

Working with the Triptychon II

Gemma Priess and Rita Weber-Wied

*The Being that I choose to name 'human being'
Is endowed with deepest meaning that I first need to search to understand*

*The Being that I choose to name 'human being'
Is endowed with the greatest heights that I first have to reach to understand*

*The Being that I choose to name 'human being'
Is endowed with a vast expanse that I first have to fathom.*

Rudolf Steiner¹

Working with the Triptychon process was first created by Rinke Visser and is developing further and further into different variations since then. Both of us met this work several years ago and have already shared our personal experiences with it in the Christmas edition of this magazine.

In this previous article we characterized the work with the Triptychon as a journey through three 'spaces without space'. One could also call these three super-sensible spaces, not-sense-perceptible spaces.

As with all journeys there are various ways of how to travel through the Triptychon as well. There are those who value the landscape most; others are more aware of the sky, the light and the clouds; others still are most specifically aware of their own physical body, the rhythm in walking and moving, getting tired and exhausted...

We would like to introduce you in this article to a whole other way to walking the Triptychon. All these journeys have in common the fact that they lead us through the same three different 'spaces without space'.

1. The Threefold Path in the Spaces without Space

1.1. The path between the partners (space of encounter)

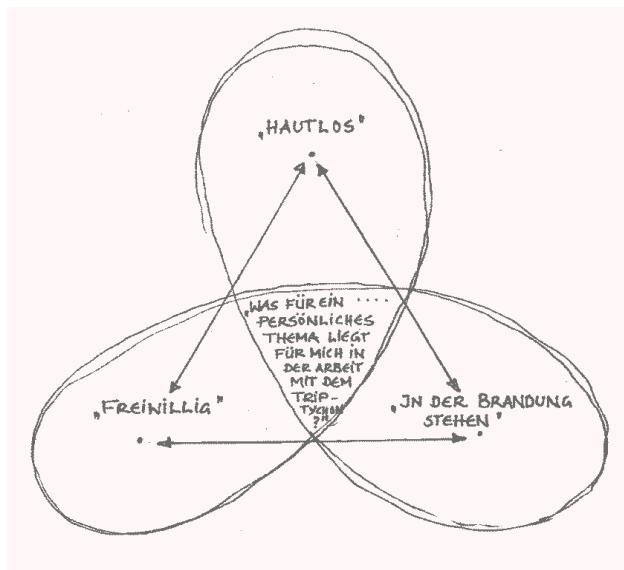
For the work with the Triptychon both, the client and the biography worker become partners on the path. The encounter space that is created offers support and protection on this journey. So long as they are connected in a living movement, the space is open and supports the encounter and their experiences will be rich.

¹ R. Steiner, GA 345, p.48

1.2. The path through the space between the images (connection between events)

Different from other methods familiar to us (for example the Destiny Learning developed by Coenrad van Houten), one does not work with one event that then becomes deepened, but with three life events from the start. The three events are in connection with each other because the client experiences these as belonging to the entry question. We could also say: these are the corner stone's marking a space in which the theme we work with actually lives.

In one Triptychon that we created together, Gemma asked: "Which personal theme lies at the heart of my work with the Triptychon?" The sketches of the three events that arose in connection to this question had the titles: "voluntarily", 'skinless' (without skin, bare skinned), "standing in the ebb and flow". By playing with the sequence of these events one can get a sense of what is meant by this second 'space' between the images.



Drawing 1: space between the pictures

Text of drawing: "voluntarily" – "bare skinned" – "standing in the ebb and flow"; middle: "which personal theme lies at the heart of my work with the Triptychon?"

The actual theme is not present in any of the titles, nor does it arise fully in any sequence, but it comes alive in the 'space between' the titles.

Would one choose to return now to the previously used comparison of the Triptychon to a journey or a hike, this particular parallel would connect to the landscape, through which the pair is walking.

