

Life and Hiddenness: Investigation of Biological Acts from Weizsäcker's Gestaltkreis Theory

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Abstract

We examine Viktor von Weizsäcker's theory of Gestaltkreis in order to understand Life writ large and unconceptualized. According to this theory, an individual life is regarded as subject and it appears in a biological event or act. This act aims at a coherence between a living thing and its environmental world and has a structure of unity of perception and motion. But what is important is that, in this unity, perception and motion are in the figure-ground relation, that is, in the mutual hiddenness. In order to explicate this relation from the view point of the whole and part, Husserl's mereology is referred to and, through this, it becomes evident that a new understanding of the whole-part relation is needed. At last, in order to search for this new understanding, two questions are examined. First, is the figure-ground relation an epistemological relation or an ontological one? Second, is it possible to treat a ground as it is? As for the former, to explicate the structure of a biological intuition, playing in a game is analyzed. As for the latter, Weizsäcker's remarks on history are considered. As a result of this inquiry, we suggest that further inquiry into the figure-ground relation is necessary for deeper understanding of Life, as Weizsäcker's writing implies.

Keywords: Viktor von Weizsäcker, Gestaltkreis, subject, coherence, figure-ground relation, mutual hiddenness, mereology, the Ground-relationship, biological intuition, history

Introduction

The model of a biological act which Viktor von Weizsäcker (1886-1957), a German neurologist and philosopher, proposes is known as Gestaltkreis ('circle of form genesis'). This article explores Weizsäcker's Gestaltkreis from the viewpoint of hiddenness. Our main purpose is to show that an appropriate study of life must include logical equipment to treat what is hidden without making this element an explicit object. This logical equipment, in our view, will contribute to the investigation of a doctor-patient relation because, as Weizsäcker states, this relation also has the Gestaltkreis structure¹. Weizsäcker's view of life has basically two levels, the level of individual life (subject) and that of non-individualized life (Life itself). Concerning the former, Weizsäcker describes individual life in detail on the basis of the

Gestaltkreis model in his main work bearing the same name². On the other hand, his investigation of the latter non-individualized Life is given only scant treatment, making only a few indirect references, even though Weizsäcker considered Life itself the main theme of his investigation (83). However, in our view, this lack of in-depth investigation does not mean that he failed to refer to non-individualized Life. We shall find in this silence an important and necessary fact about Life itself. That is, there seems to be some necessary connection between its status as a main theme and his silence about it. Thus, this connection is very important and it is worth examining and describing the basic logical scheme this connection depends on. Doing so, this investigation will hopefully contribute to understanding Weizsäcker's view of the non-individualized life.

In doing this, the only path we have is what Weizsäcker explicitly says, that is, what he says

about an individual life (subject) and his few suggestive remarks on the non-individualized life. As we mentioned above, his description of the individual life depends on the model of Gestaltkreis. Its outline, as the subtitle of his main work, "Theory concerning unity of perception and motion" suggests, is that in a biological act a subject and its environmental world are unified through perception and motion (Weizsäcker calls this relation "coherence (Kohärenz)") and that the act generates, as a result, a Gestalt with a cyclical structure. However, this act is not just an assembly of two parts, composed of perception and motion; nor is this act described by two independent theories. Instead, perception and motion are, according to the model, in the relation between a figure and a background; one of the two elements is always and necessarily hidden in the background. In our view, it is this hidden element (of the background) that is genuinely actual in the biological act because this hidden element brings about what appears to us as the act (figure); therefore, we should seek the true locus of life (subject) in this hidden element of the background.

