

Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-3345

FOREWORD

(to Ortega y Gasset)

A philosopher would have been superfluous, when I was growing up. Ancestors living and dead had already informed me that wild was best and that hunting was the way to go wild. Nature, meanwhile, had filled the woods with good things. A child did not need to understand what was happening -- not unless it hit below the belt.

When it hit first, I was eleven years old and Mom was waking me early. A furbearer worth three dollars was poking around the barn, she said, so I ran barefoot onto frosty grass, carrying a .22 rifle. As I tried to aim, however, an outrageous thing happened: My knees began to tremble so violently that pajama pants dropped around skinny shanks. My shot missed, of course, but Mom did not laugh. She recognized my emotion as the real thing -- what philosopher Ortega y Gasset calls "mystical agitation." Dad called it buck fever. I had heard about the disease but didn't know you could get it from a skunk.

That was not many years back, as history goes, but the world today groans under twice as many people, few of whom know much about skunks or mystical agitation. Urban children are raised in virtual reality, believing that animals speak English. Those young people are hunters still, all of them, but they shoot with joysticks and develop what Ortega calls "a funny snobbery toward anything wild, man or animal."

We need guidance in this "rather stupid time," and Ortega's essays are the obvious source. He is the philosopher who has looked most deeply into the hunting instinct, of which the fishing instinct is part. Further, he writes with the clarity you would expect from an heir of Socrates and Plato (both of whom hunted, as he points out).

Mind you, philosophic simplicity is not what we are accustomed to in this age of hype. Where we are reticent and convoluted, Ortega is direct and elegant. He looks through our foliage with falcon eyes, and we squirm.

An American reader should be aware, moreover, that Ortega is not in the tradition of Thoreau and Leopold -- the natural philosophers with whom I (and perhaps you) grew up.

Henry David Thoreau gave up hunting and fishing to pursue bigger game. He wanted a wife too, but gave up marriage, and read the world's great books but "travelled a good deal in Concord" -- on foot. And yet the abstemious New Englander and the cosmopolitan Spaniard agreed on what hunting is about. As you read Ortega's essay on "Vacations from the Human Condition," keep

in mind this passage from Thoreau's Walden:

"As I came home through the woods with my string of fish, trailing my pole, it being now quite dark, I caught a glimpse of a woodchuck stealing across my path, and felt a strange thrill of savage delight, and was strongly tempted to seize and devour him raw; not that I was hungry then, except for that wildness which he represented. Once or twice, however, while I lived at the pond, I found myself ranging the woods like a half-starved hound, with a strange abandonment, seeking some kind of venison which I might devour, and no morsel could have been too savage for me."

Aldo Leopold was the conservationist, naturalist, and ecologist who gave us "the land ethic." Leopold hunted "meat from God," and this is how he found it:

"The dog, when he approaches the briars, looks around to make sure I am within gunshot. Reassured, he advances ... wet nose screening a hundred scents for that one scent, the potential presence of which gives life and meaning to the whole landscape."

Ortega stands in contrast. He is a student of human nature, not Mother Nature, and of the universal, not the local. His landscape is a stage on which hunters play the lead. He does not

look into the dispersion of seeds, like Thoreau, or give animals a habitat like Leopold. What we get from Ortega is a hunter's ethic, which governs relations between two individuals -- human and prey -- and is older than the land ethic by thousands of years.

What seems remarkable is not that Ortega, Leopold, and Thoreau came into the landscape from such different directions. Their starting points were fixed by the cultures in which they grew up, and cultures change. What does not change is nature -- human nature and Mother Nature. We can be sure of this because, when the classical philosopher and the two natural philosophers go hunting, they find themselves on exactly the same trail. You and I can therefore follow it in confidence.

The measure of a philosopher, I suppose, is his ability to be right over time, and one of life's coincidences gave me a chance to measure Ortega. He had published his Meditations on Hunting in Lisbon in 1942. My work took me there years later. One autumn weekend, after beating a good deal of Portuguese brush, I picked up these essays and found a prescient passage:

"In all revolutions, the first thing that the 'people' have done was to jump over the fences of preserves or to tear them down, and in the name of social justice pursue the hare and the partridge. And this after the revolutionary newspapers, in their editorials, had for years and years been abusing the aristocrats for being so frivolous as to ... spend their time

hunting."

