

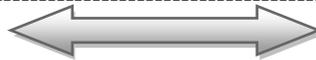
Onto-Ethological Studies: How an Environmental Imaginary Envisions a Shared Human-Beagle *Umwelt*

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-----ABSTRACT-----

Jakob Von Uexkull’s groundbreaking work on the *Umwelt* discusses how alive creatures have a wall of senses. I seek to extend his theories by applying them to what I call the human-beagle *Umwelt*. Sources will be used from environmental imaginaries because they have the theories and the requisite knowledge of abstraction. These ideas are not necessarily readily apparent or even obvious since most people do not think about animals and environments this way. Therefore, we need environmental imaginaries, to help us think about beagles, in terms of what their lives, are really like in relation to our own. Ordinarily, we tend to view beagles, in comparison to our lives, and how these animals can serve us. Of course, this limits our view about their very potential and undercuts our ability to know, understand, and to fully appreciate beagles. Beagles, like humans, are actually shaped and influenced by their landscapes. We can consider the beagle’s body type, voice, lifestyle, and how these specific things compliment an environment. The beagle has become central to human survival and at times, the beagle’s powerful nose is an extension of our bodies, the way that a cane is central to the blind, or to the disabled. Therefore, humans and the beagle share a joint *Umwelt* as the beagle’s heightened sense of smell is used by humans to become an extension of our human sense. My journal entries should help to further illustrate some of the abstract ideas gathered from the scholarly sources.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Jakob Von Uexkull’s groundbreaking work on the *Umwelt* discusses how alive creatures have a *wall of senses*.¹ I seek to extend his theories by applying them to what I call the human-beagle *Umwelt*. Sources will be used from environmental imaginaries because they have the theories and the requisite knowledge of abstraction. These ideas are not necessarily readily apparent or even obvious since most people do not think about animals and environments this way. Therefore, we need environmental imaginaries, to help us think about beagles, in terms of what their lives, are really like in relation to our own. Ordinarily, we tend to view beagles, in comparison to our lives, and how these animals can serve us. Of course, this limits our view about their very potential and undercuts our ability to know, understand, and to fully appreciate beagles. Beagles, like humans, are actually shaped and influenced by their landscapes.² We can consider the beagle’s body type, voice, lifestyle, and how these specific things compliment an environment. The beagle has become central to human survival and at times, the beagle’s powerful nose is an extension of our bodies, the way that a cane is central to the blind, or to the disabled. Therefore, humans and the beagle share a joint *Umwelt* as the beagle’s heightened sense of smell is used by humans to become an extension of our human sense. My journal entries should help to further illustrate some of the abstract ideas gathered from the scholarly sources.

A Sense of Being

“Training is a term we have been conditioned to accept as something we do through tasks and by using tools. This is true, but sometimes the tools we use, we cannot see, taste, hear, smell, or physically touch.”

-Brandon Carpenter, animal trainer

¹ Jakob Von Uexkull, “A Stroll Through the Worlds of Animals and Men: A Picture Book of Invisible Worlds,” in *Instinctive Behavior: The Development of a Modern Concept*, ed. and trans. Claire H. Schiller, New York: International Universities Press, 1957.

² See, generally, Potteiger and Purinton. “The Nature of Landscape Narrative.” *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories*” New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Everyliving thing has its own sense of being in the world. Therefore, every beagle responds to, and exists in its own environment, that is unique to that breed. Its uniquely powerful nose enhances its life and helps it determine its own sense of Being in the world. Its nose gives it so much knowledge about events and conditions in the environment. Clearly, Uexkull's premise that every animal understands its own world has profound implications for conservation and for our interactions with animals. Uexkull observes, to glimpse the environments of animals, we must first blow, in fancy, a soap bubble around each creature to represent its own world, filled with the perception which it alone knows. When we ourselves then step into one of these bubbles, the familiar meadow is transformed. Many of its colorful features disappear, others no longer belong together but appear in new relationships. A new world comes into being. Through the bubble we see the environment of the burrowing worm, of the butterfly, or the field mouse; the environment as it appears to the animals themselves, not as it appears to us. This we may call the *phenomenal* world or the self-world of the animal.³

