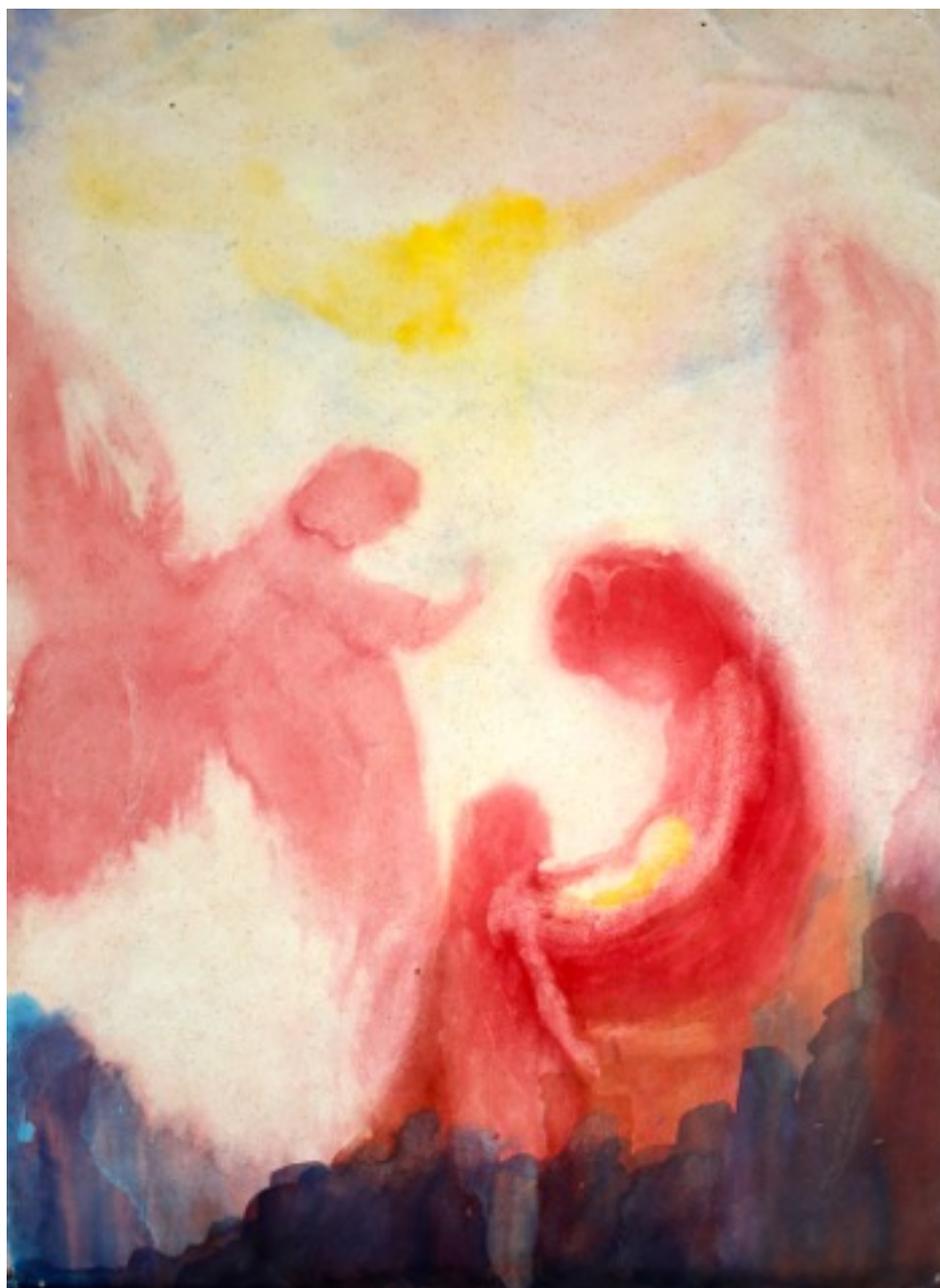


The Anthroposophic Art of Ernesto Genoni, *Goetheanum*, 1924



John Paull

The images 1-16 were first exhibited at the exhibition,

Angels of the First Class:

The Anthroposophic Art of Ernesto Genoni, Goetheanum, 1924

held at:

VITAL YEARS CONFERENCE 2016 – CRADLE OF A HEALTHY LIFE

Date: Jul 5 2016 - Jul 9 2016

Venue: Tarremah Steiner School, Hobart, Tasmania

Cover image: Image 1. Angels of the Cradle

“In painting, too, Dr Steiner showed the way to a new ideal. He trained his pupils to experience the inner life of colour - out of the language of colours themselves - to give birth to form, without ever drawing in the forms beforehand. This was a difficult ideal to fulfil and it required the development of a new technique. But in the course of years a considerable number of artists, each in his individual way, have produced beautiful works in this direction. Looking at some of these pictures, whether of human forms and groups, or sceneries of Nature, or more purely spiritual Imaginations, one experiences a kind of liberation; one feels one never realised before what the pure world of colour can convey. It is as though a new world were being opened” George Adams Kaufmann, 1933, p.46.

Journal of Organics

INTERNATIONAL, OPEN ACCESS, PEER REVIEWED, FREE

A Special Issue devoted to an account of the Anthroposophic art of Ernesto Genoni, Australia's pioneer of biodynamic and organic farming.

