



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 11. Issue.3. 2024 (July-Sept)

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

LACK OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR
PEACE IN AFRICA IN *THE HOT CHAIR* BY FAUSTINA BREW

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[doi: 10.33329/ijelr.11.3.87](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.11.3.87)



Article information

Article Received:13/7/2024
Article Accepted:27/08/2024
Published online:06/09/2024

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to highlight how lack of professional ethics has detrimental effects on peace and development in post-colonial Africa. Through the lenses of Marxist Critical Approach and Semiotics, the study analyses and evaluates the ethical responsibilities of the leaders and the led as well as various unethical signs contained in the play *The Hot Chair* by Faustina Brew. The study points out that unethical actions and reactions at the governmental level and in the health care system negatively affect all socio-economic aspects and hinder peace in post-colonial Africa. The paper emphasises the intimidation, oppression and abuse of authority by government officials, which create chaos and affect peace. Some health professionals, infected with capitalist ideas, have forgotten ethical principles and medical deontology, and have turned their profession into a business for selfish purposes, thereby aggravating the suffering of the poor masses. The findings suggest that to stop unethical professional practices, urgent and meaningful steps need to be taken through concrete and pragmatic ethical training and moral re-education for peace, stability and sustainable development in post-colonial Africa.

Keywords: Professional, ethics, health, peace, development.

Résumé : Cet article cherche à mettre en évidence les effets néfastes du manque d'éthique professionnelle sur la paix et le développement en Afrique postcoloniale. À travers l'approche critique marxiste et la sémiotique, l'étude analyse et évalue les responsabilités éthiques des dirigeants et des dirigés ainsi que divers signes contraires à l'éthique contenus dans la pièce *The Hot Chair* de Faustina Brew. L'étude souligne que les actions et réactions non éthiques au niveau gouvernemental et dans le système de soins de santé affectent négativement tous les aspects socio-économiques et entravent la paix dans l'Afrique postcoloniale. L'article met l'accent sur l'intimidation,

l'oppression et l'abus de pouvoir des fonctionnaires, qui créent le chaos et affectent la paix. Certains professionnels de la santé, infectés par les idées capitalistes, ont oublié les principes éthiques et la déontologie médicale et ont transformé leur profession en une entreprise à des fins égoïstes, aggravant ainsi les souffrances des masses pauvres. Les résultats suggèrent qu'afin de mettre fin aux pratiques professionnelles contraires à l'éthique, des mesures urgentes et significatives doivent être prises par le biais d'une formation éthique concrète et pragmatique et d'une rééducation morale pour la paix, la stabilité et le développement durable en Afrique postcoloniale.

Mots-clés : Éthique, professionnelle, santé, paix, développement.

Introduction

Global governance issues, climate change and environment degradation, gender equality, human right violation, corruption, economic inequality, inflation, geopolitical shifts, political instability, terrorism, arm conflicts, refugees' crises and the proliferation of massive destruction weapons affect sustainable peace. Thus, individuals at all levels of national and international organisations are struggling on a daily basis to find solutions to the global challenges affecting peace. From this perspective, writers and critics, as members and actors of society, contribute to solving world problems by raising awareness, providing critical analysis, influencing public opinion, advocating change and inspiring action through their works. In this role of shaping discourse and highlighting solutions, Faustina Brew chooses to use literature and, in particular, drama through her play, *The Hot Chair*, to evoke emotions, reach diverse audiences and stimulate critical thinking about the challenges of professional ethics and their implications for peace in post-colonial Africa.

Professional ethics are defined as "broad principles of truth, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, respect and safeguard of human life and welfare, competence and accountability, which constitutes the moral values every corporate member of the institution must recognize, uphold and abide by" (Subrahmaniam, 2006: 114). In other words, professional ethics refers to the moral principles and standards that guide behaviour and decision-making within a specific profession. Thus, there can be no peace and development if there is no respect for professional codes of conduct or ethics, which are designed to ensure that professionals act in a manner that is responsible, fair and in the best interest of their clients, patients or the public in Africa. This is because peace is not fundamentally the absence of physical violence. As the famous human rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "True peace is not merely the absence of tension: It is the presence of justice." (King, 2008: 83). From this standpoint, it is clear that peace takes into account the presence of justice, law, equality and order in the society. From this perspective, it is worth noting that, there is no peace when there is lack of professional ethics that create forms of injustices, corruption, economic instability, mistrust, inefficiency, and social inequality, hence affecting development.