As for Life itself, we can also understand the logical connection between its thematization and the silence about it in Weizsäcker's work with the same method. The nature of Life itself also consists in its hiddenness. The genuine function of Life itself cannot be separated from this hiddenness. So, thematizing the nature of Life in an explicit manner would make it impossible to treat it in a proper way. That is, in order to deal with life, whether it is an individual life or Life itself, we need to do so without making it a figure of immediate attention or thematizing it (at least not in an explicit manner). However, these restrictions raise some questions: first, in regard of the structure of a figure and a background, whether it is an epistemological structure which occurs when we observe or inquire into a biological act, or an ontological one which belongs to the act itself; second, whether it is possible at all to deal with what remains hidden in the background without making it a distinct figure, that is, without making it an explicit theme of inquiry, while at the same time discovering what kind logical structure is operative, in this background. Therefore, when we make an investigation into life, it will be

unavoidable to examine these questions.

In the following, we investigate the issues mentioned above. In the first section, we summarize the theory of Gestaltkreis from the viewpoint of hiddenness and show that a figure-background relation is essential to a biological act. Then, we examine the two issues described above. In doing this, we refer to Edmund Husserl's theory of parts (mereology) and Weizsäcker's remarks on history. In the second section, we consider the mereological aspect concerning Gestaltkreis. Through this analysis, we point out that the states of the same part can be variable depending on whether it is considered as a figure or as a ground and that a ground needs to be treated without making it a figure, that is, without thematizing it. Then, in the third section, we examine the possibility and logical structure of treating a life in this way, on the basis of Weizsäcker's concept of the "Ground-relationship (Grundverhältnis)". And, in doing this, we will use and analyze examples of a game and an un-lived-life. Though we are not able to attain a definitive conclusion, through this analysis, we try to show that taking the states of hiddenness into consideration will make some contribution to a more profound understanding of a life.

1. Gestaltkreis

In the classical neurophysiology developed in the 19th century, a simple reflex was regarded as the basic unit of an act by an organism. Weizsäcker tries to introduce the concept of subject into biology by disproving this theory of reflex. This is carried out, for example, through what is called "revolution experiment (Drehversuch)" (251). For example, when an examinee sits on a revolving chair and revolves him/herself, a labyrinthine stimulus is given to the inner ear and a vestibular reflex occurs in which the eyes move in the opposite direction to the revolution. Then, if the examinee is covered with a large cylinder and stays still while the cylinder revolves, an optic stimulus is given to the retina and the optokinetic reflex occurs in which the eyes follow the cylinder and move in the same direction. However, in a third case, if the examinee and the cylinder revolve in the same direction, though a labyrinthine stimulus is given to the inner ear, as in the first case, no reflex occurs. This

shows that a stimulus and a reflex are not in a fixed relation and that a relation of the two is not a basic fact to be assumed. The same stimulus does not always cause the same reflex (ex. the first case and the third case). What determines whether a reflex occurs or not and what kind of reflex occurs is not what kind of stimulus is given, but what kind of relation an organism and its environmental world occupy. That is, as long as a stable connection or order exists between the two (a stationary state and the third case), no reflex occurs. However, if this connection is lost and a gap occurs between the two, in order to recover the connection, an appropriate reflex occurs depending on each circumstance (the first case and the second one).

Therefore, in describing and analyzing an act of reflex or a biological act in general, a basic fact is not a preexisting fixed correspondence between stimulus and reflex, but that stable state of connection between organism and its environmental world. The function of recovering a lost connection is not a mechanical one. But, so-to-speak, it is a decision-making which activates itself appropriately in each circumstance. What is working in that function is nothing but a subject. Weizsäcker calls this state of connection a coherence and regards it as a basic situation of a biological act.

Among the examples of this coherence, which Weizsäcker himself gives, is a description of a scene where a person follows a butterfly with his/her eyes (110). In this case, a coherence between the watcher and the butterfly begins when he/she captures the butterfly in the center of his/her sight. Moving, the butterfly goes out of the center, and the person follows it with the eyes. When it becomes difficult to follow it with the eyes, the person follows it by moving the head, and then by moving the body, and, at last, the coherence ends when the following becomes impossible and the person loses sight of the butterfly altogether. Here, coherence is achieved as the continuing appearance of an object (butterfly) through a perception. And the perception is accompanied by various kinds of motions. Thus, a perception and a motion unite and constitute one biological act. Weizsäcker calls this state a “staggering (*Verschränkung*)” of perception and motion (114).

