

# Is a College Professor Capable of Being A Psychopath? A Character Study from the Campus Novel *Black Star*

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## Abstract

Literature reflects society. People study literature to better comprehend their own and other people's experiences. People in all civilizations interact with one another, and as a result, bonds form. Education makes a person more civilized. Campus life is considered as the most flamboyant days of a person. In Canada Undergraduate degree or Bachelor's Degree requires 3 to 5 years of study. Canada has some of the prestigious universities. When speaking about campus fiction the most customary or habitual way we analyze the same is how campus life is reciprocating student life and vice versa. At the same time campus novels do give a focus on the life of lecturers and faculties but it's much fewer. In the novel *Black Star* by Maureen Medwed interestingly portrays a female philosophy professor named Del Hanks. Studies has been conducted based on Canadian Fiction but there is a lack of study on the 21<sup>st</sup> century academic fiction that too written by a female author. In the novel *Black Star*, the central character is female professor her hardships and difficult phases are been described with the inner lining application of trauma. But interestingly nowhere in the novel the word trauma is been used.

**Keywords:** Trauma, Campus Fiction, Canada, Professor, Psychopath, Education

## 1. Introduction

Teaching is considered as a noble profession. Let it be a school teacher or college professor. Education spaces are places where knowledge sharing occurs. Campus novels reflect the individual names and protagonists of the novel. Another specialty of academic novels is that they are written by professors or teachers. They try to portray their day-to-day lives as professors and their hardships on campus. British campus novels have many stories. If I analyze the contemporary Indian scenario, the UK and Canada are dream destinations for many students. It is an educational hub for the majority of Indian students. Very few novels have been written about Canadian Campus life. Specialty of campus novels includes satire for academia, romantic relationships, friendships, professional rivalries between faculties, and so on. The primary aim of campus novels is to subjugate and highlight the hypocrisies and fallacies of academicians as well as students' lives, which include sexual exploitation and marginalization of women and female students on campus. According to Benjamin De Mott, "no novel of academe has ever produced a believable prof" (1962, p. 245). The world has changed. Some of our most well-known authors have recently authored academic books and created completely credible teachers. David Lodge is considered as a prominent figure while we study about Campus Fiction. Björg says that "literary portrayals of academics may be found long back in the Middle Ages." However, we cannot consider or qualify this as campus novels, college novels, or academic fiction. It was only in the second half of the 21st century that this new genre of campus novels or campus fiction came into prominence, and hence, campus novels as a genre began to attract both readers and authors.

## 2. Canadian Literature

Canada is a country occupying most of North America. This extends to the Atlantic Ocean in the eastern part, the Pacific Ocean in the west, and northward to the Arctic Ocean. Canada is the world's second-largest country by total area, and it borders the United States on the southern and northern sides. For thousands of years, the land of Canada has been occupied by various groups of indigenous people. Canada was a colony for the British and French. France acquired all of the colonies in 1763 after seven years of war. Canada as a country was formed with the unification of three British North American colonies in 1867. The establishment was a four-province federal dominion. The majority of French-speaking Canadians live in Quebec. The number of French- or Francophone-speaking people are a bit high in Ontario, Alberta, and southern Manitoba. Though English is also used for speaking, French is used as a language of instruction in government sectors as well as in courts. Since thousands of years, the land of Canada has been occupied by various groups of indigenous people. Canada was a colony for the British and French.

While coming to the literature part of Canada, it can be divided into two parts. It's like a big tree with two great roots. One root is highly concealed or intermingled with the traditions of England, and the latter is French. Whether written in English or French, Canadian literature normally gives a throwback to

- 1) 1) The environment
- 2) 2) Frontier Life, and
- 3) 3) Canada's Global Position has been related to its Garrison Mentality. Canada's literature is been immersed in the ethnic and cultural diversity. This is the only reason many of the prominent Canadian writers focusing on ethnic life and the ecocritical aspects even in poems and fiction.