A summary of the recent literature on corruption and the lack of professional ethics concludes that corruption and lack of ethical standards are some of destabilizing force in African socio-political and economic development (Larmou & Wolanin, 2013) and (Chew & Richards, 2010). In the same vein, Kempe Ronald Hope points out that all the global evidence reminds us that the war on corruption has had a positive impact only in countries where the top leaders have actually led it with a focus on ethical standards. However, this war has failed in all countries where the top leaders were either corrupt themselves and/or fought corruption with empty words without ethical governance. Therefore, for him, there must be a zero-tolerance policy from the top that represents ethical standard setting through both words and deeds that demonstrate values and commitment to ethical governance (Hope, 2012). From this, it is obvious that the role of any leader in the fight against corruption should consider ethical

standards. Other critics and researchers from different fields of study work on ethical values. In this regard, Victor Oguejiofor Okafor, in a comprehensive assessment of African politics, affirms that, “the question of a national ethic is essentially not one to be solved by constitutional prescription. Habit or tradition or a moral sense is not automatically created by stipulations in a constitution” (Victor, 2006:138). This assertion confirms that no matter how elaborate a constitution is designed to prevent corruption and bad governance, if it is implemented by the wrong set of leaders without ethics, the constitution, which is just a document, cannot yield the results and the effects it was designed to produce. Consequently, a good constitution is no guarantee of good governance unless there are leaders with national ethics. Validating the above-mentioned thesis and highlighting the impact of unethical principles in post-colonial Africa, Panaewazibiou (2021: 321) concludes that “lack of ethical values gives room to various disorders observed nowadays in the continent”. Moreover, some researchers dealing with unethical behaviour in the legal system have found that “Unethical lawyer behaviour not only threatens the interests of clients, but also affects the third parties and the reputation of their profession; it also undermines the community’s interests in justice and its administration, and potentially devalues legal and constitutional values and rights.” (Robertson & Kruuse, 2016: 345). From the above literature, it is clear that many studies have been conducted by various scholars on ethics and its impact on development. However, this paper seeks to focus on professional ethics and its impact for peace and development in postcolonial Africa. Pragmatically, it raises the awareness about the importance of professional integrity and provides insights to influence policy and inform decision-makers about the role of ethics in peacebuilding, social stability and development. Hence the following topic: “Lack of Professional Ethics and its Implication for Peace in *The Hot Chair*”. The aim of this paper is to examine the play with a view to highlighting how lack of professional ethics has detrimental effects on peace and development in post-colonial Africa. More specifically, the paper seeks to point out unethical actions at governmental and health sector levels and how this affects the overall socio-economic aspects of post-colonial Africa.

Since the meaning of a literary text depends on a particular theory and the mindset of its readers and critics, two literary theories are used to analyse the play: semiotics and Marxism. Semiotics, founded by Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure, is the study of signs and symbols and their interpretation. Specifically, in this study semiotics is used to analyse and identify signs and symbols of lack of professional ethics in the play and how this affects peace and development. Marxism is based on the ideas of Karl Marx. It is a social, political and economic theory that focuses on class struggle, the role of labour in the economy and the critique of capitalism. In this study, Marxism is used to show that some elected and appointed officials and civil servants, with a total lack of professional ethics, put themselves in the position of master and oppressor and then use power to oppress, exploit and create injustice. It also tries to point out the responsibility of the oppressors and the one of the oppressed, representing the masses, in accepting or rejecting the oppression and injustices that hinder peace. Besides, some materials are collected from books and articles to shed light on the topic.

