

The Acropolis

Philosophy for today



June 2021
Issue 6

Summer Edition Art - History - Anthropology - Interviews - Reviews and more



Photograph by Aaron Burden



What is The Acropolis?

In ancient Athens the Acropolis, literally meaning the High City, was the place which supported the highest ideals of the people. The founder of New Acropolis International, Professor George Livraga, chose this name to capture the key objective of philosophy; that we as individuals build a new high city within, that we discover the heights of our own potential, so that we may externally build a new high city, a new and better world, together. The Acropolis magazine is motivated by this objective and aims to share inspiring content, combining all the major endeavours of philosophy, art, science, education and culture.

About Us

New Acropolis is an international organisation working in the fields of philosophy, culture and volunteering. Our aim is to revive philosophy as a means of renewal and transformation and to offer a holistic education that can develop both our human potential as well as the practical skills needed in order to meet the challenges of today and to create a better society.

For further details please visit: www.acropolis.ie



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Editorial:

In search of meaning, Philosophy as a way of life

Today, philosophy is considered an academic discipline, abstract, complex, reserved for an intellectual elite. But it hasn't always been that way. As Pierre Hadot explains, philosophy was once a way of life, a certain way of living well, in accordance with philosophical ideas.

In classical times, philosophy consisted in thinking of course, and to know, but this knowledge was not the purpose of the exercise. What can knowledge be good for if it is not useful to us in everyday life?

"The philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome," writes Pierre Hadot, "were not first and foremost writing books. While writing, they were working to change their outlook on the world, on themselves and their feelings, in order to transform their own existence. Even their most abstract speculations (in physics, metaphysics, astronomy) were intended to understand in order to act better and not to know in order to know."

Philosophy or living philosophically

So, it was less a question of philosophising than of living philosophically. There was no philosophy without philosophical life. The Stoics or Epicureans each had rules of living which consisted of putting into practice the virtues or principles they taught. Philosophers were recognised by their way of life, of behaving in accordance with an ethic of existence. As Plutarch says, "It is Socrates' daily living practice that is his true philosophy".

A break between philosophical life and philosophical discourse

What happened that philosophy was reduced to a pure exercise of thought and language and no longer a practice of living in accordance with philosophical discourse?

Pierre Hadot, as an historian of ancient philosophy, explains that "Philosophy took refuge in universities where it was no longer a question, as in Antiquity, of educating the human being, but teachers who in turn trained other teachers."

"Today," he said, "without the aid of philosophy as a way of life, human conduct is no longer guided by virtue, but by appetites and interests. A person who has the knowledge but who lives badly is not a philosopher".

Rethinking philosophy

To think of philosophy as a way of life today is not an obvious thing. Indeed, to consider a way of life which is more respectful of nature, of the deep nature of the human being, of human and spiritual values presents us with two paths. One accepts that it is not our worldly personality with its desires, passions, interests, which will achieve a change. The other believes it is simply a question of changing the model of car, cell phone, means of greater comfort and easier satisfaction of our desires.

Contact your essential being

It is about contacting our essential being, with true self-awareness, to change our habits for other habits more in line with certain principles and values. To change our priorities, distance ourselves from the stress of daily life, freeing ourselves from the tyranny of a system that alienates us, uses us for its own benefit and robotises us.

This implies restoring to philosophy its educational role, its primary vocation to radically transform the human being, to make ourselves freer, more autonomous and responsible. Here, philosophy is an invaluable help, in several ways. It leads us to think for ourselves, to discover and understand ourselves, the world, to gradually lift the veils of the mystery of existence, to raise our level of consciousness. It helps us by passing on to us the heritage of civilisations, the answers already formulated by the philosophers of all times.

New Acropolis - Philosophy for Living

For more than 60 years, New Acropolis international association has worked to rehabilitate philosophy as a way of life, based on the practice of universal and timeless values. To do this, it promotes the study of Eastern and Western philosophies in a comparative manner, promotes philosophical dialogue and offers, through voluntary projects, the possibility of putting these values into practice for the benefit of each individual and of society. Yes, philosophy as a way of life is not only possible today, but it has become essential to face the challenges to come and to, simply, continue the upward path of our inner evolution.

Alain Impellizzeri

<https://www.acropolis.ie/philosophy-living/>

Reference: Philosophy as a Way of Life by Pierre Hadot

Summer is upon us!

The long days stretch with abundant light, reminding us that life is for living and each day is an adventure. That's the sentiment The Acropolis team wished to bring to the pages of our 6th issue for June 2021.

The articles chosen combine to bring a hopeful optimism, a reflective introspection, a sense of beauty, as we continue to navigate challenging times. We hope you enjoy!

The Acropolis team

Editorial Team

Alain Impellizzeri - Director
Aidan Murphy - Editor
Paul Savage - Design Lead
Martin McGranaghan - Design and Proofing
Daniela Baumgarten - Design
Lilian Salaber - Contributor



The Sun in Celtic Mythology

“There is an earthly sun, which is the cause of all heat, and all who are able to see may see the sun, and those who are blind and cannot see him may feel his heat. There is an eternal sun, which is the source of all wisdom, and those whose spiritual senses have awakened to life will see that sun, and be conscious of his existence; but those who have not attained full spiritual consciousness may nevertheless perceive his power by an inner faculty, which is called Intuition.” This quotation from Paracelsus indicates what many cultures had already known about the Sun, that it is not just a centre because of its position, but also because of its vital and spiritual power.

The Celts were one of those cultures that recognised the importance of the Sun. They had many deities with solar attributes and celebrations marking the significant times of the Sun cycle. At the Beltane Festival (Beltane means “bright fire”, referring to the Sun) the return of the summer is still celebrated today. Great bonfires, sometimes with sweet smelling Juniper, are built to achieve purification and rejuvenation. The Beltane festival is said to have been related with Belenus, called the “Fair Shining One” (or “The Shining God”), who was one of the most ancient and most widely worshiped Celtic deities. He is associated with the horse and rides across the sky in a wild, horse-drawn chariot which is one of the

characteristics of a solar deity. Incidentally, he was also the patron deity of the Italian city of Aquileia. Another well-known sun god of the Celts is Lugh, whose name means “shining one” or “flashing light”. His name is the origin of the Pagan festival “Lughnasadh” (which is also the Irish Gaelic name for the month of August). He was the patron god of Lugdunum (currently Lyon, France) and was associated with multiple skills and industries including arts and crafts, commerce, history, healing, war and blacksmiths. Among his symbols were ravens and specifically a white stag in Wales. He is represented as a king, a leader of the army but also a powerful god who brings light into the world.

The Sun has also had many female representations. In Irish Gaelic, the word for the sun is Grian. Although no myths remain about Grian, she is found in place names like Lough Graney and Tuamgraney. She is the winter sun and her sister or her dual nature, Áine, is the summer sun. Áine is the goddess of wealth, with power over crops and animals and she is sometimes represented by a red horse.

Étaín is another Celtic goddess considered to be associated with the Sun. She was originally a Sun goddess before becoming a moon goddess. She is the heroine of well known story in Celtic mythology,



The tradition of lighting bonfires for Beltane or Bealtaine continues to today, like this example in Edinburgh from 2008

Tochmarc Étaíne (The Wooing of Étaín). Through being faithful to love and to her true self, she was reborn and became immortal again. Elements sacred to Étaín are the sun, dawn, the sea, rain, water, butterflies, apple blossoms, and swans. She is the goddess of healing, rebirth and the transmigration of souls.

The “triple goddess” Brigid has dominion over the early spring equinox, light and fire. She is remembered for her solar nature, fitting her role as a goddess of fire and light. Brigid was also known by many other names, but all the different divinities were three-aspected goddesses: “Fire of Inspiration”, “Fire of the Hearth” and “Fire of the Forge”.