And that was exactly what happened in Portugal after the revolution of 1974. While Communist leaders were still trying to tell the workers what their struggle was about, they stuffed themselves, four at a time plus dogs, into very small cars. There were traffic jams on the way to the fields and lines of Fiats and Citroëns headed back to Lisbon after dark, bearing hares and partridges and exhausted hunters. They were not experienced and not yet governed by a tight code of ethics, but they had made a start at what they had always dreamed of doing.

It was what Ortega y Gasset had predicted three decades earlier. The old regime might have diminished revolutionary fervor if it had listened to the philosopher when he explained that hunting is not a "reasoned pursuit." On the contrary, he wrote, it is "however strangely, a deep and permanent yearning in the human condition."

And besides, no one who hunts all day has enough energy left to start a revolution.

≈

Chuck:

This book could use an index. It might be a marketing point too: At last, a serious edition of Ortega.

Field & Stream might do a review if I can send bound galleys in advance.

~~Could pick up dog food
from Rothings Saturday &
put in Dennis' Lib.~~

That hunting is a sport is
in a doubt.

"Sport" - ~~is~~ a pleasant
is not a tennis ball.

no scooping.
center
No less ^{day} important because you
do not have to do it

Ortega is not a nature philosopher. Describe
trees + birds + insects as stage settings.
Read Thoreau.

or read Aldo Leopold for the "land ethic".

(Ortega is in the tradition of Socrates + Plato -
both hunters). Interested in man (including woman).

Many points open to argument but ~~it~~ were
easy to argue with.

(101) The lineage of reason: "developed throughout history
by very hard work."

(102) "Hunting was the first occupation."

(108) "Vacations from the human condition."

(31) It involves a complete code of ~~action~~ of the most distinguished design

(76) (77) Dogs give hunting a "symphonic majesty."
"accepting reason, in sufficiency and placing another animal between his reason & the game."

Does plant only in general - "purely vegetal"
Does not pay much attention to species of ~~land~~ ^{land & insects,}
i.e. the.

For nature of a stage, plants + land + insect
as setting.

1197 The Ethereal of Hunting

Hunting must not be "deficient in effort"

But there must be no "affected piety" i.e. the. (ff lower)

(87) "... if there are so many bad writers it is because there are some good ones." (87)

hunting in order to have hunted

(20) "every good hunter has dedicated a part of his existence — it is ~~important~~ unimportant how much — to hunting."

(23) "life is brief + urgent" (essence of rushing)

(24) "existing becomes a poetic task"
hunting

(25) "Voice ... from the the innermost secret folds of ourselves."

(26) "a singular vocation"

"the happy occupation"

(29) "a deep and permanent yearning"

(35) "... feeling under their feet the profound pulsation of the human part."

My role here is that of a tick on
a battle, but I won't hold on as long.

We all look for what we ought to
do in life, and the [useless old] ways of
our ancestors [the ages] turn out to be the
most useless, but also the best.

→ How to handle the fact that hunting is
at once the most useless thing you can do
and the best.

We work twice as hard at hunting but
do not feel that we have worked at all

The oldest obligation / precept.

Universality / ~~at~~ hunting shown
by O. G.'s ability to write a book that ~~is~~
would be unchanged if written today or
a hundred years ago.

People who ~~can~~ not hunt have always hated those
who do (p. 30)

30 - The New World was once a place, ~~where~~ unlike the old, where hunting (fishing) had no demand limitation + privilege.

→ Translation is good but literal + therefore sounds (elevated / stilted,) on occasion (p31 - ~~the~~ edition of "the most distinguished design").

Prose is terse, elegant;

37 - ^{a Quire} Polybius died at age 80, falling off his horse.

38/40 - "Useful + noble" (in greater times). Built strength + valor, in the days when people did ~~not fear to~~ were not ashamed to seek them. We don't talk that way today. "Vigor"

read Polybius!

43 "purest forms of human happiness" //

// "That hunting is a sport is incidental."

(addresses every criticism of hunting: that it is a sport (purely incidental); ...)

(46) "hunting is not an exclusively human occupation" -- almost all animals do it.

"The beast's predatory zeal and any good hunter's almost mythical agitation" have the same origin

(49) (fair chase)

// (NST "one main view of hunting" but ~~a description of what is eternally true of~~ hunting -- always and by all species.)

// 51 "re-enters" nature

// clarity of vision: Ortega has it. The gift of the philosopher: to say things simply, ~~for 2 reasons: for the sake of local color.~~ not local color but truth; the general where most of us have to settle for the specific.