1.3 The path between the biographical events and the life impulse (space of possibilities)

These three events have taken place in the life of the client. In this moment now lives in him/her a question that is connected with these events. It is this question that points into the future and that even gives a direction towards a desired path. Both the client and the facilitator now begin the journey together towards an aim that even they do not yet know, (the answer to the question that is).

We could also express it in the following way: The client and the facilitator are now moving through a space between the “I am the one I have become” and the “I am the one I could become”. We name this the ‘space of possibilities’.

Just like the connectedness between the two companions is like the landscape through which they hike, so is this image of the possibilities that arises, connected to the experiences on the hike. The outer landscape, the exchange between the two on the path and the inner experiences weave this particular excursion.

2. The Pathway through the Seven Realms

If we start from the assumption that in every event in a human life his or her incarnation impulse (pre-earthly intention) has taken on form (gestalt), then we can ask these ‘forms’ for input. If this is so, every life event can give us information and insight about the respective life impulse that has become form. Of course this will require a thorough attention towards the phenomena.

This kind of questioning, this kind of attention towards life events, leads the companions through pathways of non-physical spaces.

In our last article we introduced the possibility to observe events on four levels. First we observed the sketch of the event from a physical point of view. This is followed by the observation on the level of the life forces, then the astral and finally the level of the I.

Our described ‘spaces without space’ are non-physical and therefore what is required is more than just physical sense perceptible observation. In “How to attain Knowledge of Higher Worlds”², Rudolf Steiner gives a description of the Chakras as the organs of perception of the soul. Through these, perceptions may be gained of a soul and spiritual nature.

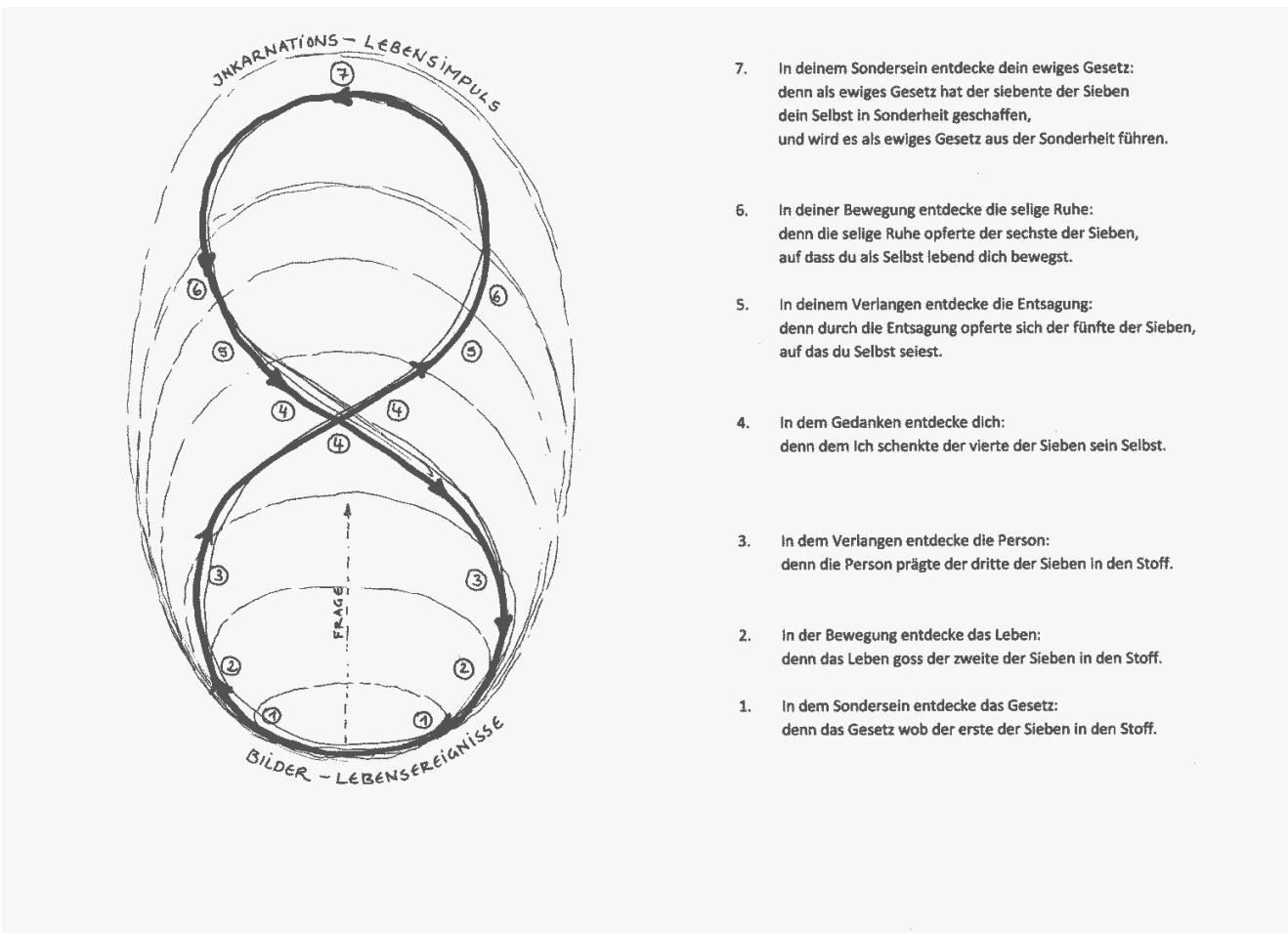
To take this up as a further incentive, what unfolds here are even more possibilities to journey through and into the space between the events of life and the actual impulse that stands behind an incarnation. It is possible then not just to observe four levels of reality, as we did in our earlier work, but altogether seven. So we could say now, we walk through seven ‘spaces without space’....