Due to the size and breadth of Canada as a nation, Canadian literature is divided into several areas. The most typical method is to divide or separate them according to location or province. The second method is to study it or permeate it by province or region. The other approach is to categorize it by author. Women's literature Acadians, aboriginal people in Canada, and Irish Canadians, for example, have been gathered into bodies of work. The third group divides it into literary periods, such as Canadian Post moderns or Canadian Poets Between the Wars. As previously said, nature and natural topographies abound in Canadian literature. Canada, as a country, has both great male and female authors. When we analyze national literatures, we can see a chronological reproduction of Canadian literature, especially in the chronological societies. When talking about Canadian fiction, we cannot avoid the very first Canadian novel, known as *The History of Emily Montague*. Which was written in 1769 by Frances Brooke. This novel is about domestic romance written in an epistolary mode. Howbeit, this novel by Frances Brooke is not just a breakthrough masterpiece of Canadian English-language fiction. It is concerned with the issues of British North America following the British, which include present-day Quebec. The novel also enumerates the problems that are fundamental to colonial and postcolonial literature.

Another novel that speaks about the Canadian wilderness and sheds light on Indian uprisings while also causing readers to form opinions about savagery and brutality is John Richardson's *Wacousta, or The Prophecy, A Tale of Canada's*. Susanna Strickland Moodie and Catharine Parr Trail, two famous Canadian writers who moved to Canada to escape declining social and economic circumstances, are sisters. At the same time, the United States began to develop or fabricate new literature that is more or less focused on future-oriented topics, discarding primitive and older ones. At the same time, two sisters who were new settlers were attempting to protect and preserve their imported ideals based on family, education, and property. The location of Moody's book *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) is fully in Canada. Moody's writerly perspective emphasizes "dear, dear England." Her writings have either generated congruence or attempted to adapt to existing preconceptions on subjects like employment, class, and gender roles. It's almost like a war between themes and beliefs.

In the year 1836, Haliburton published *The Clockmaker, or The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slickville*. He is known as the first fiction writer who used colloquial language. Haliburton's fairy tale type of novels has a great tint and essence of realism, which makes the novels much more extravagant. His writing anticipates, or, in other words, we can compare his writings not only with the writing style of Mark Twain, which is much more atrocious or agonized, but also with the contemporary, playful postmodern chronicles of Robert Kroetsch. Robert Kroetsch was one of the author's former teachers and mentors. The novel *Tracey Fragments* was blurbed by Kroetsch. Family relations also had a lot of influence on Canadian fiction. Rosanna Lephoron's popular historical romances are an example of this. She is an English Canadian woman who marries a French Canadian in Montreal. In her work, *Antoinette de Mirecourt* (1864), she attempted to depict and construct a family story in which she attempted to depict the political and social challenges surrounding New France's defeat by the British.

While moving forward, we need to think of Canadian literary realism. The term realism means the use of realistic characters over a complicated plot. Elements of realism include a focus on social issues and the struggles of everyday life, and realism paves light mainly on middle- and lower-class people. Campus fiction, our main focus area, comes under realism. When speaking about literary realism in Canada, the prime figure we cannot avoid is Zola. Émile Zola is a French writer. Canada is known for its scenic, beautiful grasslands. Most of the poems and stories do portray Canada's picaresque beauty. Sinclair Ross and W.O. Mitchell were the most prominent short story writers of all time. They were also considered the earlier leading figures of prairie novels in Canada. Literary realism was the most vibrant force in Canadian writing after modernism. This occurred during the height of modernism in Europe and the United States.

As this dissertation explores contemporary topics in Canadian fiction, the campus novel plays an important role. Some Canadian novelists, such as Margaret Laurence, published their first novel, *The Stone Angel*, in 1964. As a result, a great number of Canadian authors sought to operate within the realm of realism in their writings.

