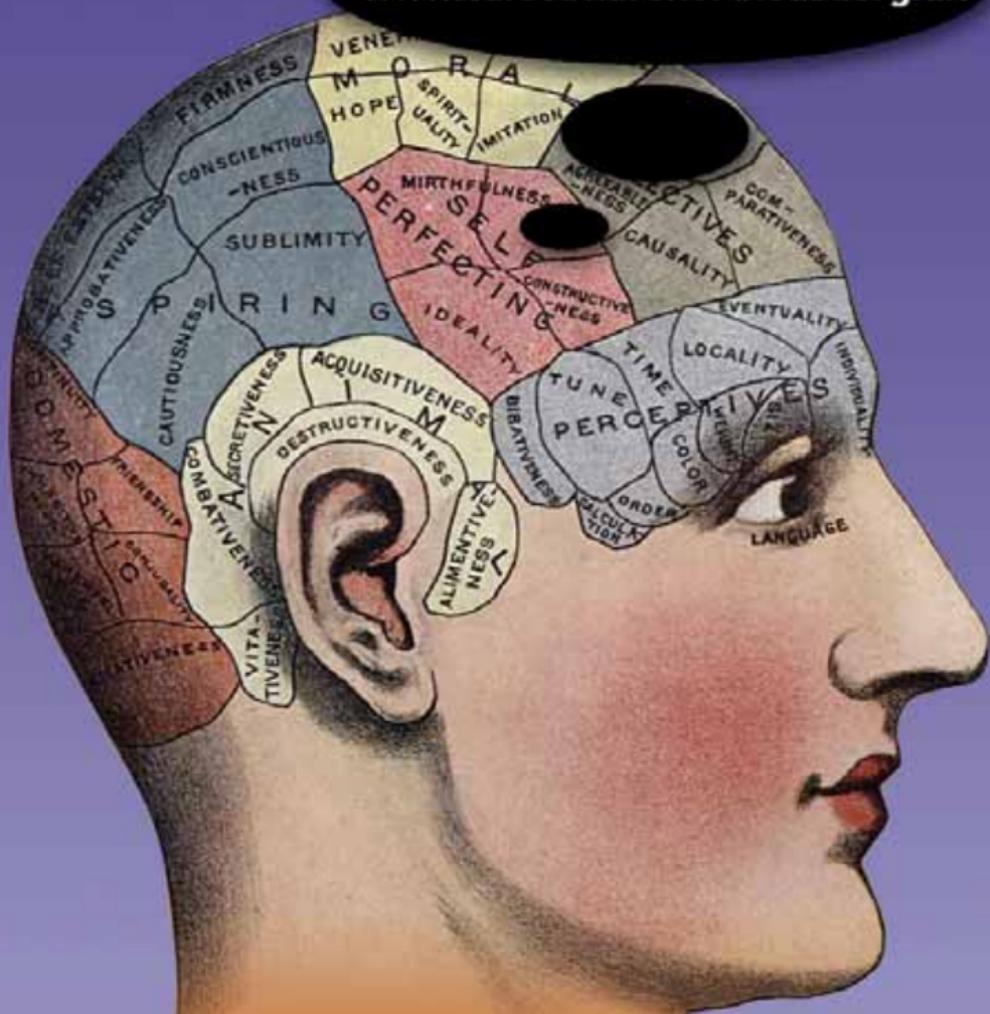


# caféculture

## 2009-10

food for thought  
[www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](http://www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk)



fortnightly,  
first and third  
mondays

caféculture at the Urban Café, Dance City  
For discussion and debate café-style

# caféculture

## Fortnightly, first and third Mondays

Café Culture welcomes you to a new season of discussions and debates on culture, politics, philosophy and science. Our events are open to and welcome everyone. No prior knowledge needed.

We aim to generate discussion, debate and a convivial atmosphere at our events. Held in central Newcastle, they provide a space for people to think, share ideas and to have a lively discussion. We don't charge for our events, but we do have a collection to help us cover our costs.

