

that supports native education including funding for specialty schools in languages and culture such as French and Mi'kmaq.

***Although the Maritimes may appear on the surface as a predominantly white population this does not mean that diverse cultures, languages, and religions do not exist.***

Although Ibbitson makes several outrageous statements based on unreliable "facts," the most troubling is his opinion regarding what constitutes ethnic diversity. In proposing his argument against Atlantic Canada's lack of cultural diversity he basically says that unless you are of non-European decent you do not qualify as culturally different.

Effectually, this means that the proverbial "we" (i.e. white) need to be able to visibly recognize an individual or group as a minority by the colour of their skin in order for "us" to acknowledge them. Unfortunately, this token gesture, obviously made in an attempt to appease those who feel discriminated against and do identify themselves as members of a

minority group, only serves to separate and isolate them even further.

Differences are not absolute, and basing cultural diversity on the colour of one's skin is not only insulting, but it's potentially dangerous. Not only should people not have to point out their differences in order to be treated equally, but qualifying "difference" limits peoples' choices and ability to change.

It is obvious in Ibbitson's statements that he believes that visible minorities should remain visible and argues that the importance of this maintains what he calls "civilized cities." What is most amusing about this opinion is that in reality immigrants are often drawn (or forced) to large cities by the exploitation of their own people because of incurred debt. The prevalence of slave labour and the illegal sex trade in Canada's major cities is shocking, and often goes unidentified by those of us who benefit from cheap clothes and easy satisfaction.

These "happy cities" that Ibbitson is so desperately trying to portray are riddled with ethnic tension (visible in territorial gang wars), poverty, and all forms of discrimination. Unfortunately, these social

problems are often viewed as someone else's problem; Ibbitson's statements quite clearly reflect this attitude.

***The apparently insecure job market does not stem from laziness but rather from the dependence on an ever-changing market, unpredictable resources (such as fishing and farming), and limited government support for those who depend on these resources***


He complains that 55 percent of immigrants "choose" to live in Ontario and only 1 to 3 percent live in any of the Maritime provinces. Rather than acknowledging the real issues and helping develop rational solutions, he prefers to blame Atlantic Canada for the rest of the country's social problems. I wonder if the true motivations for his attack are based on a need to justify why he resents the fact that he does not feel safer within his own community.

I think Mr. Ibbitson needs to rethink why he is asking certain questions yet insisting on only particular answers.

As a final point, Mr. Ibbitson completed his assault on Atlantic Canada with the question of whether Atlantic Canadians think that the safety and celebration of their communities is worth the snub of some people's decision to live here. Well, as a person "from away" who represents the supposedly non-existent group of people who want to live in Atlantic Canada, I can tell you that the quality of living is astoundingly different, and yes, it is worth it.

How realistic do you think it is to be able to send your kids out to play in Toronto and know that the neighbours, the store clerk, and the guy who delivers your oil will notice if something or someone is out of place? As a woman, how safe would I feel walking alone in downtown Vancouver? How many times a year can you depend on your neighbours to get together to discuss and implement a solution to a local problem?

In Atlantic Canada, cultural diversity is distinguished by more than just the colour of a person's skin; unique diversities do exist within this region, and they will continue to be preserved by the passion and commitment of its people.



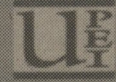
**Culture Café**  
**Big Questions & No Right Answers:**  
**Does philosophy really matter?**

**Thursday February 20 @ 7 pm**  
**Confederation Centre Art Gallery**

During this Culture Café, the Confederation Centre Art Gallery will host a dialogue on the relevance of philosophy to everyday life. Drawing upon UPEI Department of Philosophy faculty Drs. Nebojsa Kujundzic, Malcolm Murray, Pamela Courtenay-Hall, and Tony Couture, the dialogue will reflect on what philosophy has to contribute to the everyday, to the search for personal and social values, and its relevance to well being. Does thinking philosophically offer a way of handling pressures, issues, and disasters in contemporary life? What kind of cultural gap does it fill?

Designed to highlight provocative issues, the Culture Café series brings together specialized commentators with the general public in a vibrant, timely, and informal discussion. No admission, all welcome. Coffee and refreshments served.

Co-produced by the Confederation Centre Art Gallery and the Office of the Dean of Arts, UPEI



For more info, call Shauna McCabe @ 902.629.1152