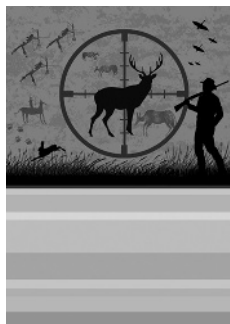


CHAPTER I

## TAKING A SHOT

### Hunting in the Crosshairs



Disclaimer: no real animals have been harmed in the writing of this piece. The safety is engaged – for now. In principle everything hunting related is *fair game* – there’s no safe zone as the scope scans the horizon – but it is mostly our own convictions that are under peril here.

### Looking Down the Barrel

We are going on a hunt here. Since we have not hunted together before, here’s some background on me. I come from a family of hunters. Gramps and sons took to the hills in the Pyrenees armed with side-by-side guns.<sup>1</sup> Dad had two different-gauged sweet hunting-scene engraved shotguns: one for small game, the other for bigger animals like wild boar. I fantasized some day I’d get one.

The best shots we took with our air rifles were against “large mammalian game.” My gun, a Norica .22, was a Howitzer that packed a punch compared to my friends’ .177’s. No, we didn’t shoot dogs or horses. We played “war” and shot at one another – yup, we were foolish. I remember taking a shot at Manuel, his rotundity made him a better target, and wounding his hand at 150 yards. *Zzzzzing!* His pellets flew by my ears as he chased while I ran away thinking how insane this was. And how fun. The thrill of this “play” set me on a hunting path...

But today I am not a hunter. I'm an "animal lover" who donates to Defenders of Wildlife. Shoot, what am I doing here then? Hold your fire and hear me out. I'm not your typical environmentalist either. In a sense I hunt: for truth, insight, and understanding. Not your usual quarry. But if you take me along as a scout, endure, and take the shot, you'll bag a different kind of game just as impressive as a 10-point buck. You won't be able to mount or eat our elusive prey, but it will give your kills a deeper meaning that will taste as rich as game compared to prepackaged supermarket meat. However, this requires mercilessly shooting down much common sense and received wisdom about hunting. Are you game?

What are we aiming at here? Just as Socrates was bent on self-examination, incessantly chasing himself, we're setting the Socratic crosshairs on hunting itself. The arduous terrain is peppered with rocky contradictions, tensions about to snap, ironies, and paradoxes (*apparent* contradictions that resolve into insight). Along the way you'll also take some insightful shots. Not to spoil the fun, you'll encounter these as I flush them out. The methodology, the way to carry this out, involves looking at the *how* and *why* of hunting. Rather than firing shells without a choke to see where the random pellets strike, this is about the well-placed one-bullet kill. This requires skill and patience. It's going to be tough and fun, as a hunt *should* be. One more thing: here we follow the *philosophical fair chase code* (PFCC): give opposing views a sportsperson's fair chance before trying to shoot them down.

## Chambering the Philosophical Rounds

To excel at hunting you have to think not just as a hunter or predator, but also as prey. This very skill is the primer that sets philosophical thinking off: the ability to look at the world from different perspectives. Let's cycle the action and load another biographical round in the chamber to put you in my shoes.

I'm about 10. For the first time I align the sights on an animal with intent to kill. My "hunting" resume is the usual one of vicious playground kids: skewering, burning, and crushing insect-like critters. But this is a bird, a "real" animal. Trouble is, I'm a WWF nature crusader. I mean, I pestered my father like a horsefly till he quit hunting. Yet, here I am, with a sweet, unsuspecting bird marked by the white dot. The heart pounding, I feather the trigger. Can I pull it?



The inner fight I encountered captures a vital *and* troubling tension inherent in hunting: the allure of asserting your superiority over another creature you pursue, and the realization that this implies killing it. We also take two birds with this shot as it captures the conflict *and* snatches a working definition (another PFCC tenet: define and clarify key concepts early). Aligning with this tension, some veteran hunters still have a residual sense of remorse once the rush of the hunt is over and they stare into dead eyes.

At this point the tracks we were following split into hunting for need, where hunters *truly* depend on killing animals for survival, and hunting for sport, the activity you, dear reader, very likely pursue. (Even if you eat what you hunt, you're at no risk of starvation should you not eat it.) The former doesn't face many ethical issues, but the latter attracts controversy like a doe in heat draws bucks. We're stalking the latter, so here the term "hunting" refers to the sporting kind.

