

caféculture 2008-09

food for thought
www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk



fortnightly,
first and third
mondays

caféculture is moving to the Urban Café, Dance City
For discussion and debate café-style

caféculture

Fortnightly, first and third Mondays

Café Culture offers a season of discussions on culture, politics, philosophy and science. Our events are open to everyone. No prior knowledge is needed.

Our events aim to generate debate and discussion on topical issues. Held in Newcastle, they seek to provide a space for people to think, develop ideas and have a lively and inclusive discussion. We don't charge for the events, but there is a collection to help us cover costs.

An interesting speaker, sometimes but not always high profile, introduces the topic in an accessible and challenging way. We then open to the floor. Our aim is not for a rigid question and answer format, but to allow discussion and debate between all participants. We want to create an atmosphere where people feel they want to participate around the issues they feel passionately about.

Sign up for regular updates

To receive regular email reminders about our events, including any unforeseen speaker changes, send an email to info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk with your details or sign up via our website www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk

re2008-09

New venue

This year we are moving to **Dance City**, with most of our events held in their **Urban Café**. You can enjoy a meal before the events or snacks and refreshments during the events. And it's a stone's throw from Newcastle Central Station, so with improved transport links we hope to attract people from across the North East as well as from Newcastle.

Café culture: events start at 7pm sharp until 9pm at Dance City, Temple Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4BR

Dance City is a three-minute walk from Central Station (railway and Metro). NCP car park next to the venue via Waterloo Street and the nearest taxi rank is at Central Station. Wheelchair access. Café with snacks and refreshments available throughout the evening.

Map available at www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk



Monday 1 September 08 caféphilosophique

The Secret of Happiness

In ancient Athens, happiness was a civic virtue that demanded a lifetime's cultivation. Now, it's everybody's birthright. Somewhere between Plato and Prozac, happiness stopped being a lofty achievement and became an entitlement. But it doesn't have to be that way. Our first Café for the season hears from **Richard Schoch**, Professor of History of Culture at Queen Mary, University of London and author of *The Secrets of Happiness: Three Thousand Years of Searching for the Good Life*.

Monday 15 September 08 caféscientifique

Giving Away Our Lives: Internet 2.0

Drawing on his LSE research at the interface of law, computing and sociology, **Paul Bernal** will discuss how the new internet economy uses the personal information we unknowingly provide to allow businesses to shape and control both our online and offline lives.

Monday 6 October 08 caféscientifique

What Works With Families?

From government to the media, everyone blames the family, seen as responsible for children's health, behaviour, educational achievement and emotional adjustment. So, is parenting in crisis? Could parenting education be the answer? Or can we blame other factors for social problems? **Joel Yoeli**, NHS clinical psychologist, and **Liz Todd**, Newcastle University educational psychologist, will debate current attitudes to the family, and discuss the role of professionals.

Monday 20 October 08 café**scientifique**

How Studying Children's Minds Leads to Big Ideas

For **Charles Fernyhough**, author and psychologist at Durham University, the birth of his daughter Athena was an opportunity to re-evaluate much of what he had learned as a lecturer and researcher in developmental psychology. *The Baby in the Mirror*, his account of how children develop in their first three years of life, is written with a father's tenderness and a novelist's empathy and style.

Monday 3 November 08 café**culture**

Global Warming: Is China to Blame?

China is the world's biggest coal producer and the second biggest producer of greenhouse gases. As well as banning ultra thin plastic bags, Beijing has endorsed Kyoto and promised to generate 10 per cent of its energy from renewable sources by 2010. So is it fair to blame China for the planet's environmental woes?

Isabel Hilton is a journalist, presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Nightwaves*, and editor of *ChinaDialogue.net*, a bilingual website on environmental issues.

Monday 17 November 08 café**scientifique**

The Physics of Star Trek: Can Anti-Matter Power the Enterprise?

There is something about anti-matter that always seems to be the stuff of science fiction, but anti-matter is very much scientific fact. **Prof Ruth Gregory**, Durham University, will discuss what it is, how it was dreamed up, and what use we can put it to today. There may also be time for a good natured critique of the Enterprise's warp drive.