Here, Uexkull explains to the readers that every living creature is in a bubble type of environment that is round just like planet Earth.⁴ Therefore, if we consider a circle and its properties, we can see that there are knowable boundaries. Animals, especially beagles, can and do form relationships outside the bubble. Beagles develop relationships with their own handlers and pet owners.⁵ Also, there are human principles that guide, shape, and determine these relations. Trust, love, kindness, shelter, and food are all essential parts of these relationships, as the beagle is dependent upon the owner for much, if not all, of these vital things.⁶ Clearly, relationships can be formed within the bubble between and amongst beagles. These relationships are vital to their existence and can be formed between canine mother and her beagle pup.⁷ How can we know about the beagle's inner life if we are not canine beagles? There are means that allow us to study animal behaviors and to develop ideas by making connections between what we observe and how the animals are acting together.⁸ For Uexkull, the main task is to try to understand the animal, in this case, the beagle, from its own perspective. Therefore, we have to try to remove our own bias, and remove ourselves from the equation. Uexkull muses, "we no longer regard animals as mere objects, but as subjects whose essential activity consists of perceiving and acting. We unlock the gates that lead to other realms, for all that a subject perceives becomes his perceptual world and all that he does, his effector world. Perceptual and effector worlds together form a closed unit, the *Umwelt*."⁹ This is how we understand the beagle's environment, as the animal sees it. This is an essential part of the analysis, as we consider, the issue of a shared *Umwelt*.

Animal Behavior as Cultural Text: This is Intrinsic to Humanity

"Reverence: the spiritual attitude of a man to a god and a dog to a man." -Ambrose Bierce

Dogs primarily can use their voices to signify different meanings. We know this based on studies about foxhunters and their observations during the hunt. Hufford advises, "what the hunters are listening for is "music," uttered by hounds, each contributing its own "note" to the proceedings."¹⁰ Further, by documenting what foxhunters have to say as they observe, we can formulate a reliable basis for figuring out how the animal sees things in its own environment. Hence, this is clearly something that is knowable by a human. Hufford goes on to say, "in the hunters' parlance some hounds are soprano dogs, while others issue "horn chops," "double yells," and "bugle notes."¹¹ The sounds that come from the hounds give us certain clues. We need to understand their behavior because such, "*cultural texts* become a means for achieving the distance necessary for self-reflection, for arriving at understandings of the forces, some of them profoundly disquieting and incomprehensible, governing the human position in society, nature, and cosmos."¹² These kind of cultural texts become the basis for building a bridge that links the beagle-human *Umwelt*. It tells us that this information is a knowable thing even though the animals do not speak our language, so to speak.

Humans and dogs both experience a shared need to connect with one another by telling or "yelping" a story, in the dog's case.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See, Miklosi, *Dog Behavior, Evolution, and Cognition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

⁶ See, generally, Serpell, ed. *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behavior and Interactions With People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰ Mary Hufford, *Chaseworld: Foxhunting and Storytelling in New Jersey's Pine Barrens*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1992, introduction.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 6.

What's a Good Rabbit Dog Worth, Anyway?

"A hound should pursue as fast as conditions demand and as slow as conditions demand." -Scott Wilson, Rabbit Hunting Beagles Society, Pendleton: South Carolina Humans have listening deficits that make it hard for us to hunt rabbits. Rabbits are quick and small, making them hard to hear, as they move through the brush. Naturally, the beagle is a superior hunter of rabbits and we tap into the beagle's sense of smell for a successful hunt. Clearly, humans need the beagle's physical characteristics in order to properly hunt rabbits. Here is how it works, the beagle chases the rabbit enough to make it hop, so the hunter can see it and take aim.¹³ It is at that very moment when the beagle world and human world intersect. The beagle is not distinctly aware of this intersection between our two shared worlds. That seems to be the trick of it-to have the animal do what it does best, yet, in a way that has almost a magical impact on our own lives. In this manner, we have a sort of common *Umwelt*, as a result, and the beagle is merely doing what is natural. What is natural, for it, translates into a shared cooperation, between human and beagle. We reap the benefits because the beagles' actions, leading to the rabbit hopping, makes life easier for us. The beagle does not have that human value of finding the easiest method to hunt for sport or for food. It is necessary to detract here, for a moment, this is similar to the crucial pollination role of bees, in the our environment.¹⁴ Bees are integral to ensuring our food supply, as their pollination process leads to greater crop size.¹⁵ Therefore, a threat to the existence of bees, is truly a threat to humanity's well-being.¹⁶ Surely, environmental imaginaries help us to see how all earthly creatures are inter-dependent but, I think, that we share an *Umwelt*, with only some of these creatures.

