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## A Modest Hunting Proposal

It is with uneasy minds that those who pick up newspapers and journals each autumn must read countless appeals in favor of or opposition to the sport of hunting, which troubles and confuses the otherwise tranquil public conscience. Endless arguments appear decrying the cruelty of the practice and the lack of responsible regulation of hunters. In response are equally endless arguments lauding the honorable art of hunting, and claiming the necessity of annually thinning the

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populations of game for their own good and well-being. It is the humble intent of this essay to reconcile these differences of opinion.

Hunting has been noted to make the senses of men more acute, to increase the likelihood that they will lead honest lives and be less apt to clutter our jails, and even to promote a spiritual development the likes of which few religions have been able to achieve. It is exactly this aspect of the practice which I wish to preserve, while simultaneously meeting the interests of those non-hunters who yearly fear for the preservation of life, limb and gentle beast.

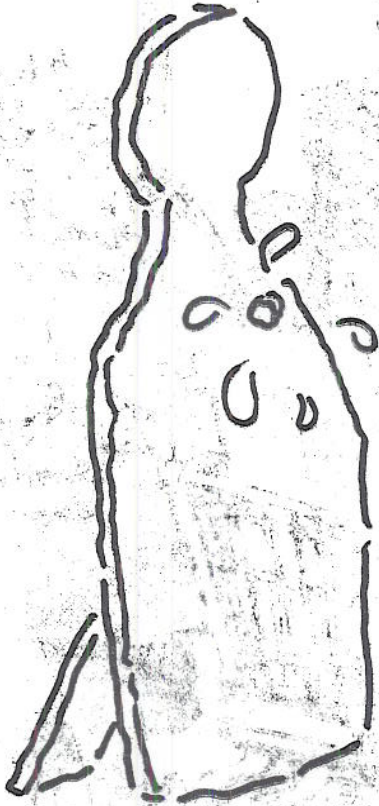
As regards the claims of hunters, the excessive animal populations are very well dealt with by speeding automobiles—and very likely with far less suffering than they would experience at the hands of the unskilled marksman—so we must look elsewhere for a basis on which to understand the hunter's zeal. From time to time in the present century a nostalgic tear has been shed for the noble savage trait of the human personality. Could we not postulate the true basis of the hunter's drive as a "noble savage syndrome," through which the hunter experiences an invigorating recollection of impulses submerged eons ago beneath the cultural refinements of modern man? Wars no longer provide a suitable outlet for the expression of this esthetic-aggressive impulse. Sports are overly oriented toward the spectator and

prove unsatisfying to the true artist among us who must participate in the taste of the kill. Unless the artist is allowed to practice his trade how is he to have an outlet for his impulses?

Still we have a problem. For the modern beast can hardly present much challenge to the armory that the modern hunter brings with him. Can it be very satisfying for the wielder of a high-powered rifle complete with telescopic sight to lodge his twentieth bullet into a deer who has stubbornly refused to succumb to the first nineteen? No, we must provide greater challenge to the ennobling predatorial instinct of the hunter.

I propose that to resolve this conflict to the mutual liking of both parties there be established a number of "sporting ranges" where those disposed toward hunting may test their skills not against the meager beast who is hardly competent prey but against each other in fair and honorable competition where in the finest sense the fittest will survive.

The benefits of such a scheme would be many. First, it would actively encourage the healthy competition upon which our democracy was founded. Second, it would aid the spiritual and physical growth of the population, and would foster the development of the hunter's skill into a true art form upon which we might pride ourselves. Third, it would cull and refine our hunter population so that we might claim our hunters to be the finest on the globe. Fourth, it would provide an expedient public training ground for our future soldiers so that when we next send an expedition to Southeast Asia we may be assured greater success. Fifth, for the non-hunters, they will be glad to see this as an opportunity to lessen the numbers of those who would become and remain hunters, and to be assured that those who remain will be of only the highest moral fiber and temper. Other benefits could be enumerated; for example, the ranges would provide a ground on which warring gangs from our cities could settle their disputes legally.



By Zarko Karabatic for The Washington Post

As for objections, I am confident that none may fairly be raised against this modest proposal, save perhaps one. Some of the more squeamish may claim this proposal to contain aspects of inhumanity, but it is exactly this point which my plan is meant to avoid. Those hunters who would go to the sporting ranges would enter by free choice, knowing that all to be found within have done the same, and so would be prepared for that which would follow. This is hardly inhumane, and rather a challenge to bring out the best qualities in them.

I am not so possessive of my idea that I would be deaf to other proposals. I would only ask that they not be put forth unless they consider two essential points. First, how will they be able to avoid the 9,700 unintended hunting deaths and accidents which occur in this land annually? Second, how will they provide for the ventilation of the esthetic-aggressive impulse which boils as a thick stew beneath the hunter's outer personality?