1- Revelation of Lack of Profession Ethics and its Impact on Peace in *The Hot Chair*

The setting, Ghana, is just the microcosm of post-colonial Africa that Faustina Brew uses to raise the issue of professional ethics with the ability to portray and reflect on societal unethical practices to call for change and the promotion of ethical standards for peace and development. The play is about power dynamics and the ongoing struggles due to the doctors’ strike, despite the alarming number of innocent patients dying in the country’s hospitals. The dramatis personae, the M.P and the Minister, in their lack of ethics in solving the burning national issues, handling the careers and salaries of the workers, create an ecosystem of intense and violent demonstrations that lead to socio-economic issues such as the lack of electricity and water in the country. The lack of ethics and the self-centered attitude of Dr Owusu and some of his colleagues make them overlook the danger of their actions to innocent people. They are indifferent to the effects of the strike; they cancel treatment and kill many patients.

They continue to receive salaries from the government and use the strike as an opportunity to treat patients at home.

After this brief summary of the play in link with the context, it is important to note that, the actions and reactions of M.P and Minister of health during the strike is unethical. As evidence, the Minister of health and the M.P are always late for meetings. To be specific, in scene six, an emergency meeting is organised to expose the aspirations and demands aimed at protecting and promoting the interests of the members of the Electricity and Water Companies Unions in their workplaces. Surprisingly, Coleman, a reporter from Shines F.M., who is associated with Appiah and Addo, representing the electricity and water companies respectively, comes and spends two hours without seeing the authorities. However, the Minister of health and the M.P were supposed to be punctual during that important and urgent meeting because of the lack of electricity and water in the country caused by the strike as a sign of malaise and bad leadership. This prompted them to leave the agenda, which summarised social amenities and Unions issues, unaddressed. Very desperate Appiah and Addo, ask themselves the following questions: APPIAH: Two hours is not enough? ADDO: Sometimes people sit there a whole day and they don't even come." (Brew, 2010 : 56)

In the light of the foregone dialogue, it is obvious that the leading people in state offices abuse their positions by allowing themselves too much latitudes which most of the time become a nuisance to the state affairs and lack of consideration to their collaborators. Brew wants to create a dramatic effect by using the rhetorical question to show how surprising and unbelievable the two hour lateness of the Minister of Health and the M.P is. Moreover, she uses hyperbole with the idea of people sitting the entire day to emphasise how unethical and disrespectful it is for government officials to be late for a meeting they have scheduled. Indeed, since professional ethics is concerned with the obligations and responsibilities that arise from a kind of service, being a minister or an M.P is of course about serving, not being served. That is to say, politicians must not solely be concerned with their interest, they must first and foremost think about that of the masses who, day in and day out, work with energy and commitment to find solutions to obstacles and to move the country towards development. Most of the time, workers go on strike because they feel that management does not have their interests at heart. Often, they feel exploited. More precisely, workers go on strike because of disputes over wages, benefits, working conditions, job security, some unfair labor practices and the disrespectful attitudes of leaders towards them. The perceived scornful attitudes of their leaders to them, then lead employees to become discontent with work. Noticeably, in the play instead of running and looking for alternatives for the demands of the workers, the M.P and the Minister decide to leave the ordinary people in despair. Their main concern is the position and its advantages, as well as ways and strategies to collect and embezzle. That is not in fact the genuine use of power, for one aspect of power is the ability to control people and events. It is therefore clear that a desperate and frustrated worker with low wage and poor working conditions cannot be at peace. Professional ethics considers the social responsibility of the profession itself as well as duties and obligations. As public servants who have indeed sworn to serve the state with loyalty and integrity, Ministers and M.Ps, who stand as symbols of post-colonial African governance, should know what they ought to do, and what they ought not to do for the sake of peace and development.

Moreover, how can leaders control events if they are unwilling to come on time and listen to trade union presidents? The following dialogue between the minister and Coleman, the reporter, says a lot about the reaction of the Minister and the M.P, who arrive late after the union leaders have left:

COLEMAN: They think they have waited for too long.

MINISTER: (*Looking at his time*) one hour is not too long.

COLEMAN: We've been here for two hours, sir. [...]

M.P.: If they don't come back?

COLEMAN: Then the meeting is postponed.

MINISTER: This meeting cannot be postponed.

COLEMAN: They played their part.

M.P.: Their parts of what? Some people wait for days, weeks, months and even years before they get this opportunity. (*Pause*) Two hours and they think it's too much.

COLEMAN: Each human being is different, some can wait others can't.

MINISTER: This is ridiculous.