Volume 3 Number 2, September 2016

jOrganics.org

ISSN 2204-1060 eISSN 2204-1532



The Anthroposophic Art of Ernesto Genoni, Goetheanum, 1924



John Paull

School of Land & Food, University of Tasmania
j.paull@utas.edu.au
john.paull@mail.com

Abstract

Ernesto Genoni (1885-1975) was a pioneer of biodynamic and organic farming in Australia. He was the first Australian member of Rudolf Steiner's Experimental Circle of Anthroposophic Farmers & Gardeners (joining in 1928). Others in Ernesto's set joined the Experimental Circle, including his eldest brother, Emilio (in 1930), Ruby Macpherson (in 1935), and her niece, Ileen Macpherson (in 1936). Ernesto and Ileen founded and farmed Australia's original 'Demeter Farm' (from 1935). However biodynamic and organic farming was but one aspect of Ernesto's life.

Ernesto trained for five years in classical art at the prestigious Brera Academy of Fine Art in Milan (Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera). Ernesto spent the year 1924 at Dornach, Switzerland, the headquarters of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy movement, where he experimented with painting "in the anthroposophic way". The works presented here and in the exhibition, *Angels of the First Class*, are believed to be those works. Eleven images (image 1 and images 5 through 14) were recently revealed stored in a folder in a private collection along with Ernesto's personal poster of the first Goetheanum (image 4). Images 15 and 16 are from two other private collections and are included here (and in the exhibition) because, by size, content, and style, they appear to be part of Ernesto's suite of Anthroposophic paintings of 1924.

A century ago, Ernesto joined the AIF in Western Australia and served as a stretcher bearer on the killing fields of the Western Front in 1916, in the battles of the Somme and Pozières. From the battlefield, he was conscripted into the Italian Army, and he was eventually demobilised in Italy in 1919.

In 1923, Ernesto was still in Italy. From Milan, he wrote to Rudolf Steiner offering his labour for advancing the Anthroposophy project at Dornach. Ernesto arrived there early in 1924 and successfully applied to Dr Steiner for acceptance into the First Class (Erste Klasse der Freien Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft). The First Class was Steiner's new course of instruction in Spiritual Science for Anthroposophists who were established in their practice. Steiner held these classes from 15 February through to 20 September of 1924.

In 1926, Ernesto migrated to Australia (after two previous visits) with the intention of exhibiting his art - most probably his classical style oil paintings - but he was thwarted in this plan by the prevailing Depression.

In Australia, Ernesto co-founded the Michael Group in Melbourne (Anthroposophy meetings beginning in 1928) for the study of Steiner's works. He taught the First Class in Melbourne and Adelaide.

The works presented here were first exhibited as *Angels of the First Class: The Anthroposophic Art of Ernesto Genoni, Goetheanum, 1924*, held at the Vital Years Conference 2016, Hobart, Tasmania in July 2016. It is believed to be the first exhibition of art works by Ernesto Genoni.

Keywords: Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophy, Dornach, Switzerland, First Class, School of Spiritual Science, Brera Academy, Milan, Italy, Australia, Michael Group, Melbourne, Victoria, Adelaide, South Australia, Western Australia, Experimental Circle of Anthroposophic Farmers and Gardeners, Ileen Macpherson, Demeter Biological Farm, biodynamic agriculture.

L'Arte Antroposofica di Ernesto Genoni, Goetheanum 1924

John Paull

School of Land & Food, University of Tasmania
j.paull@utas.edu.au
john.paull@mail.com

Tradotto da Raffaella Podreider, Milano

Estratto

Ernesto Genoni (1885-1975) fu un pioniere della biodinamica e dell'agricoltura organica in Australia. Egli è stato il primo membro australiano del Circolo Sperimentale Coltivatori e Giardinieri Antroposofi di Rudolf Steiner (nel 1928). Altre persone dell'ambiente di Ernesto si unirono al Circolo Sperimentale, incluso suo fratello maggiore Emilio (1930), Ruby Macpherson (1935), e sua nipote, Ileen Macpherson (1936). Ernesto e Ileen costituirono la prima fattoria australiana col sistema "Demeter" (dal 1935). In ogni caso occuparsi di biodinamica e di coltivazione organica fu solo uno degli aspetti della vita di Ernesto.

Ernesto aveva studiato arte classica alla prestigiosa Accademia delle Belle Arti di Brera a Milano in Italia. Ernesto aveva trascorso il 1924 in Svizzera a Dornach, il Quartier Generale del Movimento Antroposofico di Rudolf Steiner, dove egli sperimentò la pittura in senso antroposofico.

I lavori presentati qui e nella mostra "Angeli della Prima Classe" sono ritenuti i lavori di quel periodo. 11 immagini (immagine 1 e immagini da 5 a 14) sono state recentemente recuperate contenute in una cartelletta in una collezione privata assieme ad un poster personale di Ernesto che rappresenta il primo Goetheanum (immagine 4). Le immagini 15 e 16 provengono da altre due collezioni private sono state incluse qui e nella mostra poiché, per misure, contenuto e stile esse sembrano appartenere al gruppo di dipinti antroposofici del 1924.

Un secolo fa Ernesto si arruolò nel AIF in Western Australia e servì come barelliere nei campi di battaglia sul Fronte Occidentale nel 1916, nelle battaglie della Somme e Pozières. Dai campi di battaglia egli fu coscritto nell'Esercito Italiano e fu in Italia che venne infine congedato nel 1919.

Nel 1923 Ernesto era ancora in Italia. Da Milano egli scrisse a Rudolf Steiner offrendo la sua collaborazione per portare avanti il progetto antroposofico a Dornach, dove arrivò all'inizio del 1924 e dove si rivolse, con successo, al Dottore per essere accettato nella "Prima Classe" (la Prima Classe della Libera Scuola Superiore di Studi di Conoscenze Spiritualì). La Prima Classe era il nuovo corso di Istruzione in Scienze Spiritualì per Antroposofi che furono realmente organizzati. Steiner tenne queste classi dal 15 febbraio fino al 20 settembre 1924.