We can live into the quality of these seven spaces with the help of a meditation Rudolf Steiner gave 1903 to Clara Motzkus³.

In the following drawing this meditation is shown and corresponds to the path of the Triptychon (from bottom to top).

² R. Steiner, GA 10, p. 117 ff

³ R. Steiner, GA 268, p. 15



Drawing 2: The path through seven spaces without space.

Text of drawing:

1) In dem Sondersein entdecke das Gesetz:
denn das Gesetz wob der erste der Sieben in den Stoff.

2) In der Bewegung entdecke das Leben:
denn das Leben goss der zweite der Sieben in den Stoff.

3) In dem Verlangen entdecke die Person:
denn die Person prägte der dritte der Sieben in den Stoff.

4) In dem Gedanken entdecke Dich:
denn dem Ich schenkte der vierte der Sieben sein Selbst.

5) In deinem Verlangen entdecke die Entzagung:
denn durch die Entzagung opferte sich der fünfte der Sieben,
auf dass du selbst seiest.

6) In deiner Bewegung entdecke die selige Ruhe:
denn die selige Ruhe opferte der sechste der Sieben, auf dass du
als Selbst lebend dich bewegst.

7) In deinem Sondersein entdecke dein ewiges Gesetz:
Denn als ewiges Gesetz hat der siebente der Sieben dein Selbst in
Sonderheit geschaffen,
und wird es als ewiges Gesetz aus der Sonderheit führen.

7. In deinem Sondersein entdecke dein ewiges Gesetz:
denn als ewiges Gesetz hat der siebente der Sieben
dein Selbst in Sonderheit geschaffen,
und wird es als ewiges Gesetz aus der Sonderheit führen.

6. In deiner Bewegung entdecke die selige Ruhe:
denn die selige Ruhe opferte der sechste der Sieben,
auf dass du als Selbst lebend dich bewegst.

5. In deinem Verlangen entdecke die Entzagung:
denn durch die Entzagung opferte sich der fünfte der Sieben,
auf das du Selbst seiest.