M.P.: If they don't come back, I will make sure they are dismissed.

COLEMAN: That will make the situation worse. The whole country will be in chaos.

M.P.: Everybody can go to hell. We are tired of all these problems. Why can't people reason? (Coleman tunes on his recorder) You are pressman; I haven't seen any paper for the past three days. (Brew, 2010: 57-58)

From the interactions in the above quote, Brew would like to use dialogue as power to reveal the character's ability to create emotion and dynamics that engage the reader and audience in unethical attitudes. The Minister's statement "one hour is not too long" that is contrasted with Coleman's correction that "We've been here for two hours" is an irony. In effect, it highlights the discrepancy and create a subtly ironic situation where the Minister's perception of time and patience is shown to be inaccurate. Furthermore, the hyperbole in relation to "some people wait for days, weeks, months and even years" simply denotes lack of respect for the value of time and opportunities, hence postcolonial African countries are still poor and late despite the opportunities and resources. In essence, it demonstrates that the Minister has no concept of time management, hence the problem of ethics and self-discipline. In this regard, Chinua Achebe states that leaders are role models whose behaviour and mannerisms are emulated by others. He points out that leaders must be self-disciplined because if they are not, their indiscipline would exert a ripple effect on their followers (Achebe, 1984: 31). The lack of self-discipline, especially for a leader, is indeed dangerous, yet this is what postcolonial Africa has lacked.

Further, the repetition "the meeting cannot be postponed" underlines first, the importance of the meeting, and second, the uncertainty and the potential consequences of not holding it. Nevertheless, despite the lateness of the Minister and the M.P, they do not want to admit their mistake. It sounds unethical because this fact of not recognising their mistakes fosters a lack of trust and integrity and even undermines accountability. Therefore, there can be no peace in an environment of mistrust, resentment and unaccountability. Yet there can be no development without accountability and good governance. In this context, the ellipsis in the statement of the M.P shows how quick he is to threaten and intimidate his people instead of using professional discourse to solve problems. Coleman's right warning about "chaos" if people are dismissed suggests a fragile system where professional behaviour is not the norm. Still the M.P sees himself as omnipotent, with the supreme power to sack, even if he is proved wrong, without knowing that this is a sign of "chaos". "Chaos" here is used as a symbol of a disorderly and turbulent situation, implying the absence of peace and stability. To aggravate the situation, the M.P thinks that the right thing to do is to hyperbolically send his people to "hell". Visibly, this reaction is indicative of deep-seated frustration and a breakdown in reasoned dialogue, reflecting the wider issue of governance and ethical standards in the country. The question, then, is whether the country can be at peace without dialogue to solve misunderstandings. Undoubtedly, dialogue is an indispensable tool for peace building and conflict resolution. Sending his people to "hell" symbolises that he wants to plunge his people into an extreme suffering, punishment and torment. Obviously, the

M.P is creating an ultimate state of chaos and despair, reflecting moral degradation that represents the antithesis of peace and harmony. Besides, this arrogant metaphor, especially the “hell” used by the M.P, is at the same time an insult to the masses who are under obscurity without water because of the strike. This indeed is the discourse of authorities, who always think they are above the masses and their role is to neglect, ignore and enslave them. This complex of superiority and imposition is what characterize post-colonial leadership.

The foregoing analysis proves that unethical leadership is rooted in the fictional Ghana. It is then a copy-paste of the colonial ruling system. From a Marxist perspective, the Minister and the M.P put themselves in the shoes of masters who see their own people as slaves who do not deserve water and electricity. They are importing the arbitrary administrative stratagem of the colonists, which was designed to establish total domination over African countries and control over their subjects. Even with independence, people continue to witness the unfair treatment of African people by their own leaders, who choose the path of oppression and domination. Considering this angle, Robert and Carl are right when they say: “African politics are most often a personal or fractional struggle that is restrained by private and tacit agreement, prudential concerns, and personal ties and dependencies rather than by public rules and institutions.” (Robert & Carl, 1982:1). It is unfortunate that some African leaders are irresponsible and lack ethics, for ethics help to know the beliefs, values and morals of the people, learn the good and bad of them and practice them to maximise their well-being and happiness. However, leaders like Minister and M.P are not able to inquire about the existing situations, make judgements and solve the problems. They lack ethics as an ability to respond to issues through duties, responsibilities and obligations.