The sun is the source of all life on Earth and we can find the various aspects of this source of life represented in all these Celtic deities embodying will, wisdom, life-giving renewal and healing energy.

Pinar Akhan



Bas-relief of Lugus, discovered in Paris in 1867. The source of this image is Les Dieux gaulois d'après les monuments figurés (The Gallic Gods According to the Figurative Monuments) by J.-L. Courcelle-Seneuil, published in Paris in 1910.



Do Not Give In to Pessimism

Delia Steinberg Guzmán encourages us to take care of that spark of wisdom

We live at a time in history – which is everybody's life – when events are accelerating unstoppably, and often give us the impression that they are completely beyond our powers.

We know that the duration of time varies in accordance with the inner state with which we measure it. For this reason, neither in the life of human beings nor in their historical life as a whole, can we avoid this sensation of uncontrollable speed. Partly because everything happens without intervals that allow us to breathe; and partly because the number of events that are happening all over the world exceeds our capacity for assimilation; when we think we have understood something, or at least have endured it, ten or twenty other things jump out and paralyse us with their quantity, dimensions and rapidity.

It is not necessary to be a scholar to understand what I am referring to, nor do I need to give many examples. Fortunately or unfortunately, the efficiency of the


media makes it possible for anyone to experience what is happening in every corner of the world without leaving home; to feel the impact of pain, misery, confrontations, wars, death, violence, insecurity, helplessness... For every global situation that occurs -those that fill the media, those that go down in history- there are other very similar personal situations that repeat in small scale what is happening in the large scale. The small things may not make big headlines, but they affect those who suffer through them. Also in small human groups, in the family, among friends, in daily relationships, there is aggression, pain, confrontations, helplessness and, unfortunately, crimes and murders.

The aforementioned speed with which we live and the quality of what we live, sometimes makes us give in to pessimism. And even if we try to be objective and analyse the quantity and quality of the things we experience, the end result is overwhelming.

I believe, however, that it is not pessimism or the negative feeling of life that dominates us. Although it may seem that helplessness sometimes paralyses us, in truth we are not defeated.

Look at the enormous efforts that both nations and individuals make to reach agreements, to breathe easy, to stop the maelstrom, to stop the destructive and sterile struggles. The results are not encouraging in many cases, it is true, but the important thing is the perseverance to start again until the desired results are achieved. There are endless dialogues, it is true, and one even wonders whether states or men want to reach an agreement, whether there is an authentic dialogue or simple monologues in which no one listens to no one. However, it is repeated, and this is a good sign, that we are becoming aware of our deafness.

In the inner heart of everything that happens to us, there is a spark of light, of optimism, of hope for the



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future, of recovering a harmonious rhythm of life. We speak of pain, but we do it thinking of the happiness that awaits us... if we want to achieve it, of course. We speak of war, but we do so dreaming of peace. We condemn violence because we love coexistence, we resent intolerance because we want to understand each other in earnest.

Those who do not live the present – even if it is a little confused and dark – with that spark of hope, are the ones who make the present – and also the future – dangerously negative. Those who feel that spark of recovery, of renewal, of broad and safe paths, are building a more dignified future in the midst of the difficulties of the present. Needless to say that, as philosophers, and in the name of that love of Wisdom that encourages us, it is important to take care of the spark, however small it may be, because we see in it the seed of a definite clarity for tomorrow.

Delia Steinberg Guzmán





Pretty Remarkable

The Story of Sutton Hoo

“The most impressive medieval grave discovered in Europe” and “The greatest discovery in British archaeology” are just a couple of quotes to illustrate how important the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo was. When Basil Brown accepted a job from local landowner Edith Pretty to excavate the mysterious mounds on her property he probably did not imagine that it would not only become the discovery of his lifetime but it would stun the whole archaeological world and shine a new light on early medieval society and the dark ages in Britain.

Sutton Hoo is situated near Woodbridge and the river Deben in Suffolk, England. Woodbridge, a small harbour town, lies on the opposite bank and is about 11km from the North Sea. This area formed a path into East Anglia after the fall of the Roman Empire. The mysterious mounds spread all over this area attracted the attention of people long before Edith Pretty and her husband bought this land. The mounds had been left untouched since their creation in the early 7th century until the 1600s (the Tudor era), when people were able to get a license from the Crown to dig there. These people were mostly just after the valuables and treasures. They usually dug random holes and trenches just to obtain valuable artefacts and, if they were really lucky, found lots

of valuable objects which were often melted down and shared between the finder and the Crown. Fortunately they missed the contents of at least two mounds, one of which contained the burial ship.

Another big plundering period was in the late 19th century, when there was a big excavation campaign which was not really proper scientific excavation as such. The excavators did not really explore the place, instead they mostly just took valuable artefacts and left the place destroyed. They did not leave any records of their findings. In spite of all this, luckily, there were still lots of treasures and great finds left hidden under the soil of these mounds.

Enter the Prettys

In 1926, Edith Pretty bought Sutton Hoo house and the surrounding land which covered 213 hectares and moved there together with her husband Frank Pretty. Edith and Frank had known each other for a number of years, he first proposed to her on her 18th birthday but they got married much later in their lives, Edith was 42 and Frank 47. They had one son together, Robert, who was born in 1930. Unfortunately their happiness did not last too long, Frank died in 1934 aged 56.

After his death, Edith withdrew from social life and spent more time at the estate. She became very interested in spiritualism and more interested and focused on the mysterious mounds on her land. Edith spent lots of her youth travelling, she visited Pompeii, the pyramids in Egypt, as well as tombs and other monuments in Luxor where she had witnessed excavations. Also her father, who was an amateur archaeologist, excavated a Cistercian abbey which was lying next to their family home at Vale Royal. All these early experiences with archaeology and history had an influence on her at a later time and she recognised the need to have the mounds on her land excavated in a professional way.



Left: Painted portrait of Edith Pretty (© British Museum);
Right: Basil Brown (photo: Suffolk Archaeological Unit)

A Man About Brown

She approached the Curator of Ipswich Museum, Mr Maynard, who recommended a local self-taught archaeologist Basil Brown for the job.

Basil Brown, although he was considered to be an amateur archaeologist because he never studied archaeology, was very skilful and knew the area very well. From an early age he was very interested in archaeology and astronomy. He often explored the countryside of north Suffolk looking for Roman remains and could also be found digging up local fields. He left school when he was 12 and worked on his father's farm. He knew everything about the Suffolk soil and this proved to be very useful while digging in Sutton Hoo. His investigations of some Roman remains brought him in touch with the Ipswich museum. This way he got to know Guy Maynard, the curator of the museum. He applied for a job with the museum on a contractual basis and his career as a paid excavation employee began then and lasted for over 30 years.

His first excavation at Sutton Hoo took place in June and July 1938. He focused on three of the mounds and started to excavate them by using the traditional method of cutting a trench across the mounds. He was looking for a burial chamber or pit which would lie under the mounds. He was looking for a difference in soil colour and texture which would indicate the presence of an infilled chamber or grave. The fact that the mounds were

disturbed by robber trenches from previous periods made this difficult. He discovered that each of these mounds had been robbed, but he still found pieces of artefacts which suggested that they originally contained great treasures.

Just to mention some of the finds, in Mound 3 he discovered the remains of a cremated man, along with a corroded iron axe-head, fragments of pottery and the lid of a Mediterranean jug. Mound 2 contained some pieces of iron, which Basil recognised as ship rivets, he also found a beautiful piece of blue glass, a gilt bronze disc, iron knives and the tip of a sword blade. Mound 4 was the last one to be excavated in the summer of 1938. It had a very shallow pit and also showed signs that it was robbed, but due to proper excavation, they discovered fragments of bronze, high quality textile and bone.