Nel 1926 Ernesto emigrò in Australia (dopo due precedenti visite) con l'intenzione di esporre i suoi lavori artistici - con tutta probabilità i suoi quadri a olio in stile accademico, ma fu ostacolato in questo suo progetto dalla sempre crescente depressione.

In Australia Ernesto fu il co-fondatore del Gruppo Michael a Melbourne (nel 1928) per lo studio delle opere di Steiner. Egli tenne la "Classe" a Melbourne e a Adelaide.

I lavori esposti qui furono precedentemente esposti come "Angeli della Prima Classe: L'arte antroposofica di Ernesto Genoni Goetheanum 1924", che fu tenuto alla Vital Years Conference 2016, a Hobart in Tasmania nel luglio 2016, che si credeva fosse la prima esposizione delle opere artistiche di Ernesto Genoni.

Ernesto Genoni: Artist of the First Class

Ernesto Genoni (1885-1975) trained for five years (1906-1910) at Milan's leading school of art, the Brera Academy of Fine Art (Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera) (Paull, 2014a). He arrived in Australia in 1912 with his "paints and brushes" (Genoni, c.1970, p.2) and his Australian death certificate, more than six decades later, stated his occupation as "artist" (Births, Deaths & Marriages, 1975).

Art was a defining and enduring aspect of Ernesto's identity from his teenage years. And spiritualism was another. Art and spirit come together in the art works presented here. They are one outcome of Ernesto's study year of Anthroposophy in 1924 at Dornach, Switzerland, under the tutelage of Rudolf Steiner. Ernesto had trained in classical art at Brera and in this style he produced many fine works, including landscapes, portraits, and still lifes. The works presented here are a departure from the classical style of his training, and, as he states, "I was trying to paint in the anthroposophical way" (Genoni, c.1955, p.19).

The year 1924 was arguably the apogee of Rudolf Steiner's life's work, the year in which he established and taught the First Class, his Esoteric School, the year in which he delivered the Agriculture Course and thereby set in train the global development of biodynamic and organic agriculture, it was the first year of his newly founded General Anthroposophical Society, and it was the year in which he advanced the uptake of Waldorf education in the Anglosphere with his lecture series at Torquay, UK. It was the year that Ernesto spent at Dornach and he only departed after Steiner withdrew from public life due to ill health.

Ernesto had visited Australia, first in 1912, and again in 1914, just before the outbreak of the First World War. He joined the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1916. It was a surprising choice for a pacifist, a surprising choice for a brother with six brothers in Australia who had previously migrated to Australia to avoid conscription into the Italian Army to fight in Italy's nineteenth century wars of colonial expansion into Africa.

Ernesto served in 1916 in the AIF as a stretcher bearer in the Battle of the Somme, serving in France and Belgium, in the Battle of Pozières and at Ypres. By a remarkable feat of wartime bureaucratic administration he was conscripted off the battlefield into the Italian Army, a conscript army.

Ernesto refused to take the oath of allegiance in the Italian Army. There followed various stints in Italian military prisons, Ernesto was court martialled, and spent years serving as a medical orderly in the military hospital of Verona. He was finally demobbed and once again a free man - in Italy. In the process of discharge from the AIF, he had signed away his right to repatriation to Australia.

After his year at the Goetheanum, Ernesto again set out once again for Australia. This time it was more than a visit, it was a migration. He had visions of a studio, an exhibition of his own art and that of other Italian artists (Fig.1). For whatever the reasons, these plans never came to fruition, perhaps it was the Depression, the economic imperatives of the time, the country was suffering economically and, as with others on the land, his brothers had no immunity from these tough times, perhaps there was an issue of self confidence, perhaps it was a lack of entrepreneurial and marketing skills?



FARMER-ARTIST'S RETURN.
Mr. Ernest Genoni, who was farming in Western Australia for three years before the outbreak of the Great War, and who enlisted with the A.I.F. and went to France in 1916, returned to Western Australia on the Italian steamer *Citta di Genova* on Monday. After serving for about a year on the Western front, Mr. Genoni transferred to the Italian army, with which he served until the armistice. He then settled in Italy and took up his former profession as an artist. Just before Signor Mussolini became the Prime Minister of Italy some of the Fascists asked Genoni to paint a portrait of Mussolini, but the arrangements were not completed. After remaining in Western Australia for about a month, Mr. Genoni will proceed to Melbourne, where he will open a studio and hold an exhibition of his work. He has made arrangements for a group of Italian artists to forward samples of their work periodically for exhibition in Australian cities.

Fig. 1. The Australasian, 5 June 1926.

Ernesto went on to co-found the Michael Group, Melbourne's original Anthroposophical study group, with Anthroposophy meetings beginning in 1928. He was the first Australian member of Steiner's Experimental Circle of Anthroposophical Farmers and Gardeners (ECAFG), joining in 1928. Others in Ernesto's set joined the ECAFG, including his eldest brother, Emilio (in 1930), Ruby Macpherson (in 1935) and her niece, Ileen Macpherson (in 1936). In 1935, along with Ileen Macpherson, Ernesto established a biodynamic farm, Demeter Biological Farm, in Dandenong, Victoria, an Australian first (Paull, 2014a).