Under what conditions, if any, is hunting for fun legitimate? This kind of challenge is what philosophers, as truth hunters, live for. It means confronting beasts most hunters prefer not to cross paths with: arguments against hunting. Worry not, they won't plead to be spared, trying to convince you to feed critters Disney-style by firing flowers. But this isn't about shooting tied-up animals either; it is about chasing better reasons for hunting so that spilled blood may be atoned.

My hands are stained red, just not in the way you may surmise...

## Firing Blanks

Blanks? Blanks. That's what animal liberationists want you to shoot. Even better, spent shells, to avoid disturbing the animals. But their arguments sure are loud. Were they ammo, they'd be a magnum caliber with a nasty kick. Ironically, paradoxically, the reason to bring these folks here is to find better reasons to hunt. Before proceeding, another rule from the PFCC: don't simply reject or argue against the conclusions of opposing arguments that say "don't hunt." This looks at the gun from the wrong end (bad idea). We should look at the reasons they fire instead, the evidence that supports the conclusion. An open mind and a clear bore go a long way here.

Typically, those opposing hunting come with a side-by-side ethical shotgun, the rights of animals and their intrinsic worth in one barrel



(as Tom Regan chambers it), and the suffering this inflicts on animals in the other barrel (with Peter Singer loading this one).<sup>2</sup> Actually, to down our quarry here we need only fire Singer's load because he bypasses two issues that muck up the other bore: the nature of rights and whether animals can have rights. For Singer these have "to be justified on the basis of the possibilities for suffering and happiness," and since animals have interests, at least in not being caused pain, this covers much of what matters to rights partisans.<sup>3</sup>

Singer shoulders the ethical theory of utilitarianism, built on the notion of our action's consequences. An action is morally right or wrong in relation to the amount of pleasure or pain it causes to those affected by it. Someone sharing ammo with you when you're out in the field is a happiness-producing action, whereas their using your dog for target practice is not. To recast this extra-light, yet keep the same firepower: it is wrong to hunt because of the suffering it brings animals. This makes *me* take the finger off the trigger.

The upshot: we should give equal consideration to the interests of all animals.<sup>4</sup> Fine. But for the record, the equal consideration of those interests is not the same thing as those interests being equal. It remains to be seen how they compare. We can flush out the difficulty of calculating animal pain versus human pleasure – especially if we scout out a context larger than individual animals and hunters, and consider the suffering this brings to other animals related to our prey and its role in the ecosystem, as well as how people's lives are affected by the hunter's activity (family members, hunting businesses, opponents). How do we estimate the pain and pleasure? Whereas the original argument seems to give minute of angle groupings, now even the best scope can't handle it. It's like trying to fend off a rhino with a cap gun. However, this is a "practical" difficulty that leaves the underlying issue standing: isn't there something wrong with causing suffering to animals for the sake of sport? The rhino is pissed.

We can discharge the following: animals *also* hunt and kill; they can do it, we can do it. True, as Woody Allen says in *Love & Death*, "nature is ... spiders and bugs, and big fish eating little fish ... animals eating animals. It is like an enormous restaurant."<sup>5</sup> But this won't cut it. Animals, acting on instinct and lacking cognitive capacity, don't know any better. We do. We can grasp the consequences of our actions. This means realizing that our fun rides on the suffering of other beings when there are alternative enjoyments available – even with guns and bows – which don't involve killing and maiming animals.



Another PFCC cue: a better strategy to deal with opposing views is to actually concede the point, then see if you can come up with a follow-up shot that blows it out of the water (should we be concerned with waterfowl). Let's agree with Singer that, because animals are not mere means but ends in themselves with interests of their own, we must not treat them as expendable for *trivial* purposes.<sup>6</sup> Now we need to show that hunting is not trivial – so much so, in fact, that it overrides the interests of animals in not being used as mere means or harmed on account of sport.<sup>7</sup> This is quite a challenge. Let's give it our best shot.

## Loaded Words and Shooting Straight

But we can handload the cartridge with even more gunpowder.<sup>8</sup> You've heard and probably intoned it, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Substitute Stone Age weaponry for *spritzers* and bolt-actions and we're set. In a genuine sense words hurt, since they're used to justify the skin-piercing bullets aimed at animals tagged as "pests." Besides, we're great at devising ways to avoid guilt-trips. Words that show contempt – "it's just a darn varmint" – or praise for the speaker's own prowess – "it was a bruisin' bruin" – cycle the conscience-easing action like it's custom serviced. However unpleasant this may be, as scrubbing bores always is, for the sake of a cleaner hunting ethos we should reflect on hunting tropes and their effect on the sport.

