ENG 12 Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis

For your first assignment you will be deconstructing **one of the following three** articles: “**The downright abomination of stunt marriage proposals”** by Shannon Proudfoot **OR “Canada is not a country”** by Scott Gilmore **OR “Welcome to Winnipeg: Where Canada’s racism problem is at its worst.”** All were printed in the same publication, the Canadian news magazine *Maclean’s*.

Below you will find a series of questions to help guide your analysis. Answer each question in a short paragraph. Any answer less than 5 sentences means you probably haven’t written enough. In addition, make sure to use **specific examples** from the texts to back up your arguments.

1. Content: Please explain your article’s central argument. Does it rely most heavily on pathos,

logos, ethos or some combination thereof to make its point? Be specific.

1. Style: Explore the language the author uses. How would you describe the difficulty of the vocabulary?

What tone is it trying to strike and how? Does it use common rhetorical devices such as metaphor, simile, allegory and/or repetition?

1. Content: How accessible is this piece? How much prior knowledge does the writer assume

 from the reader? How much context does the author provide to ensure understanding?

1. Content/Style: How convincing is this article? Did it use the correct balance of appeals? Did the author

make the right decisions regarding language? Was their point ever confused or lost entirely?

SAMPLE ANSWER FOR QUESTION #1: Note - Sample is missing a hook.

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| *The central argument to Kevin Watt’s opinion piece “****The Decade of the Gun”*** *is that the only real way to lower the number of gun deaths in Canada is through teaching children about gun violence at a younger age. Watt (2017) argues that only by talking frankly with kids in their most formative years (approximately 10 to 12 years old) will they “understand the devastating effect gun violence has on its victims and their families” (p. 2). The result of this understanding will end the romanticising of weapons and violent acts. He leans heavily on* ***logos****, using examples of successful early education programs in both Europe and central Asia to prove its long-term viability. He also shows parallels to a PEW study that showed how communication between parents and their children about sex at an early age leads to fewer unwanted pregnancies and STDs. He acknowledges that parents and teachers avoid tackling these discussions with young people because of the discomfort it causes them. His push back against this idea, stating that some minor discomfort is a small price to pay for the safety of children.*  |

**The downright abomination of stunt marriage proposals**

*Shannon Proudfoot: How does it feel being reduced to a mere audience member—one face in a gaping sea—staring up at a scene from your own life?*

by Shannon Proudfoot

Published in *Maclean’s*, Sept. 11, 2018

A few years ago when I was writing for Sportsnet magazine, this video made the rounds at the office. You might not expect a bunch of desk-jocks to swoon over a grand romantic gesture, but you would be wrong. My colleagues adored it: the Disney-parade spectacle, the unfolding surprise, the crescendo with several dozen somehow-willing accomplices jazz-handsing their way around a young hipster who says yes to, I don’t know, a ring woven out of the beard hairs of her beloved by birds and mice trained in the manner of the dress-making crew in Cinderella?

I alone did not like the video. I loathed it. And when I told my co-workers, they reacted like I’d announced that I hated love itself and also musical theatre. Which, let me tell you, is extremely not the case.

It is in fact because I love love—along with decent production values and artistic restraint—that I hate that video, and the seemingly escalating number of public stunt marriage proposals to which we are now subjected. Word of these abominations inevitably reaches me when people tag me in tweets about them, for this is the hill upon which I have chosen to die a noble and cranky death.

At its most benign and well-intentioned, turning a proposal into a public stunt seems immature and misguided. At its worst, it reeks of narcissism and manipulation: “Everybody look at meeeeee! And who would say no with all these people watching?”

I think about it in terms of intention and audience.

What is the goal of a modern marriage proposal? To tell one person that you enjoy their company more than anyone else’s, and that you would like to form a team with them, just the two of you sailing a big, bewildering world together, having sleepover parties forever.

And for whom do you stage a proposal? It is inherently an audience of one. The entire point of the exercise is that it’s about just two people and the private bond they share—a connection glimpsed by the rest of the world, but never fully understood from the outside.

Now, what is the point of a public stunt? To stage a show. To draw eyeballs, attention and accolades from hundreds of random strangers—maybe tens of thousands, if Ellen DeGeneres sees your video or something. You want to be applauded like a busker, only you’re not juggling flaming torches for sweaty tourists who will slink off without putting money in your weird hat, you’re flogging an enormous moment in your own life—and in the life of someone you purport to care deeply about.

