

TROUBLE: A SYMPOSIUM

November 6-8, 2019

Vanier College Auditorium (A-103)

"I don't think necessity is the mother of invention. Invention, in my opinion, arises directly from idleness, possible also from laziness – to save oneself from trouble."

—Agatha Christie

"Trouble is the common denominator of living. It is the great equalizer."

—Søren Kierkegaard

Trouble, in the context of English literature, is a wide-open concept. You can think of the conflict at the heart of the hero's journey: the action that opens up that hero to new experiences, growth and eventual victory. Trouble can also be the instigator of greater social change – a single social issue can be the catalyst of great and cascading transformation. Texts can challenge our own comfort, either by their attempts to raise consciousness, or our own discomfort at dealing with authorial bias. Ultimately, we *need* a little trouble in our lives – to break the monotony of our own lives, sure, but also to recognize the issues we face, to encourage us to seek new ways of being, and to force us to confront the things we take for granted.

Trouble, the theme and title of the 2019 edition of the Vanier College English Department's annual symposium, will involve speakers, performers, activists, poets, and writers who identify, challenge or even cause a little trouble through their work.

All events will take place in the Auditorium with the exception of the Coffee House, which will be held in TASC (E-300). We look forward to seeing you there.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6th

8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. (A-103)

TRUE STORIES, TOLD LIVE

Autobiographical storytelling as an artform has seen an incredible popular resurgence in the past decade. We open our symposium with a slate of storytellers, hosted by **Francesca Esguerra**, a producer for *Confabulation* – Montreal's premier all-true storytelling series. Featuring five stories, these performances blur the line between fiction and memory, exploring the purpose and function of memory and memorial storytelling.

10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (A-103)

STORYTELLING THROUGH THE AGES

Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) dance artist, **Barbara Kanerattoni Diabo**, demonstrates and speaks about her relationship with telling stories inspired by her culture.

This event is supported by the Diversity is Belonging Project, sponsored by Entente Canada-Québec

12:30p.m. to 1:45p.m. (A-103)

REFUGEE BOULEVARD

Between 1947 and 1955, Montreal became home to the world's third largest community of Holocaust survivors outside of Europe. Tommy Strasser, a war orphan from Czechoslovakia, will share his early experiences of settling into the city while **Stacey Zembrzycki** and **Nancy Rebelo**, both teachers at Dawson College, and **Eszter Andor**, Commemorations and Oral History Coordinator at the Montreal Holocaust Museum, will speak about bringing survivors' stories to life in a new interactive audio tour, refugeeboulevard.ca, that allows participants to walk in their footsteps.

This event is supported by the Diversity is Belonging Project, sponsored by Entente Canada-Québec

2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (A-103)

COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CRISIS

Our first panel discussion will feature two presenters, offering two different perspectives on the challenges inherent in telling a broader public about issues related to climate and the environment. **Allison Hanes** is a columnist for the Montreal Gazette. **Dan Goldberg** is the senior communications advisor for Canada's International Development Research Centre.

4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (A-103)

THE LOWER PLATEAU (film screening with Q & A with the filmmaker)

A formerly successful Montreal musician trudges through the darkest days of winter, armed with a backpack full of weed and a repertoire of Alanis Morissette covers. In the heart of the city's independent music scene, the snow-covered Plateau, Jaine encounters both allies and obstacles. When a glittering opportunity in the Emerald City of Toronto threatens to lure her into a shiny new life, Jaine struggles to sever old ties. The Lower Plateau is the latest film by Montreal filmmaker **Liz Singh**, who will be available for a talkback after the screening.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7th

8:10 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. (A-103)

FEAR OF MISSING OUT – GEORDIE THEATRE PERFORMANCE

Montreal's **Geordie Theatre** is pleased to present a new work by local playwright, **Michaela Di Cesare**. Olive wants to research a string of assaults at bus stops in her neighbourhood for the school paper. Unfortunately, she's grounded and spends all her free time working at her parents' deli under their watchful supervision. Olive's best friend T-Star (née Tanya) is growing impatient with this arrangement and starts to withdraw from the friendship. Vincent, an aspiring forensic scientist on the autism spectrum, befriends Olive and promises to help her crack the case.

Fear of Missing Out is a beautiful coming-of-age play that looks at the tough choices facing teens today; a contemporary tale that honestly navigates conversations and realities of consent, cultural identity, and independence.

This event is supported by the Diversity is Belonging Project, sponsored by Entente Canada-Québec

10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (A-103)

WRITING THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: TARAS GRESCOE

The future of the world is urban. But how can we keep our ever-more populous cities moving in a sustainable way? In his award-winning book *Straphanger*, Taras Grescoe travelled to fourteen cities, to look at the best and the worst in urban transportation, from bicycles in Copenhagen to freeway sprawl in Phoenix. At Vanier, he'll talk about the process of writing a globe-trotting work of creative non-fiction, and what he learned about how to keep the cities we live in happy, healthy, and connected.