Another observation from a professor named Stephen Slemon is that cultures or literatures situated in the mainstream area's projects magical realism. Magical realism is a Latin American narrative strategy that includes fantastic, mythical, or fictional elements in realistic fiction. As Russian novelist Vladimir Nabokov's short stories published in the past illustrate, magic realism was one expression of modernism and surrealism. When it comes to Canadian fiction, Margaret Atwood is the leading figure who should be included in this discussion. In her first novel, *Edible Women* (1969), Atwood uses the third-person narrator to convey her protagonist's struggles and estrangement. We can see Canadian cultural scenes and art forms such as plastic arts, performance art, body art, and film in current Canadian books. This is a neo-Gothic hue that runs through current Canadian fiction. *Headhunter* is a novel by Timothy Findley. He rewrites the famous story by Joseph Conrad. He is actually switching or interchanging it into an urban Canadian setting novel with a beginning sentence.

On a winter's day, while a blizzard raged through the streets of Toronto, Lilah Kemp inadvertently set Kurtz free from page 92 of *Heart of Darkness*. Horror-stricken, she tried to force him back between the covers. The escape took place at the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, where Lilah Kemp sat reading beside the rock pool. Timothy's novel *Headhunter* portrays characters who are neither real nor

fictitious, neither dead nor alive

Canadian literature has a great contribution from first- and second-generation immigrants after displacement and relocation. By the end of the twentieth century, the majority of the current Canadian population was from other countries. Because Canada has become a dream destination for people across the world. Canadian literature is an amalgamation of literatures from all over the world. Some examples of novels that were anglophone upon arrival in Canada are Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here* [1996], *At the Full and Change of the Moon* [1999], etc. They share many of the western cultural and literary markers of their generation through their education, which is still based on the conventional British educational curriculum. The universal voices emerged from all over the globe. Some of them were from Italy, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, China, Japan, etc. Numerous people, including M. G. Vassanji (*The Book of Secrets* [1994]) and Cyril Dabydeen, were raised as Indians in circumstances that were primarily African. Many writers have penned their novels or poems in an ironic or elegiac style that is more or less autobiographical in nature. Their themes include missing family connections, failed romantic relationships, identity crises, social and communal dispositions, etc. Most of the literature spoke about racial discrimination and the mental fracture that came from the ill treatment of either friends or family. Peter Olivia's 1999 novel *The City of Yes*, which alternates between Japan and Canada, is a fine example of an inventive multicultural voice. It combines a barrage of languages, cultures, and worlds and explores many perspectives on them.

### 3. Urban Writings in Canada

Towards the end of the twentieth century, a strong vibration of urban writing began to shoot up. This urban writing had established or created a drastic change in the minds of literature and art lovers. Through movies and books, only the outer world has captured greater pictures of how Canadian life will be. That is, the number of immigrants in Canada is increasing. Canada is considered one of the highest metropolitan or urban societies in the world. While analyzing this or cross-reading this fact, we can see that a vast majority of immigrants prefer staying in the cities of Vancouver and Toronto. The majority of Canadian fiction has been set in the small towns of Canada. There are intercultural writers who segregate their time between their mother country and Canada. Migrations and dispersions have great stories to tell. William Safran, the political scientist, said that "the dispersal from homeland from two or more foreign regions, those who are away from their homeland, will have a collective memory of it and have a belief that they will always be outrageous in their host state" (Johnson, 2019. para. 8). Indo-Canadian authors like Sukhminder Rampuri, Sukhwant Hundal, Surinder Dhanjal, Surinder Pal Kaur Brar, and Surjit Kalsey have made an effort to preserve Indianness in the second generation by illuminating mythical traditions, sharing personal anecdotes from their time spent in India, and other means.