The Revelation of Mound 1

Basil came back to continue excavating the site in May 1939. This time he decided to excavate the largest of the mounds, called Mound 1. He used his usual trench technique and discovered pieces of iron. He then started to carefully explore the area with a small trowel and he discovered five rivets in a position which later turned out to be the prow of the ship. With this discovery Basil had to change his technique and make the trench wider so that he could include the whole form which was emerging from the soil. As he kept digging, he revealed the ghost of a ship, although practically nothing from the original timber survived, the form of the ship was preserved in great condition. The outline of the curving wood in the sand showed where all the planks, ribs and other construction details had been. Almost all the original iron rivets were in their original places. The ship was about 27 metres long and approximately 4.4 metres wide. Basil continued digging and he discovered the burial chamber in the centre of the ship. He saw some sign of robbery but in the end to his great relief he realised that the quarrying activities in the Middle Ages changed the shape of the mound, so when the treasure hunters were digging into the mound thinking they were going into the centre of the mound, they actually missed the burial chamber.

Edith Pretty oversaw the excavations for two years and when Basil Brown uncovered the huge ship burial with its chamber undisturbed under Mound 1 she knew that it was a discovery of huge historic significance. It was clear that this kind of discovery called for the best experts in the country, so the excavations were handed over to Charles Phillips of Cambridge University and his team of great young archaeologists. Talented young archaeologist Peggy Piggott and her husband Stuart were members of this team. Peggy was the first to find a golden artefact.

The team had to work very quickly and efficiently as at this stage war with Germany could have been declared at any moment. Over the space of a few weeks they found treasure after treasure. Altogether there were around 260 finds of gold, garnet, silver, bronze, enamel, wood, iron, bone, feathers, fur and textile. Metal items survived

the acidic soil better than organic material but still some organic materials as mentioned above were uncovered. At this point, when all these amazing artefacts were dug from the Suffolk soil, Charles Phillips was able to identify the burial as Anglo Saxon and not Viking, which confirmed Basil's original theory.

What They Found

One of the most impressive finds was the famous Sutton Hoo helmet which was wrapped in cloth and laid near the left side of the dead person's head. The helmet is a product of amazing and very skilful craftsmanship.

Other weapons found around the body are equally impressive and breath-taking, among them was a sword with a gold and garnet cloisonné pommel, a sword harness and huge gold belt buckle. These artefacts were the product of a master goldsmith with amazing skills.



Among other finds there were drinking vessels, folded textiles, leather shoes and other clothing and metal objects which were in the bottom part, near the legs of the dead person. On the top there was a huge silver platter with stamps showing that it was actually made in Constantinople (today's Istanbul), the capital of the Byzantine Empire. An interesting fact is that the platter was already hundred years old when it was buried in Sutton Hoo and shows East Anglia's long distance connections.

The burial contained a set of silver bowls which were also of Byzantine origin and some silver spoons, also probably Byzantine.

The discovery of a decorated purse containing 37 gold coins, 3 blank coins and 2 small ingots was very important in providing key evidence for dating the burial. Each coin came from a different mint in Francia and helped to date the burial to the early 7th century CE.

The chamber contained lots of domestic objects as well, including wooden buckets, caldrons etc.

All these objects were arranged around the burial chamber in a meaningful way to transmit the message about the dead person's identity and status in society. Such a rich burial showed that the person was very

important and had prominent status in Anglo-Saxon society of the early 7th century. Initially, the body was not found, but later analysis of the soil found phosphate traces which suggested that the body decayed in the acidic soil.

Legacy

Who was this important person, whose burial chamber astonished the archaeological world in the 20th century? It is still open to interpretations but most experts suggest that it was Raedwald/Redwald, King of East Anglia, with a claim to be 'Bretwalda' or 'wide ruler' with influence over other surrounding kingdoms who died around 616-627.

Sutton Hoo is definitely remarkable and famous because of the treasures which were uncovered but another important fact is that its discovery helped to change and rewrite our understanding of a time in history which was previously misunderstood and underestimated. Many historians considered Britain after the fall of Roman Empire to be in the so-called 'Dark Ages', where society declined in all aspects of life and where all the skills and knowledge of previous eras were lost. Sutton Hoo proves that it was actually the opposite and that early medieval Anglo-Saxon society had amazing artistic skills, complex systems of beliefs and international connections as well as personal power and wealth.

The treasures of Sutton Hoo originally belonged to Edith Pretty as she was the land owner but she generously donated it all to the British Museum. After the outbreak of WWII in September 1939 the treasures from the excavations were buried in a London Underground tunnel to survive the war.

What started as a vision and originally a minor job for a local amateur archaeologist turned out to be one the most important discoveries in modern day archaeology. It captured the imagination of society in the 1930s and still continues to capture our imagination to this day.

Zuzana Majerčíková



Excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship burial, 1939 (photo: Barbara Wagstaff, © 2019 The Trustees of the British Museum)



Bohemian Rhapsodies

Songs of life, and death, and the life thereafter



The myth of Orpheus, the ancient Greek poet-hero, has inspired artists and art forms for millennia and was known to popular culture throughout the ages, but it is less known that this same Orpheus was also a mystical figure and his epic poems, or rhapsodies, had a profound influence on Western philosophy and religion.

Orpheus is a somewhat unconventional character in Greek mythology. He was a Thracian, whom the Greeks considered barbarians – warlike and bloodthirsty – but Orpheus is described as being mild of manner, a lover of music, song, poetry, and learning. He was considered a Greek among the Thracians. He was mortal but his music had supernatural power that would draw all of nature together in peaceful harmony, appeasing the ferocious beasts, causing rivers to change their course, trees to uproot themselves and stones to move under the influence of his song.

He is depicted as a hero, albeit an unlikely one. Why would Jason ask a mild-mannered lyre player to join the perilous voyage on the Argo? Yet without Orpheus and the power of his music, the Argonauts would have perished at sea or on the rocks.

Orpheus is best known, however, for his heroic venture into the underworld following the death of his beloved Eurydice, where his lamenting song captivates Persephone and Hades who agree to allow them to leave, on condition that Orpheus walk ahead of Eurydice and does not look back until they both return to the land of the living. But Orpheus is not the typical hero – having successfully negotiated numerous hazards in entering the underworld and securing the release of his beloved wife, it all ends in tragedy when Orpheus succumbs to fear and turns around at the last moment to see Eurydice swept back into the underworld and he loses her forever.

Quite apart from these tales in the myth of Orpheus, he is also a mystical character. He is reputed to have revealed the sacred rites of the cult of Dionysus and

is known as the revealer of mysteries: the oracle of Orpheus founded at Lesbos was said to rival the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. A mystery religion, known as Orphism, existed from at least 500 BCE through to 700 CE based on the mysteries and teachings of Orpheus, passed down through the 'Orphic Rhapsodies'. These teachings later compiled into 'Orphic texts' were used by the followers of this cult religion and the initiates who practised the 'Orphic way of life'. Although Plato had a low opinion of the 'Orpheotelestai', or 'Orpheus-initiators', he was influenced by the teachings of Orpheus, and some of Plato's ideas which were pivotal in shaping Western philosophy and religion have their roots in the Orphic teachings.

In his rhapsodies, Orpheus presents an explanation for the origin of the cosmos, and the gods, in which there is a 'oneness' from which everything emerges and to which everything will eventually return. He also describes how human beings were fashioned from the ashes of the gods (the Titans) and, therefore, within mortal man there is a divine and immortal soul. As punishment for the primordial crime of the Titans, this immortal soul must spend successive cycles imprisoned within a mortal human frame until the soul has been purified and achieves salvation where it is reunited with the one true source.