4. In dem Gedanken entdecke dich:
denn dem Ich schenkte der vierte der Sieben sein Selbst.

3. In dem Verlangen entdecke die Person:
denn die Person prägte der dritte der Sieben in den Stoff.

2. In der Bewegung entdecke das Leben:
denn das Leben goss der zweite der Sieben in den Stoff.

1. In dem Sondersein entdecke das Gesetz:
denn das Gesetz wob der erste der Sieben in den Stoff.

1) Discover the archetype (lawfulness) in the individual expression:
It is this lawfulness the first of the seven wove into the substance.

2) Discover Life in Movement:
It is this life force the second of the seven poured into the substance.

3) Discover personhood in desire:
It is the seed of the human being the third of the seven impressed into substance.

4) In thought discover the Self
It is the I the fourth of the seven endowed upon the Self.

5) In your desire discover sacrifice:
It is through sacrifice the fifth of the seven let go so you may come into being.

6) In your movement discover holy calm:
It is in the sacrifice by the sixth of the seven of this holy calm that you yourself may live and move as an enlivened being.

7) In your individual being discover the archetypal being:
For as eternal lawfulness the seventh of the seven has created your Self in its separate existence and will also lead it from this separation back to the (eternal) archetype.

3. A Journey through Seven Spaces without Space

So, how would such a journey through seven spaces look like? In an attempt to describe this we face two difficulties: as already mentioned earlier on, every Triptychon happens between two specific human beings and is therefore unique and poses an almost impossible task to make general statements.

On the other hand, and this is the second difficulty, if we describe a specific journey, what unfolds and is meaningful for those on the journey, easily sounds like theoretical and ‘dead’ generalizations. They need to be brought to life again by the readers.

What can be described, and this we will now proceed to do, are the spaces we traverse and the inner activities that one needs to perform on this journey.

3.1 First ‘space without space’

To develop a feeling for the quality of the first space, it is good to call on an experience one can have before falling asleep. The body lies heavy on the bed, the breath slows down and is deeper, and the eye lids close. The muscle tension eases, the mouth opens and one can have a feeling of the body weight sinking. Sometimes it is possible to feel the soul disconnecting from the physicality and this can cause fear. The fear comes from a sense of loosing oneself, of dissolving completely.

In this first space the theme is one of our earthly security or insecurity. Of solid or shifting ground, the security the earth gives us and the fear we can have around giving up this feeling of security. The three life events we have chosen to begin with can give us ways to find insight into our specific themes in regards to security and trust.

To return again to our picture of the hike, we can say that this first step confronts us with the dangers of the path, to become aware of our specific fears on it and to face them. To do this gives us the tools and equips us with knowledge where to be cautious and what to watch for.

3.2 Second ‘space without space’

Experiences of weightlessness can prepare us for the second step. Also, swimming in warm water for example can give the experience of how the body is one with the water, weightless and carried by the water. Another experience is the sensing of our breath: deep breathing in relaxation, short breath during physical activity or shallow breathing when we are anxious. A poem by J.W. Goethe ‘Song of the spirits over the water’ can give us much insight into the qualities of the second space. This is the realm of life, its movement and dynamic.

To observe our three events from the perspective of this realm requires us to observe outer and inner movements that have taken place. For example, the movement gestalt of a conflict situation may show up as contraction, hardening or dissolution. Observing also what pulls us toward or pushes us away, is good practice. Where and when can we totally surrender to a movement? Also, the experi-

ence of width and breadth, narrowness and broadness. To sense boundaries between inside and outside. Can these be flexible or elastic?

3.3 Third 'space without space'

Situations and instances in which we experience a burning sense of desire or passion can give us a feel for this third realm. There is a clear experience of our personal will force. The inner fire is kindled and nothing can take us off our path. The aim and goal is clearly seen. This stage can give us a real sense of power but also a deep experience of powerlessness. To burn for something or for an ideal makes the pain even greater; also, the presence of hindrances may cause strong reactions. Ingeborg Bachman in her poem "It is Fire under the Earth" has many qualities of this third space.