And who is the audience for a stunt like that? Sure, the person you ask to marry you is there in the front row, but are they really the curtain call you’re chasing? And how do they feel being reduced to a mere audience member—one face in a gaping sea—staring up at a scene from their own life, instead of being a participant in it?

Remember when China’s He Zi won a silver medal in the three-metre springboard in Rio, capping years of grueling training and fragile dreams of Olympic glory? No? Hmmm, weird. Well, do you remember when her boyfriend rushed the podium seconds after she received her medal and dropped to one knee, ring in tow? Ah, there it is.

“I didn’t know he would propose today,” she told reporters afterward. “And I didn’t expect myself to marry myself out so early.” Wow, she sounded pretty stoked, didn’t she? No doubt she was on the very same page as him about getting married. And how could she have been anything but thrilled to have a major professional accomplishment hijacked by her own personal tone-deaf romance bozo?

There’s also a much darker possibility in these gestures suggested in this recent story about a failed video game proposal dubbed (by the guy who set it in motion, which is telling) “the world’s saddest Easter egg.” Once someone thought to ask for the woman’s side of the story, she painted a picture of a deeply miserable relationship she’d long wanted to escape.

Of course, most public stunt marriage proposals are probably well-intentioned and not coercive, but there’s still something cluelessly narcissistic about them that undercuts the supposed romance.

Years ago, before “crowdfunding” was a thing, I interviewed a guy who was anonymously soliciting donations to buy Super Bowl ad time to propose to his girlfriend. I remember him being quite likeable and self-effacing. I asked why he was doing this: was his girlfriend a huge football fan? She was not. Did she like dramatic gestures? Not really. Was she someone who enjoyed being the centre of attention? Nope, he said, she’s pretty shy.

Way too often, that’s what public stunt marriage proposals look like: someone gets jacked up about the idea of staging a stunt, gets carried away thinking about how stunt-errific it will be, and completely forgets about the proposal and the person who’s supposed to be at the centre of it all.

We have already become frighteningly meta as a society. We think about the photo we’ll post on Facebook to commemorate an event instead of just living the moment while it’s ours, or we mentally draft the tweet we’ll post to announce “some personal news” the moment they offer us the job.

But we have reached another level of bleak emptiness when we start engineering moments of our lives—moments that really, really matter—to maximize the applause or clicks we might get from strangers we shouldn’t give a damn about, instead of thinking only about the one person we do.

And the rest of us—well, frankly, the rest of you, because ever since I outed myself to my horrified Sporsnet colleagues, I will have none of this crap—are reinforcing this urge every time we share one of these things and help it go viral.

So don’t do it. Just like you might make a deal with your friends to pile your phones in the middle of the table and ignore them when you go out for a meal, maybe if we stop larding attention on these public stunt proposals, they’ll die off and we can all live slightly more real lives. If you’re at a sporting event and one of these things goes down, embrace your inner Philadelphia fan and boo like you’ve just seen Santa Claus.

And if you are on the receiving end of one of these grotesque spectacles, I implore you: Say no. Walk away. If you really like the person and want to marry them anyway (Are you absolutely sure?), lean down and tell them quietly that you will discuss this later in private. What the world needs now is love, real love. And that means more crestfallen mascots. Let’s make this happen together, people.

**Canada is not a country.**

*Scott Gilmore: If our rag tag federation can’t build pipelines, move beer or find some common bonds, we may have a fatal problem*

by Scott Gilmore

Published in *Maclean’s*, Apr. 19, 2018

I want to fly up to northern Manitoba next month to visit my parents. It’s not a long flight; I live in the province next door and with a connection in Winnipeg I can do the trip in an afternoon.

It is expensive though. For the same amount of money I could fly to Peru and back three times and still have change left over for some inflight duty free. I could fly to any state in America, any country in Europe, a dozen cities in Africa, and almost every country in Asia (North Korea and Timor Leste excepted).

I normally just wince and buy the ticket, knowing that this is just the way it is in Canada. But this time I stopped and considered how odd it is that I live in country where it is easier, cheaper and often faster to travel overseas than it is to do so domestically. And once I started pulling on that thread, several other things started to unravel.