Based on these teaching the Orphics believed that in observing a strict standard of ethical conduct, living an ascetic way of life and undergoing secret initiation rites to purify the soul, they could accelerate or even bypass these successive cycles of transmigration (metempsychosis or reincarnation) to reach salvation earlier. There was a firm belief in life after death: that when the mortal body died the immortal soul would be reborn into the celestial world for a period before being entombed once again in a mortal body. For the Orphics, the words 'birth' and 'death' referred to changes in the state of existence rather than beginnings and ends, and because they focused on the immortal soul their meaning were reversed: the human birth was death for the immortal soul and the death of the human body meant birth (rebirth) for the immortal soul.

With this cycle of Life, Death, Life there was also forgetting and remembering: when the immortal soul transitioned into a human existence its celestial memories were lost, and when it returned to the celestial world after the human body died, its celestial memories were restored. The Greeks believed that when the shades of the dead entered the underworld they were expected to drink from the waters of Lethe to forget their human experiences. The Orphics initiates, however, expected salvation when the mortal body died so they wanted their reawakened souls to avoid the waters of Lethe (because it would mean losing their newly restored celestial memories and an inevitable return to the mortal realm) and instead to drink from Mnemosyne, the lake of memory, so that

they would retain their celestial memories. This is so important, that Orphic initiates were buried with tablets ('totenpass') referring to the 'Gift of Memory' that give instructions to the reawakened soul about how to navigate the afterlife and underworld. A typical tablet inscription might read:

Say:
***"I am a child of light
and starry heaven;
and I am parched with thirst
and I perish;
but give me quickly
refreshing water to drink
from the lake of Memory"***

Like their patron, the Orphics were unconventional, choosing a system of beliefs and a way of living quite apart from established society in Greece, and later in the Roman empire. After the demise of the Orphic mystery religion, the Orphic rhapsodies faded into obscurity until they were rediscovered in the 15th century CE by Giovanni Aurispa and Marsilio Ficino (dubbed the 'Second Orpheus') and had a profound influence on the Humanist movement at the centre to the Renaissance in Europe. As we contemplate the progress of human civilisations and the state of humanity in the 21st century, and we look forward to the next renaissance, perhaps it is time for the song of Orpheus to be heard once again.

Martin McGranaghan



Pythagoreans celebrate the sunrise (1869) - Fyodor Bronnikov

Throwing Shapes

Moving in Pythagorean circles

What would you think of if I mentioned Pythagoras? Perhaps forgotten traumas about triangles from math class? Something about music? Would it surprise you to learn that the influence of Pythagoras and his schools was a significant contributing factor to western thinking as we know it? That Plato, the Renaissance, Copernicus, Kepler and Newton can all trace common roots back to this great man? How can one person leave such a legacy? There are many aspects we can attribute to such a phenomena but perhaps the most interesting is because he didn't do it alone. Pythagoreanism was a movement, a school of philosophy that was founded by a giant of thought but which spread through the works of countless, forgotten historical figures that allowed these ideas to spread and grow and change the world.

We have to cast ourselves back to the 6th century BCE, with what historical information we have, and try to imagine the life and times of the common people of the Mediterranean basin. In a period of rapid change, with society becoming increasingly divided and political systems in flux, people were seeking stability and a more viable way of living. Into the mix comes a school of philosophy in Crotone, Italy, led by the son of a gem-engraver from Samos, a remarkable man who had spent twenty years learning the mysteries of Egyptian philosophy and wanted to make a difference in the world.

This was Pythagoras, somewhere around 530 BCE, establishing his school which would break many rules and reinvent many norms. The first

revolutionary concept of the Pythagoreans was that education was for everyone. At the time, only the wealthy elite could avail of the best education but this was of no importance to Pythagoras, all were welcome in his schools. While there was an equality of opportunity, there was no equality of outcome, everyone progressed in their education based on their merit and capacity. The inner circles, containing the greatest depths of knowledge available in the schools, were not commonly accessible but had to be earned through incredible dedication and self-discipline.

As such, the school had an external aspect which was open to the public and also an inner aspect, structured into three fundamental sections. This ensured that everyone could find their rightful place and the educational level best suited for them. The three levels were known as the novice, akousmatikoi and mathēmatikoi.

The Novice

For those beginning it was a process of being tested, to see what the person was made of. For this, each individual had to have a desire to change, to overcome themselves and therefore a willingness to be tested. Immediately this would separate those seeking true education from those merely looking for the prestige of gaining knowledge in a famous school. The nobility who came to the Pythagoreans expecting special treatment were soon given a rude awakening when they realised they would be treated no differently from the common people.



Illustration from 1913 showing Pythagoras teaching a class of women. Many prominent members of his school were women

To be tested means to accept the need to change, to have some humility in the face of our pride which does not like to be challenged. It's not always an easy thing to do and demonstrates an incredible wisdom in the Pythagorean method – before being admitted to the inner sanctum of knowledge, one has to be able to overcome their own ego. These tests were not academic exams, rather tests of character, not about what one knows but about how one lives what they know.

The Akousmatikoi

Novices accepted into the next stage would engage in a deeper inner work, the development of their own inner life. As an initiational practice, the akousmatikoi entered into a stage of silence which would last for three to five years where they learned to listen. Another fascinating concept, the idea being to encourage the students to find their own answers. To be receptive, reflective, to practice what we are discovering and to resolve our own issues gives the human being an incredible depth and resolve.

The Pythagoreans exemplified many of these initiational systems, showing another way of educating. For them, teaching was not just about giving answers, teaching was a methodology of awakening the ability in a person to find their own answers. The master was simply the one enabling the disciple to discover the breadcrumb trail of wisdom hidden in nature and in themselves.

The Mathēmatikoi

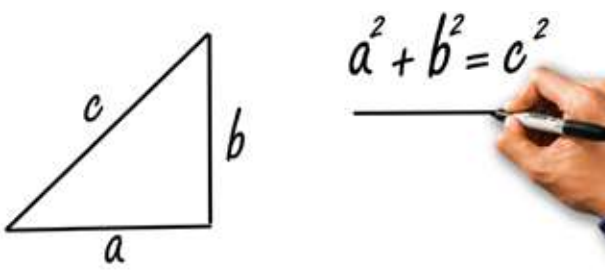
The inner circle of the school was the most dedicated and created a community of philosophers living and working together to study, to teach and to contribute to the world around them. In the realm of science they advanced the arenas of mathematics, geometry, astrology. Applying mathematical principles to music and architecture they developed perfect proportions for harmonious aesthetics.

All of which was a reflection of the harmony and beauty they sought to channel from the divine aspect of nature. Their spiritual tendencies were a developed form of sun-worship, seeing god manifested in the intelligence of our solar star. They practiced various rituals in line with the Orphic traditions of the time and promoted an unassuming and simple life of work, learning and community.

The impact of the schools of Pythagoras in their roughly two centuries of existence is hard to measure fully but impossible to deny. What's most interesting to observe is the model of a school of philosophy, in this classical tradition, which was replicated throughout history, to afford the human being again and again the opportunity to overcome their ego and learn to apply and transform knowledge into wisdom.

Equally relevant as an example, the Pythagoreans did this for the betterment of the world at large. They were a strong moral example in the times in which they lived. It was said that people could tell the Pythagoreans apart because of the way they carried themselves, their mere presence distinguishing them from others. To be honourable, upright, to be humble and joyfully seeking to help others – all that is their true legacy, even more important than the forms of shapes.

Aidan Murphy



The Pythagorean Theorem

In mathematics, it is a fundamental relation in geometry among the three sides of a right-angled triangle. It states that the area of the square whose side is the hypotenuse (the side opposite the right angle) is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares on the other two sides. This theorem is often written as an equation relating the lengths of the sides a , b and c .