Our talks involve a range of interesting speakers, sometimes but not always high profile, who introduce their talk in an accessible and challenging way. We then open to the floor for comment and debate. We want to go beyond a question and answer format to allow broad participation. Our overall aim is to create an atmosphere where people can talk about the issues they feel passionately about and to open our minds to new ideas.

## Sign up for regular updates

To receive regular email reminders on our events as well as any unforeseen changes or unavoidable cancellations, please sign up for regular updates by sending your details to [info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](mailto:info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk) or sign up via the website [www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](http://www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk)

# re2009-10

## Venue

Café Culture is held at the Urban Café, Dance City. You can enjoy a meal before the events or snacks and refreshments during the break. And it's a stone's throw from Central Station; our improved transport links mean we attract people from across the North East.

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

**Dance City** is a three-minute walk from Central Station (railway and Metro). There is an NCP car park next to the venue on Waterloo Street. Nearest taxi rank Central Station. Secure bicycle parking outside. Wheelchair access. Café with snacks before the event and refreshments available during the break.

Map available at [www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](http://www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk)



Monday 7 September 09 caféphilosophique

## Can Technology Make Us Better Humans?

Modern technology offers us various ways to improve our capacities beyond the level we would generally describe as normal or healthy. The use of such technology has been regarded by some as unethical, such as 'smart drugs' used by students revising for exams. **Rebecca Roache**, a philosopher from Oxford University, will consider the extent to which enhancement technologies differ from more familiar ways of improving ourselves, as well as some ethical concerns.

Monday 21 September 09 caféscientifique

## Darwin: Beyond the Origin of The Species

Celebrating the Darwin bicentenary, this event will go beyond an examination of the origin of the species, to consider whether Darwin achieved so much because of his privileged, well-connected background. **Phil Gates**, a biologist from Durham University, will consider how Alfred Russel Wallace, who was not privileged or very well-connected, also arrived at the same conclusions independently. We will look at what Darwin could have achieved if he hadn't been born into comfortable circumstances, exploring how schooling and access to university still resonates in the higher echelons of science today.

Monday 5 October 09 cafépolitique

## The North South Divide: Is the Gap Growing?

What has the impact of the economic recession been on the North? Has the credit crunch led to a widening of the North South divide? **Daniel Dorling**, geographer at the University of Sheffield, who was awarded the Leverhulme Prize for his work, will reveal the answers from his mapping of changing social, medical and political geographies of Britain. He will consider the implications of rising housing market and wealth inequalities, and the polarisation of health and life chances.

**Monday 19 October 09** **caféscientifique**

## **Genesis Machines: Computing with the Code of Life**

From his book, *Genesis Machines*, **Martyn Amos**, computer scientist from Manchester Metropolitan University, will explain how scientists are turning away from silicon chips and instead are using real, wet, squishy, perhaps even living biology to build machines that could change the world forever. He will explain how cells, gels and DNA strands are the 'wetware' of the 21st century. He says revolutionary applications may be widespread within 10 years and asks what breed of computer does the future hold?

## **New for 2009**

### **Café Culture at the Free Thinking Festival, The Sage, Gateshead**

Cafe Culture will be at this year's BBC Radio 3 **Free Thinking Festival**, a weekend festival of ideas at The Sage, Gateshead from 23 to 25 October. Artists, writers, scientists and thinkers will explore today's most exciting ideas. Join us for two special Cafe Culture events.

### **24 October 09 4pm** **Theory Slam**

Do you have a pet theory, neat explanation or call to action? The theory slam invites you to display your innovation and insight, be it philosophical, political, scientific or cultural. Please email your theory to [info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](mailto:info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk) by 1 September 2009 to take part. We will select a good crop of entertaining ideas in this fast paced, energetic event where theorists have three minutes to make their case.

### **24 October 09 6pm** **cafépolitique**

## **The Economic Downturn: Green Shoots or Gloom?**

**Hugh Pym**, BBC Chief Economics Correspondent, will reflect on the causes of the global recession from his book *What Happened*. He will give his views on what our economic future holds.