### 4. Canadian Campus Fiction

In this paper, we are mainly focusing on Canadian campus fiction. Campus fiction as a whole does have great prominence and relevance in popular culture as well. Campus novels do contain some amount of romance as well as reality. Campus novels may or may not have real heroes or real stories. Because much of the campus fiction has been written by college professors themselves. Academic fictions are novels that are set on a campus or at a university. This genre was started as a main area in the early 1950's. Here we can quote an example, which is the novel written by Mary McCarthy named *The Groves of Academe*. *The Professors House* by Willa Cather from 1925, *The Smith Conundrum* by Regis Messac from 1928 to 1931, and *Gaudy Night* by Dorothy L. Sayers from 1935 are a few examples of books with academic settings. Kingsley Amis *Lucky Jim* and those of David Lodge are some of the best-known campus novels. Another specialty of campus fiction is that these novels will be authored mainly by academicians or college professors. One study found that "the way in which academic life is portrayed in fiction creates a complex intersection among a number of forces. A primary issue in which these novels engage is the interplay between fiction and fact: we assume university novels to be realistic because they are based on an actual institution, often enough on a real university in a real place" (Rossen, 1993, p. 10). According to Mortimer Proctors' study of university fiction in English literature, "the university novel, in the long course of its development, has been shaped more than anything else by the state of the English universities." A larger sphere regards universities as a source of authority. Those shallow passages, big pillars, classrooms, and lecture halls that are arranged as small matchboxes, big trees, the wavy wind that always blows throughout the campus, and the humming murmuring voices of students are some of the very first-hand memories that will come to mind when we think of university life. For instance, Jeffrey J. Williams (2012) provides a useful distinction, suggesting that the protagonists of campus novels are students, whereas the major characters of academic novels are academicians. Academic novels will paint an outline for a public who is unaware of what is happening in campus life. But on the contrary, the readership for academic novels is mostly a crowd of people who are one way or another related to academia. Academic novels written by Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, and Prose were the most well-known academic novels of yesteryear.

The very first campus novel is from the United States of America. As I mentioned before, *Groves of the Academy* by Mary McCarthy.

### 5. Black Star as a Campus Novel

In this article, I introduce a Canadian Campus novel named *Black Star* by Maureen Medwed. This is a dark story unearthed through a frenzied voyage in the mind of an untrustworthy narrator who took a refreshing break from the sugary CanLit tomes that we used to read normally. Del Hanks, a professor of philosophy who is 40 years old, serves as the narrator of this book. She experienced a midlife crisis. Everything that is under 40 years is the culmination of the beginning. A forty-year-old is the beginning of the end for everything (Medwed, 2018). Despite her post as a university professor is actually writing an important book, titled "The Catastrophic Decision" for over a decade. Delorosa shops at Forever 55 a shop and eats Chef Boyardee, and she speaks in a declarative tone that reminds American