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

The history of this ancient equation remains a subject of debate. Though attributed to Pythagoras he may have only rediscovered something first recorded more than a thousand years before by the Babylonians.



What's it all about?

We sit down with the Director of New Acropolis Ireland, Alain Impellizzeri, to discuss philosophy, society, religion...you know, the big stuff.

Alain has been the Director of New Acropolis in Ireland for over thirty years and has a lifetime's experience of providing an integral and practical philosophical education. Of Italian heritage, though born and raised in Belgium, now an adopted son of Eire, Alain has a unique perspective on the Irish mentality. I've asked him to help clarify a few things about philosophy, what it proposes and why it's important for the challenges we face today.

I begin the discussion asking how he explains what philosophy is for an Irish audience?

"The way I would explain philosophy is kind of situated in Socratic times, 5th Century BCE because the word philosophy is very big, it is the love of wisdom, so we can try to place it in that period in history where philosophy emerges with a certain purpose."

This purpose he describes as twofold, the first being to gain in clarity.

"The purpose is not simply to have ideas and to talk about them but to gain a certain level of clarity through dialogue which will help, obviously, the way we act in the world, that was one objective. The second was to fight the manipulations of the time, the Sophists they were called in Socratic times, today we would call them spin doctors. But clearly Socrates will arm the youth of Athens with an ability to think by themselves and for themselves. That's very important for me, the art of thinking but they

are thinking to gain in clarity not just to question for the sake of it while also to be able to not be caught by the spin and manipulation of these sophists. When I explain this I always say that philosophy is so contemporary because we have the same challenges today. This hasn't changed, time has passed but the questions remain the same simply because even if we have answered questions 25 centuries ago we still have to answer them for ourselves. Even if we read it somewhere else we have to find the answer for ourselves which is obviously quite important."

Philosophy as a Way of Life

Philosophy is often synonymous only with thinking. But great ideas need to be applied, this is something we often miss out on in life so I asked Alain how to apply philosophy as more than an intellectual pursuit?

"I think the difference is that being a philosopher implies not simply to understand but to translate that understanding into a practice. Today there is a fascination with the Stoics for instance which is a good example and why are we fascinated by the Stoics? Because they give us practical advice for daily living and their advice, in general, is of an ethical nature. They say gain sufficient distance or independence from the world you live in so that you can act in it better. So the practice is how can I strengthen myself from a character point of view, from a moral point of view, how can I gain

"...being a philosopher implies not simply to understand but to translate that understanding into a practice."

courage, determination, perseverance, justice, kindness, generosity, they talk about a number of qualities. All of which require practice because courage doesn't emerge by chance, kindness just doesn't emerge by chance it needs to be practiced. But is there a book of practice telling us exactly what to practice? Not really, what there is is a method to practice. Some people have more or less courage, more or less this, more or less that so we're not all going to practice the exact same things yet the idea of practice is fundamental which is to translate what we understand into how we live it."

For Alain that's fundamental because we are confronted with so many tricks of the mind, including the power of the mind that convinces us that simply thinking about something is sufficient.



World Philosophy Day 2018

"Often enough once we think about it, we think that it is done. I thought about it, I got it, thank you very much. In reality that's not the case. How do we know that we have practiced? When life comes and knocks at the door and says here it is a little challenge, a little test. There we see if our inner strength really is there, whether we have practiced it or not. So practice is fundamental. There are many authors in the last maybe 20-30 years who have started to discover or rediscover philosophical practices because until about 30 years ago it was more an intellectual pursuit for a lot of people, too complicated.



Voluntary action in the community is a central aspect to the New Acropolis education

But when they started studying the classical schools, be it Eastern or Western and they realised that there was an underlying practice and generally speaking the first practice was of moral or ethical nature."

I Think Therefore I Am, Right?

Feedback we often receive is that people think philosophy would be beyond them, that they wouldn't get it, that it's too dense or intellectual. Though clearly the practice that Alain is describing is more behavioural. So I asked him if this perception of philosophy as something academic was a barrier to people?

"It has had that perception, to be too intellectual. For me that's very relative. If you have a determination or desire to find answers to your questions you're going to find them. But if you prefer to have pre-packaged answers, like most people want - give me the answer and that's it, then philosophy becomes difficult. So I don't think it's difficult in itself, no. Above all if you have that desire, that determination or that need not only to ask yourself questions but to find answers and answers that can be applied then it ceases to be intellectual and becomes a way of life. For me it's more a perception and it's true that in academia we sometimes over intellectualise but not only for philosophy, for most things. I have colleagues who are in the technology side and they use a very funny, difficult terminology to talk about simple things. It's a form of power to keep that power, I don't think that's necessary really."

I commented that this is a global trend, the superficial desire for easy answers, what Alain called pre-packaged. We see it everywhere today and as the backbone of the modern online discourse. Entrenched in their opinions people are more concerned about being right than of discovering anything new. It is a problem Alain is well aware of.



Christmas hamper drive supporting homeless families in the community

“The thing is that we want an answer so that we can go back and be passive again. Because if you philosophise, if you learn about life, well there's no final answer about anything. There are elements that help you to progress in your own development as a human being but final, final answers, well I don't have those, I don't know what they are. What I know is that I can have some level of convictions based on my experiences, based on my reflection, introspection, I can understand them but also, I know that further practice will bring them to a next level and so on. To learn we have to accept to live with uncertainty, with apparent contradictions. If we're not able to live with apparent contradictions, to question is very difficult because we want to be at peace, not in peace. At peace means leave me alone, no problems, I don't want to think. In peace means I'm serene enough in the face of the challenges that life brings to me. Two different ways of approaching the same questions.”

The Religion Question

Another reaction people sometimes have to philosophy is that it is religious. Either that or it is heretical, depends who you're asking. To help clarify I asked Alain where he places philosophy in relation to religion, are they mutually exclusive or complementary?

“I think if you stop for one second both religion and philosophy are probably trying to answer the same questions, about why we're here, what happens when we die, what's going on, where are we going etc etc. The questions are similar, the approach to them is rather different. Religion will give an answer as a matter of faith which per se one has to respect because everybody has the right to their own vision of life, how they envisage where they come from and how they envisage where they're going and why. But religion as a way of approaching life relies on the concept of faith. Philosophy doesn't say yes or no it just simply says it's possible but I want to understand. Then we're going to start questioning, not just doubting but questioning, understanding so as to go beyond just faith. I think philosophy is closer to science than it is to religion in reality, because we're going to try and question, to

"To learn we have to accept to live with uncertainty, with apparent contradictions. If we're not able to live with apparent contradictions, to question is very difficult..."

understand, to test it in life. Religion tends to more accept the truth as it is given down to them by an authority, whichever authority that it is. And if that is what people want to do it is something to respect except when it becomes fanatic and they want to impose that, that theirs is the only truth and nothing else. Philosophically that can be uncomfortable for me because that brings division and separation and we know what challenges that brings. Per se philosophy is not against religion or this approach to the sacred, simply that there are different ways to do it and the philosophical one is, as I said, closer to science, more investigative, trying to understand, trying to practice it, trying to go beyond the perceptions that we have at first. Now, there are many things we don't know so we have faith about the possibility of something but we're going to try to understand them, to practice them. That's why you have philosophers who are atheistic that don't particularly have a vision of God and others who do so it's not black or white.”

No Individual is an Island

One of Alain's big inspirations has always been Plato's The Republic, the heart of which is a social message of collective living, justice and the common good. So I asked him what is the role of philosophy in the social arena?