First Class: Rudolf Steiner's School of Spiritual Science

“... the world is beautiful and glorious and sublime and the endless glow of revelation in all that lives in leaf and blossom flows to our eyes with colour on colour from the visible universe; it is meant to remind us how the divine is manifested in what is lifeless in earthly matter, in the thousands upon thousands of crystalline and non-crystalline forms at our feet, in the water and air, in clouds and stars; it makes clearer to us that the animal life that frolics in the world and delights in its own existence and the warmth of its existence – that all that is divine-spiritual revelation ... Nature ... it glows to us as grand in tone and strength and warmth” (Rudolf Steiner, First Class, first lesson, February 1924a, p.7).

In December 1923, at the foundation meeting of the General Anthroposophical Society at Dornach, Switzerland, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) launched the School of Spiritual Science. Statute 5 stated that: “The General Anthroposophical Society looks upon the School of Spiritual Science at Dornach as the centre of its work. This School will be composed of three classes” (Steiner, 1923, p.18).

Statute 5 stated that “Members of the Society will - on their application - be admitted to the School after a period of membership ... to the First Class” (p.19). The Statute continued that “Applicants will be received into the Second Class or Third Class respectively, when those responsible at the Goetheanum deem them ripe for admission” (p.19).

Earlier that year, Steiner had declared that:

“... the aim of Anthroposophy is to regain insight into the forces of soul-and-spirit working through the entire universe, to show the connection between human thought and cosmic thought, between man's soul and other world-souls, between man's spirit and other world-spirits, and the creative, cosmic spirituality as a whole. In other words, the aim of Anthroposophy is to make it possible once again for men to be aware of the reality of the spirit in the universe” (Steiner, 1923b, p.2).

Steiner's intention was for three classes - we could characterise them as Spiritual Science 101, 201 and 301. As events played out, only the First Class, and not all of that, was delivered, before Steiner was overtaken by illness. Steiner delivered 19 lessons and 7 'recapitulation' lessons of the First Class. He withdrew from public life on 28 September 1924, retiring to his sick bed, and he died the following year.

Steiner advocated for “openness” in these final years of his life:

“... the consciousness of the present age ... demands full publicity for everything that happens ... It might please some to claim secrecy in this or that ... but ... a Society built in this way ... will find itself in opposition to the consciousness of the age ... and the most serious hindrances to its progress will arise” (Steiner, 1923a, p.11)

“... a good deal of what is now included in the Statutes is bound up with the complete openness of the Society ... This openness will have to be taken very, very seriously by us” (Steiner, 1923/1924, p.253).

Notwithstanding Steiner's declarations of 'openness' as a core principle for the re-founded Anthroposophical Society, the First Class has not been generally available - other than to designated readers of the First Class, of whom Ernesto Genoni was one.

The First Class lectures were published in German in 1977 and issued on written request. Then, in 1992 an edition in German was made generally available. A translation into English by George Adams (Kaufmann) was published in three volumes by the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain in c.1994. The translation of Frank Thomas Smith of 2015 appears to be the first edition generally available in English (see Steiner, 1924a, 1924b, 1924c; Smith, 2015).

1924: A Year of Anthroposophic Achievement

“We have been compelled to invite you to visit a heap of ruins. As you again climbed the Dornach hill your first glance fell upon the ruins of the Goetheanum which was burned down a year ago ... this heap of ruins is in many ways symptomatic of the general condition of world affairs today” (Steiner, 1923a, p.1).

For Rudolf Steiner, the year 1924 was a year of growth, of development and achievements, a year of dealing with catastrophes, and ultimately a year of withdrawal.

Goetheanum

Steiner took the destruction of the first Goetheanum - a quaint all-timber building - as a fresh challenge. He spoke of “the earliest possible execution” of a rebuild (Steiner, 1923/1924, p.210). A new Goetheanum “must be as resistant as possible to damage such as that which unfortunately destroyed the old Goetheanum ... this new Goetheanum is to be built in a relatively new material, concrete ... I have attempted to design in a style appropriate to concrete” (p.211). He added that “you cannot build in 1924 as you did in 1913 and 1914” (p.215).

In response to the fire, Steiner sought “to find for the forms a modern style that is appropriate for concrete as a building material” (Steiner, 1923/1924, p.249). The challenge was “to accept the material as the necessary given factor and then search for the forms out of this material” (p.249).

Only in his minds eye did Steiner ever see the second Goetheanum. Nevertheless, it was built to his vision and his 3-D model, the result is a remarkable building, an architectural masterpiece of the twentieth century, and, to this day, it retains a great feeling of modernness that Steiner sought almost a century ago.

First Class

Although its present status is debatable (Kiersch, 2006; Smith, 2015), the First Class presented by Steiner at the Goetheanum in 1924, was a reification of Steiner’s vision of an esoteric school for Anthroposophists, albeit a foreshortened version. The Second and Third Class were never delivered. Ernesto Genoni became a reader of the First Class for students of Anthroposophy in Australia, presenting readings in German and in English, in Melbourne and Adelaide.

Biodynamics

Rudolf Steiner travelled to Koberwitz (then Germany, now Kobierzyce, Poland) and delivered eight lectures on agriculture, The Agriculture Course (Steiner, 1924d; Paull, 2011a). Steiner called for an alternative to the chemical direction that agriculture was taking, he advocated working with nature, and he advocated a differentiated form of agriculture to be developed along the lines of what he called the ‘hints’ of his course.

At Koberwitz, Steiner established the Experimental Circle of Anthroposophic Farmers and Gardeners with the mission to put his ideas to the test, to develop farming protocols that worked, and to then widely disseminate this mode of agriculture. Ernesto Genoni was at Dornach, he did not attend the Agriculture Course, but later he did become a member of the Experimental Circle.