Therefore, if we describe an act of an

organism in a complete manner, its structure will be that the two poles of organism and its environmental world are connected and united through two mutually opposite workings, that is, perception (env. world \rightarrow orgn.) and motion (env. world \leftarrow orgn.). And a visual image of this unity will be a circle. Thus, Weizsäcker calls it a *Gestaltkreis*.

Next, we examine the example of walking. While walking, we can direct our attention to the movement of our legs (locomotion). Then, our locomotion is presented to our consciousness. At the same time, so long as we are walking successfully, the motion must be adapted to the condition of the ground surface and, if so, the information about the condition must be given to us. That is, that condition must be perceived through the locomotion, but so long as we pay attention to the motion (given as a figure), that perception is submerged in the ground and not presented to our consciousness explicitly. On the other hand, while walking, we can be conscious of the condition of the surface. And, at that time, the perception is presented to us; however, the locomotion which enables that presence then withdraws into the ground.

Therefore, a perception and a motion, as is mentioned above, ‘staggering and enabling’ each other, constitute one united act as a whole, but they are never both simultaneously present. One always hides or suppresses the other. Such a relationship is called “mutual hiddenness (*Gegenseitige Verborgenheit*)”.

In so far as this is the case, we cannot grasp the concept of *Gestaltkreis* as a whole, because we cannot simultaneously have both components of the act as explicit objects of the study. We cannot help studying each of them with the other hidden in the ground. This situation is the same situation where an object appears as a closed figure against the ground, which Gestalt psychology asserts (124). And we cannot grasp the structure as a whole, so, as Weizsäcker states, we can only experience it directly³.

In addition, mutual hiddenness constitutes one essential nature of the biological act (spontaneous-motion), so it can be found everywhere and in various manners about the act. In the example of following a butterfly with the eyes, in order to keep the coherence with it, other objects in the environmental world are

cut off and “sacrificed (geopfert)” and, thus, they are driven away into the background (111). Weizsäcker argues, “essentially, the act of watching consists always in this division (ibid.)” of the environmental world into the cohered part and the sacrificed one and calls this sacrificing a negative work (124). Either way, through this work an order or a structure of figure and ground is brought into the world.

In the following section, let us continue to examine mutual hiddenness and the relationship between figure and ground further, but from another point of view.

2. Mutual hiddenness

Gestaltkreis can be regarded as a whole which consists of two parts, that is, perception and motion. So, here, let us examine the relation of mutual hiddenness from a viewpoint of the relation among parts or between whole and part. In doing this, we make a reference to the theory of whole and part (mereology) developed by Edmund Husserl⁴.

In the third investigation of his *Logical Investigations*, titled “On the Theory of Wholes and Parts”, Husserl divides parts included in a whole into two kinds⁵. For example, a horse can be taken apart into such parts as head, body, legs, and so on. In this case, these parts can continue to exist by themselves even after taken apart from a horse as a whole. He calls such a part an independent one (LI II 3, 50) or a piece (LI II 55). On the other hand, the same horse can be analyzed into such parts as its form and its color. In this case, each part cannot exist in the separation from the whole or from the other, like a form without a color or a color without a form. This kind of part is called a dependent part (LI II 51) or a moment (LI II 55).

Then, let us see how this applies to perception and motion in Gestaltkreis, and which kind of part they are classified into in the viewpoint of figure and ground. Husserl's remark about this relation remains only a secondary one but concerning an example of a visual object and its background in the visual field, the following is observed: when we perceive an object visually, it is certain that the object is inevitably accompanied by the background around it. Therefore, they cannot exist by

themselves taken apart from each other. However, on the other hand, we can alter the background without limitation and even make it vanish in our imagination with the object fixed and unchanged. Then, accompaniment of the background can be regarded to play no essential role in the existence of the object. That is, the inseparableness of the accompaniment is, after all, only a factual state of affairs and not a necessary one (LI II 16, 24). From this consideration, the relation between a figure and a ground will be regarded as that between pieces.