Douglas Coupland once described British Columbia as part of a “cultural Chile”, a west coast community that ran from San Diego to Prince Rupert, tied together with an integrated economy, a similar lifestyle and a common worldview. Growing up in Alberta, this resonated with me, as I felt I had more in common with someone in Montana than I did with a Montrealer or a Haligonian, two cities I had never even visited.

Whether Canada’s cultural communities run north-south into the United States is less important than the fact they do not run east-west. We often talk about the “two solitudes”, based on the idea that French and Anglo Canadians live very different and unconnected lives. This is indisputable. We watch different shows, listen to different music (name any of the current top 10 musicians in Quebec), hold different values. If you don’t believe that last point, consider any public opinion survey—Quebec is an outlier on nearly every question from abortion to world affairs.

But there are other solitudes, too. Less than 10 per cent of Canadians have ever visited the north. And those who have come from only a handful of cities, such as Winnipeg. Remove the language, and there are fewer cultural similarities between Newfoundland and Saskatchewan than you would find between France and Belgium. What is more, the proportion of Regina residents who have actually been to St. John’s is a fraction of the Parisians who have been to Brussels (or Berlin).

Stephen Harper anointed Quebec a nation. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced that Indigenous Canadians are a nation. Conceivably a future prime minister may continue the trend and for some political advantage describe Maritimers as a nation, or South Asian Canadians as separate cultural identity. And why not? No one has ever successfully argued that Canadians are a people.

We do not even pass the most rudimentary test of a nation as those “united by common descent, history, culture, or language”. As the current PM himself has said “There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada.”

And, it is increasingly difficult to argue that Canada is a state, or at least a strong one. Being a Canadian citizen does not always entitle you the right to work or study in another province. It does not even allow you to carry a few cases of beer across a provincial border. Goods and people move far more freely within the European Union than they do within this country.

And that is not simply a choice made by the federal government. It has always been too weak to assert its alleged authority over the provinces. Yes, you can argue that legally Ottawa could knock down these barriers, could allow an Ontario carpenter to work in Quebec for example. But in truth, every federal government has lacked the political power to do so.

Some definitions of statehood refer to having a monopoly on violence. We meet that criteria: there is only one Canadian military. But it has atrophied to the point that our Navy is no longer able to fully assert sovereignty over our maritime boundaries, and our Army doesn’t even make an attempt in the Arctic.

And, in one important regard, Ottawa is perhaps not even a legitimate power. Consider that fully democratic governments are only found in provinces and cities, not at the federal level. There are no un-elected, unaccountable lawmakers in our provincial legislatures and our city halls. Thank god.

The world needs more Canada. This cliché is well used around here. We love to revel in our progress as a “post-national” state. But, it’s possible that as Canada evolved from geographically proximate European colonies to whatever we are now (a rag tag federation that can’t build pipelines or move beer) we skipped right over the “national” stage.

So if Canada is not a people, not a nation, possibly not even a nation state, what are we? I would argue we are merely a collection of people who happen to be moving in roughly the same direction. Occasionally we have a leader who marshals us together, to walk in one particular direction, or to march to a specific rhythm. But only occasionally, and never for long. No, we remain the same colour on the map not because of a strong sense of shared identity or a common purpose, but because we simply haven’t had much of a reason to split up. Yet.

So far, this nationhood by happenstance has worked out for us. Our quality of life is one of the highest in the world. A recent survey ranked those of us who live here as among the happiest. We have had a couple of brushes with dissolution, but survived and the future looks good. Until the day when suddenly it doesn’t.

One lesson that the last 20 years has reinforced is that there are far more black swan moments, completely unanticipated game-changing events, out there than we realize. It is almost inevitable that this country is one day going to face some unexpected shock. It could be the rise of another charismatic, iconoclastic, regional politician who points to Ottawa as the source of all that is wrong. It could be an economic crisis that dramatically pits one region against another. Perhaps it might even be a technological advance that changes our culture in ways we cannot even imagine now.

When that day comes, we may realize that we took for granted those few ties that bound us, and we did far too little to add to them and to draw them tighter.