The sight is on the bird. Breathe in, so cute; breathe out, I have it where I want it; breathe in, that'd be cruel; breathe out, just pull the trigger; breathe in, wonder if it has lil' baby birds; breathe out, it'd be quite a shot. My arms are tiring. Breathe . . . Crack! The pellet leaves. I can't wish it back.

Evolutionary psychology, which explains things in terms of whether they maximize our chances to procreate or not, supports the idea that language shapes how we view the world. I'm usually reticent to join their party (philosophically, they glass and interpret evidence too narrowly), but they present a persuasive case that should make us think twice before shooting off certain words. To pack this with as few grains as possible: gendered words ascribe different attributes to the same object across different languages. The word for "key," a female noun in Spanish, is



described as intricate or lovely by Spaniards, whereas in German, the masculine noun has Germans describing it as jagged, or hard and heavy. Likewise language shapes what we see, since using the same word to cover more than one color, or more words to discriminate different hues, makes for faster or slower color recognition across different language speakers.<sup>9</sup>

To chase this toward our interests: if words shape how we see the world, and our word choices influence how we see animals, this has dire consequences for fauna. Referring to animals as pests, cuties, or beauties – prairie rats, sweet baby pandas, or gorgeous stags – may mean we shoot as many of them as possible, smooch ‘em, or hunt them in a fair and honorable way. Often hunters speak of varmints derisively while praising game. Three-quarter bore expressions are pertinent here: “insults” passed off as neutral tags, such as varmint, vermin, pest; euphemisms like harvesting or culling; and hyperbolic renditions of animals and risk that speak of bruises, beasts, and monsters. These load the odds against the animals.

It can be argued that it’s a fact that rodents are pests, or that coyotes are predators to be eliminated. But the argument’s claw extractor isn’t built for this; these reasons fail to grab the case, jamming the cartridge. For one, demeaning the animals actually brings the wrong emotional component (the positive one comes later). It puts rage in the machine, and anger and guns don’t mix. Contrast varmint treatment with that of pets, referred to by “gentler” descriptions. Even when we must kill them because they are a threat, or there are too many, we devise *humane* ways to eliminate them. Because these animals suffer just the same, pest status is not a reason to disregard their suffering. Consistency requires equal treatment and a more humane way of disposing of them such as sterilization. But this means they’d be off limits for hunters. The issue is that language makes it easier to justify indiscriminate killing in ways we wouldn’t condone for other animals, be they pets or prized game.

The other two categories follow suit. Hunters often refer to themselves as stewards of nature who *care* for the animals they hunt. Indeed, they do much good for the animals and their immediate environment. But terms like “harvesting” euphemistically disguise the fact that it’s not conservation for the animals’ sake but for the hunters’. It’s about using animals to guarantee the joy of hunting – the vocabulary underscores their use as objects. If one *really* cared for the animals, one wouldn’t hunt them. Since the last set of terms fits the pattern we won’t ferret it out in detail, simply noting that speaking of bruises and brutes creates a mystique that takes out the best genes (true nature stewardship wouldn’t do so; predators kill the weak, better serving the ecosystem).



Let's shoot straight and call a thing by its name. We are not harvesting but killing when we hunt; it isn't a prairie rat, but a prairie dog; it's not a damned varmint, but a fox. And there is *nothing wrong* with that. These are not the kind of holsters you want for your concepts anyway. Ultimately this cheapens hunting, shooting at sitting ducks (at worst) or waddling ones (at best), not at challenging flying fowl. Here goes a follow-up shot. Even if the premises of the argument don't support the conclusion, the conclusion may still hold for other reasons. Let's grant that how we speak *and* think of the prey affects our behavior, resulting in a kind of controversial inauthentic hunting.

Paradoxically, this makes a stronger case for the hunting I believe is legitimate: a *meaningful* hunting carried out in ways and captured in words that don't belittle but honor animals.

Reading this may have been somewhat painful, but definitely a lot less so than having your behind perforated by a nosler-tipped round. You've been a sport staying with me. You can sigh with relief since now we'll argue for your side of things, and I'll take shots at myself instead of you. We're in luck. I just picked up the trail we're after.