Cantwell's Discourse: Music Reflects Environment

In order to create the bridge to the shared *Umwelt* between humans and beagles through the connection of scent, it is imperative for us to figure out how to enter the beagle's mind and its world. We need to communicate what we need the beagle to do, or not do, such as chasing the cottontail too far away. The beagle plays a role within our lives helping the hunter to efficiently catch the rabbits. The beagles do not know that they are doing this exact thing. They are just doing their own thing within their beagle world. It is an instinct for them to chase the rabbit. The hunter must train and cultivate the beagle to want to please us as it enjoys itself by running and by yelping. According to the leading expert and environmental imaginary, who studied canine voices through hunting activities, the yelping translates into a chorus of meanings.¹⁷ This *music* reflects conditions in the animal's environment.¹⁸ Similarly, Robert Cantwell's, *If Beale Street Could Talk: Music, Community, Culture*, connects the Meaning of music in our lives and how it reflects *signs* in the environment.¹⁹ Cantwell muses, "for many people, particularly young people, great swaths of ordinary life, public and private, may be said to have been lived in accompaniment to music."²⁰ For Cantwell, music holds meaning in our society and it can reflect the environment, as the jazz sounds are a reflection of Beale Street and the "Canal Street Blues" are these physical environments.²¹ It can be argued that Cantwell's ideas hold true in beagle world. Since the beagle's "yelp" reflects a meaning that correlates with a certain state of things in the animal's environment. This is, of course, not even limited to the beagle that helps the hunter but is expanded to include all beagle activities, especially when the beagle works as a police dog.

Notes From A Brief Conversation With a Police Dog's Handler

Anecdote 1: "The Emotions of the Handler Run Down the Lead"

I had spoken with Detective Erik Skoog from the New Jersey Police Canine Special Weapons and Tactical Team (SWAT) about his relationship and the training of his canine named Rookie. According to Detective Skoog, the animal came to live with him when it was thirteen weeks old. A canine is chosen based on his having a strong prey drive and strong play drive. The prey drive leads them to always "get their man" and

¹³ Scott Wilson, <http://www.rabbit hunting beagles.com> (site accessed December 12, 2009)

¹⁴ Christian Evans, "Mysterious Collapse of Honeybee Population Threatens National Food Supply," <http://www.naturalnews.com> March 21, 2007 (site accessed December 12, 2009). This article references a Pennsylvania State study from their College of Agriculture. This crisis is referred to as an agricultural Chernobyl.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Hufford, *Chaseworld: Foxhunting and Storytelling in New Jersey's Pine Barrens*.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Robert Cantwell, *If Beale Street Could Talk: Music, Community, Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008, 3-5.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ Ibid., 11.

the play drive leads them to want to play, as a reward for the police work activities, so to speak. Detective Skoog advised, the canine lived with him, long before the training started, as dog and handler had to form a social

bond. Love and obedience played a major role in this bonding process. The canine would have to sit and stay as commanded. Detective Skoog articulated, "in a canine, the emotions of the handler run down the lead." Therefore, the canine can sense any agitation, in the handler, from the handler's slightest movement, even of one finger, released from the canine's leash or lead. In fact, Skoog relayed that when they both started training, the officials did not think Rookie would work out because they improperly interpreted Rookie's behavior. Skoog said, "we were in class together and I did not realize that I kept moving my finger on the lead and Rookie kept standing up." The canine thought Detective Skoog was ready to stand up. Skoog finally figured this out and the training officials came to realize, this was of an example of an unusually strong bond, that was forged between canine and handler. Rookie is hyper-sensitive to his handler's needs and emotions. Therefore, when a sufficiently strong enough bond is formed, the canine aptly anticipates the next move. In this manner, their *Umwelts* are in sync, as canine and human share the same world, but the canine seeks only to protect the handler (expecting reward play in return) and exhibiting no fear or hesitation, whatsoever. Detective Skoog notes, "the canine will not hesitate, for one second, to step in harm's way to protect me, and I am not sure whether a human partner would hesitate for a second... I mean, I know that a human partner would help me, but the canine just has no fear or noticeable hesitation." The canine is a pack animal and that instinct comes through. The canine does not share our human value system, exactly. You have to relate to it based on its values and somehow try to sync human values with canine values.