This event is co-sponsored by QWF Writer's-in-CEGEP Program

12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. (A-103)

THE BRIDGE

Live CBC Radio taping w/ Nantali Indongo in conversation with rapper Nate Husser

CBC Radio's **The Bridge** offers weekly in-depth conversations about culture, style and taste from creators who bring in an eclectic array of the music they find inspirational. The show is hosted by **Nantali Indongo** – herself a musical artist, both solo and as a member of Nomadic Massive, a multilingual hip hop group based in Montreal. For our symposium, she'll be joined by Montreal rapper **Nate Husser**. Nate is a Montreal native, who grew up in Little Burgundy, and whose work is marked by his roots, as an Afro-Caribbean, inner city, anglo millennial. In addition to talking about Nate's creative journey and inspiration, they will also explore the state of rap in Canada in 2019 – following the first ever Polaris prize win for a rap album.

2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (A-103)

SHOW YOUR WORK – THE NEED FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

The great challenge of communicating big ideas is to make these complex ideas more digestible, without falling into misrepresentation and oversimplification. For our 2019 symposium, we are pleased to welcome two groups committed to bringing scientific ideas to the broader public:

Broad Science is an initiative dedicated to making science inclusive, engaging, and intersectional. We are focused on telling science stories from the voices and perspectives that often get overlooked and go untold. Though podcasting Broad Science aims to provide a platform that makes science accessible for everyone, empowers marginalized communities, and encourages socially-conscious scientific practice in the next generation of scientists.

SIGMA: The Vanier Science Journal is a celebration of the excellent science and technology writing being produced at the college. We publish research papers, popular science writing, short fiction and poetry, and opinion pieces on a wide range of subjects. Writers whose work is selected for publication prepare their texts in collaboration with student editors who are involved at every step of the process. The journal is available in hard copy and online at vaniersciencejournal.com.

4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (A-103)

POETIC VOICES

This event is dedicated to the memory of Vanier English teacher and storyteller extraordinaire Brian Llewellyn-ap-Dafydd, who passed away on New Year's Eve 2015 – though his stories live on around campus and far beyond. Three poets from our own English Department – **Marcia Goldberg**, **Kevin Bushell** and **Chrissy Ridders** will read selections of their work, and speak about their approaches to poetry and voice.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8th

8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. (A-103)

SEAN MICHAELS – A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR

Sean Michaels is a novelist, short story writer and critic. Born in Stirling, Scotland and raised in Ottawa, he eventually settled in Montreal, where he founded the pioneering music blog [Said the Gramophone](#). His debut novel, *Us Conductors*, received the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the QWF Paragraphe Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction, and was nominated for the Amazon.ca First Novel Award, the Kirkus Prize, the International Dublin Literary Award and (in translation) the Prix des libraires de Québec. His second novel, *The Wagers*, appeared in 2019. Sean's award-winning writing has also appeared in *The Observer*, *McSweeney's*, *The Guardian*, *Pitchfork*, *The Walrus* and *The Globe & Mail*. He enjoys cold water, warm madeleines, and songs with colours in their titles.

This event is co-sponsored by QWF Writer's-in-CEGEP Program.

10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (A-103)

BE A GOOD GIRL

Be a Good Girl is a one woman show that combines drama, dark comedy, film sequences, and original songs to tell true stories of sexual assault and its repercussions. Created and performed by Adina Katz, who was compelled to speak out about her personal experiences due to the other cases of sexual assault and harassment that has been publicized over the past few years. She has been developing this show since 2014, it debuted in 2018 at the Toronto Fringe Festival, and has since evolved into its latest version, performed this past March at the Segal Centre for Performing Arts.

This event is co-sponsored by Women and Gender Studies

12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. (A-103)

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO FAKE

Coming off a Canadian election that was full of claims of false news, narratives and gossip, we're thrilled to close our mainstage programming with a panel discussion of this important issue of our time. Speaking on the issue, we have **Sarah Leavitt** – a videojournalist, who has worked at CBC news for the past seven years; **Emily Kingsland** – a librarian at McGill University, who has been studying the phenomenon of fake news and teaching critical reading and thinking workshops for the past three years; and **Anders Yates** – a Toronto-based satirist, whose work regularly appears in **The Beaverton**, as well as his own videos online.

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (E-300)

COFFEE HOUSE

Join us in the intimate setting of the TASC as members of the Vanier community—teachers, staff, and students—are invited to read or perform their own original literary works. Refreshments will be provided. Everyone is welcome. Anyone interested in participating in the coffee house should contact April Lepitre at lepitrea@vaniercollege.qc.ca.

The English Symposium Committee would like to thank the Faculty of General Education for sponsoring this three-day event and Printing Services, Student Services, and Communications for assisting with various aspects of it. We would also like to thank Vanier's Indigenous Circle, the QWF Writer's-in-CEGEP Program, the Diversity is Belonging Project, Entente Canada-Quebec, and Women and Gender Studies for their support.