However, reconsidering the previously mentioned example of following a butterfly, making an object a figure and driving others away into the ground (sacrificing), as Weizsäcker states, are not two separate acts but two aspects of one act. Therefore, it is not appropriate to consider their accompanying each other only as factual. So, we should regard the figure-ground relation as essential when an object appears to us. Furthermore, considering another example, let us examine the case of horizontal lines with diagonal lines arrow- or nock-shaped on both sides. This case is often taken up as an example of illusion. Here, the diagonal lines seem to influence the impression of the length of the horizontal lines, only so long as the attention is paid to the horizontal ones and the slant draws back into the ground. That is, being in the ground itself gives an object there a proper function to determine how a figure appears. At last, we can take up one more example. It is well known that suppressed experience causes an explicit symptom, but this occurs only in so far as this experience remains in the unconscious (the ground) and loses this function when it is brought into the conscious through therapy. The ground of this process brings the appearance itself of the figure into existence. From these examples, we can say that what remains in the ground is not a mere concomitant figure nor something kept in a storage waiting to be taken out, but it is fulfilling a function, which is possible only so long as it is hidden in the ground. And this function is only to influence the way something explicitly appears visible, enabling it to appear as a figure as well.

Reexamining Husserl's above argument on a basis of these examples, we can confirm the following: when we assume free alteration of the visual background in our imagination, we

make the ground an object of the operation of free alteration and, through this, we thematize this ground and make it an explicit figure, and, as a result, cease to treat it as a ground. And, at this point, the ground will have lost the function it fulfilled when it was a ground, undisturbed by conceptualization or objectification. This being the case, we must say that, in order to study the relation between a figure and a ground properly, we need to treat a ground consistently as a ground, that is, without objectifying it.

We can also express the above relation of ground and object in the following way. A relation between a (visual) object and its background, analyzed as one between figures, is regarded as one between pieces; however, analyzed as a process occurring between a figure and a ground, a relation is regarded as one between moments.

In order to treat a biological act on a basis of the relation between a whole and a part, what is essential is logical equipment to describe the force a figure-ground relation has. But in Husserl's mereology in the third investigation, such logical equipment is absent⁶.

Returning to the Gestaltkreis, we can say, on the basis of the above-mentioned, that Gestaltkreis is not a construction of perception and motion, as if assembled from two pieces; neither can a theory on Gestaltkreis be obtained through integration of two independently existing theories on perception and on motion. To be sure, we can consider perception and motion separately as explicit objects. However, by combining these explicit objects, we cannot reproduce Gestaltkreis, that is, as a biological act. It is because both are not in the relation of a figure and a ground in this case. When we consider one of them explicitly, the other is accompanying the one as a ground and enables the one to appear as an object but this function is lost when made a figure. Therefore, we can never capture the function explicitly as itself.

From this, Weizsäcker says that we cannot grasp the Gestaltkreis as a whole, but we can experience it only practically. Incidentally, being made a figure and treated thematically means being objectified and separated and differentiated from our own subjective existence which is now living and acting. On the contrary, what remains hidden in the ground escapes

from such an objectification and is experienced as it is fulfilling the function, so, to use a phenomenological way of speaking, it is exactly 'being lived'. Thus, we will be able to say that, as for a biological act, what is truly actual (working or living) is what remains in the ground and that there we should seek for the locus of life.