Anecdote #2: Love and Obedience Play a Major Role

Detective Skoog and Rookie worked together as they rode around in the patrol car. Rookie would stay in his special platform but he would stick his paw, through a hole in the fence-like barrier between the front and back seat of the cruiser. Rookie would place the paw on Detective Skoog's shoulder. Clearly, this was a sign of adoration and re-assurance for both canine and handler. Detective Skoog knows that Rookie loves doing police work. He said that he has two sets of keys: one for the police cruiser and one for his truck and each one makes a different noise when it's picked up. Every time he would pick up the keys for the police cruiser, Rookie would get excited and bark. He was ready to go to work and knew the very subtle difference in the sound the keys made. Rookie was clearly attuned to his environment, more so, than any human. Our need to hone those special canine skills could not ever be greater than right now. Truly, our modern and sophisticated technologies are helping criminals, especially creative drug smugglers, as they try to evade law enforcement authorities.

Anecdote #3: Using Play Towels to Find Illicit Drugs

Rookie's special nose and ears enable him to physically have stronger senses than a human. When Detective Skoog takes Rookie on the lead, Detective Skoog taps into Rookie's stronger senses of hearing and smell. Skoog said, "when we go out on an apprehension, I have a "play" towel. I put drugs in the towel and Rookie gets the scent... basically, Rookie thinks he is playing a game, trying to find a mere play towel... in this real-life criminal setting, Rookie sniffs for the scent of that towel, (which is the scent of illicit drugs) rather than him sniffing for the drugs, so to speak." When Rookie is successful and finds illicit drugs, Detective Skoog will immediately reward him through affectionate play and through re-assuring speech. It is clearly evident, to the canine, the reward is linked to a successful find and the canine, therefore has sufficient motivation for an apprehension.

This is how police officials use the canine breed as an extension of their own senses, a meshing of our *Umwelts* will ensue as we use the canine's value system to work within our own, further perfecting an intersection between human landscape or environment and the canine's notion of the world. Canine training officials stake great pains to make sure that there are no conflicts between human values and canine values. They must take what they know about pack mentality and human nature and develop a set of desired skills. The right skills are to be encouraged and fostered and they will deliberately work to hinder and actually discourage any ascertainable undesirable canine behavior. There is sufficient time and effort put into these worldwide programs. Detective Skoog told me that he was sent to Australia to help them develop their canine programs. They were using beagle to sniff out banned agricultural items at customs. Skoog advised that the United States does the same thing and the beagle was trained to sit, rather than bark, when it came across an undesirable agricultural item that U.S. Customs had banned or had to be declared.

Beagle are More Than Mere Objects

“To his dog, every man is King: hence the constant popularity of dogs.” -Andrew Rooney It is important to note that we are considering the beagle to be more than just a mere object as we create a new shared *Umwelt*. This step is necessary, in order to move forward, in this analysis, and take the leap maintaining that a kind of shared *Umwelt*, is even possible or desired. The animal does perceive the shared *Umwelt* since beagles are interested in certain things in the environments. There are some things that do not interest them at all. They show little interest in flowers unless a rabbit was near the flowers and a traceable scent can be investigated. They are interested in food, and the delicious smells that attract them to food, whether its dog food or human food. Beagles are also interested in anything that has their Owner’s scent on it. Interestingly, any item that we put our hands on, becomes something that the beagle would like to investigate. This behavior exhibits a mutual interest between the beagle and the human, as the beagle desires to please its Owner. Other things in the beagle’s environment, that it is interested in, would be anything that another dog touched or smelt. It is logical to assume that if another dog was interested in the object, then, the beagle would be too. Most importantly though is the interest and desire for closeness that the beagle expresses to its human Owner. Often, the beagle will try to sleep in our beds because it smells like us. The dog seeks this closeness and this connection to us. It really does not prefer the floor or some form of dog bed that does not have our dogs did not have any special place to sleep. I have developed a brief journal that will document some of my experiences as an Owner of two female beagles named Miss Penney and Chloe. These journal entries will help to delve into the discourse about beagles and their relations with their Owners. I am fairly certain that others, share the same kind of experiences and would sincerely welcome the notion of a shared human-beagle *Umwelt*.

