

STAR SPIDER

Researcher • Writer •

Executive Director of Counter

Web

www.starspider.ca

www.thecounterproject.org

Email

star@thecounterproject.org

Bio

Star Spider is a writer, researcher, and Founder of Counter, an organization working to counter psychological manipulation and coercive control. Star has published multiple short stories and two novels. Star's current research focus areas include psychological manipulation, coercive control, the philosophy of law, the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of mind. She also has interest and experience in social justice and abolition, public health, educational gaming, social psychology, cult psychology, misinformation, philosophy of science and environmental ethics. Star is completing her undergraduate degree in philosophy and psychology at Toronto Metropolitan University.

Education

Toronto Metropolitan University - Undergraduate Bachelor of Arts (Expected Graduation with Honours - April 2025) - Philosophy Major, Psychology Minor - Current GPA: 4.16

TMU CEDZ - Entrepreneurial Zone Learning Certificate

George Brown College - Certificate in Event & Meeting Management (2006)

Employment

Teaching Assistant: Toronto Metropolitan University - September 2023-December 2023

This role included preparing and teaching weekly SSH 105 - Critical Thinking tutorials for the philosophy department. It involved managing 45 students, grading, student communications, reading and watching lectures on critical thinking, and collaborating with the professor to ensure cohesion of lessons and academic misconduct management.

Research Assistant: Toronto Metropolitan University - June 2023- August 2023

This role included designing an engaging and thought-provoking Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence course. The tasks involved included creating a comprehensive schedule with weekly topics, selecting relevant readings and course materials, and crafting unique AI-based assignments. Through this course, students will explore the profound philosophical implications of artificial intelligence and develop a deeper understanding of its ethical, metaphysical, and societal significance.

Consultant•Researcher•Writer: Toronto Metropolitan University & Seneca College - May 2023-September 2023

This role included research, writing and game design for a game intended to engage students on artificial intelligence and academic integrity. This project involved delving into research around issues in AI, including bias, misinformation and the human and environmental impact. Also, designing puzzles and interactions with an introduction to AI terms and ethical issues around AI use in academia.

Consultant•Researcher•Writer: STEAM Labs and Pacific Museum of Earth - November 2022-January 2023

This role included writing for Climate Hero, a game to teach children about climate change. Working in Twine to develop branching narratives, characters and scripts. Developed debrief for educators focused on allowing the players to delve deeper into the concepts explored in the game and challenge conceptions about climate change to broaden their perspectives.

Consultant•Researcher•Writer: The Social Changery - July 2022 - December 2022

This role included writing and research in the public health field, direct development of a campaign to educate youth on cannabis use, research in game design, and developing a curriculum to support public health models of behaviour change.

Producer/Writer: Happy Creations - 2010-Present

This role includes client services, production and post-production management, promotion, budget management and accounting. www.happycreations.ca

Author: Various Publications -2014-2021

This role included story development, writing, collaboration with agents and editors, editing and promotion. www.starspider.ca

Founder: Alternate Reality Events - 2008-2010

This role included event design and management, onsite coordination, client services, budgeting and accounting.

Event Manager: HUMANCONTACT - 2007-2008

This role included event and budget management, video production, research, client services, filing and onsite coordination.

Event Manager: Premier Conference & Events - 2006

This role included filing and database management, production of distribution materials and onsite management.

Promotions Coordinator: Advanced Technology Productions - 1998

This role included writing press releases, producing flyers and posters—and coordinating, designing and implementing promotions.

Volunteer

Founder & Executive Director: Counter - September 2023-Present

This role includes researching and writing comprehensive toolkits for educating about psychological manipulation and coercive control, offering workshops to educate mental health practitioners, providing peer and family support to families and individuals affected by PM and CC, and connecting families and individuals to resources. It also includes general organization management, including workshop development, collaborating with other organizations and institutions, budget planning, grant research and writing, board management, organizational planning and day-to-day management.

Consultant & Collaborator: Life After Hate - January 2024-Present

This role includes collaboration on a special project with one of the founders of Life After Hate. Working to build a toolkit on violence in the extreme far right. This toolkit includes information about methods of psychological manipulation and coercive control within the extreme far right and solutions to help those involved move away from violence.

Consultant & Collaborator: Diverting Hate - April 2024-Present

This role includes collaboration on a study of manipulation tactics used in The Real World and The War Room (organizations run by sex trafficker Andrew Tate). Work includes consultation on the high-control aspects of the group and possible interventions for current members, editing, and qualitative interviewing of former group members.

Resource Collection: Guide Mental Health - January 2024-Present

This role includes researching and collecting resources for a mental health practice in the east end of Toronto.

Project Manager: Antidote - October 2021-May 2022

This role included managing a start-up organization, designing a business plan, fundraising coordination, video production, volunteer coordination, volunteer recruiting, writing and research in the field of psychological manipulation.

Founder: Exodus Events - 1998-1999

This role included event design and management, securing talent, location scouting, and execution of charitable concerts.

