Business Community and Fraternal Community

I. Introduction

Harrison Frye recently described "four ways in which the market allegedly crowds out community."[1] For example, G.A. Cohen says, the "immediate motive to productive activity in a market society is (not always but) typically some mixture of greed and fear."[2] To persist, a community must be productive, but in a true community as Cohen imagines it, "people care about, and, where necessary and possible, care for, one another, and, too, care that they care about one another."[3]

Cohen's *Why Not Socialism?* depicts a camping trip that visualizes this ideal. A small number of friends practice rudimentary division of labor, as campers do. They bring various resources: pots and pans, fishing rods, and so on, but treat such resources as collective, to be used freely by fellow campers. This is the socialist way, and Cohen asks readers, isn't this "rather obviously the best way to run a camping trip?" (10). Is there not something charming in the campout image? I find no fault in Cohen for wanting to share it, but Cohen himself was under no illusions about the image proving anything.[4] The campout is a rhetorical question, not an argument. Hence the book's title.

As I read Cohen, and from what I knew of him, Cohen intended his campout image not as a blueprint for socialist community so much as a reverie. He was drawing a picture, in the twilight of his career, of how pleasant it would be for humanity to realize ideals of community and equality. He had come to acknowledge that his ideals are probably unrealizable, at least at scale, in our market-driven world. "One may therefore not infer, from the fact that camping trips of the sort I have described are feasible and desirable, that society-wide socialism is equally feasible and desirable" (11). Still, for all that, Cohen wanted us to understand his feeling that capitalism is a tragedy. Even if capitalism is the best we can do, something is wrong with us if we cannot do better. I do not read that as an argument. I read it as a lament.

Harrison Frye offers several *models* of the market, speculating on whether community could emerge within them. In an admittedly utopian Carens Market, market agents compete and innovate as they do, yet income is taxed at 100 percent (with proceeds being divided equally.)[5] Could Cohen's ideal community emerge in such a market? Or, in a more realistic Bruni-Sugden model, trade is driven by a joint intention that trade culminate in mutual benefit.[6] Or, in an even thinner Steiner model, agents are not necessarily driven by ideals of reciprocity, but neither are they necessarily driven by fear and greed. Instead, modeled agents have whatever interests bring agents to market. Some come to the marketplace hoping to find fellow travelers with whom to form a thicker community, but even if they find the fellowship they seek, they remain travelers with destinations of their own.

Would Cohen would been reassured to find that we can model markets in which, given some idealizing assumptions, the problems Cohen sees in real markets do not arise? I doubt it. I

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[1] Harrison Frye, "Rescuing the Market from Communal Criticism," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 51 (2023): 234-64.
[2] G. A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), at p. 40. See also Frye, 238.
[3] Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* 34-35. Frye, p.6.
[4] Jason Brennan's *Why Not Capitalism?* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
[5] Joseph Carens, *Equality, Moral Incentives, and the Market: An Essay on Utopian Politico-Economic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
[6] Luigino Bruni and Robert Sugden, "Fraternity: Why the Market Need Not Be a Morally Free Zone," *Economics & Philosophy* 24 (2008): 35-64.

think Cohen's lament was not about model-theoretic possibilities but about capitalism as we see instantiated in our world. It may goose productivity. It may be the best we can do all things considered. Still, Cohen found it wanting. He saw it falling short of ideals of equality and fraternity that are worth wanting.

This essay follows Frye in reflecting on ways in which markets crowd out community, but my main aim is to reconsider Cohen's vision. We do not need to see a model to know that true community is an observable reality. We see it within households. We could find it at campsites. People (brothers at least) sometimes treat each other like brothers. But Cohen asks, where can we observe true community scaling up? This is not a question that can be answered by models. It requires observation.

Has Cohen's camping trip ever been implemented on a large scale? Yes. Has socialism ever successfully operated at scale? There, too, the answer is yes. Are those places where community has crowded out markets? Or does it turn out that crowding out markets is, at least sometimes, unnecessary? In fact, market forces have a history of observably making room for thick fraternal community, but this is not to say that they always do.

II. What Crowds Out Community

Frye considers four ways in which markets are supposed to crowd out community:[7]

> *Anti-Social Motives*: Traders are driven by greed and fear, not a desire to be of service, to make the world a better place, or to show that they care.
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> *Instrumentalization*: Traders think of other people as mere means, not as ends in themselves.
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> *Contingency*: Traders see relationships as mere means, too. Accordingly, relationships last as long as the immediate purpose that motivates them, then (having become pointless) dissolve.
>
> *Exclusion*: Traders anticipate preferences that bring customers to market, but customers are not friends. So, we treat the services we bring to market as mere means. As a fisherman might care how what a fish weighs, and might care what sorts of lures the fish are biting, we care what people want from us (and how much they are willing to pay), not why.