To request a full brochure and programme of events, call the BBC Audience line on **03700 100 300** or visit <http://www.bbc.co.uk/freethinking>

Monday 2 November 09 café**culturel**

## The Reading Revolution

**Jane Davis** is the Director of The Reader, a Liverpool-based organisation which pioneers new approaches to reading across the community from children who don't attend school to older people with dementia. We know that reading fiction and poetry is good for us, but just how good? Can reading poetry help people with neurological dysfunctions, can reading Dickens cure depression? Jane has also developed innovative read-aloud and personal response models which are at the heart of these approaches.

Monday 16 November 09 café**scientifique**

## Disability and Bioethics: Stand-off or Dialogue?

Disability is a central topic in biomedicine, especially the new genetic and reproductive medical technologies, and so it is of major interest in bioethics as well. But relations between bioethics and disabled people, especially the disability movement, have been fraught. Bioethics is sometimes accused by disability activists of having a eugenic goal; in turn, disability activists are accused of being unrealistic and unrepresentative. In her book *Disability Bioethics: Moral Bodies, Moral Difference*, **Jackie Leach Scully** argues for a better dialogue between disability and bioethics, with greater recognition of the diversity of experience of disabled people.

Monday 7 December 09 café**philosophique**

## The Age of Extremes

The 20th century is often seen as an age of extremes, with the welding of a belief in human rationalism and a newtonian vision of an orderly universe amid the growing powers of the modern state. **Robert Geyer**, Professor of Politics at Lancaster University will argue that this order has manifested itself, despite being challenged, in an ordered framework for public policy focusing on audits and driven by targets. Has this vision recently been transformed by physical, chemical and biological discoveries which break out of this orderly mould?

# 2010

Monday 4 January 10 caféculture

## Theory Slam

Come along to our New Year theory slam to share your theory. Do you have a neat explanation or a sinister conspiracy you would like to share? Can you persuade, challenge and entertain an audience of sceptics? We welcome theories of any mould, whether they be politics, science, culture or philosophy – or a combination! We invite you to give your three-minute burst of brilliance, as the audience listens and then votes for the winner. Prizes awarded for the best theory. To participate send an email to [info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](mailto:info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk) by 1 December 2009.

Monday 18 January 10 caféculture

## The Optimist

When the financial world fell to its knees, **Laurence Shorter** believed things had become as bad as they could get. *'The word optimism seemed exhausted, misunderstood, fallen on hard times, associated with all the wrong things – Americans and Tony Blair.'*

Following this revelation, Laurence spent three years talking to genuinely optimistic people for his book, *The Optimist*. If listening to the Today programme makes you want to stay in bed it may be time for you to join the counter-revolution and sign up for Shorter's Manifesto for Optimism.

**Monday 1 February 10** cafépolitique

## **Is Formal Education Enough?**

Does our education system set us up for what life throws at us? **Tony Jeffs** teaches community and youth work at Durham University. He argues that informal education is just as important as our schooling and that as a society we should consider taking more responsibility for the future of our young people. Jeffs believes that instead of harbouring negative attitudes towards young people, if we took a lead from our European counterparts, including raising the school starting age and improving youth provision for young people, we would reap enormous benefits for society as a whole.

**Monday 15 February 10** caféscientifique

## **From Stem Cells to Sperm Cells**

**Karim Nayernia** trained in Germany as a molecular biologist, working on germ cells and cancer cells, moving to Newcastle University in 2006 as Professor of Stem Cell Biology. Karim will talk about how it is possible to use stem cells to create sperm in the laboratory, with the aim of understanding the biology of male infertility.

**Monday 1 March 10** caféculturel

## **Are Poets Still the ‘Unacknowledged Legislators of the World’?**

What place does poetry have in our contemporary world? And what role do poets have in society? Are they still the ‘unofficial legislators’ as Shelley suggested in 1918? Join **Mark Robinson** who will speak on the subject from his position as both a poet and as the Executive Director of Arts Council England, North East.