My Journal Entry #1: This Journal will chronicle my observations from interacting with my two beagles: Miss Penney and Chloe. Miss Penney is a 12” small beagle and Chloe is a larger 15” beagle. This morning the two beagles woke me by sniffing incessantly and by licking my hand. Miss Penney sneezed and then shook her small body in a side to side motion. I opened my eyes and there they both were looking at me. They wanted breakfast and to go into the yard to smell everything. They usually are lucky and can detect the scent of a wild rabbit that may have strayed into the yard overnight, escaping under the fence. Following that trail will take them a few minutes as their noses go right to the ground and their tails are raised. The beagle displays affection, through licks which are her kisses, to her Owner. When one beagle is taken out, without the other beagle, the one left behind will use her muzzle to figure out where the other beagle went. She will kiss that beagle and carry out a sensory investigation that gives her some information. The beagle uses the muzzle or nose in order to understand her world. It is surely a powerful device and we find it hard to comprehend the ability that the beagle has. It is interesting to consider that a human animal could share a common *Umwelt*, under the described circumstances, with humans relying on these canines to make humans more adept at handling the conditions and demands of our own environment.

□

It is a unique power that humans desire to tap into for own purposes and for the greater good of humanity. In short, the muzzle or the beagle nose is the beagle’s world because without the extraordinary ability to smell, what humans cannot, the beagle would be lost. Beagle world exists and would be very different, if our human interest and our human desire to share a common *Umwelt* would cease to exist. The beagle would just be a pet to us. It would be an animal that we allowed into our homes and into our hearts. Or just another member of the family as I, and others, treat pets as family giving them the best love and care that money can buy. Are these beagles prized for their special ability to sense odors from far away or is there more to it? How do beagles understand their own environments and landscapes? Uexkull notes, “there are, then purely subjective realities in the *Umwelten*; and even the things that exist objectively in the surroundings never appear there as such.”²² The beagle’s environment, is known to it, based on its own relationships and actions. Hence, the animal knows its own environment through each of the experiences that it has. Humans are more complicated, yet, we too begin to know our environments based on experience. We know that the beagle can think but is it capable of rationale thought? This is a major distinction between the human and the animal, yet, at that moment when humans use beagle to sniff out something that a human nose cannot detect, we enter a shared *Umwelt*. Having realized this, our society will actively use these animals to sniff out bed bugs, drugs, and certain foods. A common good mentality has sprung forth in order to hone the beagle’s ability, in this regard. It is clearly not something that the dog has a choice in. Although I suppose, if the dog did not like it, then she could simply refuse to learn the skill.

²² Ibid., 72.

Our Problem: We Do Not Sniff With Enough Zest

“Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.”

-Mark Twain

From Journal Entry #2 The beagles chase each other down the small steps leading into the kitchen area. Somehow, Miss Penney and Chloe know the difference between all of the rooms in the house. They only know about the rooms that are important to them. The bedroom is important because they sleep there and the kitchen is important because they eat there. The den is special because they lay on the couch in there and wait for someone to come home. They like to lay on the couch because the pillows smell like the humans.

Their nose tells them where they are in the house. If I open the dog food can they can smell it from upstairs. At our dinner table, the beagles will beg on their hind legs and then sit down after being told firmly. We do try to share some food with them and they will try almost any food. They always smell table food first and if they do not like it, they pretty much will spit it out. They do not cherry eat jello and only they know why. I guess that I learned that there simply are secret things that they do not share with me. There are things that I do and they simply do not care or really understand them. □

Our dogs express emotions and we can sense fear, happiness, and anger in them just by their expression and demeanor.²³We can step into the *Umwelt* of the beagle as we try to embody the animal. Clearly, we are only constrained by our limited sensory abilities. We do not have the unique snout that would endow us with the magnified sense of smell

which is one of the beagle's gifts to humanity. We can get down on all fours and start smelling things. We start experiencing the world from the beagle's own perspective as a short four-legged creature. It is hard to imagine having such a keen sense of smell. The heightened ability to smell endows the beagle with an ability to smell scents far away from its current location. The heightened sense of smell moves to the foreground of the beagle's existence. The beagle's sense allows it move in certain directions. The scent guides the beagle as it negotiates its landscape. Naturally, the scent is tied to the beagle's gaze as the beagle will *look* in a certain direction, based on the scent. It is through *looking* that another connection is forged between human and beagle in our quest for a shared *Umwelt*.

