
Book review of 'University on Watch: Crisis in the Academy'

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ISSN: 2515-138X

Within the last decades, there has been rising prevalence of mental health issues in academia (Gonçalves, 2017). A number of studies have been done (e.g., Eisenberg, Downs, Golberstein, & Zivin, 2009; Kitzrow, 2003; Martin, 2010), in order to enhance efforts to prevent and treat mental disorder within higher education. But then, it seems that everything still is in the same place. I feel that it is vital that we also consider the lived experience of students who have mental health issues.

One book that gives us a glimpse of the experience of mental health issue by a university student is *University on watch: Crisis in the academy* (Peters, 2019).

I can confidently state that *University on Watch* was found to be a captivating non-fiction account of Peter's experience in university with schizophrenia. The first person narrative draws readers in, and they will feel connected to Peters during this time in his life. The language in the book will open up the eyes of people in the book to the realities of living with schizophrenia. The memoir sheds much light on the treatment of those with mental health problems and will hopefully allow for a discussion for positive change. Peters serves a symbol of hope and dealing, and readers will be inspired by his journey and his determination to heal.

This book is a fitting example of the difficulties of treating brain disorders for people who are in universities. I found the book easy to read and finished it quickly. I recommend the book for the diagnosed, family and friends. It is very descriptive and really portrays what goes on when a person is manic or psychotic. Peters' story chronicles his experience at 'New London University' (a fictitious US university) battling first episode psychosis, and the initial stages of schizophrenia which continued to go undiagnosed until the main character, Jacques, is in the hospital. Readers will appreciate how Peters details the various aspects of his new illness, succumbing to the disorder from his own perspective

during that time, but always with the guidance of a clear-headed narrator who has come through it. It makes it a lot easier to understand the insidiousness of delusions. Like how they creep in slowly enough that – unless caught and challenged – it makes sense to believe the distortions are reality. As a rhetoric scholar, mental health clinician, and a person with lived experience with schizophrenia. Today, Peters is a *prosumer*.

As stated in the preface by Peter's student intern, Jacques identity aside, and the general status of disabilities studies. Narratives, memoirs, and stories that aim to reclaim the writers' lost authorial voice are in demand. These stories offer catharsis.

Upon reflection, after reading this novella, I am still not sure how to feel about Peter's chosen path to healing through writing. This remind me of my previous work which reveals that writing confers a host of psychological benefits (Relajo, 2015).

Indeed, in spite of what he has experience at university, he was privileged enough to offer his readers the opportunity to find catharsis and re tell his story in a genuine and authentic way without privileging the reader. While other writers don't have the same opportunity, Peter's shares this privilege and opportunity with the reader with *University on Watch*.

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