



A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: with A Theory of Meaning (Posthumanities)

Jakob von Uexkull

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Is the tick a machine or a machine operator? Is it a mere object or a subject? With these questions, the pioneering biophilosopher Jakob von Uexküll embarks on a remarkable exploration of the unique social and physical environments that individual animal species, as well as individuals within species, build and inhabit. This concept of the *umwelt* has become enormously important within posthumanist philosophy, influencing such figures as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze and Guattari, and, most recently, Giorgio Agamben, who has called Uexküll "a high point of modern antihumanism."

A key document in the genealogy of posthumanist thought, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* advances Uexküll's revolutionary belief that nonhuman perceptions must be accounted for in any biology worth its name; it also contains his arguments against natural selection as an adequate explanation for the present orientation of a species' morphology and behavior. *A Theory of Meaning* extends his thinking on the *umwelt*, while also identifying an overarching and perceptible unity in nature. Those coming to Uexküll's work for the first time will find that his concept of the *umwelt* holds out new possibilities for the terms of animality, life, and the whole framework of biopolitics itself.

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