Biodynamic Agriculture grew out of Steiner’s call for a differentiated non-chemical agriculture. These ideas were taken up by Lord Northbourne in Britain and formulated as “organic farming” (Northbourne, 1940; Paull, 2011b, 2014b).

Lectures

“I for my part am always willing to speak whenever people want to listen to me” (Steiner 1923b, p,11). Steiner pursued a punishing schedule of lectures in 1924. He delivered 454 lectures that year. It was an annual tally exceeded only in 1923 (with 461 lectures) (Stewart, 2016). In 1924, Steiner lectured at Dornach, Basel, Bern, Zurich, Stuttgart, Prague, Paris, Koberwitz (Kobierzyce), Breslau (Wrocław), Oosterbeek, Arnhem, and, in his final visit to Britain, at Torquay and London.

Retreat

Rudolf Steiner suffered from illness throughout 1924. There are claims that he was poisoned at the Christmas Conference of 1923/24 (e.g. by Whitehead, 2010). In any event, Steiner struggled on throughout 1924 carrying the burden of illness. Eventually, Steiner retired from public life on 28 September 1924, permanently as it turned out, and he passed away on 30 March 1925 (Collison, 1925).

Rudolf Steiner: Philosopher of the New Age

“No one who wishes to join the Society is required to subscribe to a principle of any sort; no acknowledgement of belief, no scientific conviction, no artistic intention, will in any way be put forth dogmatically” (Steiner, 1923a, p.10).

Steiner was a champion of freedom and a master of the alternative, and in this alternative role he reframed a great many issues - including spiritualism, arts, agriculture, diet, education, medicine,- and he thereby ushered in the New Age movement. He spoke of “a question of alternative” (Steiner, 1923a, p.7).

Dogma

At a time when dogmas were the order of the day in established religions, Steiner urged the pursuit of the spiritual dimensions of life, but eschewed all dogma. He stated that: “A dogma in any sphere whatsoever shall be excluded from the General Anthroposophic Society” (Steiner, 1923a, p.20).

Maya, Illusion

Steiner freely adopted Sanskrit terms and concepts from Eastern religions and philosophies particularly Hindu and Buddhist terms. In the midst of the ruins of the first Goetheanum he spoke:

“... the outer world is Maya, illusion. And we shall find the right mood for this Christmas Conference, if we can arouse in our hearts the feeling that the heap of ruins before which we stand is Maya, is illusion; that much of what surrounds here is Maya, is illusion” (Steiner, 1923a, pp. 2-3).

Steiner spoke of the end of the period of *Kali Yuga*, and he made his own such Sanskrit terms as *mantra* and *karma*.

Arts

“What had been presented in the Mystery Plays in the form of drama was extended into the fields of architecture, sculpture and painting. To this was added Eurythmy ... performances” (Steiner, 1923b, pp. 13-14). Steiner spoke of the desire of some “to receive the anthroposophical impulse through the medium of the arts” (p.16). The Goetheanum building epitomises the newness of the arts thinking that Steiner espoused.

Education

Steiner was keen to foster schools implementing an alternative form of education, child-centric and age appropriate, that he had demonstrated at his original Waldorf School in Stuttgart. He devoted his Oxford Conference of 1922 to successfully championing to the Anglo-world the rationale and practicalities of Waldorf education and Steiner schools (Mackenzie, 1922; Paull, 2011d).

Agriculture

“Truly, the farm is a living organism” (Steiner, 1924, Lecture VIII p.7). “A farm is true to its essential nature, in the best sense of the word, if it is conceived as a kind of individual entity in itself - a self-contained individuality. Every farm should approximate to this condition ... whatever you need for agricultural production, you should try to possess it within the farm itself” (Steiner, 1924, lecture II, p.1).

These ideas were developed into biodynamic agriculture (Pfeiffer, 1938; Paull, 2011c) and eventually into organic agriculture (Northbourne, 1940; Paull, 2014b).

Medicine

Steiner stated boldly in 1920 that “... you will all agree that any confidence in the future among medical workers depends on the reform of the actual medical curriculum”. With Dr Ita Wegman, Steiner fostered the development of Anthroposophic medicine (e.g. Steiner & Wegman, 1938). There is still a large Ita Wegman Clinic at Arlesheim (close by to Dornach) and Anthroposophic doctors practice in many countries.

Vegetarianism

“In future, a great hymn of praise will be sung to vegetarianism, and people will tell one another, as if they were speaking of some ancient memory, that their ancestors used to eat meat” (Steiner, 1915).



Image 2: Ernesto Genoni, self portrait, oil.

“He was dark, with flashing eyes, hair swept back off his forehead and an erect exotic look. If his brothers were jovial, easy going and inclined to be portly, Ernesto was slender, serious, aesthetic and elegant. His voice was clipped, his sentences crisp and his manner refined. They called him ‘il filosofo’ the philosopher, but he was really an artist”

(Maria Triaca, 1985, p.116).



Image 3: Ernesto Genoni, 1916, London (Australian Imperial Force (AIF) uniform, 16th Battalion patch on left arm & SB (stretcher bearer) arm band).

Western Australia to the Somme, 1916:

“Every young man was then enlisting so I thought to enlist too ... I enlisted in order to serve in the medical corps ... Then we were sent to the Somme ... Pozieres ... The sergeant calls for volunteer stretcher bearers. I came forward ... the first vision of dead bodies. My inner trust of Christ as Lord even of the shells!”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1955, p.12-14).