To observe the sketches from the third space can give us insights into the will aspects. Who wants what? Where is the desire in the various players? Who has the power and in which form? The same goes for powerlessness. How are these forces dealt with? What is the fight (struggle) about?

On our journey through the first three spaces we may have the impression that we enter deeper and deeper only into our own inner self. First to test the ground, meet our fears and make our way through unsure ground. Then in the second space it is as if we walk on water, feel with our entire being the dynamics of the events. Our sympathies and antipathies are experienced, our longing and aversions...The feeling of constriction and being bound accompanies our entry into the third space. We now are entering into our own needs and burning desires if they are not met. A sensation can arise that is like being and burning in the fire.

In this way we have experienced in these first three realms what kinds of longing, needs and wishes are connected to our three life events.

3.4 Fourth 'space without space'

Entering the fourth space brings us into an entirely different realm. In the above drawing (page 4), we see at this location a crossing point, a turning inside-out of the lemniscate. Now we have reached the point where we no longer sense inside ourselves and our events but where we begin to create a mood of soul through which and in which it is possible now to look at ourself and at the other players in our events.

The mood of love needed to enter into this fourth space can be developed through remembering the presence of a love filled feeling while watching a baby. This child has not done anything for which it should be loved and this may not even be expected in the future, yet the simple presence of a watchful eye that loves, has brought on such pious feeling. This kind of experience can become the preparation for such an unconditional and loving mood and becomes the entry into the fourth space.

When it is possible to look with such a mood at oneself and all others in our sphere, this experience may lead to a kind of metamorphosis of soul. We then no longer see our world as revolving around ourself with us in the center but we feel connected and related to all others. Others live in us and us in them. This transformation of perspective is the pre requisite to the entry into the following spaces.



Drawing 3: Metamorphosis from third to fourth to fifth space

3.5 Fifth 'space without space'

In order to come near to qualities that live in the fifth realm, we can imagine a situation in which someone spoke in such a way, that grace resounded. We may be reminded of a conflict situation whereby all present attempted to resolve something, but the situation was doomed to fail and became more and more blocked. In this kind of impossible scenario someone turned to one innocent bystander or silent witness to ask for help. The answer came: "I have the feeling that in this conflict the issue revolves around competition". In the precise moment, as these words were spoken, a mood of relief spread throughout, everyone realized that truth had been spoken and it was possible to address the real issues now.

This space is the first one into which we can enter with the changed perspective. We can have the sense that we now look at everything as if from the periphery, looking in. This does not mean we look and experience from a distance and are disconnected, but we have a feeling for the truth and the essence of things, as was revealed in the example above. One could even say, in respect to the example, we can almost feel as if we are simultaneously all the persons in the scenario, those who became engrossed in conflict, those who watched and also those who spoke the essential truth that freed up the space.

Now we may also see and understand why it really makes no sense to write down the words that were spoken. The fact that many conflicts revolve around competition is no spectacular insight. Yet for those involved in that momentary stuck situation this truth spoken was something like a completely new discovery that set the tone for something brand new and changed everything.

3.6 Sixth 'space without space'

The quality we're speaking about here can be found in the artistic process. There are such moments: we have given it all we can, worked really hard on something and reached a point at which nothing more worked. All efforts could not bring us anything further. This could be such a moment, when we

then let go of all intentions, can give up our personal will without giving up on the project. This is as if we give our focused will over to the periphery will. This kind of inner attitude is required in order to enter into the sixth space, it could also be called the higher will. If this moment can be attained, the original question with which we entered the Triptychon will arise in a completely new light.

3.7 Seventh 'space without space'

The following verses from a poem by Nelly Sachs shall stand as the description for the seventh realm.