Faustina Brew, through language, symbols and dramatic tension points out the responsibility of the masses and the oppressed who stand firmly against their domination and the exploitation by the post-colonial leaders, mainly through the portrayal of the M.P. and Minister. They think it is easy to influence, intimidate and imprison the masses who feel exploited when they go on strike. But Ghanaian working class is gently standing up and saying “no” to the exploitation and intimidation. In a very gently way, Appiah rejects the orders and intimidation of the M.P:

M.P: Is the electric Company for you?

APPIAH: No sir.

M.P.: What right have you, to cut power in this country?

APPIAH: We don't have any right, sir

M.P.: You have answered right. Now go back and restore power immediately.

APPIAH: No sir. (Brew, 2010:59)

This extract mixed with direct and indirect questions raises many questions. Indeed, the electricity company does not belong to Appiah, but does the government belong to the MPs and ministers? If not, why do they “steal government money” (Brew, 2010: 8) as Tettey asks them? From this point of view, the “no” that Appiah uses here is, firstly, a symbol of total rejection and disagreement with the unethical attitudes of the leaders. Secondly, it underlines the rejection of capitalism and the exploitative system put in place by the leaders. Because water, as a symbol of life, and electricity are essential for the general improvement of the quality of life, and therefore they cannot be used greedily as a business for personal profit at the expense of the suffering of the masses. Pointing out that the system of governance is bad in Africa, Eagleton states that “capitalism... class divisions and conflicts are rampant in most African countries. (Terry, 2013: 51). That class division is what is seen in the behaviour of M.P and the Minister, who dominate and oppress the labourers who go on strike to demand their rights.

From his thought, it can be argued that there is turmoil in most African countries that can lead to the downfall of leaders who decide to serve their interests and the capitalist system instead of serving and defending the interests of their people. It is also worth noting that the unethical style of governance affects all socio-economic sectors of the country, including the sensitive and crucial health sector, hence the need to expose the unethical games and their effects in this sector in the following section.

2- Health System and Unethical Practices in *The Hot Chair*

The health sector in fictional Ghana is characterised by corruption and a lack of ethical values, from ministerial level down to doctors and their unions. In effect, the health sector falls under the purview of a Ministry of Health, and its general mandate is to improve the health status of the population by providing preventive, curative and rehabilitative services that will consistently increase longevity and quality of life. Such services are also expected to be of high quality, relevant, accessible, affordable, equitable and socially acceptable; to promote healthy lifestyles; and to improve the health care system in a sustainable manner, focusing on efficiency and sustainability. However, in most African countries, as in the case of the fictional Ghana, which reflects African reality, unethical practices are observed. Men and women working in the healthcare system steal drugs, exploit, violate privacy and discriminate against patients. Such practices also undermine trust in medical institutions and ultimately destabilise peace in the country. As a matter of fact, in the fictional Ghana, the health service is in shambles, as hospitals are reduced to mere consulting clinics without drugs, water and equipment. As a result, whenever a patient is brought to the hospital, he/she is likely to die, because most of the words that come out of the doctors' mouths, as Dr Owuso says, are: "I don't have any medicine for that" (Brew, 2010: 12). Sometimes, even when medicines or products are available, their quality is questionable because corrupt leaders lose the capacity to ensure access to quality and essential medicines. More unsafe products find their way into government health facilities through counterfeiting and bribery of officials. It is therefore obvious that no matter how skilled and qualified a doctor is, he cannot perform magic if there is no equipment, minimal working tools and drugs, such as any natural or man-made chemical that is used as medicine to treat patients.

The result of such actions is the suffering and death of the patients. As evidence, most of the dramatis personae in the play who go to the hospital with a dear patient end up being deceived, as in the case of Acquah, who says to Dr Owusu: "That medicine too didn't work" (Brew, 2010 :33) and further comes and says desperately "She is dying, the girl is dying" (Brew, 2010 :33). As if to confirm his words, the same Acquah speaks sadly: "Doctor it has happened, the girl is dead". (Brew, 2010: 44). Next to him, Brew uses Fifi's mouthpiece to say, "She is dead" (Brew, 2010:74), as another victim of lack of professional ethics in the health sector.