61 - I think game does sound, in places, but is always difficult to hunt (if truly wild).

// 62 "the wild animal that does deep down inside any good hunter..."

(61) "hunting is dying... this outstanding form of happiness is on the verge of vanishing."

(70) "The urbanized + cultivated man has almost always felt a funny hostility toward anything wild, man or animal."

mistranslate snipe or woodcock

(62) // Philosophy is hunting

96 "one does not hunt in order ~~to~~ to kill..."

97 camera hunting

11 (animal rights) "~~The ~~real~~ ~~are~~ beautiful~~ farce

↓
(There are not many modern topics he did not address.)

EDITORS AFIELD

ordered
from Vargos

THOMAS McINTYRE

Hunting

Thoughts On The Sport

I could not tell if it was a bull or not; but even from the ridge 1000 yards away, I had no doubt it was an elk moving in the Colorado timber below me. Through my field glasses I could make out the October-afternoon sun shifting across its flank as it walked between the dark pines and then lay down upon the needled forest floor, its head still in the shadows. There was not much time until nightfall, and I knew that if I was going to learn what manner of elk this was I had to start right now: That stand of timber was much farther off than it appeared at first glance. Standing, I could see—as the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset suggested in his wondrous *Meditations on Hunting*—that it was at least 10,000 years to the edge of those trees.

José Ortega y Gasset was Spain's leading thinker in this century. The author of such major philosophical works as *The Revolt of the Masses* and *Meditations on Quixote*, he was born in Madrid in 1883 and died there 72 years later. In 1942, while in Lisbon in exile from the Falangist dictator Francisco Franco, Ortega y Gasset wrote the prologue to his friend Edward, Count Yebes's memoirs *Twenty-Years of Big-Game Hunting*. The idea was not a new or foreign one to him, however. "Just as the leaping stag tempts the hunter," he began

his prologue, "the topic of hunting has often tempted me."

Subsequently reprinted separately from the Count's book under the title *Meditations on Hunting*, this lengthy essay to my knowledge represents the single serious modern philosophical examination of the sport of hunting (by which Ortega y Gasset also meant fishing and trapping, seeing each as a form of hunting—which he defined as the pursuit of game in order to capture it). No other philosopher in our time has judged hunting to be important enough to warrant his consideration; but, of course, our time, as Ortega y Gasset pointed out with a hint of an exasperated sigh, is "a rather stupid" one.

Exactly what, according to this Spanish philosopher and humanist, is sport hunting all about? It is *not*, first of all, sim-



ple food gathering, because no present-day sportsman needs to hunt in order to eat. Nor is it a version of combat, even with dangerous game, because combat is a contest between ostensible equals, and man, in terms of his intelligence and technology, is vastly superior to any animal. In fact, the true sportsman has to impose limitations upon himself and upon his technology in

order to lower himself more nearly to the level of the animal he pursues and permit it a freer play of its instinctive defenses, its "game" of avoidance and flight and concealment. Then is hunting all about the killing of animals?