Monday 1 December 08 café**politique**

Fortress Britain: Is Immigration Working?

Inward migration is often touted as the solution to Europe's skills shortage and growing pensions deficit. Does immigration create a social burden or inject desperately needed youth and dynamism into Europe's ageing societies and sluggish economic growth? Five years on from the Morecambe Bay tragedy, **Professor Andrew Geddes**, University of Sheffield, will argue that immigration frenzies in the media and politics are largely missing the point and explore what he feels are more relevant questions on how to effectively manage migration, past, present and future.

Monday 15 December 08 café**philosophique**

A Manifesto for Silence: Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise

Noise pollution is now recognised as a major social problem. There is what Aldous Huxley called an assault against silence taking place in our world. Yet silence has played a crucial role in human history in key areas of activity such as religion and the arts. **Stuart Sim**, Professor of Critical Theory, University of Sunderland, will assert that it is being under threat from an increasingly noisy culture that impoverishes us. Why silence matters and where it matters will be considered, including its sociological, physiological, psychological, and metaphysical aspects.

2009

Monday 5 January 09 café**philosophique**

Theory Slam

Do you have a pet theory, a neat explanation or a sinister conspiracy? Could you persuade, challenge or entertain an audience of sceptics? The Second Tyneside Theory Slam invites poets, scientists, philosophers, comedians and eccentrics to display their innovation and insight in a three-minute burst of brilliance. The audience listens, questions and votes to award the title (and prize money) of Top Tyneside Theorist 2009. To participate, please send an email with contact details and a sentence about your idea to info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk by 15 December 2008.

Monday 19 January 09 café**scientifique**

Standing Up for Fatigue: The Biological Basis of CFS/ME

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS/ME) affects approximately two per cent of the UK population, impacts on quality of life and affects a sufferer's ability to work and live their life. Despite this, there is no diagnostic test for CFS/ME and no effective biological treatment. **Julia Newton**, Newcastle University, researches the autonomic nervous system, which controls subconscious activities that occur in the human body, such as respiration, bladder and bowel function, and also maintains heart rate and blood pressure. Autonomic dysfunction and particularly low blood pressure, hypotension, are a frequent finding in people with the symptom of fatigue.

Monday 2 February 09 café**politique**

Reinventing the State: Balancing the Dominance of Market Driven Theories

Much political debate has focused on market orientation in economic, social and democratic policy. **Richard Grayson**, from Goldsmiths College, University of London, will seek to redress these theories. As co-editor of a book on progressive liberalism, *Reinventing the State*, he will set out what he believes are distinct limitations to the market. Richard will assert that there is still a very clearly designed role for the state, one that is creative and enabling, rather than centralising and stifling.

Monday 16 February 09 café**scientifique**

Heavens Above: From Northumberland to the Red Planet

Gary Fildess, Chief Astronomer at the new Kielder Observatory, will introduce the project and explain the importance of amateur astronomy, while **Pete Edwards** from the Ogden Centre, Durham University, will describe the latest results from the Phoenix mission, explaining why there is so much interest in Mars and how this might help answer the question 'Are we alone in the universe?'.

Monday 2 March 09 café**culture**

Performance Culture

Prof Atau Tanaka, Chair of Digital Media, Newcastle University's Culture Lab, will present intermedia artworks that call on the energy of performance for seemingly non-performative acts. Atau, whose work bridges the fields of media art, experimental music and research, will discuss how sensor-based musical instruments can be used for performance and exhibition. He will explore how the physicality of a musician is translated by digital technology, then transposed to give viscerality (motion) to visual media and proprioceptive (touch) awareness to urban environments.

Monday 16 March 09 café**scientifique**

Is There a Right to IVF? The Ethics and Politics of Infertility

One in seven couples have difficulty conceiving, and approximately one per cent of all births involve assisted conception. With the rationing of NHS treatment, going private is the only option for many. **Prof Alison Murdoch** is Head of the Newcastle Fertility Centre@Life, a member of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, and a former president of the British Fertility Society. She will explore the social and clinical complexities of assisted conception.