From all this evidence in the plays, it is obvious that the medical structures that are built are nothing more than tombs for the dead and dying. The necessary equipment and medicines are swallowed up by elected officials and hungry civil servants who rape the economy with impunity. Drugs and equipment are only said to have been bought in the documents, but in reality, the money budgeted for them was never spent on such purchases. They were stolen by those trusted to ensure performance. From a semiotic point of view, the frequency of deaths symbolizes the end of the painful struggle imposed on patients by the bad health system. Dying is the finality and, at the same time, the sense of peace and release from suffering given to patients by health professionals. Concretely, how can there be peace when health professionals, who are supposed to preserve, protect and enhance life, are instead killing people through unethical behaviour? How can people feel at peace when they see their son, daughter, father, and mother or relatives dying because some health workers have stolen drugs or refused to work for selfish reasons? From this perspective, Kempe is right when he declares that "corruption in the health sector exacerbates many of the existing challenges that health systems may face and can create new ones" (Kempe, 2017:7).

One thing that can be deciphered from the above unethical attitudes is that in post-colonial Africa, most corrupt leaders do not care about the health sector for the simple reason that they seek for health treatment from other civilisations. Therefore, the rich and powerful travel to the West, China, India and other parts of the world to get adequate medical care because of the precarious and deplorable state of the health care system they have created in their respective countries, leaving the people of the lower class as victims and exposed to more health hazards. The following excerpt illustrates this attitude of leaders in fictional Ghana:

DR.OWUSU: Don't government officials get sick?

Dr. ANTWI: You are funny. They get sick but they know where to go for treatment (Brew, 2010: 17).

In truth, government officials can go to well-equipped and even the best hospital in the world, but as Dr Owusu sarcastically says: "Even some of the government officials who are flown abroad for treatment because they think we are not competent enough to touch their precious bodies are flown back home as useless cargo for burial." (Brew, 2010:35). From this fact, it can be argued that leaders need to think twice about critical health issues. They must begin to have a clear and healthy vision for the health of Africans. Being a leader is not forever. They will leave office, but if they do not do their best to improve the health system, they are likely to become victims of that system in one way or another. Similarly, from a semiotic lens, the neglect of health system is a sign that there is no peace in a country where pharmacies are transformed into shops for maximum profit. There is no peace on a continent where leaders force pharmacy students to study for many years only to become sellers of drugs from other civilisations instead of developing local African pharmacy based on their cultural and traditional realities to ensure sustainable health for future generations.

The embezzlement or fraud of health funds, the non-existent rules and regulations, the lack of accountability, the low salaries and the limited range of services are leading Dr Owusu, the president of the medical workers' union, to cling to the idea of a proletarian revolution. It is based on a "complete and total liberation of the people, completely socialized economy collectively owned and controlled by the people" (Ngũgĩ, 1972:13). In line with this ideology, Dr Owusu, assuming his responsibility as an oppressed person, calls on doctors to go on strike as a unity and collective struggle of the masses which aims at "fighting for better conditions of service" (Brew, 2010:15). In fact, doctors go on strike because they also think that government officials are "thieves" (Brew, 2010:27).

However, for doctors like Dr Owusu, the president of the union, the strike was just a pretext to turn his house into a hospital. Theft of public drugs to private clinics settled at home and bribery have become his business. He does not care about professional ethics and human values. He forgets the moral values and medical deontology that should guide the medical profession as well as the moral issues. The set of beliefs, attitudes and habits that Dr Owusu exhibits are parallel to what a medical doctor should exhibit in terms of morality. For example, when Dr Antwi, one of Dr Owusu's colleagues, tells him that some of his attitudes are "against our professional ethics", Dr Owusu's surprising response in a litotic form is "forget about ethics, they only exist in books." (Brew, 2010:16). Here in particular, the dialectical exchange between Dr Antwi and Dr Owusu shows that Dr Owusu forgets the Hippocratic Oath. He also forgets ethics. He simply ignores the promise he made when he became a doctor to do everything possible to preserve human life and to maintain high standards of work. A doctor like Dr. Owusu forgetting about ethics is like ignoring patient rights, confidentiality and safety, ignoring justice and moral integrity.