“I dare say that in the long run a good many of those who did become stretcher-bearers ... did volunteer for it because they were that kind of man, who deep in their hearts preferred being killed to killing”

(Charles Bean, 1947, p.116).



Image 4. Ernesto's poster of the interior of the first Goetheanum.

Dornach, Switzerland, 1920

"I arrived in Dornach at the inauguration of the first Goetheanum. There Mrs Ferreri introduced me to Dr Steiner and I was received by him with great warmth. Unfortunately he was speaking in German which I did not know, but by his long handshake and smiling expression ... I could feel his sincere welcome"

(Ernesto Genoni c.1970, p.6).

"In 1920 ... I went to Dornach. What a strange impression I received from the first view of the Goetheanum building ... the meeting with the Doctor ... the bewildering impression of the interior of the Goetheanum. I could not enter in such saturated life of the spirit and after a few days I left ... In the following years it was a painful search to find my way in life"

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1955, p. 19).



Image 5. The Thinker.

Milan, c.1904:

“When I was eighteen ... I then commenced painting studies at the Milan technical school which was the beginning of a decided effort on my part to learn more of the art of drawing and painting. The first year was considered so successful by the teachers that the following year I could attend the Academy of Brera and did so for about five years. This entrance into the artistic life brought before me an ideal which gave wings to my spirit and I experienced what seemed to be a re-birth of my soul”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, pp.1-2).



Image 6. Flight of the Angel.

Verona, 1916:

“It turned out that I had to go into the Italian Army ... I protested against being sent into a fighting corps ... I was asked to swear allegiance to the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel, to which I said ‘No, I am not going to swear’ and asked why, I said ‘Because it is against my religious and moral principles’. In the evening I found myself in prison for very serious ‘military disobedience’. After a few weeks in prison I was summoned to the presence of the colonel who said to me - ‘You must have a very good saint in paradise looking after you’ to which I answered ‘Yes Sir’ ... I was sent to the Great Military Hospital of Verona ... and was assigned as a common orderly in one of the wards”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, p.5).



Image 7. The Blue Madonna.

Verona, c.1917:

“... the Great Military Hospital of Verona ... a letter came from my sister ... stating that there was a strong hope that Italy might make peace with Austria. I was reading the letter to my comrades but unfortunately an officer overheard this ... In consequence I was court-martialled as a defeatist ... I was imprisoned in the local prison ... I waited for 3 months in a fortress prison ... The Judge ... said that as I had already been in prison for three months I would now be let off ... my good Angel mentioned earlier was looking after me and I was kept in the military hospital [as a medical orderly] to the end of the war”

(Ernesto, Genoni, c.1970 , p.5-6).



Image 8. Eurythmy Trio.

Milan, c.1911

“I was then in the 21-28 cycle. One day, (so-called perchance) a book came into my hands in which I found expressed for the first time the idea of reincarnation and karma and I said to myself ‘But this makes sense in life’. I then came into contact with a spiritualist circle through which I heard mentioned for the first time the name of Rudolf Steiner. Then my search began into studies of the various oriental streams of spirituality. For several years I methodically meditated every morning on the Bhagavad-Gita, Buddhism and the gospels.

I wrote several letters to my brothers in Australia about my new orientation of thinking, whereupon my brother Angelo wrote to me saying ‘What you are writing to us is quite new - What about coming to Australia to tell us of all these things’. So, for that reason I decided to come to Australia and join my six brothers and three sisters in 1912. I took with me my paints and brushes”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, p.2).