3. The Ground-Relationship⁷ and the Biological Intuition

So far, we have argued that a structure of mutual hiddenness belongs to the essence of a biological act and that, in order to understand this act, we need to treat its hidden element as it stands hidden in the ground, that is, without making it a figure or thematizing it. However, to this, two doubts will necessarily occur. The first doubt is whether the structure is ontological or epistemological. If it is regarded as the former, then it can be said to belong to the act itself. But if it is regarded as the latter, then it is attributed to the act so long as we observe or think of the act and cannot be said to belong to it essentially. The second doubt is how is it possible at all to treat what stands hidden in the ground without making it a figure or thematizing it?

Of course, it is too difficult to say anything definitive about these questions. And, in addition, what Weizsäcker says about them is highly ambiguous and allegorical, so it is hard to interpret his intended meaning clearly or univocally. So, following this, let us instead refer directly to some relevant quotations from Weizsäcker and then form plausible inferences and observations.

"Physics assumes that, in its investigation, an *independent* world confronts the knowing-I as its object of knowing. As opposed to this, we must learn in biology that we find ourselves in a dependence together with an object and that the ground of the dependence cannot be an object. While, in the assumption of physics, an object would exist as ever, even without the dependence on the I, an object of biology can be thought to be at all only in so far as we struggle with it; its independent existence cannot be assumed. ... A biologist lives in his/her object and experiences it through his/her own life. ... Physics is only objective, but a biologist is also subjective (295)."

"We insist ... that an object of biology could

never become intuitive in the way that a person intuited life-phenomena in the forms of space and time. ... Though it sounds paradoxical, a living thing, as we see it, ...can be captured in its uniqueness through the obsession in the subjectivity [through our being obsessed by the subjectivity]. ... A life presents itself where something moves *itself*, that is, through intuited subjectivity (318)."

"Biology experiences that a living thing *finds* itself in a *regulation*, the *ground of which itself cannot be an object*. We will name this 'Ground-relationship' in biology.⁸ Therefore, the Ground-relationship, which dominates biology, is, essentially, a relation *to* never-objectifiable ground, and so not, as in the case of causality, one *between* knowable objects, like between a cause and an effect.

Therefore, the Ground-relationship is precisely nothing other than subjectivity, but this subjectivity is experienced in a certain concrete and intuitive way. Our investigations must work in the Ground-relationship, but they cannot know this relationship explicitly, for this is the last instance (*ibid.*)."

In these quotations, Weizsäcker denies independent existence of a living thing. A living thing exists in so far as it is in relation to a biologist who studies it. So, it seems appropriate to say of a living thing that its ontological and epistemological dimensions are inseparable. But, furthermore, Weizsäcker suggests that the latter dimension does not hold at least in its classical sense. In physics, we can obtain scientific or objective knowledge of its object and it is realized through excluding subjectivity. Therefore, we can *know* its object objectively, that is, the epistemological dimension holds concerning an object of physics. On the other hand, in biology, we *experience* a biological object through our own subjectivity. So, we cannot exclude our own subjectivity in biology. (It is worth noting that Weizsäcker contrasts physics not with biology, but with a biologist.) Therefore, we cannot have an objective knowledge of a living thing⁹. However, what kind of circumstances brings this about?

We can say repeatedly that existence of a living thing consists in a relation between living things. But this relation is through each subject's dependence on a ground (Ground-relationship).

And Weizsäcker identifies this dependence with subjectivity. Then, how can we understand this dependence?

Following the above quotations, Weizsäcker continues: "It [the instance] is a power and can be experienced as dependence or as freedom (*ibid.*)."

Here, the pair of dependence and freedom can be thought to correspond with that of the Ground-relationship and subjectivity. So, in the following, let us consider the dependence-freedom relationship.