## The Virtuous Hunter

Something falls into the river. But I can't tell whether the waters have washed away the sweet bird or a chunk of branch. The elation gives way to remorse. To this day the bird's ghost haunts me: if I hit it, it flies on the sorrow I felt; if I didn't hit it, it's truly a ghost's ghost for haunting me with gratuitous guilt.

To get a tight grouping around the bull's eye: hunting as a sport requires that we willingly build it as a challenge. We make the hunt more difficult than it needs to be, curtailing our superiority over the prey to bring us as close to parity as possible while giving us the chance – not the certainty – to succeed. Michael, Robert De Niro's character in *The Deer Hunter*, exemplifies this by voluntarily embracing the one-shot kill ethos as his standard of excellence.<sup>10</sup> The interest lies in the *process* more than the result, as José Ortega y Gasset writes.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the kill is the goal (otherwise it's a travesty of a hunt). What marks the difference between an excellent hunt and a questionable one is *how* this is achieved and the reasons behind these actions, the *why*. The virtuous hunter follows an



ethos, let's call it Diana's Code after the Roman hunting goddess, which points our thinking, actions, and weapons in the right direction. Here we argue for the non-triviality of hunting.

After much grueling philosophical tracking – comes with the turf – we've spotted our prey. The hunt for “the hunt” is finally on. Alert and ready, we *still* don't shoot. Hunting stands out among sports because it requires extreme self-control, what with the adrenaline pumping, the lure of the prey, and the very small window of opportunity, it's too easy to pull the trigger or release the string prematurely. Often the best skill a hunter has is being able to hold the shot or forsake it altogether. It takes true discipline. Hunters who, rather than risk a bad shot, let animals go that they've tracked for months before the season impress me. It's time to bring out the single-shot rifle of ethical theories, virtue ethics. This theory centers on hunters of virtuous character, who *aim* at being the best Nimrods possible:<sup>12</sup> *excellence* as hunters is the goal. Ortega concurs with this.<sup>13</sup> Virtues are the middle ground between vices and lead to this excellence. For example, courage sits between the vices of cowardliness and recklessness. Virtuousness depends on doing things for the right reasons: forsaking the shot to avoid just wounding the animal is virtuous, holding it to save a bullet ... well, the gun should go off and waste the round.

To hit the target we need good judgment, experience, deliberate thinking, and skills developed by habit. Indeed, at the heart of hunting is a *discipline* that requires developing those skills unique to hunting. You must cultivate *the skill of the kill*: unflinching, steely nerves; tracking and orienteering abilities; and, of course, superior marksmanship. This is built on hard work. Miguel Delibes, a Spanish award-winning novelist who says he was a hunter who became a writer,<sup>14</sup> celebrates the tough hunts of his youth, based on effort, sacrifice, suffering, and know-how.<sup>15</sup> This Spartan hunting is more meritorious – read virtuous – than the kind done on ATVs. We become soft otherwise. And this affects the value of the kill. Not all are worth the same.

Hunting practices are a diverse lot that fall on different places along the hunting continuum in terms of “virtuosity.”<sup>16</sup> On the positive end, the virtuous hunter leads by example. Delibes pictures such a hunter in his *Diario de un cazador*: Lorenzo is a dedicated huntsman who shoots and talks straight, and owns up to his mistakes to avoid them in the future.<sup>17</sup> Hunting boar with spear, bear with bow, dangerous game up close and personal, or with a one-shot ethos, all follow Diana's Code and devise formidable and admirable challenges. Quality not quantity guides this. A central aspect of this superior kind of hunting is the ritual of honoring the



kill and paying homage to it. It seems we could learn something from our Stone Age antecessors, who went out of their way to undo the violence of their deed by ritual veneration.<sup>18</sup> The cavemen were more sensitive and advanced than today's metrosexual crowd, let alone your average yahoo.

The ambiguous cases inhabit the middle of the range. My "hunt" was an example of novice hunting where no honorable kill was possible (for one, I shouldn't have shot the bird over the river, where the body was irrecoverable). There are questionable practices that virtuous hunters wouldn't use, such as electronic game calls. These give hunters an advantage over the animals and the sport itself, taking away any legitimate claim to a worthy challenge. In the words of another Delibes' character, Gualberto, as he comments on game calls, "it is as if on your wedding day your wife's old boyfriend waits for you with a blunderbuss behind a curtain. Is that hunting, boss?"<sup>19</sup> We might end up hunting with "smart bullets" that chase prey on their own ...