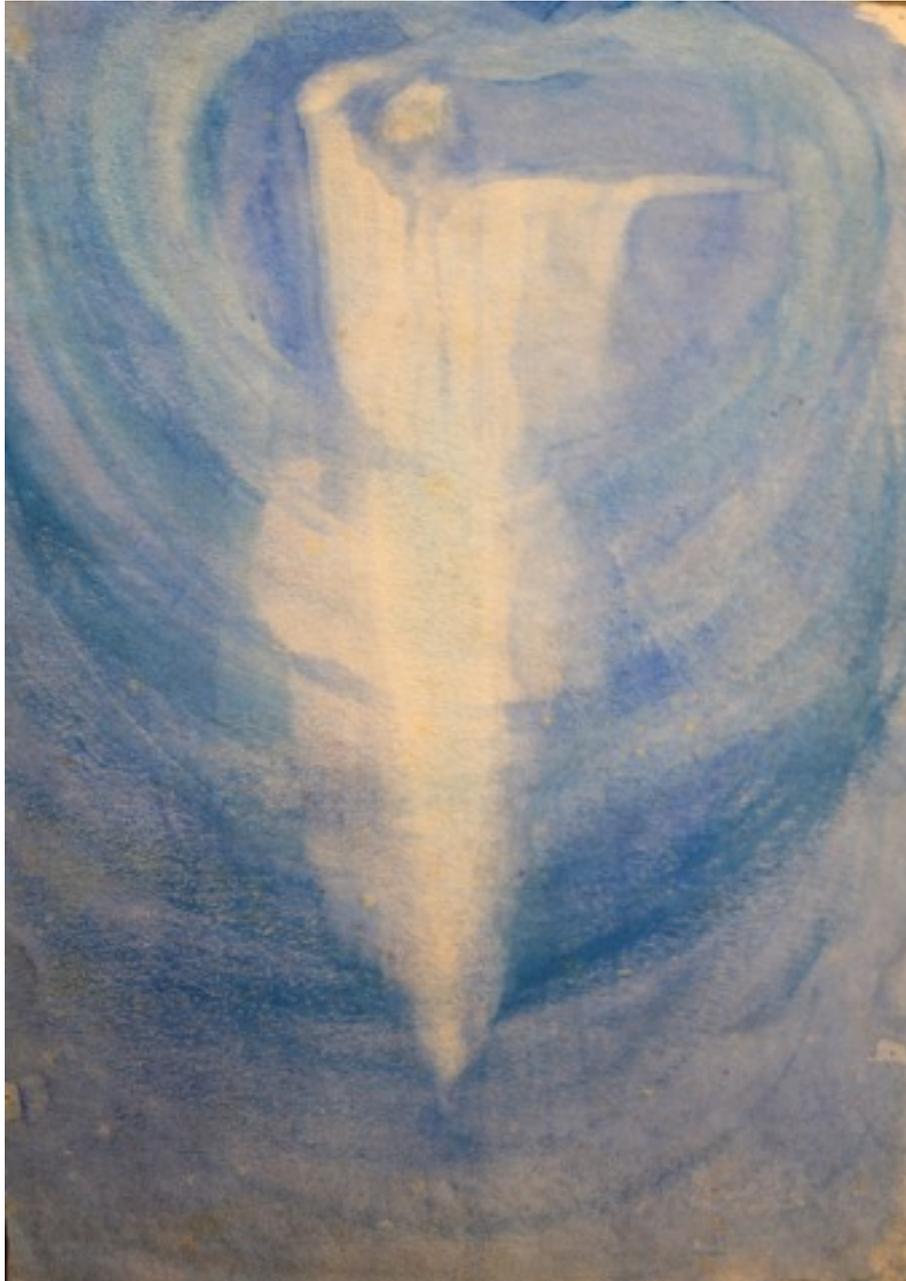


Image 9. Eurythmy Solo.

Dornach, 1924:

“My second visit to the Goetheanum was quite a different experience. I must mention that on this second visit I could speak to Dr Steiner in the French language. On the first visit I was unaware that Dr Steiner could speak. Unfortunately I was so inarticulate with embarrassment that he said several times: ‘What is it that you need from me?’ Eventually he gave me a meditation and he showed me the plasticine model of the second Goetheanum and said he was waiting for the approval of local authorities to commence building. He also gave me some good advice concerning the new impulse in Art, especially in the field of painting. The conversation was rather long”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, p.8).



Image 10. The Guiding Spirit.

Milan, c.1918:

“Rosa tells me of Anthroposophy ... Signorina Schwarz was inviting Rosa to an Anthroposophy reading in the afternoon. She could not go but asked me if I would like to go. So I went ... to the first Anthroposophy meeting. For nearly 18 months I went regularly to the weekly Anthroposophy readings. Meanwhile I took up again painting”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1955, p.18).



Image 11. The Golden Dawn.

Dornach, 1924:

“Dornach ... I was trying to paint in the anthroposophic way. Again at bottom I was not happy with my painting. I was admitted to the Class. My gradual understanding of the German language at the lectures ... In September of that year the Doctor became ill. I returned to Milan”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1955, pp.19-20).



Figure 12. Moonlight Lake.

Broome Hill to Milan, 1913:

“After I had been away from Italy about a year I had a great nostalgic impulse to go back to Italy and see my friends there. So in 1913 I went back to Milan. I took up my painting again but somehow it was the most painful period of my life ... I could not understand it then but of course there was a reason - this return to Italy was not in accordance with my karma, my karma being in Australia”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, p.3).



Image 13. Ethereal Figure.

Battlefield of the Somme, 1916:

“I was sent to France armed with a rifle and was soon in the trenches. On the eve of entering the trenches a sergeant suddenly yelled ‘Anyone want to be a stretcher bearer’ and I jumped at it. He said to me - ‘Be careful, you might get your head blown off’ and I answered ‘Aren’t we all prepared for that’. He said ‘No, not me’. The day after when I met on ‘no man’s land’ a party of stretcher bearers carrying the wounded, I heard ‘Are you Genoni?’, ‘Yes’ I replied ‘Who are you’, and I recognised him to be the sergeant who the day before said he was not prepared. I said to him ‘You are wounded. How badly are you hurt?’. He said ‘I was hit in the spine’. He was taken to the dressing station and I never saw him again”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, p.4).



Image 14. Blue Peak.

Milan to Melbourne, 1926:

“I continued the study of Anthroposophy ... and in 1926 I again had the urge to return to Australia. I was then 43 years of age. I came to Melbourne where eventually I met Mrs [Anne] Macky of the ‘New Conservatorium’ and together we started a little group in Hope Street, South Yarra. After two or three years it culminated in forming the Michael Group”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, p.8).



Image 15. Contemplation of Eternity.

Melbourne, 1951:

“Then in 1951, Frau Von Nagy came to Melbourne with the task given to her by the Vorstad of starting a group for the reading of the First Class. I was asked by Frau Von Nagy and Mrs [Ruby] Macpherson (who was then leader of the Michael Group) to take on the task of reading the lessons - in English and German”

(Ernesto Genoni, c.1970, p.9).



Image 16. The Rainbow Madonna.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the many individuals and organisations that have assisted in the research for this paper and exhibition, including but not limited to: Pam Martin, Kay Galletly, Margaret Garner, Margaret & Len Genoni, Dr Raffaella Podreider, Norberto Lenzi, Dr Robert Negri, Annita Sharpe, Walter Jefimenko, The Michael Centre, Peter Braithwaite, Archives of the Goetheanum (Dokumentation am Goetheanum Bibliothek Kunstsammlung Archiv), and Stephan Widmer, Rudolf Steiner Archive, Dornach.