Umbrella of Virtues public event – philosophy in the streets of Dublin



New Acropolis Ireland, Lower Rathmines Road Dublin

“Most philosophers have brought about the necessity to understand the principles of life. The more you investigate you see there are two ways of approaching it. One is an individual path of self-enlightenment like Buddha, but most of us are not Buddha. That's why Buddha says don't believe because I say so just practice it and, in that practice, help each other. Plato would say that a just person makes a just society, so if we say know yourself, become a better individual through that process of self-knowledge that will automatically have an impact in the world we live in. Why? Well, today science clearly has discovered the principle of solidarity. The principle of solidarity contradicts the concept of the law that the strongest dominates. Like in the vegetable world, the strongest tree survives, the others die - today there is a lot of research suggesting that trees are actually helping each other, there's a network that interconnects all that together and so and so forth. So there's two models, one model is what the Buddhists would call the model of the head, “me myself and I” or there is the model of the heart which suggests the idea that we are interconnected and that there's a fundamental solidarity as part of the human condition.”

Alain chooses the solidarity model because he understands that it reflects better how nature works, how life works, that everything is interconnected. This is the approach which he then relates to collective living and our social responsibility towards each other.

“I think we're all interconnected, my body, every single organ and cell in my body is interconnected. It's one body although each of them have different functions and that's fundamentally forgotten. We have to relearn that we are individuals and yet we have social responsibility that is to say that we are part of a collectivity. That concept of the common good - which people talk about - we have great difficulty to practice it because to practice a common good we have to give up something a bit. We have to give up something so that the common good is first or it

is brought forward but today we are convinced that it's me first, second, third and so on so the common good becomes very difficult.”

Alain observes how the concept of the common good does resonate with people, at least at an emotional level. Conceptually it's fantastic but in reality how well do we understand what it takes to live together? An example he uses is the hugely topical environmental subject.

“We think that technology and external circumstances are going to resolve it. Not many stop to think, ‘well maybe we should live differently. We should consume less.’ That implies that we have to give up something for the common good, in this case the good of the planet therefore the good of humanity. Until we have overcome this idea that while we are the center of our universe we are only a part of the universe, that the universe is one or at least is interconnected or is governed by the concepts of solidarity, to live in a society which is more just, more serene, fairer is going to be very difficult. For me as a philosopher it's a dimension that is important and fundamental, we cannot disconnect self-knowledge with our civic responsibility and being part of the world.”

As a non-profit worldwide organisation New Acropolis embodies this emphasis of a social philosophy that brings about individual and collective development through the renewal and cultivation of timeless values. This is a philosophy to be practiced, a philosophy for living. Alain has dedicated his life to it, three decades here in Ireland and the next generation of philosophers will continue for the decades to come.

Aidan Murphy



Pallas and the Centaur

Pallas and the Centaur is a painting by the Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli. It was probably depicted in 1482 and now hangs in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Tuscany.

Interestingly, this painting has been proposed as a companion piece to another classic work from Botticelli, his *Primavera*. They were displayed for many years side by side in a city palace in Florence.

Both paintings were commissioned by Lorenzo de Medici, also known as *il Magnifico* - the magnificent - as gifts on occasion of his cousin's marriage in 1482. Lorenzo was a Florentine patron, political leader and grandson of Cosimo de Medici, the founder of the Neoplatonic Academy of Careggi (near Florence), led by the philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499).

What an intense and delightful experience it must have been to gaze at both paintings alongside each other...To immerse oneself in the gentleness and sweetness emanating from the faces of the feminine characters depicted in both artworks, while in the same breath noticing a striking difference: the compositions in the background.

Sometimes Botticelli would put great amounts of attention to the background to add layers of symbolism along with the focus of the artwork, as seen in the *Primavera*, for example. In the case of *Pallas and the Centaur*, however, the setting is stark: relatively empty and very dark. Why did Botticelli keep it so simple on this occasion? Perhaps he wanted us to focus almost exclusively on the two figures in the foreground.

Pallas and the Centaur shows a tall and beautiful woman grabbing a centaur by the hair. The woman has been identified as the Greek deity Athena, specifically by her epithet of Pallas, which identifies her as a goddess of wisdom. The olive branches that cover her clothing also reinforce that interpretation. She wears a dress decorated with the three-ring insignia of the Medici family.

Athena is the multifaceted goddess of wisdom, courage, inspiration, civilization, law and justice, mathematics, strength, war strategy, the arts and crafts. She is known for her calm temperament. Portrayed as a shrewd companion and patron

goddess of heroic endeavour, she is noted to have fought for justice, rejecting any battle that lacked purpose. How much this attitude could help us fight for Truth!

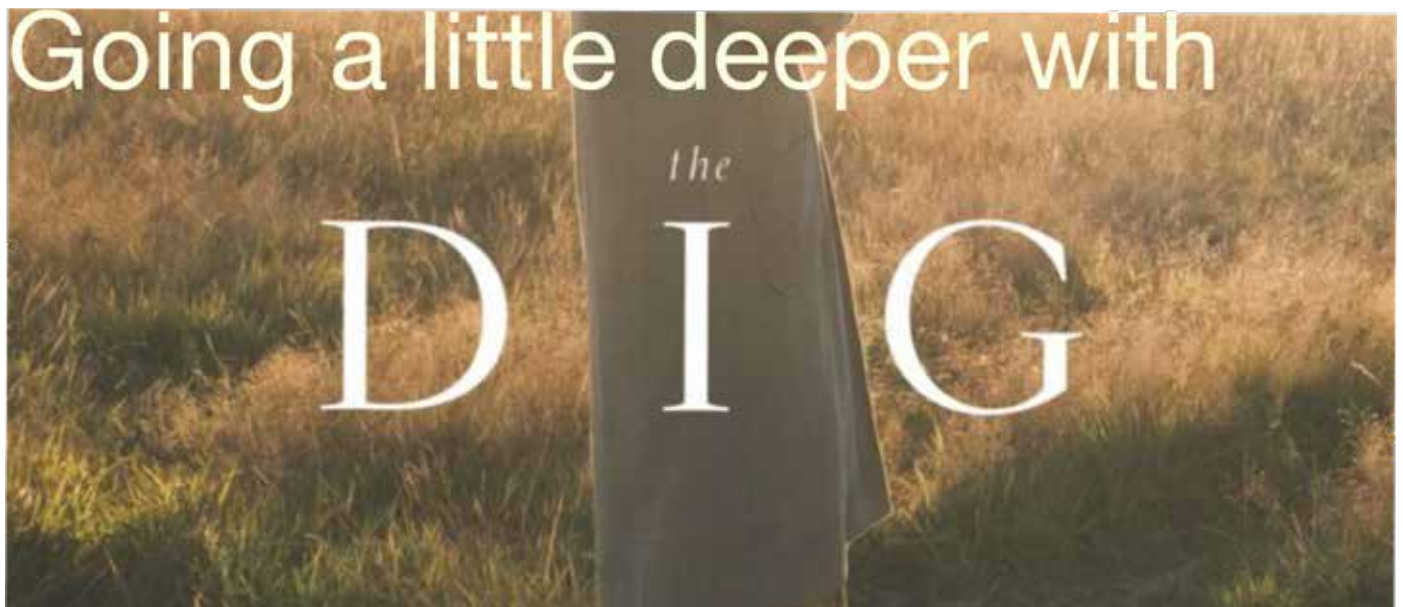
Art historians have also suggested that the woman could represent an Amazon warrior named Camilla. The Roman poet Virgil wrote about Camilla in the *Aeneid*, and described her as chaste, pure, and powerful. It's possible that Botticelli painted this woman to be both figures simultaneously - mixing Greek and Roman themes together was something he did often.