The vicious hunter operates at the negative end of the spectrum. Aerial kills from choppers, poaching, grossly "arranged" canned hunts and similar practices mark this shooter. A colleague witnessed a group of "hunters" corral a herd of elk into a small clearing just before hunting season; once it opened they formed a semi-circle with their vehicles and shot them all. Of course, this is not done in the open. Gualberto again: "I tell you boss, when a man has to hide to do something, it's cause the thing he does is not right."<sup>20</sup> I ask you, is that hunting, boss?

Time to take your hard-earned shot. When we chambered the philosophic rounds earlier I spoke of the tension inherent between the excitement of the chase and the act of killing. Of course, here the strain comes as a .50 cal. paradox. The more you appreciate the value of the life you take and observe Diana's Code, exerting yourself to make a true challenge of the hunt, the more valuable and genuinely enjoyable the hunt. It will also be all the more ethically legitimate. Conversely, the more you "belittle" matters – remember the issue of language? – the less valuable the hunt and all that follows. To add more spin to this, the greater the regret at extinguishing a living being for the right reasons and in the right way, the better you can feel about it! This doesn't mean you should go through a pack of Kleenex every time you hunt. Between the vices of being callous and a crybaby, there is the virtue of being sensitive. The virtuous hunter "feels" for the prey. Indeed, this is the best way to ensure an ethical hunt.

To give the coup de grâce, there is a sense in which the ethical treatment of animals is actually indebted to the virtuous hunters' ethos, for the latter *intentionally* limits what's allowable against the animal in the



hunt.<sup>21</sup> This compassionate hunting depends on a genuine appreciation of animal life. One kills, but for better reasons. However, this doesn't mean wavering before pulling the trigger, because one cannot afford a flicker of doubt if one is to bag any partridges!<sup>22</sup> Rather, it asks for an emotional connection afterwards – reflection. Hence the importance of giving due respect to the life just taken.

In short, the original question was whether we could justify hunting for the sake of fun in the face of animal suffering. Well, the issue isn't solved with a simple answer, "hunting is right" or "it's wrong." It requires a more nuanced answer that argues that hunting is acceptable for some people, some of the time, for some reasons. And at the core we find that the hunter's ethos, built on feeling for the animal, brings about ethical sensitivity and demands excellence from the *hunter of virtue*.

## Parting Shot

I mentioned blood in my hands. I once killed a deer. On a bicycle! Talk about a skeleton in the closet (surely you didn't expect this!). I didn't run it over with monster tires or spear it *à la* Lancelot. Off the front of a training race, I encountered a herd of deer. Hesitating whether to stop or close to the finish, I pressed on. Caught between the road, parallel to their exit path, and an 8-foot metallic fence, they got spooked. With effortless elegance, even in panic, they jumped over the fence one by one. Except the last one. (Squeamish readers should skip the rest of this.) Its front leg hit one of the poles that held the fence in place. Its very attempt to get over actually drove the pole through the shoulder, impaling and dislocating it. Gaping wound. Muscle. Sinew. Bone. Blood. Gravity did its job. The deer fell on the other side, pitifully dragging itself away. Deer are resilient. Maybe this is another ghost and it survived? (Skeletons in closets, ghost stories, how fitting for hunting season and Halloween.) No, death's shadow followed it alright.

I'm aware this wasn't hunting; I wasn't *directly* responsible. But the point is, I've had my kill.<sup>23</sup> And given my empathetic temperament, that's plenty. However, had I been given the choice, I'd have preferred a one-shot deal that gave the deer a chance, where if successful I could honor it. I rely on other hunters, Virtuous Hunters, who respect their kills to