In order to consider the view point of the dependence-freedom relationship, we will use the example of playing a game of chess and present three possibilities to interpret this example. Weizsäcker himself refers to a game to illustrate the relation between dependence and freedom (273). And it is obvious that he takes it as an analogy of the Ground-relationship. First, in playing chess, we move our pieces as we like, that is, we play freely. However, for our play to be allowed in a game, it must obey the rules of the game (here, of chess). In other words, our freedom is enabled by the presence of constraint. Thus, our free play is nothing but obedience to the rule. However, this obedience to the rule itself cannot, as Weizsäcker states, be known explicitly or be objectified. When we objectify and are explicitly conscious of the rule, the rule is separated from our playing or ourselves; then, it will be possible to break it in our playing. To the contrary, when we play freely in a game, we will normally be conscious of our play and not of the rule. However, then, we will not, at least intentionally, break the rule. Our obedience to the rule is unified with our free play and enables this play, so it cannot be separated from the latter. We can say, then, that we do not recognize the rule objectively, but we experience it directly through our free play. So, to use the above expression, we can also say that the rule is lived in our free playing. In other words, we cannot play freely in a game, if we are not unified with its rules. Then, we can confirm that free play and obedience are two phases (or moments) of one thing, that is, a game, and that they are in a relation of a figure and a ground. Furthermore, we can also reconfirm the mereological states of affairs which we identified above: the kind of relation between the same set of parts is variable, depending on whether they are considered in a relation between

figures or in a figure-ground relation. For, when a rule is objectified, playing and rule-adherence are separated and become independent of each other, but when a rule remains in a ground, a rule is lived as a free play, enabling the latter and, thus, the two parts are dependent on each other. In this case, by replacing “obedience to the rule” to “dependence on the Ground,” we are also able to confirm the same structure in the relation between the Ground-relationship and subjectivity.

Second, to continue analyzing the example, there is, of course, an opponent in a game and he/she also plays freely. My free play and his/her free play are combined and constitute a game. Then, let us see how the relation of the two is described. Weizsäcker’s description about this, however, is only provisional and insufficient. According to Weizsäcker, the essence of a game is “partial indefiniteness” or “methodological indeterminationalism (273).” That is, in a game, we predict the opponent’s play on the basis of the rules, but the prediction must remain in the underdetermination. However, neither when a perfect prediction is possible nor when no prediction is possible can a game be realized. So, indetermination within a certain limit constitutes the essence of a game. And, as for the determination, we must observe the opponent’s decided play. Here, we find “obedience to the rules” (limitation of indetermination) and “freedom” (determination of the realized play) in a conjunction between prediction and observation and through this conjunction, we encounter subjectivity (*ibid.*).

Weizsäcker insists that we can have an intuition of a subject and names this intuition a biological one, distinguishing it from a physical one. In that encounter, he finds a realization of biological intuition. However, from this description alone, the subjectivity of the opponent will only be guessed indirectly from the comparison between our prediction and our observation, and so, the subjectivity cannot be said to be intuited directly. Furthermore, a description of our own play is lacking here. A game consists of plays of at least two opposing players. Therefore, a description of the relation between these players is indispensable. Next, let us see how we can describe this relation of opponents.

The relation between opponents can be

regarded as an example of coherence (295). It consists of filling a gap when a connection with an object is lost. And, in the case of a game, each move of both sides corresponds to this filling. However, my own move which fills a gap and recovers a connection with the opponent brings about the opponent’s move. This means that my move is, to me, filling a gap and recovering the coherence, but to the opponent, the same move brings about a gap and breaks the coherence. So, we can regard a relation between opponents as mirroring. That is, one and the same thing has opposite senses to each of the participants concerned. The relation between freedom and dependence could also be understood in the same manner. In the case of a game, while our play is experienced as freedom, it is also experienced as dependence, that is, as a mirror image of an opponent’s freedom, because freedom is determined and enabled by the opponent’s play. Thus, we can say of subjectivity of an object that it is experienced intuitively as a ground of dependence, but in so far as it is the subjectivity of an object, it cannot be a direct object of knowledge. What is directly given as a figure is our own dependence, and an object’s subject must be given only as its mirror image or as its negative, that is, as its ground. “What occurs as a figure in one side occurs as a background in the other.”¹⁰