academic writer Camilie Paglia. Another main characteristic of the novel is the stair-well man. Del delivered lectures on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Another significant characteristic of this novel is the unwavering explanations about the campus, which gives it a mystification or secrecy, especially when the author narrates the building structure and corridors. “The corridor to the basement of John Kenneth Hall was black and shiny with a floor of tiny specks of color that looked as if it were trying to imitate an expensive exotic stone, but was really meant to distract the eye from the scratches and scuff marks” (Medwed, 2018, p.39). *Black Star* by Maureen Medwed elaborates the sexual tone of explanation throughout the novel. This is visible even in the professors’ conversations. “Yes, even sexualized. The cow’s rump, the horse’s tail, the chicken’s vent, and the sensuous and arched back of a cat. The animals are us and we are animals. What we view in our animals, we view ourselves. (Medwed, 2018, p.53). The novel *Black Star* gradually enfolds the daily incidents of a college professor and her daily routine. From a feminist perspective, I can say that the hardships of a female character are displayed in the novel *Black Star*. The feminine aspect is equalized to male or masculine behavior. This novel pinpoints the basic nature of inhumanity towards animals. “Our culture of meat has turned animal rights into animal rites” (Medwed, 2018, p.53). The author criticizes supermarket culture by saying that supermarket is another word for cemetery, because she vehemently criticizes that even for food, we are blindly inhabiting depending on preserved food items that are available in the market. Throughout the novel, we can see that, in one or the other way, sexual conversations and sexual encounters are depicted. Another fascinating pulse which we can see is that there are no connections between these conversations. Each scene had its own paranormal conglomeration. Another pounding characteristic of *Black Star* as a campus novel is that the vocabulary or dialect that the author uses are foul invective words in nature. Throughout the text, I have become aware of these words. “Nothing but stink, pollinators, ass kissers, liars, and backstabbers. The thing we aspired to, that once excited us, had died within us” (Medwed, 2018, p.144) There are situations where the protagonist herself thinks of burning her manuscripts, because at a point, she is frustrated with the work of writing that she was doing. “I couldn’t tell her whether the Catastrophic Decision was becoming a work of madness or genius or some half-baked pivot-point in between (Medwed, 2018, p. 145). Here, I can say that the central character or protagonist Del Hanks has occupational regret. This was the main rationale behind her unhappiness and dissatisfaction with the work she is doing. Del Hanks is in her forties and is beginning to realize that she is caught between the years devoted to her job as an academic and her longing for the life she gave up to become an academic. A study conducted by Alexandra Budjanovcanin and Chris Woodrow reveals that “regret is a universal emotion that can be experienced throughout the course of life, with varying degrees of consequence” (Alexandra & Chris, 2022). Del is a well-paid philosophy professor, but she is doomed or blighted by her career or profession. It is a psychological issue that her mindset was inferior. Career scholars are not immune to this principle, and “tend to look for and emphasize the positive and hopeful, whereas the dark side of careers is often left unconsidered” (Byington et al., 2019:240). From the novel, I felt that for some period, she was dissociated from other characters. In her own words, this is called depersonalization. This is similar to a separation from herself. At this locus, she contrasts her character with toilet tissue paper. “Like a Kleenex, one ply pulled apart from another” (Medwed, 2018, p. 135). Throughout the novel, I experienced an uncanniness or obscurity that made the episodes of events more profound. This ambiguity includes the sudden displacement of characters’ situational location from a classroom to a hospital to a rainy night. It is like a slippery soap that hits a wall, falls on the floor, and then slides through the watery surface. As a woman, Del the main character evolves through serpentine and impenetrable situations. Campus novels date back to the early 1950s. John Lyons had penned a notable work on campus fiction which is *The College Novel in America* defines the academic novel as “higher education is treated with prime concern and the main characters are students and professors” (Lyons, 1962, p.17).

When we hear about campus novels, we imagine it is like a campus movie which includes the colorful life of the campus. However, there will be campus novels like that, but *Black Star* is not like that it is something different. The difference can be felt in the abrupt writing style of Maureen Medwed which takes the reader into a slippery ride of a roller coaster and throughout this roller coaster journey the reader as such might be plunged into some instances or incidents which happens in the campus. The feeling of becoming plunged is caused by the phenomena of stream of consciousness. Here, the emotions of a character are written; hence, the reader can understand the fluid state of these characters. Throughout the novel, the entire backdrop gives us a scenario of conversations between other professors or conversations with the self. These continuous mind cascading contemplations make protagonist Del an unforgettable and outstanding figure. There is a circumstance when Del has a grudge against LeBec. “Invited her to lunches and parties. I wanted to tear off LeBec’s mask, but feared my colleagues would run away in horror and later hold it against me” (Medwed, 2018, p. 154). This shows the uttermost and acute antagonism against Le-Bec. Sometimes, as a reader, I felt that it was childish to keep such grudges that too one professor to another professor. An almost complete chapter in this novel describes Del. ’s agonies. Like a sequence of continuous events, while reading it, I felt like it was a kind of bombarding uninterrupted and ceaseless events which takes the reader to a cumbersome phenomenon. These unnatural events occurred after confirming that the patient was pregnant. Another interesting fact is that from the perspective of a female character, the events mentioned in chapter five are extraordinary. “I shivered, shook, clenched the dress covered in dirt, blood” (Medwed, 2018, p.192). In the end, I felt like it was like an inner inertia of Del, who suddenly reawakened herself from the situations she had been through. The first part of the book is a very obvious parody on academia’s petty, backstabbing nature: the race for tenure, the interoffice politics about who is and is not invited to a faculty dinner, the misery of meetings to discuss pedagogy or sensitivity training.