Monday 15 March 10 caféscientifique

## Putting Your Head Through the Screen

Pervasive networks, easy access to the internet and social network tools like Twitter, Facebook and Seesmic are blurring the boundary between being online and being offline, while geolocation tools mean your friends – and stalkers – can track you in the real and the virtual worlds. Technology guru **Bill Thompson** will ask what implications this has for our sense of identity, and how can we know who we are when many of the people we spend our time with are only electronically available?

Monday 19 April 10

Sixth Annual bookgroupsummit

## Kate Clanchy, *Antigona and Me*

Read the book, then come along and meet the author. In her memoir, *Antigona and Me*, **Clanchy** explores the five years that she spent living with Antigona, a Kosovan refugee, and tells the story of her extraordinary life, from escaping violence in Kosovo to a fight for independence and freedom in the UK. **Kate Clanchy** is the author of three collections of poetry, *Slattern*, which won the Forward Poetry Prize, *Samarkand*, which won a Scottish Arts Council Book Award and *Newborn*.

Monday 17 May 10 caféscientifique

## Sustainable Energy without the Hot Air?

Our addiction to fossil fuels is not sustainable, but can a country like Britain conceivably live on its own renewable energy resources? Will a switch to 'advanced technologies' allow us to eliminate carbon dioxide pollution without changing our lifestyles? **David MacKay**, Professor of Natural Philosophy of Cambridge University, author of *Sustainable Energy without the Hot Air*, shows how we can evaluate sustainable energy claims and plan a rational strategy for the future.

Monday 7 June 10 | cafépolitique

## Fragmenting Fatherhood: A Socio-Legal Response

Is the role of fathers changing in today's society? How has law responded to these developments? From his book *Fragmenting Fatherhood: A Socio-Legal Study*, **Richard Collier** from Newcastle University will consider what impact changing ideas of the family may have had on the relationship between fatherhood and law, including beliefs about male role models for children. He will explore issues around activism in the fathers rights movement, seeking to chart a way through these often polarised debates, and look at recent policy responses which have sought to strengthen the skills of fathers in Britain.

Monday 21 June 10 | caféphilosophique

## Regulating the Imagination: Porn and the Dirty Pictures Act

Fears that pornography's malign influence on society, social norms and personal practices has led to the recent criminalisation of possession of 'extreme' pornographic imagery. This legislation is founded on the principle that people need protecting from themselves and it is supported by groups from the police to moral campaigners and feminist activists. This law is promoted as the first step in stemming the filth that new media technologies have made possible. But opponents of the law see it as an attack on personal freedoms, rights to consent and fantasy. **Clarissa Smith**, from Sunderland University, will explore issues from her book *One for the Girls: The Pleasures and Practices of Reading Womens Porn*, discussing whether the State should seek to regulate the sexual imagination.

Monday 5 July 10 caféphilosophique

## Billy Elliott or Sir Jeremy Isaacs: Is Geordie Culture too top down?

A Geordie, traditionally, was considered to be an unsophisticated working-class man feared and patronised by the middle classes. Sir Jeremy Isaacs and his committee awarded Liverpool as the Culture Capital saying its bid was bottom-up. Of course, we can still dispute this, or we might believe Liverpool is exceptional. **Roy Struggess**, chair of the Newcastle Philosophy Society, will explore whether those involved in our region's culture now use their training, careers, status and 'high' culture as an antidote to what being a Geordie represents and whether a new culture which embraces visceral energy and passion is needed.

# caféculture

**[www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](http://www.cafeculturenortheast.org.uk)**

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

Enquiries or mailing list requests to:

**[info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk](mailto:info@cafeculturenortheast.org.uk)**

More events can be found at:

**[www.newphilsoc.org.uk](http://www.newphilsoc.org.uk)** for café philosophique

**[www.ippr.org/north](http://www.ippr.org/north)** for ippr north

**[www.newwritingnorth.com](http://www.newwritingnorth.com)** for events including the Durham Book Festival: 23 October–1 November 2009

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