In Classical mythology centaurs were not evil creatures. They were, however, subject to their own desires. They got drunk and ruined parties, and were often overcome by lust, passion, or greed. Combining man and beast, they symbolise the feral instincts of humanity and therefore, the work is to be understood as an allegory to virtues that act as a brake on a bad-tempered, passionate temperament.

Athena Pallas, on the other hand, was the goddess of wisdom and a symbol of rational logic. She was also the patron goddess of Athens, the city of Socrates and Aristotle. With that in mind, this ceases to be a painting about mythology and becomes a tale of morality. This is the story of virtue conquering passions.

In a time where the Catholic church wielded immense power and influence, Botticelli's purpose wasn't to convince people to worship Athena; it was to communicate how reason, wisdom and ethics are stronger than passion, lust, and greed. The use of Classical mythology and Classical philosophy to reinforce a morality both pagan and Christian was a very Renaissance thing to do, and Botticelli did it better than nearly anyone. This mythical scene was to be the last of his Medicean period, moving on from this point to more religious-based work which continued until the end of his career.

Lilian Salaber



A recent online movie night organised for members of our school featured the 2021 Netflix movie *The Dig* and three of our members were inspired to write a little piece on it to share the potential power of cinema to bring about ideas, to inspire, to move us and to bring about a deeper discussion about the fundamental things in life. Here we have something from Giulia, Tim and Aidan to give some different perspectives on what makes *The Dig* a special movie.

Giulia

How can movies be an inspiration for us, and how can this inspiration stay with us after the credits roll? We always have the choice of what to do with our experiences, the choice of extracting meaning even when looking at a fictitious story played out in front of our eyes, in a time and space that is both real and imaginary.

The poetics of film-making and story-telling offers yet another possibility of education in our continuous efforts of knowing ourselves, others and the world around us. The interweaving of acting, music, photography, and silences in movies have the potential of stirring in us sentiments, reflections, dialogues within ourselves and with others on elements that possibly touch our lives, even when the story told take place in far distant places, in epochs long gone, and by masks never worn before.

When the pandemic struck us over a year and half ago we may well have had more time to consume more movies, but how much have we absorbed of the ideas, the beauty, the inspiring messages being shared in cinema's greatest offerings? To be entertained is one thing, and the philosopher does not deny the sweetness of such experiences, but our questions also lie deeper and we should always dig a little deeper as a result.

A recommendation then would be *The Dig*, a period drama released in January 2021, and directed by Simon Stone. It reimagines the events of the 1939 excavation of Sutton Hoo, one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the last century in Western Europe. The movie, starring Carey Mulligan and Ralph Fiennes - among others - is a very well-acted and gently told story about the relationship of humanity's past with our actions,

emotions and understanding of life. It's a movie about archaeology but also perseverance, courage, dignity, friendship and much more.

Certain movies, certain stories, can foster our ability to look at the kaleidoscopic expressions of life in time and space, and extract something more unique, something that touches the timeless and the spaceless. Even in a world of pandemic, where cinemas have been so long closed and online streaming drowns us in so much content (often not of great depth) we should never forget that our inner projectors can always shed light on the black screens of our imagination. If we embrace the opportunity, we can learn from everything and every experience, such is applying philosophy, even to realms of the silver screen.





Carrie Mulligan and Ralph Fiennes as Edith Pretty and Basil Brown. (Netflix 2021 - All rights reserved)

Tim

The Dig is set in England in 1939, just before the Second World War. The story is based on true events which occurred when a wealthy widow and landowner, Edith Pretty, hired a local 'amateur' archaeologist, Basil Brown, to excavate and explore earth mounds on her lands at Sutton Hoo, Norfolk. Basil unearthed a 7th century burial site containing a 27 metre long Anglo Saxon ship, and other treasures. The find was one of the most important in European archaeology, and proved that despite their warlike reputation, the Anglo Saxons clearly had beautiful art and culture.

The Dig is a charming, gentle, and intelligent story which explores time, loss and yearning. The central characters are Basil and Edith. Though coming from different social classes, they are kindred spirits, sharing a bond, a passion to find the truth of what, if anything, lay beneath the mounds at Sutton Hoo. Stoic qualities of courage, sense of purpose, determination, and acceptance shine through in the actors' performances.

The storytelling is understated. Typical of the period, much remains unsaid, especially between Edith and Basil. The film explores the passage of time, the importance of history, and our connectedness with those who came before us. Referring to this concept, Basil says "it speaks, the past".

With stellar performances by Carey Mulligan as Edith and Ralph Fiennes as Basil, *The Dig* is highly recommended.

Aidan

Reminiscent of classic Merchant Ivory films like *The Remains of the Day*, *The Dig* harkens back to a subtle form of cinematic storytelling largely lacking today. The somewhat subdued characterisations play out beautifully through the masterful performances, the pace is measured and thoughtful, the themes are at once broad in their universality yet immediate in their humanity.

The importance of history is one of the core concepts, the link with the past as a means of understanding where we come from, while at the same time the events occur on the cusp of history in the making with WWII looming on the horizon. The dialogues play out in deep, reflective scenes illustrating the characters coming to terms with the scope of history, their own mortality, legacy and even the expanse of the stars, an unknown terrain yet to be discovered.

On paper it's a simple tale of kindred spirits encountering each other in the context of an incredible archaeological find but *The Dig* goes deeper and through the magic of cinema unearths an expansive yet intimate journey which resonates with the innate quest of the human being to connect with the mysteries of time, life and that which lies beyond.



Vivaldi's Summer Vacation

An uplifting piece to elevate us to the heights of summer's intensity

Vivaldi's best known work is a set of violin concertos entitled *The Four Seasons*. This piece is composed of four concertos, first introduced in 1725. Each concerto represents one season of the year. Vivaldi's masterpiece, the concertos were influenced by a set of four sonnets. These sonnets may have been written by the composer or by a colleague. They were crafted to capture the essence of summer, winter, autumn and spring.

A typical concerto consists of three movements, a slow middle movement contrasting the lively first and third. Each season – sonnet – can be divided into three sections, each corresponding to a movement. Antonio Vivaldi included a series of poems describing each season's events, below is the second sonnet, *Summer*.

To maintain a compelling composition, each section's three movements are organized into a tempo pattern of at first not very fast, then slow; fast and finally fast. These are known as Allegro non molto (not extremely quick), Adagio; Presto and Presto respectively.

This is what you should listen out for in the music:

Violins slowly sets the scene, the placid sound of the birds, the sense of languishing in the summer heat.





The tempo picks up as the gentle western breeze is overtaken by the harsh north wind. It doesn't build too much however before slowing down again, reflecting the mood of the shepherd boy, quick stabs of the violin capturing his sobs as he anticipates the coming storm. The rest of the movement is mostly slow and sombre, punctuated with bursts of energy.

The second movement also starts slow, building the tension with periodic explosions from the violins. These are the fears of the shepherd boy, the thunder and lightning and swarms of hornets he imagines are to come.

The final (and most famous) movement sees his fears realised. The heavens churn and hailstones fall so hard they cut the tops off the corn. Vivaldi injects a tremendous energy into the Presto movement as the violins are ignited in the relentless, humbling and beautiful fury of a summer storm.

Vivaldi applies a rhythm that includes order and method. Without that rhythm all falls apart. Everything is very structured. In an orchestra it has to be a proportionate balance between the instruments intervening as part of a dynamic whole. There is movement in nature, there are seasons, time of day, night and day.

There are sound movements, musical and dancing rhythms, poetic rhythms, when we speak we apply rhythm, there is a dynamic. Rhythm is an internal law of nature in every aspect of life.

Vivaldi teaches us through his concertos to never lose the rhythm, there is acceleration and deceleration, there is levity and intensity, there is activity and there is rest but nothing in nature ever completely stops.