*Erde,
wenn auch ihre Liebe ausgewandert ist,
ihre Brände ausgebrannt,
und es leise geworden ist auf dir und leer –
vielleicht augenlose Stelle am Himmel,
darin andere Gestirne zu leuchten beginnen
bienenhaft vom Duft des Gewesenen angezogen –*

*so wird dein namenloser Staub, den sie benannt,
dem sie so viele Wandernamen gaben
durch sie ins Gold der Ewigkeit gemünzt
doch seine selige Heimat haben.*

(Nelly Sachs)

*Earth
Although their love has emigrated,
Their fires burned out,
And it has become silent and empty on you –
Perhaps a place without eyes in the sky,
Wherein other stars begin to shine
Attracted like a bee by the scent of what has been -*

*Your nameless dust, to which they have given
names,
To whom they gave so many travel names,
Is coined by them into the gold of eternity
And will still have its blessed home.*

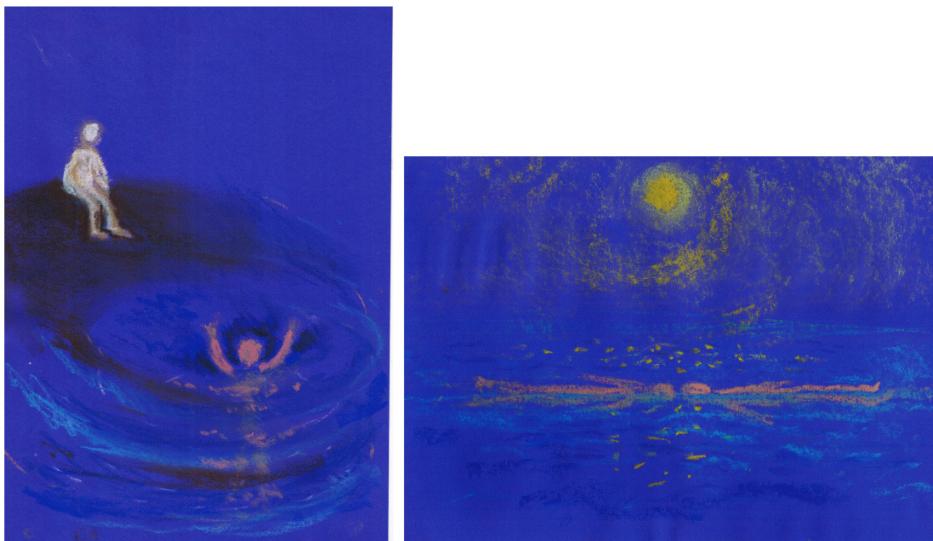
This is the space in which we experience ourselves most from the periphery. To stay with the image of the hike, this represents the summit with the cross. At times we can have a huge wide view into the world from here, at other times the world beneath us can be under a veil of clouds. After resting here it is time to begin the return journey.

4. The Return

The two companions started out with three life events. The client's question has taken them through seven spaces. Step by step have they made their way towards the particular intention that had found form (gestalt) in three specific events. It could also be said, that they removed layer by layer what had veiled the active creative forces that brought these events into being in the first place.

Now it is time to return in reversed order through the six spaces. The task of the facilitator is now; to help bring what has been found in those lofty heights back into the earthly reality of the client.

Whereby on the way out or up, the task was a dissolving of form, now it is a forming and a formulating into concrete intentions that can be connected to the clients life path and future intentions.



Drawing 4: First space on outward journey, first space on return journey.

Just like it is important to rest after a long and eventful journey, equally important is it, to rest and review a Triptychon journey. The facilitator now has the responsibility to see that the rightful integration takes place. It has also proven helpful and meaningful for the client to use art in order to create a piece of remembrance this can be many things: a poem, a picture o.a. that reminds us of the journey undertaken and helps us to remember the experiences of the Triptychon process.

“Do not forget at any moment during your physical existence, that you were within the spiritual world. Only then will you move in the earthly world with strength and security for the length of time required.”⁴

This article was first published in the German “Zeitschrift für Biografiearbeit”, 2013. Many thanks to Regine Kurek for the translation!

© Gemma Priess: info@biografieberatung.eu and Rita Weber-Wied: weberwied@gmx.de

⁴ R. Steiner, GA 227, p. 240