Monday 20 April 09 café**politique**

The Politics of Football: Will Elitism Ruin Our Game?

Kevin Miles of the Football Supporters' Federation will argue that modern British football is deeply political. Contending that free market economics will destroy competition within our national game, he will ask how clubs justify inflation-busting prices while pocketing ever-increasing TV revenue. In an era where the annual Premier League wage bill tops £1 billion and players earn up to £150,000 per week, is it time football got back to its grassroots and clubs re-engaged with the communities from which they were born?

Monday 18 May 09

Fifth Annual book**group**summit

Diran Adebayo *My Once Upon A Time*

Read the novel, then come and meet the acclaimed British novelist, critic and broadcaster best known for his vivid portrayals of modern London life and his distinctive use of language. His debut novel, *Some Kind of Black*, explored a black-British rite-of-passage and won him numerous awards, was serialised on British radio and is now a Virago Modern Classic. His follow-up, the private eye fable *My Once Upon A Time*, fused film noir and fairytale with Yoruba myth to striking effect and solidified his reputation as a pioneer. More about Diran can be found at: www.theblessedmonkey.com

Monday 1 June 09

café**politique**

Polls Apart? Gender, Voting Behaviour and Political Participation

Will women hold the balance of power when Gordon Brown calls our next election? Women's votes in recent elections have been crucial to the overall outcome, hence Tony Blair's wooing of Daily Mail readers. But do men and women really think differently about politics in the first place? **Rosie Campbell**, Birkbeck University, will consider the gender differences in politics from policies to participation, asking whether Britain should adopt Spain's 40 per cent rule whereby neither men nor women can have more than 60 per cent of the candidates for any party in national or local elections.

Monday 15 June 09

café**scientifique**

Non Proliferation and Nuclear Renaissance

Nuclear energy is often offered as a partial solution to energy and climate security concerns. But the global spread of nuclear capabilities may undermine non-proliferation challenges if technologies and materials are diverted to military use. **Professor Wyn Bowen** is Professor of Non-Proliferation and International Security in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He has worked as a consultant to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna and served as a weapons inspector on several missile teams in Iraq with the UN Special Commission during the late 1990s. Wyn also served as a Specialist Advisor to the House of Commons' Foreign Affairs Committee inquiries into the Iraq war and weapons of mass destruction.

Monday 22 June 09 caféphilosophique

Religion and Politics: Limits to the Secular State

Should religion and politics be kept separate?

Professor Peter Jones, Newcastle University, will look at cases such as the embryology bill or abortion, when people with religious beliefs have views and want to influence the debate. Does our society exclude religious voices or are these groups actually imposing their religious beliefs on others, making criticisms of mixing religion and politics justified?

Monday 6 July 09 caféscientifique

Waves

Waves seem to be everywhere, from ocean breakers pounding the shore, to the tiny, musical pressure fluctuations produced by a string ensemble, from reverberations of an earthquake circumnavigating the globe, to the electromagnetic rays emanating from a lamp, from brainwaves to Mexican waves, gravitational waves to royal waves. In fact, at a subatomic scale, anything and everything seems to behave as a wave.

Gavin Pretor-Pinney, Cloud Spotter and Idler and absinthe importer, asks what exactly are waves and why are they so universal?

Monday 20 July 09 caféphilosophique

Medical Ethics in the Real Mess of the Real World

Ray Tallis, a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, will argue that entirely defensible ethical decisions are impossible. While biomedical ethics and the law provide a framework for ethical decision-making in medicine, they are an insufficient guide to an entirely satisfactory decision and need to be supplemented by a 'conversational', informal ethics. Ray Tallis was Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Manchester before becoming a full-time writer.

caféculture

www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk

Events organised by Culture North East, ippr north, Newcastle Philosophy Society and PEALS. The events have been funded by a grant from the Northern Rock Foundation and are supported by Dance City.

Enquiries or mailing list requests to:
info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk

Other café philosophique events can be found at:
www.newphilsoc.org.uk

Organised by



Supported by

DANCECITY 