Academic Awards

Bronze Toronto Metropolitan University Philosophy Essay Award - 'Schrödinger's Theory: Superposition and Realism'

Research Experience

Research Assistant: Toronto Metropolitan University - June 2023- August 2023

This role included designing an engaging and thought-provoking Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence course. The tasks involved included creating a comprehensive schedule with weekly topics, selecting relevant readings and course materials, and crafting unique AI-based assignments. Through this course, students will explore the profound philosophical implications of artificial intelligence and develop a deeper understanding of its ethical, metaphysical, and societal significance.

Directed Research Course - Gangs: Motivations, Virtues and Dangers of

Group Identity: PHL 950 - Toronto Metropolitan University - June 2024-August 2024

This was a directed research course under the supervision of Kym Maclaren at Toronto Metropolitan University. This project involved exploring various readings and media on gangs to understand the motivations and virtues of gang involvement. Outcomes included numerous in-depth reflections and a detailed literature search and review.

Presentations/Conference Workshops

Counter Workshop (March 2024) - Guide Mental Health - Workshop for identifying, countering, recovering and red flags of PM and CC

Counter Workshop (March 2024) - Safer Spaces Therapy - Workshop for identifying, countering, recovering and red flags of PM and CC

MozFest Workshop (March 2022) - AI Sentience & Deep Ecology: Rethinking our Philosophy of Nature

Interviews & Articles

CBC Here & Now (April 2024) - [Radio Interview](#)

TMU Today (April 2024) - [Counter Feature Article](#)

Publications

Academic

Toolkit for Identifying & Countering Psychological Manipulation & Coercive Control - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Toolkit for Recovery from Psychological Manipulation & Coercive Control - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Red Flags for Psychological Manipulation & Coercive Control - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Toolkit for Helping Your Loved Ones Under the Influence of Psychological Manipulation & Coercive Control - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Toolkit for Helping Youth Under the Influence of Psychological Manipulation & Coercive Control - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Toolkit for Safe Seeking - Finding Healthy Community, Connection & Purpose - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Policy Recommendations for Bill C-63 - An Act to Enact Online Harms Act - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Policy Recommendations for Bill C-332 - Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Coercive Control of Intimate Partner) - Counter, Creative Commons (2024)

Novels

Past Tense - HarperCollins 2018

Hey Jude - Orca Books 2020

Essays

Vice Magazine - Making Friends is Tough After you Leave a Cult

Real Talk Blog - Making Art with Mental Illness

Writing Awards

Runner Up Conville & Walsh Word of Mouth Prize - 'Past Tense' (Novel)

Third Place Jenny Magazine Sci-fi Contest - 'Space'

Short List Room Magazine Contest - 'Camels for Freedom'

Long List Raymond Carver Story Contest - 'We all have wings'

Long List CBC Creative Non-fiction Prize - 'Camels for Freedom'

Honourable Mention Friends of Merrill Contest - 'The One in Green'

Winner Fringe Contest Eden Mills Writer's Festival - 'Willow'

Winner CBC Prompt Contest - 'Stuck'

CBC Pick of the Day The Song that Changed my Life - 'This Flight Tonight'

Short Story & Poetry Publications

Grain Magazine Issue 44.3 - May 2017 - 'Gramma'
Flash Fiction Online - July 2016 - 'Green on the Inside'
Five 2 One Magazine - February 2016 - 'Warm Milk'
Leopardskin and Limes - January 2016 - 'Willow'
Found Press - Winter 2015 - 'Amako'
Necessary Fiction - Summer 2015 - 'MUST SPEAK DOVE'
Cease, Cows - Summer 2015 - 'Before the stars went out'
Cheapjack Pulp - Summer 2015 - 'Bronwyn's Aria'
Open Pen - Summer 2015 - 'Middle Name'
Writers Tribe Review - May 2015 - 'Thirteen Things'
Ginosko - May 2015 - 'All I know'
Red Fez - May 2015 - 'Mundane Revolution'
Zeit-Haus Magazine - May 2015 - 'Tectonic Heart'
The James Franco Review - April 2015 - 'Name it'
The New Urge Anthology - March 2015 - 'Writing on the wall'
Apocrypha and Abstractions - January 2015 - 'Meat Breath'
Maudlin House - January 2014 - 'Leadership Camp'
A cappella Zoo - January 2014 - 'The world of her own making'
Sein and Werden - December 2014 - 'Now we are ten'
Empty Mirror - November 2014 - 'Shine'
Flyleaf Journal - November 2014 - 'How can we ever be better?'
Purple Pig Lit - November 2014 - 'Remembered in the soil'
The Quilliad - October 2014 - 'The Same'
Gone Lawn - October 2014 - 'insomnia'
Apeiron Review - September 2014 - 'Of Gods and Curtains'
Klipspringer Magazine - September 2014 - 'Honey & Rye'
Close to the Bone, Near to the Knuckle - August 2014 - 'Muriel & Ryan'
Lantern Magazine (Poetry) - June 2014 - 'Now'
ExFic - May 2014 - 'Double Stuffed Oreo'
Black Treacle - April 2014 - 'Hungry'
Grim Corps - October 2013 - 'Dear Agnes'
Eden Mills 'Readings from the Fringe' - September 2013 - 'Willow'