Creating Unspoken Relationships: The Power of the Visual Gaze/Looking

“Money will buy you a pretty good dog, but it won't buy the wag of his tail.” -Josh Billings

From Journal Entry #3 First Gaze of the Day: Miss Penney and Chloe wander into the kitchen from the backyard and they fully expect doggie treats. They shake off the cold from being outside for a few minutes. They lick each other and smell one another in a little ceremony. I should note here that they only dash into the kitchen when its dinner time. Miss Penney will start walking around in circles around 3:00 begging to be fed. She knows its 3:00, and dinner time, because that is when my niece comes home from school. Nevertheless, Miss Penney and Chloe are alert this early in the morning and their noses are wide awake. If it is raining outside, then they prefer to mope around yawning and stretching all day. For this reason, they are better behaved when it rains. Anyway, they head for the kitchen and begin to jump and bark incessantly. Miss Penney is always the ring leader and I begin to ignore them waiting for a calm to set in. My other dog is a white boxer named Sidney and she thinks she is a small beagle. She will sometimes overpower them just due to her size. She wiggles and bunks into them all the time. Each dog stretches out and lays down when I ignore them. They gaze at me for a while waiting for me to get up. Miss Penney nudges my hand with her nose. I feel her whiskers. I give them each a treat because they settled down. They knowingly look at me, sort of understanding it. We have a silent conversation with our eyes. It is one of those moments whereby, we have a meeting of the minds, so to speak. Our worlds are shared through this body language: a nonverbal form of communication.

□

Bakhtin's Dialogics of Space

Mikhail Bakhtin's, Dialogics of space in which he discusses the self and Other and the example of two people facing each other.²⁴Bakhtin places an emphasis on seeing and on vision.²⁵ We understand each other in relation

²³ Roger Abrantes, *Dog Language: An Encyclopedia of Canine Behavior*. Illinois: Wakan Tanka Publishers, 1997.:

²⁴ Julian Holloway and James Kneale, “Michael Bakhtin: Dialogics of Space.” in *Thinking Space*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift. New York: Routledge Press, 75.

²⁵ Ibid.

to one another.²⁶ Holloway and Kneale write, For Bakhtin, the Self attempts an *architectonics* (the ordering into wholes) of the Other.²⁷ As mentioned above, we see them and temporally and spatially position them as wholes in relation to other people and different objects.”²⁸ Therefore, it might be inferred that we, and the beagle, simply cannot see our entire bodies and can only know certain things about our positions, in relation to what the other tells us.²⁹ We can imagine the beagle feeling the same way. It would seem that beagles often chase their tails and cannot see the back of their tails, which is bothersome to them. Surely, a beagle would look at its Owner and would be able to know things about itself and its position in the world. It can be inferred from Bakhtin that the beagle uses the visual gaze in order to accomplish this.³⁰ For the beagle, *looking* becomes a way to define itself, and to share in a bond with her Owner, extending to a shared *Umwelten*, if you will.

The Role of *Signs* and *Looking* in Relation to Landscape

Bakhtin discusses the (*dialogical*) utterance in which we perceive our environments and we must respond to them.³¹ Holloway and Kneale feel that this is essential, to our very existence, as we must interact with our environments to feel and to stay alive.³² It is no different for the beagle, who must interpret these environmental *signs*, since they may actually be substitutes as language for it. One *sign* is picking up the leash, without saying a word, shows the beagle, that looks at the Owner, a pleasurable walk will soon follow. These connections exist between humans and beagles just by the act of *looking*. There are ways that animals can all visually manage our world.³³ Durst observes, “A great many stories come together to *produce* Devil’s Tower...many of them are about the acts of seeing, and by attending to the *narratives of looking* that swirl around the Tower...we gain some purchase on the issues.”³⁴ Here, the Devil’s Tower is a non-verbal symbol for power, access, and authority, proving that authoritative relationships can be asserted visually, through a particular landscape or *sign*.