Laura Lorincz

Summer

(Concerto No. 2 in G Minor)

I. Allegro non molto--

Under the heat of the burning
summer sun,
Languish man and flock; the pine is
parched.
The cuckoo finds its voice, and
suddenly,
The turtledove and goldfinch sing.
A gentle breeze blows,
But suddenly, the north wind appears.
The shepherd weeps because,
overhead,
Lies the fierce storm, and his destiny.

II. Adagio; Presto--

His tired limbs are deprived of rest
By his fear of lightning and fierce
thunder,
And by furious swarms of flies and
hornets.

III. Presto--

Alas, how just are his fears,
Thunder and lightning fill the
Heavens, and the hail
Slices the tops of the corn and other
grains.

Link to view

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g65oWFMSoK0>

Mari Samuelson: Vivaldi - "Summer"
from Four Seasons

Timer codes:
0:08 I. Allegro non molto
6:04 II. Adagio; Presto
8:10 III. Presto

Rambling

Rambling this deserted ravine. Underfoot, bohreen,
Formed over generations, a limestone grass patched pathway
Meandering, purposefully parallel,
With the stream filled gorge,
Water gently cascades seawards.
Refreshing foot spa.

Opposite bank, immediately, pine forested, tightly grouped
Appropriate combination, virgin, mature evergreen,
Savouring the fragrance.
Inhale, hold, exhale, focused.

Beyond the treetops, a whale shaped mountain.
Snout like, gradually ascending, from the vortex
Into a long plateaued, tree covered jewel.

Enveloping all, pacific blue sky,
Enriched by candyfloss-like cumulus clouds ever transforming,
In constant motion.

Pyramidal shaped, snow-capped, rock faced mountains.
Form the left side of the valley, descend steeply
Where elephant sized, orange coloured lichen covered granite boulders
rest.

David Murtagh

Taste of summer

Healthy smoothie recipes



Kale and pineapple

- 1 handful of kale leaves
- 1 cup of frozen pineapple slices
- 350ml water, chilled
- 1 tsp flaxseed
- 1 tsp Spirulina powder
- 2 tbs honey, optional



Banana and mango

- 1 banana
- 1 cup of frozen mangoes
- 350ml almond milk, chilled
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp chia seeds
- 1 tbs oatmeal
- 1 tbs honey, optional

Beetroot, carrot and orange

- 1 carrot, chopped
- the juice of 5 oranges
- 1 beetroot, chopped
- 1 tbs agave syrup, optional

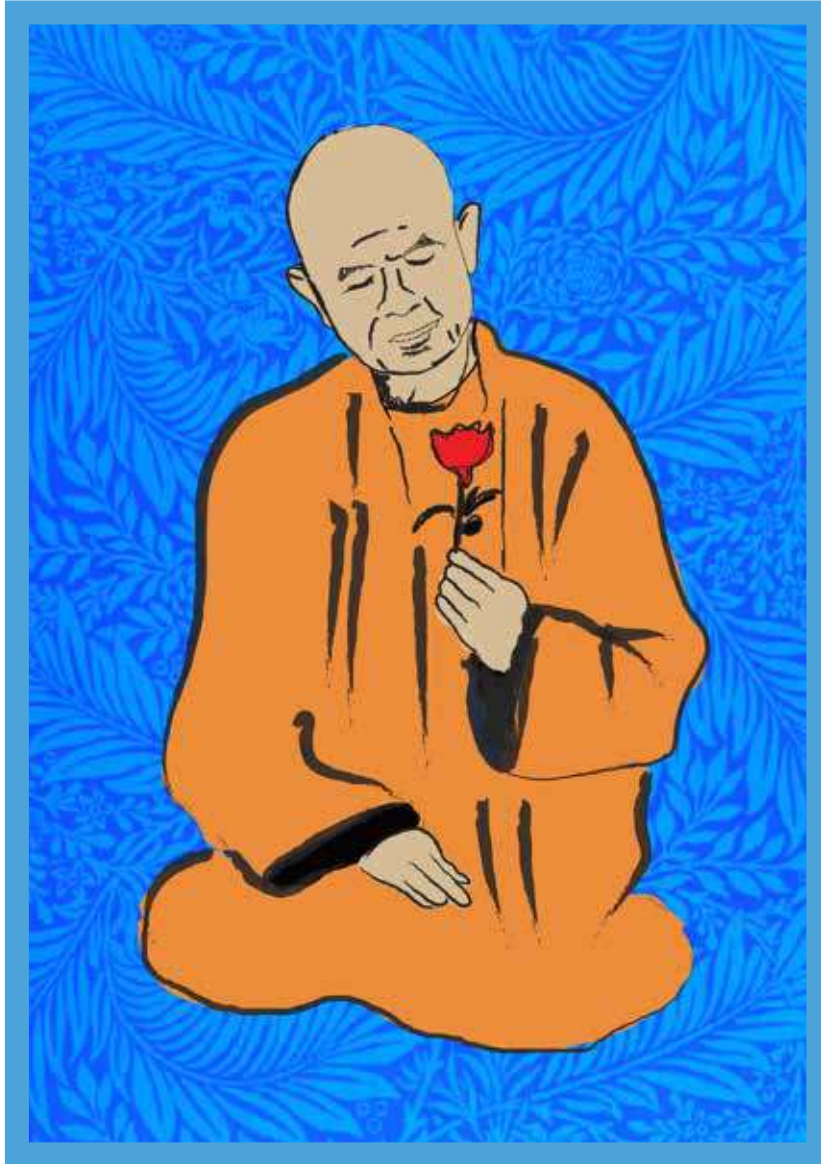


Instructions

- 1 Blend all the ingredients in a blender for about 3 minutes on the highest setting.
- 2 For the kale and pineapple and beetroot smoothies, use a sieve to pour the juice into a large glass.
- 3 Use the back of a spoon to press the pulp into the sieve to extract as much juice as possible.
- 4 Serve chilled with ice.

Daniela Baumgarten

Only ever now Thich Nhat Hanh



Nhat Hanh recounts a story that Tolstoy had told about a king who tries to find the answer to three questions: What is the best time to do each thing? Who are the most important people to work with? What is the most important thing to do at all times?

The questions might be those of any person leading a busy life and striving to achieve things, but the answers revealed by the story are not exactly what everyone would like to hear: the most important time is now; the most important person is always the one you are with; the most important pursuit is making the person standing at your side happy.

You should not think about some larger service for humanity, but only how you can help now, where you are, Nhat Hanh says. If you cannot serve those around you and make them happy, you are not going to make the world at large a better place.



Philosophy Culture Volunteering



Philosophy

To be a philosopher is a way of life which is committed to the best aspirations of humanity.

Philosophy, when it is practical, is educational.

It helps us to know ourselves and to improve ourselves.

Culture

The practice of human values is the basis for a model of active and participative Culture, which brings out the qualities of each person, broadens the horizons of the mind and opens the human being up to all the expressions of the spirit.



Volunteering

Volunteering is the natural expression of a spirit of union with life and humanity, which manifests in the practice of values such as unselfishness, and a commitment to strive for the common good.

It is by practicing the universal values of philosophy that we can deeply transform ourselves and turn our ideas into action.

The practice of philosophy develops self-confidence, moral strength and resilience to face the difficulties and crises of life. It allows us to become an actor of change in our lives and around us.

Our introductory course in practical philosophy offers a series of theoretical and practical classes to progress in self-knowledge, to practice taking advantage of every circumstance in life without forgetting to develop solidarity with others.

For more on our courses, public talks and activities you can contact us:

Email: info@acropolis.ie

Phone: (01) 496 8310

Web: www.acropolis.ie

Facebook: [NewAcropolisIreland](https://www.facebook.com/NewAcropolisIreland)