Third, another essential element of coherence is sacrificing. A coherence with an object is necessarily accompanied by sacrificing a coherence with other objects and, in this way, bringing about an order into the environmental world. In the case of a game, an object of coherence can be thought to be each move of the opponent. Then, we will inquire what the object of sacrificing is. As for the move in a game, we will need to take into consideration a group of moves which were not chosen. To this group belong those moves that were possible but were not chosen and those which were, from the first, eliminated by the rule. They make a ground to the chosen moves as a figure. And the opponents in a game can be said to live the common rule on a basis of sharing this ground. If the ground is not shared, each of the opponents lives in a differently ordered game-world and each play obeys a different set of rules. Thus, living with common rules is necessarily accompanied by

sharing a common ground. However, here, this shared ground is a group of unchosen moves, and these moves are not realized; that is, they not only remain hidden in a ground but are also non-existent. So, if we try to understand coherence from the viewpoint of sacrificing, we will need to consider this dimension of non-existence. As well, this dimension must be included into the never-objectifiable ground.

So far, we have considered the identity between the Ground-relationship and subjectivity, using an example of a dependence-freedom relation in a game. And we have taken three viewpoints of a lived rule, mirroring, and sacrificing. Here, they are treated as separate viewpoints and are not brought into a unified description. However, in each of these viewpoints, we can identify a figure-ground structure or hiddenness as their essential moment. So, the next task will be to describe these viewpoints in a unified manner on the basis of this structure, so that the description may contribute to an investigation of a life.

Let us move to the second question noted above: how we can treat what remains hidden in a ground without making it a figure, that is, without thematizing it, and whether it is possible at all to do so. Here, we can merely refer to what Weizsäcker suggests about it in his later years. Although in a different context, he emphasizes the importance of putting a disease in an individual's whole life-history, in order to understand the disease. In doing this, he states that "in a historical process", whether it is an individual's life-history or that of humanity, "what is the most working [operative] is [not a lived life but] an unlived one¹¹", that is, "a hidden past¹²". "There must be what is real in its work but unreal in knowing¹³." "What is realized [in a history] is not what was possible but what was impossible¹⁴." For example, "anger is suppressed repeatedly and hypertension arises instead¹⁵." In this case, because anger could not be realized and was unlived, it is realized as hypertension. The anger did not exist, but precisely for this reason, the anger was working or operative, that is, it was effective¹⁶. When we trace a historical process from earlier to later, we can verify only a causal sequence of facts, that is, what has been lived. However, in this case, what is most working or operative in a history is not taken into

consideration, and so this way of considering the matter is insufficient. Therefore, we must start from the later time and go back to the earlier times and, in this way, we can detect the working of what is unlived and hidden.

It is not necessarily clear whether we can treat the mutual hiddenness between perception and motion in the Gestaltkreis theory in the same way as "unlived life" or "hidden past". However, we can find, both in a history and in an individual act, a common structure where what is truly working or effective is what is hidden. And when we regard a history not as an objective process of events but as a subjective process of activities by living things, we can say that it is, as a whole, itself a biological act, so it is possible that what is valid to one is valid to the other. Therefore, developing the inquiry on this structure further and conducting the inquiry without making the structure a figure, by thematizing what remains hidden in the ground is one of the directions which could lead to a more profound understanding of a life.