I was once told by someone wiser than me that a successful marriage requires a constant effort to find connections—the relationship must be continually maintained and strengthened. Because otherwise, when the bad times inevitably arrive, it will be too late. I feel this may apply to Canada. These are sunny days. But the weather will change. And when our storm arrives, we may discover that Canada was never really a country after all.

**Welcome to Winnipeg: Where Canada’s racism problem is at its worst**

Adapted from 2015: How the death of Tina Fontaine has finally forced the city to face its festering race problem.

By [Nancy Macdonald](https://www.macleans.ca/author/nancy88/)

Published in *Maclean’s,* January 22, 2015

“Oh Goddd how long are aboriginal people going to use what happened as a crutch to suck more money out of Canadians?” Winnipeg teacher Brad Badiuk wrote on Facebook last month. “They have contributed NOTHING to the development of Canada. Just standing with their hand out. Get to work, tear the treaties and shut the FK up already. Why am I on the hook for their cultural support?”

Another day in Winnipeg, another hateful screed against the city’s growing indigenous population. This one from a teacher ([now on unpaid leave](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/brad-badiuk-winnipeg-teacher-suspended-over-facebook-comments-on-unpaid-leave-1.2927144)) at Kelvin High School, long considered among the city’s progressive schools—alma mater to just about every Winipegger of note, from Marshall McLuhan to Izzy Asper, Fred Penner and Neil Young.

Badiuk’s comments came to light the day Rinelle Harper—the shy 16-year-old indigenous girl left for dead in the city’s Assiniboine River after a brutal sexual assault—[spoke publicly for the first time](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/news-video/video-rinelle-harper-speaks-out-on-violence-against-aboriginal-women/article22008515/) after her recovery. She called for an inquiry to help explain why so many indigenous girls and women are being murdered in Winnipeg, and elsewhere in Canada.

Badiuk’s comments came while the city was still reeling from the [murder of Tina Fontaine](http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/tina-fontaine-didnt-get-to-live-a-full-life-272461441.html), a 15-year-old child from the Sagkeeng First Nation who was wrapped in plastic and tossed into the Red River after being sexually exploited in the city’s core.

They came after Nunavummiuq musician Tanya Tagaq, [last year’s Polaris Music Prize winner](http://www.cbc.ca/q/blog/2014/09/23/tanya-tagaq-polaris-music-prize-winner/), who complained that while out to lunch in downtown Winnipeg where she was performing with the city’s ballet this fall, “a man started following me calling me a ‘sexy little Indian’ and asking to f–k.”

They came the very week an inquest issued its findings in the death of Brian Sinclair, an indigenous 45-year-old who [died from an entirely treatable infection](http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/brian-sinclair-a-victim-of-stereotyping-247205991.html) after being ignored for 34 hours in a city ER.

They came in the wake of a civic election dominated by race relations after a racist rant by a frontrunner’s wife went viral: “I’m really tired of getting harassed by the drunken native guys” downtown, Gord Steeves’s wife, Lori, wrote on Facebook. “We all donate enough money to keep their sorry asses on welfare, so shut the f–k up and don’t ask me for another handout!” The former city councillor and long-serving, centrist politician didn’t bother apologizing. He lost, but not because of this.

For decades, the friendly Prairie city has been known for its smiling, lefty premiers, pacifist, Mennonite writers and a love affair with the Jets. Licence plates here bear the tag “Friendly Manitoba.” But events of last fall served to expose a darker reality. The Manitoba capital is deeply divided along ethnic lines. It manifestly does not provide equal opportunity for Aboriginals. And it is quickly becoming known for the subhuman treatment of its First Nations citizens, who suffer daily indignities and appalling violence. Winnipeg is arguably becoming Canada’s most racist city.

But indigenous activists believe Tina Fontaine’s death also marked a turning point in race relations; that, for perhaps the first time, the brutalization and murder of a 15-year-old was not dismissed in Winnipeg as an “Aboriginal problem.” Ironically, from the fall’s horrific events, a sense of unity has begun to emerge.

Tina’s body was found in the same spot where, in March 1961, [the remains of Jean Mocharski were found](http://www.winnipegsun.com/2014/06/02/arrest-made-in-historical-homicide)—the first cold case from Winnipeg in a new database of murdered and missing Aboriginal women. The 43-year-old mother of seven had been beaten and stabbed. Like Tina’s, her murder remains unsolved. “We value dogs more than we do these women,” says indigenous playwright Ian Ross.