Our ability to see and to *look* translate into our ability to be controlled and manipulated by our environments. Hence, the relationship between the Owner and the beagle is dependent on this form of looking that creates its own relationship involving authority. The beagle can construct its environment in relation to the results of its looking behavior and what stems from that. The beagle can try to assert itself based on whether or not the human makes eye contact with it. Presumably, if there is no eye contact, then the beagle is doing something that is not approved. In short, beagles look, just as often as we do, in our lives. Beagles *look*, usually after something first, and they are trying to find out information that they require for assurance in their lives. They seek to please us and use looking as a way to do it. We share that tendency to *look* and even to gaze, as a beagle will gaze when it’s necessary, based on what its nose tells it.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Uexküll’s work on the *Umwelt* explains how we can view creatures as sharing more with us than just the common space called planet Earth. This work builds bridges to a shared human-being *Umwelt* as we tap into the beagle’s heightened sense of smell. The beagle is genetically advantaged by the shape of its large ears and large snout. These are indisputable physical characteristics that render the beagle superior to the human when it comes to scouting activities. We rely on the volume of works that have been written by environmental imaginaries in their quest to imagine what life is really like for all living creatures. It is necessary to think about these creatures and the complexities of their lives because they have talents that can help humanity achieve a better world. In the recognition of their value to us, we can make the case even stronger for animals to be protected, respected, and cared for as much as possible.

I have learned a lot about beagles, just by living with them, and I tried to capture some of their essence, in a few short journal entries, featured here. Surely, there are not enough words to describe the differences between the average house pet and the beagle that is trained to work with police officials. In both cases, we develop a

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ John Dorst, *Looking West* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1999, 195.

³⁴ Ibid.

strong bond and love for these animals, no matter what their purpose and relationship may be to us. The moments when we share an *Umwelt* with the beagle only make us appreciate them more. The beagle seems to like to be needed this way and likely does not understand what is going on as we tap into its world. We exploit its world for a positive reason to help people and for once, this form of exploitation does not hurt anyone, especially the animal. I do not advocate that exploitation of any animal, should ever be practiced, especially on a regular basis, but these human attempts to create a human-beagle *Umwelt* can only lead to love and deeper human respect for these creatures. They actually possess an ability that we do not have, with all our powerful technologies, think of it, we use them to help us, in these unique situations.

We looked at Uexkull's idea that animals can comprehend the rules, values, and order within their own worlds. In short, animals have a sense of Being and can consider themselves in relation to us. Pets that live with us seem to think that we are living in a pack as pet Owners struggle to assert authority and be the leader. Beagles often will try to assert authority of their own as they engage in demand barking and may not always come inside from the yard, when called to. Humans need animals and they are essential, to our survival, as a species. We have been granted dominion over all living creatures and this is a special and very heavy responsibility. Yet, Uexkull's ideas and premise offer humanity so much more, since he endows us, with a way to enter the beagle's self-world. I did not ever realize that this was possible until I read his theories. Certainly, this knowledge is valuable as officials try to more fully understand the canine world. Our reliance on them for their prized sense of smell will only continue to increase. A deep understanding of the beagle world is required in order to avoid any confusion between human and beagle. This is especially true in the case of working beagles that help rabbit hunters and when police officials rely on them to help solve crime. In the section marked, *Notes From a Brief Conversation With a Police Dog's Handler: Anecdote #1*, we should consider that police officials misunderstood Rookie's behavior and they were going to disqualify him from the canine unit.

We saw that canines use their voices to communicate with each other and with us. Their voices translate into a chorus that is a cultural text. Further, the chorus signifies their vocal communications and it enables storytelling. A narrative can be constructed based on the variety of the beagle's noises. Their music, if you will, reflects environmental conditions as they see them. Music is a large part of our human life as it reflects our cultural values and reminds us of places and streets, in particular. Interestingly, the same phenomena seems to be true for the beagle, too. Beagles frequently create some type of music, even when they are outside in the backyard following the scent of rabbit. This commonality, along with the others mentioned on the preceding pages, serve to explain just how we can assert that a human-beagle *Umwelt* actually exists.

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