Such pathologies seem worth worrying about on their own merits, and they are Frye's way of capturing various aspects of Cohen's reasons for rejecting capitalism. Part of my burden in the following sections is to note ways in which the above items may seem to be pathologies in fraternal relations but they can also be virtues in arm's-length relations.

III. Fragility

Alfred Archer says "Cohen's point is not that community requires a body of shared experience, but that community requires that people *care about one another*."[8] Archer's wording is interesting. Insofar as community *requires* people to care about one another, that is a way in

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[7] I replicate Frye's four-part analysis while characterizing the four problems in my own words. My intent is not to change the topic so much as to clarify, simplify, and emphasize different aspects of it.

[8] Alfred Archer, "Community, Pluralism, and Individualistic Pursuits: A Defense of *Why Not Socialism?*" *Social Theory and Practice* 42, no. 1 (2016): 63. Cf. Brennan, "Equality, Community and Diversity in Cohen's Socialist Ideal," 125-127. Frye, 29.

which community is *fragile*. Indeed, communal management's benefits (that is, it can spread risk and can offer lower the transaction cost of mobilizing workers for community-scale projects) have not been enough to keep communes together.[9]

So far as I know, the most durably successful communes in human memory are the agricultural settlements of the Hutterites, dating back to sixteenth century Austria. They migrated to the Dakotas in the 1870s, then to Canada. North American Hutterite communities now contain around fifty thousand people as of 2023 (mostly on the Canadian prairies where I grew up).

What is the Hutterite secret? Robert Ellickson says Hutterite communes have three:
1. A POPULATION CAP: when a settlement reaches a population of one hundred and twenty, a portion of the community must leave to start a new community. The cap helps them remain a close-knit community where everyone knows, and is accountable to, everyone.
2. COMMUNAL DINING AND WORSHIP: people congregate several times a day, which facilitates a rapid and intense monitoring of individual behavior and a ready avenue for supplying feedback to those whose behavior deviates from expectations;
3. A BAN ON BIRTH CONTROL: the average woman bears ten children (the highest documented fertility rate of any human population) which more than offsets the trickle of emigration. We might add that Hutterite culture and education leave people ill-prepared to live in anything other than Hutterite society, so the emigration rate is low. Is this a desirable way of life? It certainly is a thriving life-form (perhaps *the* thriving form of communal life) and seems poised to remain so.

By contrast, as an example of how hostile communal management can be to community, consider the Jamestown colony of 1607, North American's first permanent British settlement. The Virginia Company established the colony as a commune. The colony's charter guarantees to each settler an equal share of the collective product regardless of the amount of work personally contributed. Of the original group of one hundred and four settlers, two thirds die of starvation and disease before their first winter. New shiploads replenish the colony; the winter of 1609 cuts the population from five hundred to sixty. Colonist William Simmons writes, "It were too vile to say (and scarce to be believed) what we endured, but the occasion was only our own for want of providence, industry, and government, and not the barrenness and defect of the country, as is generally supposed."[10] In 1611, career soldier Thomas Dale (appointed by Governor Thomas Gates to administer martial law) arrives to find living skeletons[11] bowling in the streets, waiting for someone else to plant the crops. Archeologist Ivor Hume reacts with wonder: The "colonists' unwillingness or inability to work toward their own salvation remains one of American history's great mysteries."[12]

In 1614, now-Governor Thomas Dale has seen enough. He assigns three-acre plots to individual settlers, which reportedly increases productivity seven-fold. (I found no verification for this number apart from colonist Captain John Smith's impression that, "When our people were fed out of the common store, and laboured jointly together, glad was he who could slip from his labour, or slumber over his task he care not how, nay, the most honest among them would hardly take so much true pains in a week, as now for themselves they will do in a day.") [13]

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[9] The remainder of this subsection draws extensively from David Schmidtz, "The Institution of Property," *Person, Polis, Planet,* (New York: Oxford University Press (2008): 193-210.
[10] Haile (1998) 340.
[11] The word chosen by eyewitness George Percy was "anatomies" (Haile, 1998, 507).
[12] Hume (1994) 160.
[13] Quoted by Ellickson (1993) 1337. After visiting Jamestown in 2007, talking to history buffs who work there, and reading work published since the first version of this essay (including Haile's extraordinary collection of eyewitness accounts), I now suspect that several factors exacerbated the communal charter's corrosive effects.

The colony converted all its land to private parcels in 1619.