On Aug. 8, police came across Tina in a roadside stop: she was in a vehicle with a male driver who was allegedly intoxicated. He was taken into police custody. Officers let Tina go, even though she was listed as a high-risk missing person. A few hours later she was rushed to Children’s Hospital after being found passed out in a core-area back alley. Her family was not notified she was in hospital. When she woke, Child and Family Services placed Tina in a downtown hotel where she was allowed to walk away. (In March 2014, the average number of kids in city hotels was 65, up from 17 two years earlier. The bloated system simply cannot cope with the huge number of children in care in Manitoba. Almost 90 per cent of children in foster care in Manitoba are Aboriginal, the highest rate in Canada.)

Tina was last seen on Aug. 9, shortly after 3 a.m., by a new friend. “I want to go home to Sagkeeng, where I’m loved,” she told her. The friend says Tina was approached by a man who asked her to perform a sex act. Eight days later she was pulled from the river, identified by a tattoo on her back bearing the name of her father, Eugene. Tina’s story cast a spotlight onto the shameful state of life for many Aboriginals in Winnipeg, where disdain for poor, inner-city Natives has long bubbled just barely beneath the surface.

When measuring racism, social scientists tend to rely on opinion polling and media analyses. Last year, for example, Winnipeg recorded the highest proportion of racist tweets of the six Canadian cities known for high levels of hate crime, according to data collected by [University of Alberta researcher Irfan Chaudhry](http://www.sociology.ualberta.ca/FacultyStaffandGraduateStudent/PhDStudents/CHAUDHRYIrfan.aspx). (Manitoba recorded the second-highest rate of hate crimes last year, after Ontario, according to a recent report.)

It is difficult to isolate Winnipeg or even Manitoba in opinion polling, which tends to group the Prairie provinces (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) together. But from them, a deeply troubling portrait of the region emerges. In poll after poll, Manitoba and Saskatchewan report the highest levels of racism in the country, often by a wide margin. Just 61 per cent of Prairie residents said they would be comfortable having an Aboriginal neighbour, compared with 80 per cent in Ontario, according to a recent CBC/Environics poll; and just 50 per cent would be comfortable being in a romantic relationship with an indigenous person, compared to 66 per cent in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada. This was a particularly bizarre result, says [Niigaan Sinclair](http://umanitoba.ca/centres/ccwoc/artists_affiliates/Sinclair.html), who teaches Native studies at the University of Manitoba; after all, he adds with a chuckle, one in two Manitobans has indigenous blood. In the end, we are who we think we are. Culture defines identity.

So, what explains the unusually high degree of discrimination? To Sinclair, it is no coincidence that Manitoba was the only province founded in violence. The failed indigenous uprising headed by [Metis leader Louis Riel](http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/parties-leaders/rethinking-riel/the-north-west-rebellion.html) led directly to the even bloodier Northwest Rebellion 15 years later, creating generations of animosity. But the playwright Ian Ross believes this discrimination is largely borne of fear—“that Indians are getting something you don’t have.”

Shortly after, the *Winnipeg Free Press*released [poll results](http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/special/civicelection2014/Gulf-between-natives-and-non-aboriginals-serious-poll-shows-278350971.html) showing that 75 per cent of Winnipeggers consider the city’s divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens a “serious problem.” (Nationally, Manitobans are most worried by a rise in racism: 65 per cent, versus 48 per cent in neighbouring Ontario.)

Jon C, of the Winnipeg Boyz, calls theirs the “bruised generation”: two generations removed from residential schooling but still reeling from its effects. “My grandmother went to full-time residential school—the ones who were beaten and brainwashed,” he says. “My own mother never lived with her; she never learned how to look after me and my sister, to nurture us.” He remembers sitting through wild, all-night parties as a toddler. He stole food to stave off hunger as a boy. For a while his bed was a sheet on a cement basement floor. It’s this sorry state of affairs that leads many in the city to look down on the Aboriginal population.