In short, he makes no distinction between what is right medical practice and what is wrong medical practice, which is essentially the code by which he practices. These scenarios highlight an ironic juxtaposition because the same Dr Owusu who accuses government officials of theft and corruption is the one who does the worst by setting up clinics at home, taking bribes and killing patients instead of

going to work. It is striking that the lack of peace and underdevelopment in post-colonial Africa is not only the responsibility of the leaders, but also of the led. Such doctors in post-colonial Africa aggravate the suffering of the poor masses. In this regard, it is clear that, the actions and reactions of some people from the masses contribute to the oppression, domination and suffering of the same masses.

Understandably, Brew uses drama not only as a tool to raise awareness and call for positive change and the well-being of the people, but also as a window to envision new possibilities for peace, stability and development in postcolonial Africa. To put it another way, for peace and development, it is a call for people to stop stealing drugs from dying patients. A call for people to stop selling expired drugs to patients without worry. A call for people to stop stealing public medical equipment to private clinics. A call for all professionals to stop using short working hours through absenteeism and lateness. A call for people to stop using work premises and resources for private ends. A call for all professionals in postcolonial Africa to stop thinking that “ethics only exist in books”.

Dr. Owusu uses the strike as a pretext to be involved into bribery. He charges clients in his house in return for quick service like abortion. Actually, he charges a lot of money to help Acquah get rid of a pregnancy. This pregnancy is a result of Acquah’s paedophilia with Betty, “She is about sixteen years old” (Brew, 2010: 19). Equally, such an act is a sign of a lack of personal ethics, because it shows how some men, with their wives and children at home, behave immorally by having sex with their daughters. They even ask them to have abortions when they get pregnant. Nevertheless, Dr Owusu is willing to perform D&C. All he needs is money. This passage tells more:

AQUAH: She is pregnant.

Dr.OWUSU: I don’t have any medicine for that. The best way out is to perform D&C

ACQUAH: But you are on strike, how can you go to theatre to perform D&C?

Dr.OWUSU: You let her come, I will manage

ACQUAH: Here?

Dr.OWUSU: Yes

ACQUAH: how much do I have to pay?

DR. OWUSU: Six hundred thousand cedis

ACQUAH: Mm! Can you reduce it a bit? (Brew, 2010: 11-12)

The above scene firstly shows how Dr. Owusu, as the leader of the union, provides private consultations at home, and secondly, how he charges his clients and collect everything from them. As says Acquah “if you collect all the money how can I buy the medicine?” he further affirms “but it is too much” (Brew, 2010:13). D&C (Dilation and Curettage) is used as a medical euphemism often associated with abortion. This then demonstrates the true face of medical doctors in the post-colonial Africa who kill for money. Out of this, one can see a contrast. There will be no peace in a country where the healthcare system is transformed into business, for the rules of business and the ones of the health are opposed. In addition, the interjection “Mm!” from Acquah shows how surprise he is when Dr. Owusu exposes his cupidity and immorality. Dr. Owusu openly says, “I will never go broke so long as I remain a doctor. No way! The government thinks it can cheat everyone, not me, Owusu.” (Brew, 2010:13).

Another shocking evidence is that, after Dr. Owusu had killed Betty as a result of the failure of the D&C he performed at home, he just did not care. He even expresses his immorality while talking to Acquah this way “ I didn’t ask you to sleep with the girl; neither did I force you to bring her here for D&C. after all it’s not all patience we treat that survive, some are born to die.” (Brew, 2010:35). Dr. Owusu does not stop there. He tries to hide his responsibility for Betty's death, thinking “We shall tell the mortuary man that we found the body in the bush and we want him to preserve it whilst we inform

the police.” (Brew, 2010: 44). For Dr. Owusu to get rid of the dead body he pretends to be “a good Samaritan” (Brew, 2010:53). A close analysis of the above extract sheds light on Dr Owusu’s unconscionable and nonchalant attitude towards the death of an innocent patient, which is in stark contrast to the expected ethical behaviour of a doctor. It also underscores a fatalistic and unethical attitude towards patients’ care, since doctors think and believe that patients’ mortality is a common and acceptable outcome, hence the gravity. Even pretending to be a “good Samaritan” is an allusion to the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, who selflessly helps a stranger in need. In this context, “good Samaritan” is used sarcastically to highlight Dr Owusu’s deceitful and unethical behaviour in trying to cover up Betty’s death. It also symbolises lack of integrity and honesty, for Dr. Owusu shifts in responsibility and deliberately fabricate stories and lies to corrupt everybody in his way just to achieve his egoistic goals.

