the country celebrates its independence, the leadership still functions within a framework established by colonial powers, suggesting that true autonomy remains elusive. The mention of the Chief of Police symbolizes a critical aspect of governance that has not yet transitioned to fully reflect the indigenous population's authority.

The reference to “some white men” in the quotation still believing they own the land adds another layer of irony to the narrative. This sentiment reflects an enduring colonial mentality that resists the changes brought about by independence. The juxtaposition of the celebratory tone with the acknowledgment of continued colonial attitudes serves to critique the notion of independence itself. The lingering presence of these colonial figures suggests that independence is not solely a matter of political sovereignty but also involves a cultural and psychological shift that has yet to be realized. The irony lies in the fact that, despite the outward celebrations, the internalization of colonialism persists, inhibiting true national identity and unity. While the celebrations are meant to signify a break from colonial rule, the reliance on familiar structures and figures indicates a deeper struggle with self-definition. The hope for a Nigerian Chief of Police implies a desire for representation and authority, yet it also reflects an acknowledgment that leadership still bears the weight of colonial legacy. Thus, “Colonial legacies continue to shape governance structures in Africa, influencing state formation, political systems, economic structures, and legal frameworks” (J. Shawai, and I. Baamshal, 2025, p. 290). This dependence on former colonial structures leads to a paradox where the new leadership is perceived as merely a continuation of colonial practices, rather than a genuine break from them. The irony in this situation serves as a reminder that true independence encompasses more than just political change; it requires a fundamental rethinking of power dynamics and cultural identity. As Nigerians navigate their newfound independence, the challenge lies in reconciling the celebratory narrative with the ongoing influence of colonial legacies. This duality invites a critical examination of what it means to be independent in a world where the shadows of colonialism continue to shape perceptions, relationships, and power structures. The irony of independence underscores the need for a more profound transformation, one that acknowledges the past while actively working towards a future defined by true autonomy and self-determination.

3. CONCLUSION

The study has shown that the quest for true independence in Africa remains a complex interplay of historical legacies and contemporary challenges. While the continent has made strides towards autonomy, the shadows of colonialism and neocolonialism continue to shape its political and economic landscapes. The persistent issues of reliance on external aid illustrate that many African nations are still grappling with dependencies that undermine their sovereignty. The resilience and agency displayed by various states in their pursuit of sustainable development are commendable; however, these efforts are often thwarted by systemic inequalities and external pressures that limit their capacity for self-determination. The analysis presented in this paper underscores the need for a deeper understanding of Africa's independence narrative. It is crucial to recognize that while individual nations may exhibit signs of growth and progress, the overarching structural constraints remain significant barriers to achieving true autonomy. Future efforts towards independence must address not only the remnants of colonial influence but also the ongoing dynamics of globalization that perpetuate dependency. A holistic approach that fosters genuine self-sufficiency and empowers African states to navigate their unique challenges is essential for realizing the continent's full potential and ensuring a future marked by true independence.

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