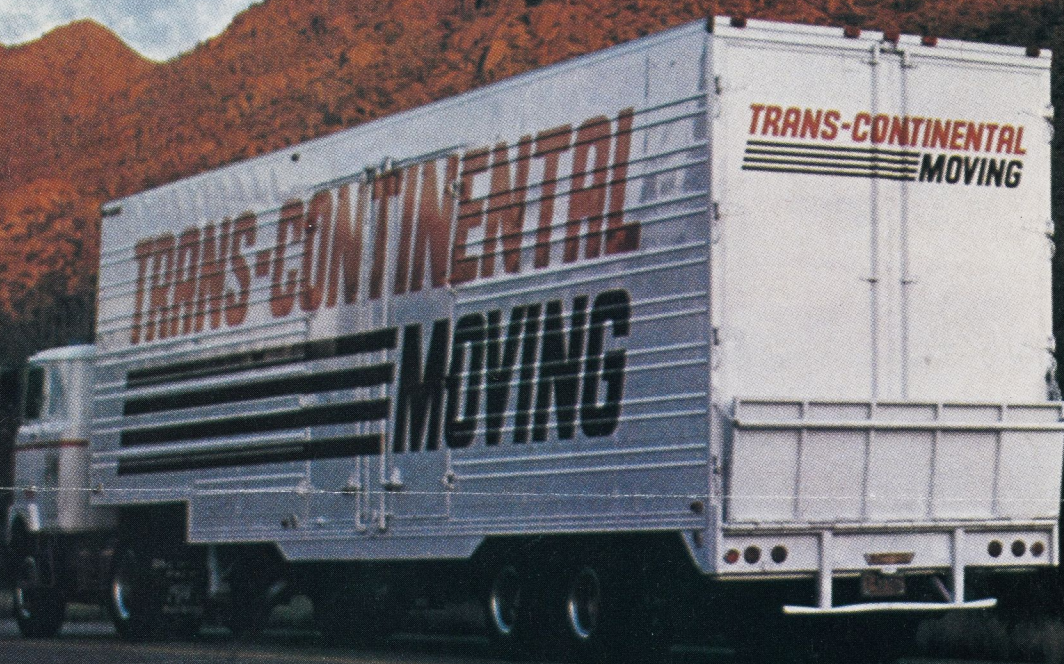
Although the ultimate role for the hunter is to be a "death dealer," the killing of animals is still the most mysterious aspect of the hunt. It is true that the genuine possibility of the game animal being killed must be present for hunting to be true hunting, to be "authentic." It is even the case that "the greatest and most moral homage we can pay to certain animals on certain occasions is to kill them with certain means and rituals." But it is not the death of the game animal that most interests the true hunter; rather, it is the hardship, risk, skill and physical exertion—in short, the hunting itself—that went into achieving that death. That is his greatest pleasure. And if the hunter does succeed in killing, it is only "in order to have hunted." It is to have made the hunting real and not some caricature such as "photographic hunting," which mocks our human instinct to hunt—"that bitter impulse that we have inherited from primitive man"—by nimbly trying to avoid the component of death that is present in hunting and which causes every good hunter uneasiness "in the depths of his

continued



Photo by Gabby Barrus

As hunters, we can enjoy "a vacation from the human condition."



You can count on Sears service

Few places in the U.S. are beyond the reach of Sears 16,000 service trucks—and even if you move to Ely, Nevada or Blairs Mills, Kentucky, Sears will arrange for your service and honor your warranties.

EVERY YEAR, one American family in five moves to a new home. New address, new phone number, new schools, new friends—but if your appliances came from Sears, the same old reliable service is only a phone call away.

If you want help hooking up Sears appliances you've taken with you, call your new Sears store in advance and let them know when you expect to move in.

Sears will do its best to be there that very day.

If you bought a Sears appliance from *any* Sears store in the U.S., *every* Sears store and service center in the U.S. will offer you service—and of course you can charge it on your Sears credit card.

If you bought a maintenance agreement from Sears, every Sears store will honor it.

Sears operates 16,000 service trucks, each driven by a Sears-trained technician and stocked with parts for Sears products. Chances are very good that a single service call will

[Ortega leftovers]

those who prefer the old ways find them distant and winding.

[Ortega was not the only philosopher who hunted. Socrates did it, and Plato, [] and many of their descendants. Hunting and fishing (which is the same thing) either attract philosophers or bring out the philosopher in each hunter.]

Nature was life, for Leopold, and recreation/diversion [] for Ortega -- but you in his pages you will see what recreation [] means.]

clear -- clearer than, say, the last instructions you read for shooting a clay pigeon or tying a trout fly.

My role here is that of a tick on a buffalo.

Thoreau wanted a wife, too, but gave up marriage. There is a wrenching passage in which he embraces "the shrub oak with its scanty garment of leaves rising above the snow,... innocent and sweet as a maiden...." (Bly p.114)

[-- a linkage [] between each animal and the environment [] that nurtures it. [You cannot have the individual [] without its habitat, [] says Leopold.]

Game has a supporting role, for Ortega, and all the rest -- trees, birds, and insects -- are incidentals, part of the setting. You paint your own backdrop.

Nature becomes a spectator sport. The screen shows talking animals and noble savages;

Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-3345

FOREWORD

(to Ortega y Gasset)

A philosopher would have been superfluous, when I was growing up. Ancestors living and dead had already informed me that wild was best and that hunting was the way to go wild. Nature, meanwhile, had filled the woods with good things. A child did not need to understand what was happening -- not unless it hit below the belt.

When it hit first, I was eleven years old and Mom was waking me early. A furbearer worth three dollars was poking around the barn, she said, so I ran barefoot onto frosty grass, carrying a .22 rifle. As I tried to aim, however, an outrageous thing happened: My knees began to tremble so violently that pajama pants dropped around skinny shanks. My shot missed, of course, but Mom did not laugh. She recognized my emotion as the real thing -- what philosopher Ortega y Gasset calls "mystical agitation." Dad called it buck fever. I had heard about the disease but didn't know you could get it from a skunk.