Demonstrating a lack of integrity and honesty, Dr Owusu wants the strike to last as long as possible. As a strategy to prevent his colleagues from returning to work, he uses his position as president of the association and threatens to revoke the membership of those like Dr Antwi who say “I am tired of staying at home” and that he should “go back to work” (Brew, 2010:14). Moreover, he corrupts Coleman and Miss Adjei, both from the Press, and prevent them from reporting the truth. Dr. Owusu hires criminals to kill his friend and colleague Dr. Antwi for the simple reason that Dr. Antwi was able to organise some doctors to start work the next day to save the lives of dying patients. Dr. Owusu clearly reveals, “with all these attacks, they still continue to work. I don’t know what to do next. (Pause) We shall continue attacking them till they give up. I wish they could get rid of Dr. Antwi. The other will be discouraged when he is eliminated.” (Brew, 2010: 33). Dr Owusu’s actions and reactions in this scenario illustrate a total betrayal of professional duty, for medical professionals have an ethical obligation to prioritise patient care and save lives. Doctors’ unethical practices lead Parsa-Parsi, Gillon, & Wiesing (2023: 163) to assert that “a crucial necessity of medical practice is the establishment and maintenance of patients’ trust in their doctors and in the medical profession”. This implies that doctors must put patients’ interests first, because trust is fundamental to the doctor-patient relationship. When doctors put their own interest first, as Dr Owusu did, it can undermine this trust, which is crucial for effective medical care and ethical practice.

Dr Owusu’s actions directly contradict this duty by attempting to eliminate Dr. Antwi and other colleagues who are dedicated to helping patients. Again, Dr. Owusu’s willingness to use violence against his colleagues for personal interests demonstrates a profound ethical breach. Such behaviour is antithetical and contrary to the principles of trust, integrity, and respect that underpin medical practice. Notably, in postcolonial Africa, righteous and innocent people have been killed for their commitment to fighting unethical practices, corruption and injustice. Thus, regardless the profession, a person who sees unethical practices and corruption taking place and does not report is as guilty as the perpetrator. A person who covers up injustice is himself unjust. Definitely, the fight against unethical practices can only be won if people work together and all assume their responsibilities as citizens. People should not think of themselves as masters and put personal vendettas and rivalries ahead of their basic duties of saving lives, working with commitment and acting with integrity for peace and development.

Conclusion

This paper on Faustina Brew's *The Hot Chair* demonstrates that unethical leadership style affects all socio-economic sectors, including the sensitive and crucial health system, which hampers peace, stability and development in post-colonial Africa. It exposes how leaders in the shoes of masters install intimidation, oppression and abuse of authority as some of the consequences of lack of professional ethics. In addition, capitalist and neo-liberal ideas have infected health systems and turned them into businesses for selfish purposes. Health professionals have forgotten the moral and ethical values and medical deontology that should guide the medical profession. As a result, health professionals, who are supposed to preserve, protect and enhance life, are instead creating disasters and aggravating the

suffering of the poor masses. The analysis suggests that the lack of peace and underdevelopment in post-colonial Africa is not only the responsibility of the leaders, but also of the led who lack ethical practices. The findings show that the lack of professional ethics, the aggression of righteous people and whistle-blowers committed to fighting unethical practices, corruption and injustice undermine peace, stability and development. Therefore, Brew's play is a call for change and the enforcement of strict regulations and anti-corruption laws that enhance transparency and accountability. To stop unethical professional practices in post-colonial Africa, urgent and meaningful steps must be taken through concrete and pragmatic ethical training and moral re-education for peace, stability and sustainable development.

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