Tyler Henderson, a 28-year-old Ojibway nursing student at the University of Manitoba, says he feels racism every time he walks out his front door. Henderson says Winnipeg police stopped him 15 times last year. “You fit the description,” police tell him when he asks what he did wrong. Once, police claimed he’d pulled to a stop a few inches beyond the stop line. “It makes me mad,” he says. “But there’s nothing I can do.” Some young indigenous men are stopped twice per month in the inner city, according to University of Manitoba criminologist Elizabeth Comack.

The problem is far more insidious than childish taunts. A few years ago, the federal government investigated claims that indigenous Winnipeggers were being denied housing due to discrimination. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation pulled together a random survey of Aboriginal renters. The results were damning. One in three told the CMHC that after showing up to visit an available suite they were told it had “just been rented.” More than 30 per cent felt they had been driven to neighbourhoods in the core, where the poverty rate and the incidence of crime more than doubles the wider city and jobs are scarce.

Institutions are meant to be colour-blind. Last month, Manitoba released its report into the 2008 death of Brian Sinclair. The 45-year-old had sought treatment at the Health Sciences Centre (HSC) for a blocked catheter. Sinclair was Metis, with a host of health and social issues and a past history of substance abuse. He’d lost both legs to frostbite on a bitter February night the year before. His landlord had locked him out.

Although Sinclair initially spoke to a triage aide at HSC, he was never formally registered and was not seen by a nurse. As his condition deteriorated, he vomited repeatedly. Still, no hospital staff checked on him or asked if he was okay. A janitor who mopped up his vomit placed a silver bowl on the floor in front of his wheelchair. On four separate occasions concerned patients asked staff to check on him. None did. Finally, a security guard was prodded into checking on him by another patient. By then, 34 hours after arriving in hospital, Sinclair was dead. *Rigor mortis* had set in.

Many staff testified they’d believed Sinclair was homeless or intoxicated or “sleeping it off,” and not in need of care. Despite this, judge Tim Preston ruled last February that the inquest would not explore why those assumptions were made, nor how they might be avoided. The inquest would strictly focus on reducing wait times and hospital overcrowding. At that point, Sinclair’s family walked out. In December, they slammed the inquest as a wasted opportunity. “Stereotypes are at the root of why Brian was ignored for 34 hours,” said Brian’s cousin Robert Sinclair. “Those stereotypes have not gone away.”

Don Marks, a Winnipeg writer, recently visited an ER with an indigenous friend. They’d dropped a painting, and the broken glass had cut his friend. “Aw!” a nurse exclaimed in greeting them. “Have we been drinking and fighting again?” The nurse’s assumptions seemed harmless, says Marks, who edits *Grassroots News*, an Aboriginal newspaper—but they were not. “This was someone responsible for treating Native people in our hospitals. We all know racism exists in our health care system.”

Understaffing and clogged waiting rooms cannot explain Sinclair’s death. The ER was fully staffed the day he died. Fully 17 staff members admitted seeing that he was there. And almost every angle of Manitoba’s well-documented wait-time problem had already been explored by government studies and media reports. To many Winnipeggers—at least to Aboriginal ones—this was yet another whitewash.

Other Western cities celebrate their First Nations heritage. Salish art covers the hoods of Vancouver’s police cars, strip malls, even its pothole covers. The Vancouver Canucks wear a Haida whale on their jerseys. Fin, their mascot, beats a Haida drum; and the team’s player of the game dons a Haida hat. Major indigenous art installations dot the city (the inukshuk at English Bay became the symbol for the Vancouver Olympics). The city’s airport houses the country’s most impressive collection of indigenous art, including Bill Reid’s *Jade Canoe*, once depicted on the $20 bill. In downtown Vancouver, a new public museum devoted to northwest coastal art recently opened. All of this is strikingly absent from Winnipeg, the indigenous heart of the continent, despite a flurry of new public buildings.

In September, roughly one kilometre downstream from the site Tina Fontaine’s body was discovered in the Red, the $351-million Canadian Museum for Human Rights opened at the Forks, the sacred confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. The 12-storey mountain of concrete and stone houses just two major exhibits directly addressing indigenous abuses although the museum houses many other exhibits that touch on the issue in various ways. However, alongside a treaty encased in glass there is no mention of the reality for Natives who agreed to its terms and resettled to reserves; there, they were barred from even leaving without apartheid-style “passes.” They slowly starved as the bison they relied on were wiped out. All this happened in the museum’s backyard.