help me atone for this. Then again, as a cruel and adventurous Spaniard – as the great philosopher Immanuel Kant so described my countrymen – maybe I should get over it.<sup>24</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 I dedicate this chapter to them: Grandpa Juan “Atuna” Ilundáin-Muguero and son Iontxo, both in the happy hunting grounds, and the rest of the pack, Jesús mari (my father), Josetxo, and Pedro José. Their hunting exploits would have made Greek hunting goddess Artemis proud.
- 2 Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002). There are also bolt-action, lever-action, and AR-15 platform arguments such as land ethic or ecofeminist critiques. For *other* arguments yet see Linda Jerofke’s tasteful “Taking Stock: An Overview of Arguments For and Against Hunting,” in Fritz Allhoff and Dave Monroe (eds.) *Food & Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 221–35.
- 3 Singer, *Animal Liberation*, p. 8. His concern is “speciesism,” treating other species in an unfair way.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 231.
- 5 *Love & Death*, dir. Woody Allen (Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 1975).
- 6 Singer, *Animal Liberation*, p. 20.
- 7 Of course, hunting is not trivial for hunters, but from the point of view of animal suffering, all things being equal, the burden of proof is on the hunter.
- 8 Warning: this will make you uncomfortable; remember the PFCC and bite the bullet. It’ll pay off in the end.
- 9 Sharon Begley, “What’s in a Word? Language May Shape Our Thoughts,” *Newsweek*, July 9, 2009. Available at [www.newsweek.com/id/205985](http://www.newsweek.com/id/205985) (accessed July 31, 2009). There is a difference between language and thought that is ignored here. Language may simply reflect how we think of these. However, since the thinking at this level is dependent on language, this is probably a relation that goes both ways.
- 10 *The Deer Hunter*, dir. Robert Cimino (EMI films, 1978).
- 11 José Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Hunting*, trans. Howard B. Wescott (Belgrade, MT: Wilderness Adventure Press, 1995), p. 35ff. This short work, often cited in hunting circles in too poor a way, contains a plethora of insights for a flourishing life that merit a careful, deliberate tracking of all its pages. Following common practice, “Ortega” will be used hereafter.
- 12 Nimrod was the original badass “Mighty Hunter” of the Mesopotamians. A ruler who conquered plenty of cities, his reputation was tarnished in the Bible by association with the Tower of Babel.



- 13 *Meditations on Hunting*, pp. 98–9.
- 14 Miguel Delibes, *Mi vida al aire libre* (My Life Outdoors) (Madrid: Ediciones Destino, 1989), p. 201. Moreover, he says he was a hunter before he had a gun, as he hunted with stones as a child (p. 202).
- 15 *Ibid.*, pp. 214ff.
- 16 Rather than hunting being absolutely right or wrong, there are better and worse reasons for hunting, and ways of realizing it, that line up on a continuum. This strategy of giving up black and white answers doesn't result in a relativistic "anything goes." It actually permits more precise and honest shooting. True, it brings some uncertainty at times, but it more accurately captures what's going on. Just as the gradients between different colors lack definite boundary lines, but we can tell a red from a yellow, there will be hunting practices that are clearly admirable, and others that won't even qualify as hunting. Context helps adjudicate difficult cases.
- 17 Miguel Delibes, *Diario de un cazador* (Diary of a Hunter) (Madrid: Ediciones Destino, 1995).
- 18 David Sansone, *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 40ff. Although his book is about the definition of sport and Greek athletics, its first part has a truly insightful analysis of the phenomenon of hunting. Should readers be inclined to pursue this, they will find revealing ideas on why hunters display their kills and mount them, reasons beyond practical explanation for why they get rid of human scents, and many more enticing catches.
- 19 Miguel Delibes, "La caza de la perdiz roja" (Hunting the Red Partridge), in *Viejas historias de Castilla la Vieja* (Old Stories of Castilla la Vieja) (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1981), p. 140; my translation.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 130; my translation.
- 21 David Inglis, "Meditations on Sport: On the Trial of Ortega y Gasset's Philosophy of Sportive Existence," *Journal of Philosophy of Sport* 31 (2004): 92.
- 22 Cf. Ortega, *Meditations on Hunting*, p. 98; Delibes, "La caza de la perdiz roja," pp. 122–5. It does bring you closer to not pulling the trigger. The ambivalence, whether from a self-avowed animal lover such as me, or a seasoned hunter with hundreds of kills, stems from the same source. We understand *The Deer Hunter's* Michael better now when he goes from his one-kill ethos to taking the finger off the trigger at the end of the film. He's gained an appreciation for life and the tension has placed him on the other side. Hey, it happens even to the toughest.
- 23 I also have an impressive track record of killing all kinds of birds while driving (usually with my horrified wife in the car). But that's a story with a different lesson best left for another occasion.
- 24 Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Beautiful and Sublime*, trans. J. T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 100.