Endnotes

- 1 Viktor von Weizsäcker, "Über medizinische Anthropologie," in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 5, Suhrkamp, 1987, p. 189.
- 2 Viktor von Weizsäcker, *Der Gestaltkreis. Theorie der Einheit von Wahrnehmen und Bewegen*, in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 4, Suhrkamp, 1997. After this, reference to this work will be indicated by giving only its page number in the text.
- 3 V. v. Weizsäcker, *Anonyma*, in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 7, Suhrkamp, 1987, p. 55.
- 4 Weizsäcker suggests, in his review of Husserl's *Experience and Judgment*, that they share the common origin of their thought and that this origin is derived from Vienna (V. v. Weizsäcker, "Edmund Husserl: Erfahrung und Urteil. Untersuchungen zur Genealogie der Logik" in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 1, Suhrkamp, 1986, p. 557). Mereology is one of the traditions of Viennese thought. Therefore, it is not meaningless to refer Husserl's theory of parts to examine the theory of Gestaltkreis. cf. B. Smith, *Austrian Philosophy*, Open Court, 1994, p. 3.
- 5 Edmund Husserl, J. N. Findlay (tr.), *Logical Investigations* Vol. II, RKP, 1970 (translated from the 2nd German edition of *Logische Untersuchungen*). Reference to this book will be indicated with the capitals LI II and the page number in the text.
- 6 Today's studies on Husserl's theory of parts can

be said to focus mainly on formalization of the theory (as formal logic or as formal ontology). For example:

Simons (P. Simons, *Parts: A Study in Ontology*, Oxford University Press, 1987) develops modal mereology on a basis of Husserl's theory and complement the standard system of mereology. Fine (K. Fine, "Part-Whole," in B. Smith and D. W. Smith(eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp.463-483) extracts and formalize the "core" of Husserl's theory and sketches "the principal ways in which the core might be extended" to other contents of the theory. In these works, the figure-ground relation or the hiddenness is not thematized.

D. W. Smith (D. W. Smith, *Mind World. Essays in Phenomenology and Ontology*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 147-176, esp. 168) refers to Husserl's notion of horizon and analyses a background idea as the foundation of intentionality in the framework of formal ontology. But, in this work, the function of the idea is not in the relation of being in the ground or hiddenness.

Though Sokolowski's work (R. Sokolowsky, *Husserlian Meditations. How Words Present Things*, Northwestern University Press, 1974) is a rather early one in this field, we owe much to it, because the importance of the figure-ground relation for Husserl's theory of parts is suggested (105, 197). But he does not argue about it in an explicit manner. Furthermore, he does not refer to our point, that is, the variability of the kind of part.

- 7 One and the same word, "ground", needs to be used in two different meanings: as a ground in the relation to a figure and as the never-objectified ground on which all biological acts depend. In order to make a distinction, we use "Ground" to indicate the latter.
- 8 It is highly probable that he suggests Life itself by the Ground. Cf. V. v. Weizsäcker, Anonyma, in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 7, Suhrkamp, 1987, p.48.
- 9 Rasini makes a similar indication. But he doesn't distinguish experiencing from knowing. Cf. V. Rasini (R. Uhlmann, A. Cafaggi (trs.)), *Theorien der organischen Realität und Subjektivität bei Helmuth Plessner und Viktor von Weizsäcker*, Königshausen & Neumann, 2008, pp. 147.
- 10 V. v. Weizsäcker, "Über medizinische Anthropologie," in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 5, Suhrkamp, 1987, p. 190.
- 11 V. v. Weizsäcker, *Pathosophie*, in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 10, Suhrkamp, 2005, p.206, 277-8.
- 12 V. v. Weizsäcker, "Erinnerung an Alexander von Humboldt," in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 1, Suhrkamp, 1986, p. 451. It is characteristic of his historical consideration that two kinds of history, that is, an individual's life history (biography) and the whole history of humanity, are always superimposed. The former repeats and represents the latter. So, his conception of history has a similar structure of

E. Heckel's recapitulation theory. As well, we will be able to identify another mereological structure contributive to inquire into life. Cf. V. v. Weizsäcker, "Ärztliche Fragen," in *V. v. Weizsäcker Gesammelte Schriften* 5, Suhrkamp, 1987, p.317.

13 *ibid.*

14 V. v. Weizsäcker, *Pathosophie*, p.277.

15 V. v. Weizsäcker, *Pathosophie*, p.278.

16 Truly, the word "effective" is not appropriate here. This word involves causality, which is a relation between existences. However, what is unlived is not an existence. Therefore, a relation of causality cannot consist between it and what is realized.