“Colonialism didn’t just impact Aboriginal people,” says Perry Bellegarde, [the new national chief of the Assembly of First Nations](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/perry-bellegarde-elected-new-national-chief-of-assembly-of-first-nations/article22026566/). “It forever changed the way the European population on the Prairies would see Aboriginals as a problem, never a partner.”

It is no coincidence that on a huge range of metrics, the indigenous community is faring worse in Manitoba than any other province. Manitoba, for example, has the worst school attendance record among Aboriginal youth of any province or territory. And just 28 per cent of indigenous Manitobans living on reserve graduate high school, fewer than in any other province. An Aboriginal boy in Manitoba is more likely to end up in prison than graduate.

The province imprisons a higher proportion of its indigenous population than apartheid South Africa did its black population. Sixty-five per cent of inmates at Stony Mountain Penitentiary, a medium-security prison just outside Winnipeg, are indigenous, the country’s highest Aboriginal incarceration rate measured by jail.

In education the problems of underfunding have been well documented: federally funded reserve schools receive 40 per cent of the funding that non-reserve schools do, amounting to a per child gap of $2,000 to $3,000. Many reserve schools don’t have libraries. One in three doesn’t even have running water.

These are neither Aboriginal nor white problems, says Kives, who writes for the *Winnipeg Free Press*: they’re a Winnipeg problem. “Until everyone in the city understands that the health and well-being of the rapidly growing indigenous community is inextricably linked to the health of the city overall, we have a big problem.”

But since Tina Fontaine’s murder, the ground has suddenly begun to shift in Winnipeg. A vigil held in her memory was “one of the most remarkable and massive in Winnipeg’s history,” according to Niigaan Sinclair, who called it a “turning point” in ethnic relations. He’d never seen so many white faces at an Aboriginal event before. “Winnipeggers, for perhaps the first time, saw Tina as their own.” “Somehow, she opened people’s eyes—[people] who’d been trying so hard to keep them shut,” says social activist Noëlle DePape.

The city certainly does not want for organizations trying to help indigenous Winnipeggers. But a new generation of remarkable young activists is taking matters into their own hands. Meet Me at the Belltower, a one-time rally to take back the North End, has become a weekly call to action: every Friday, families and young people gather at the Selkirk Avenue belltower in the heart of the North End to demonstrate against violence. The event was launched by Michael Champagne, a dynamic, 27-year-old [TED Talk veteran](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXJOQYxxV2Y) never seen without at least a half-dozen young acolytes. Champagne is like the Pied Piper of the neighbourhood, empowering a generation of indigenous kids.

Two months after Tina Fontaine’s vigil, almost to the day, Winnipeg elected Bowman mayor. Just before his official swearing-in, on Nov. 4, Bowman made a last-minute addition to his speech. He chose to open by acknowledging that council had gathered “on Treaty 1 land, and in the traditional territory of the Metis Nation,” a simple, but deeply moving nod. It has become tradition when delivering a speech in Vancouver to acknowledge and give thanks to the Coast Salish, whose traditional territories cover the city; but this had never been done at Winnipeg City Hall before. “I see a real opportunity right now—with the level of engagement over these very serious and difficult issues—to make a difference,” Bowman told *Maclean’s*. “If my own family’s heritage can assist in building bridges in various communities in Winnipeg, then that’s an opportunity I fully intend on leveraging. I want to do everything I can.”

A month later, on Dec. 5, the city’s police chief, Devon Clunis, delivered more surprising remarks, calling on Winnipeggers to engage in a “difficult” conversation on the city’s ethnic divide. He asked residents to recognize white privilege, suggesting their “affluence” resulted from historic inequity. “Some people simply feel indigenous people choose to be a drunk on Main Street or they choose to be involved in the sex trade. No. We need to have those specific conversations—and try to understand why those individuals are living in those conditions.”

To Jamie Wilson, after Tina Fontaine’s death it was like “you couldn’t deny it anymore”—the racism, all the problems. He believes Winnipeg has begun confronting these head-on. “Right now, we’re stuck in a trap. We’re going to have to acknowledge it. Or it will forever hold us back.”

“Tina did this,” says Thelma Favel. “Tina opened even the government’s eyes. It had to take my baby to die for people to realize there was a problem—and there still is.”