That was not many years back, as history goes, but the world today groans under twice as many people, few of whom know much about skunks or mystical agitation. Urban children are raised in virtual reality, believing that animals speak English. Those young people are hunters still, all of them, but they shoot with joysticks and develop what Ortega calls "a funny snobbery toward anything wild, man or animal."

We need guidance in this "rather stupid time," and Ortega's essays are the obvious source. He is the philosopher who has looked most deeply into the hunting instinct, of which the fishing instinct is part. Further, he writes with the clarity you would expect from an heir of Socrates and Plato (both of whom hunted, as he points out).

Mind you, philosophic simplicity is not what we are accustomed to in this age of hype. Where we are reticent and convoluted, Ortega is direct and elegant. He looks through our foliage with falcon eyes, and we squirm.

An American reader should be aware, moreover, that Ortega is not in the tradition of Thoreau and Leopold -- the natural philosophers with whom I (and perhaps you) grew up.

Henry David Thoreau gave up hunting and fishing to pursue bigger game. He wanted a wife too, but gave up marriage, and read the world's great books but "travelled a good deal in Concord" -- on foot. And yet the abstemious New Englander and the cosmopolitan Spaniard agreed on what hunting is about. As you read Ortega's essay on "Vacations from the Human Condition," keep

in mind this passage from Thoreau's Walden:

"As I came home through the woods with my string of fish, trailing my pole, it being now quite dark, I caught a glimpse of a woodchuck stealing across my path, and felt a strange thrill of savage delight, and was strongly tempted to seize and devour him raw; not that I was hungry then, except for that wildness which he represented. Once or twice, however, while I lived at the pond, I found myself ranging the woods like a half-starved hound, with a strange abandonment, seeking some kind of venison which I might devour, and no morsel could have been too savage for me."

Aldo Leopold was the conservationist, naturalist, and ecologist who gave us "the land ethic." Leopold hunted "meat from God," and this is how he found it:

"The dog, when he approaches the briars, looks around to make sure I am within gunshot. Reassured, he advances ... wet nose screening a hundred scents for that one scent, the potential presence of which gives life and meaning to the whole landscape."

Ortega stands in contrast. He is a student of human nature, not Mother Nature, and of the universal, not the local. His landscape is a stage on which hunters play the lead. He does not

look into the dispersion of seeds, like Thoreau, or give animals a habitat like Leopold. What we get from Ortega is a hunter's ethic, which governs relations between two individuals -- human and prey -- and is older than the land ethic by thousands of years.

What seems remarkable is not that Ortega, Leopold, and Thoreau came into the landscape from such different directions. Their starting points were fixed by the cultures in which they grew up, and cultures change. What does not change is nature -- human nature and Mother Nature. We can be sure of this because, when the classical philosopher and the two natural philosophers go hunting, they find themselves on exactly the same trail. You and I can therefore follow it in confidence.

The measure of a philosopher, I suppose, is his ability to be right over time, and one of life's coincidences gave me a chance to measure Ortega. He had published his Meditations on Hunting in Lisbon in 1942. My work took me there years later. One autumn weekend, after beating a good deal of Portuguese brush, I picked up these essays and found a prescient passage:

"In all revolutions, the first thing that the 'people' have done was to jump over the fences of preserves or to tear them down, and in the name of social justice pursue the hare and the partridge. And this after the revolutionary newspapers, in their editorials, had for years and years been abusing the aristocrats for being so frivolous as to ... spend their time

hunting."

And that was exactly what happened in Portugal after the revolution of 1974. While Communist leaders were still trying to tell the workers what their struggle was about, they stuffed themselves, four at a time plus dogs, into very small cars. There were traffic jams on the way to the fields and lines of Fiats and Citroëns headed back to Lisbon after dark, bearing hares and partridges and exhausted hunters. They were not experienced and not yet governed by a tight code of ethics, but they had made a start at what they had always dreamed of doing.

It was what Ortega y Gasset had predicted three decades earlier. The old regime might have diminished revolutionary fervor if it had listened to the philosopher when he explained that hunting is not a "reasoned pursuit." On the contrary, he wrote, it is "however strangely, a deep and permanent yearning in the human condition."

And besides, no one who hunts all day has enough energy left to start a revolution.

≈