Another interesting characteristic is the manner in which Maureen Medwed describes each person in the novel. The creativity level that she portrays is like the reader is actually going through real meetings with characters. Jenks, who is a senior professor, is about to retire, and the way Medwed paints a senior professor is exemplary. “At fifty-eight, Jenks’ hair hung in a peppered curtain. Here, the author herself was getting black spots when her hair went gray. She wore sandals teamed with wool socks” (Medwed 2018). 154). The imagination level or creativity that she expunges is stupendous. Pepper trees have long hanging threads such as minute branches called

pepper vines. They are considerably delicate in nature. As an author, Maureen Medwed illustrating a fifty-eight-year-old lady is splendid. The involvement of students is occasional; instead, I can say that the insurgence or unrest between faculties makes this novel exceptional. Another fascinating fact about *Black Star* is that the author herself painted a clear picture of a classroom where a student that she calls nerd asks some doubts. Hence, this proves that a professor in a university is immersed in classroom lectures amidst his/her problems. The point is that I believe that she has problems with her own that creep into her lectures. Del-Hanks who is the narrator do have some purgation of emotions from last class that is why she is just pondering over her previous lecture. where she might have concluded with a point. However, at the same time, her brain was contemplating the preceding lecture. There faced a moral dilemma when she concluded her class. "Continuing from my conclusion of last week's discussion, we have a moral world that the problems speak to. What would we do in moral cases where these problems may apply?" Medwed, 2018, p. 187). Le-Bec as a person is going through a concatenation of episodes which makes her uniqueness, a quintessential one. The inner lining of the story is narrated by the invisible lens of trauma. However, there is no mention of the word trauma in the novel *Black Star*. Along with the protagonist, the reader is also experiencing a lucid traumatic condition. In the fifth chapter, it is like a tight fuzzy day, and it is humanly impossible for a pregnant individual to drive a car on a rainy day. Trauma is like a thin inner membrane that layers this novel. As a reader, we face the amount of trauma that the protagonist is undergoing, mainly in the area of the profession. As a reader, I can establish or interrogate in my mind. It may be common for readers to have such intuitions. The argument that I state is that, as a professor, does Del have a regret feeling about her profession? One study found that regret can be felt about career-related decisions, and the choice about the career path one takes is a unique type of decision with far-reaching consequences that can be relatively difficult to undo (Wrzesniewski et al. 2006). Another study about occupational regret by Canivet and colleagues indicate that "there is a paucity of studies about employees who remain at their work places or in their occupation although they no longer prefer them" (Canivet et al., 2017:334).

Another main theme that I had come across is the significance of a female author in writing academic fiction like this. Maureen Medwed was a successful female author who portrayed the challenges and difficulties faced by a female professor. Although I can say that the character is a psychopath by nature, it also implies that her life situation itself had made her mentally unstable. Here, I can subtly state that the feminist perspective of this novel is completely strengthened, and the objective is unconditionally achieved. Gender inequality is currently a vexed question on campuses. Usually, male writing styles and their way of channelling emotions through fiction are entirely different from female fiction. Maureen Medwed is also a professor of creative writing at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Universities or educational spaces are places where we build social relations. However, these are spaces where the voices of females are silenced, but at this outset, academic novels like this will make those voices powerful.

Education spaces such as schools and colleges are knowledge centres, where the exchange of ideas takes place, character formation takes place, individuality will grow in pace, and people will become self-independent. Dewey discovered what amounts to a general principle of social organization: for any given group, the type of predominant shared activity directly affects the type of social relations within the group (Dewey,8). Violence has no inherent valence or significance in writing. Violence can be purposeless, useless, heroic, triumphant, brutal, or horrible. The value attributed to any particular act of violence is influenced by the author's perspective on the characters being portrayed, the author's outlook on life in general, and readers' reactions.

