

Academic Betrayal: The Bullying of a Graduate Student

Loren Mayshark

Red Scorpion Press (Apr 27, 2017)

Softcover \$9.95 (164pp)

978-0-9985768-3-1

With candor and courage, Mayshark exposes the higher education system in this shocking memoir.

Loren Mayshark's *Academic Betrayal* is an impassioned first-person account of a graduate student's trials and tribulations.

Academic Betrayal concentrates exclusively on Mayshark's experiences at one school, Hunter College (part of the City University of New York system), but it has broader implications. "My story is a microcosm that elucidates many of the problems in our system that tragically go unspoken," writes Mayshark, referring to higher education in the United States. In that context, this short work is essentially an indictment of graduate programs, but it reads more as a memoir of one student's failed postgraduate career.

Mayshark recounts his experience from start to finish in a chronological tale augmented by diary excerpts. It begins with the graduate school application process, rejection letters from several schools, and an offer to attend Hunter College as a nonmatriculated student. The first sign of trouble is the school's refusal to allow Mayshark to continue as a matriculated student after he successfully completes several courses. "The bureaucracy at Hunter was daunting and the staff was remarkably unhelpful," writes Mayshark. This is just the beginning of a protracted period in which one bad thing leads to another, eventually culminating in the author's decision to abandon writing his thesis after six years of agony.

Mayshark is a good storyteller; his ability to reveal one perplexing situation after another makes for engaging reading, and his observations about specific professors, their mannerisms, and their personal agendas are particularly memorable. There is a whistleblower quality to the story that should raise the hackles of anyone who has been subject to the injustices meted out by a bureaucratic organization. The story could also be seen as a cautionary tale for any prospective graduate student.

On the other hand, it is possible that some readers may be less sympathetic to the author's plight. While Mayshark clearly comes across as the victim in *Academic Betrayal*, some of the author's extenuating circumstances, such as the great distance he must travel to classes, are harder to understand. In addition, since the story is seen only through the eyes of the author, one could easily view it as a vindictive diatribe rather than an objective story in which the opposing perspective is shared.

Still, there are parts of *Academic Betrayal* that seem troubling from any vantage point. For example, Mayshark's statement, "Every time I ran up against these institutional barriers or problems the onus was always put on me, never on the institution or faculty," is chilling. His portrayal of the thesis writing process is equally disturbing; apparently, he was shunted from one professor to another, agreed-upon meetings and reviews were delayed or postponed, and rewrites of chapters were repeatedly demanded without the benefit of constructive criticism.

"Looking back on my academic career, it is clear that I became trapped in a system," Mayshark concludes. It is with

candor and courage that Loren Mayshark writes about that system in *Academic Betrayal*.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (April 26, 2017)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.