Thank you to the **Ileen Macpherson Trust** for financial support for the exhibition ***Angels of the First Class: The Anthroposophic Art of Ernesto Genoni, Goetheanum, 1924***, first exhibited at the *Vital Years Conference 2016 – Cradle of a Healthy Life*, Jul 5 - Jul 9 2016, Tarremah Steiner School, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.

References

- Births, Deaths & Marriages. (1975). Third Schedule: Deaths in the State of Victoria, No. 3991/75; Ernesto Fermo Genoni, 11th February. Melbourne: Records of Births, Deaths & Marriages Victoria.
- Collison, H. (1925). Rudolf Steiner. X a.m. 30th March, 1925, R.I.P. Anthroposophical Movement, 2(13), 101.
- Genoni, E. (c.1955). Personal memoir, 26 pp., handwritten manuscript, school exercise book. Private collection.
- Genoni, E. (c.1970). Personal memoir, 9 pp., typewritten manuscript. Private collection.
- Kaufmann, G.A. (1933). The Anthroposophical Movement: Information for Enquirers. London, Anthroposophical Publishing Co.
- Kiersch, J. (2006). A History of the School of Spiritual Science: The First Class. Forest Row: Temple Lodge Publishing.
- Mackenzie, M. (1922). Spiritual Values in Education & Social Life (Conference programme; 8 pp. ed.). Oxford: Oxford Holiday Conference, August 15th to 29th.
- Northbourne, Lord. (1940). Look to the Land. London: Dent.
- Paull, J. (2011a). Attending the first organic agriculture course: Rudolf Steiner's Agriculture Course at Koberwitz, 1924. European Journal of Social Sciences, 21(1), 64-70.
- Paull, J. (2011b). The Betteshanger Summer School: Missing link between biodynamic agriculture and organic farming. Journal of Organic Systems, 6(2), 13-26.
- Paull, J. (2011c). Biodynamic Agriculture: The journey from Koberwitz to the World, 1924-1938. Journal of Organic Systems, 6(1), 27-41.
- Paull, J. (2011d). Rudolf Steiner and the Oxford Conference: The birth of Waldorf education in Britain. European Journal of Educational Studies, 3(1), 53-66.
- Paull, J. (2013). A history of the organic agriculture movement in Australia. In B. Mascitelli & A. Lobo (Eds.), Organics in the Global Food Chain (pp. 37-60). Ballarat: Connor Court Publishing.
- Paull, J. (2014a). Ernesto Genoni: Australia's pioneer of biodynamic agriculture. Journal of Organics, 1(1), 57-81.
- Paull, J. (2014b). Lord Northbourne, the man who invented organic farming, a biography. Journal of Organic Systems, 9(1), 31-53.
- Pfeiffer, E. (1938). Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening: Soil Fertility Renewal and Preservation (F. Heckel, Trans.). New York: Anthroposophic Press.
- Smith, F.T. (2015). Introduction, pp.3-5, in Steiner, R. Esoteric Lessons for the First Class of the Free School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum, Volume 3. (This edition published 2015, trans. Frank Thomas Smith). Cordoba: Southern Cross Review.
- Steiner, R. (1915). Outlooks for the future: Significant facts pertaining to the spiritual life of the middle of the XIXth century: 3 Lectures, October 31, November 1 & 7, Dornach.
- Steiner, R. (1920). Spiritual Science and Medicine, Lecture 1: 21 March, Dornach. www.rsarchive.org.
- Steiner, R. (1923a). Opening Lecture at the Foundation Meeting of the General Anthroposophical Society at Dornach, Switzerland on December 24, 1923. (Translated by Pat Erikson and published in English in 1943). New York: Anthroposophic Press Inc.
- Steiner, R. (1923b). New Thinking and New Willing (lecture given in Stuttgart, 6th February, typescript, translated by K. Wegener, Revised, Jan 1954 ed.): For Members of the Anthroposophical Society.
- Steiner, R. (1923/1924). The Christmas Conference for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society 1923/1924. (This edition published 1990, trans. Michael Wilson). New York: Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1924a). Esoteric Lessons for the First Class of the Free School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum, Volume 1. (This edition published 2015, trans. Frank Thomas Smith). Cordoba: Southern Cross Review.
- Steiner, R. (1924b). Esoteric Lessons for the First Class of the Free School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum, Volume 2. (This edition published 2015, trans. Frank Thomas Smith). Cordoba: Southern Cross Review.
- Steiner, R. (1924c). Esoteric Lessons for the First Class of the Free School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum, Volume 3. (This edition published 2015, trans. Frank Thomas Smith). Cordoba: Southern Cross Review.
- Steiner, R. (1924d). Agriculture Course ("Printed for private circulation only"; 1929, first English language edition; George Kaufmann Trans ed.). Dornach, Switzerland: Goetheanum.
- Steiner, R., & Wegman, I. (1938). Fundamentals of Therapy (G. Kaufmann, Trans.). New York: Anthroposophic Press.
- Stewart, J. (2016). Chronological listing of lectures. Fremont, MI: Rudolf Steiner Archive.
- The Australasian. (1926). Farmer-artist's return. The Australasian (Melbourne), 5 June, 47.
- Triaca, M. (1985). Amelia, A Long Journey. Melbourne: Greenhouse Publications.
- Whitehead, A. (2010). Rudolf Steiner: Journey of a Grail Knight Warrior. Blackheath, NSW: Golden Beetle Books.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided that the author/s and the Journal of Organics are credited. **CC BY-SA 4.0**