Rivalry can be distinguished from other forms of competition in part by mutual identification and recognition (Kuenne 1989, 555; Maoz and Mor 2002, 5; Thies 2001, 697-698; Thompson 1995). Rivals, as Thompson (1995, 200) argues "brand each other as such and act accordingly. Rivalry can also result in mild violence. The psychological hostility of violence can be stated as at times, rivalries can be plagued by mutual suspicion, mistrust, and animosity (Maoz and Mor 1998, 129; 2002, 5; Vasquez 1996; 2009). Rather than being guided by rational cost-benefit analysis, rivals may inflict harm on their rival over the pursuit of positive goals (Dreyer 197). Foucault described schools and academic institutions as discipline-based and discipline-producing organizations. The intensity of brutality that a student experiences in school or academic spaces can lead to prolonged stress and mental struggles. In the novel *Black Star*, there is no visibility of violence anywhere, and physical violence has not yet been depicted anywhere. However, at the same time, professor Del is somewhere or elsewhere captivated and vulnerable to violence. This has made her emotionally traumatic, which in turn leads the reader to think about the possibility of occupational regret, which means regret around choosing a certain occupation.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see increased extremism between the right and the left in the world, and it has reached a peak, and the author sees it as a kind of either us killer or be killed mentality happening, and it is scary and lacks compassion in our world, and the author does not like it. Furthermore, there dislikes a dearth of compassion in this world. This work combines tragic comedy and sad irony, and the net result is tragedy. Maureen Medwed, the author, grew up reading a number of tragedies as a child, including Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Shakespeare, and Edward Albee. What is important is that we learn to appreciate the differences between each other. If someone is vulnerable, such as a marginalised person, she believes we should have compassion or deep compassion and support them, and she sees that happening less and less in our society, right, with the huge disparity and people being knocked out of the way if they are not strong enough, and Del, the protagonist, is an example of that. She is an example of a person who is likely to suffer from some type of mental illness and vulnerability; however, she is nevertheless able to work and have a life, and people may regard her as strange. At the same time, she is floundering, making her vulnerable to people like Helene LeBec, who is smarter and more organized and understands how to function inside the system. Two women were chosen to demonstrate that they could be harsher to one another. It is not only men vs. women, or anything like that. However, they are also vulnerable and invulnerable. However, this is a fundamental issue. Furthermore,

there may be economic vulnerabilities. It could be a mental health issue, a physical disability, something racial, or something to do with gender. However, this is a limitation of this study. These people are marginalized, and those who can function in more effective systems, such as sociopaths or narcissists, can take over. According to Maureen Medwed, someone like Helene Lebec can fool everyone since she is gorgeous and young, has money, possibly grows up in an academic home, and has numerous connections. Consequently, although they appeared defenseless, they were able to utilize their position of authority. She is marginalised. Helene LeBec utilised her influence to take advantage of the situation and take over the entire department, which is something that can happen at a university. This is not impossible, but may occur. It can occur anywhere in the body. The author chose a university setting for a variety of reasons. Most people believe that professors are incredible people who would never harm others. This is how people perceive them. However, this is not always true. This paper is about a character study. As mentioned earlier, Canada is one of the dream destinations for students. The paranormality of this novel is a major striking feature. That is, is it possible for a college professor to be a psychopath? Usually, universities or educational institutions blame students or researchers as psychopaths, but here, a professor herself is abnormal. It has been said that teachers and professors should be role models, but here I can see this contradiction. This study will benefit from the scenario of higher education, as well as academicians who conduct research on sociological aspects. Since the selected novel is post-millennial campus fiction, its contemporary relevance to this study is highly valid. This study also paves the way for gender studies, feminist perspectives, and female writings in Canadian Campus fiction.

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Mr Mathew M George had framed and presented the idea of this research after reading the book *Black Star*. Dr Evangeline Priscilla B had supervised and given her inputs and suggestions. Mr Mathew prepared the first draft of the manuscript, which both of them jointly developed, proofread and edited.

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