Although Jamestown was not market-based, it evidently was a classic Prisoner's Dilemma, that is, a conjunction of fear and greed as reasons for noncooperation that jointly make noncooperation a dominant strategy. Fear and greed built into the structure of Jamestown's original non-market charter drove colonists to a point where they would rather die than keep feeding free-loaders. Giving three acres of private property to each settler finally set the table for thriving community (even if only market community).

Robert Goodin says, "Working within the constraints set by natural scarcity, the greatest practical obstacle to achieving as much justice as resources permit is, and always has been, the supposition that each of us should cultivate his own garden."[14] However, Jamestown's charter did not suppose each of us should cultivate his own garden. It supposed the opposite. Colonists abided by the charter, and starved. A few years later, with a new charter that privatized the means of production, colonists were tending their own gardens and thriving.[15]

I expect Cohen would have agreed that it is not good to profess belief in an ideal, then use that ideal as a justification for forcibly imposing a management infrastructure that predictably won't serve the ideal. Sincerely believing in an ideal is a reason should instead lead us to evaluate a management scheme by asking how it works, not how we *wish* it worked, and not how we think it *ideally would* work if only human nature were equipped to survive it.

Frye asks us to imagine Harry deciding "to stop fishing just because he was tired of fishing. He says to other campers, Look, I'm tired of fishing. You all keep doing your parts and I'll just keep on having fun. Ok? If the other campers grumble about Harry's sudden slacking, and Harry responds, "Oh, I see what's going on here. You all are a bunch of marketeers, huh? You only want me around if I do the fishing! Not very communal of you," I suspect most would judge *Harry* the uncommunal one, not the other campers" (24).

Why see Harry's behavior as uncommunal? Harry has asserted, in effect, that "It's my life" in a communal setting where other members of the fraternity view themselves as paying the price of Harry's declaration of independence. Needing to counteract the fear and greed that go with costs being external, communes in the real world face a perennial existentialist crisis. The ones that last manage by constantly monitoring and punishing free riders. Communists have to be quick to judge Harry to be uncommunal. Harry says, "It's my life." His fellow campers say, "Not really. In a true community like ours, your time is not your own."

In a sustainable commune, there is a sense in which *instrumentalism* can be a feature, not a bug. People can think of themselves as self-owners when it comes to being consumers (if overconsumption poses no threat), but their productive capacities are not theirs to dispose of. Their productive capacities are means to the ends of the collective. Collectives thus contain the damage done by anti-social motives of fear and greed. Treating individuals as if their time is not theirs to waste seems historically to be a *pillar* of successful communal management. Communes work hard to stabilize themselves with elaborate, intrusive, intense monitoring schemes aimed at

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First, the Virginia Company intended to make a profit, so eventually skimming the produce of the colony was precisely the point. Colonists felt misled about how hard life would be. More galling still was the idea of working hard largely to profit the lying fat cats who put them in their plight to begin with. Third, the colonists wanted to go home, and imagined they could win a deadly game of Chicken. The idea, as reported by a horrified Thomas Dale, was, "We will weary out the Company at home in sending us provisions, and then, when they grow weary and see that we do not prosper here, they will send for us home. Therefore let us weary them out" (Haile, 1998, 779).

[14] Goodin (1985, 1). Goodin and I debate the issue at length in Schmidtz and Goodin (1998).

[15] See "The Institution of Property" for some discussion of what turned into the Headright system of land grants and of the emergence of Virginia as a producer of tobacco.

reassuring members that free riding will not be tolerated.[16]

The *exclusion* worry in essence is that we don't care enough about why our customers come to us in search of trinkets. If they are willing to pay our price, that is all we need to know. Exclusion can be a problem in a fraternal community, where a customer is also a brother or a sister. But in arm's length relations, exclusion has an upside. It helps to make transactions impersonal in a good way. We need not care about whether a person practices the politically correct religion or whether they have the politically correct attitude toward gay marriage. All we need to know is whether we both want to proceed with the exchange at that price. We can call this exclusion, but in a different context, we might call it liberalism, or toleration.

Sometimes, merchants intrude, for example, asking a customer to share the details of some home improvement project, offering advice while knowing (perhaps self-consciously aware) that advice is not necessarily welcome. Some shopkeepers want their shop to be a place where customers can come for reliable advice and in the long run save money. But the market ideal is that you don't *need* to intrude. You can let the customer's money talk and you can let that be the end of it.

Here is another perspective from which the depersonalization of relationships has an upside. Friendly societies turned mutual aid into a form of community. Although the friendly societies were cooperatives that had many aspects of thick community, socialists tended to be hostile to them, and agitated for their functions to be taken over by tax-funded government programs that crowded out the relatively thick community of the friendly societies. While I saw community in general as having been weakened by government programs, my co-author Bob Goodin, like most socialists, saw the government programs as having an upside. When he explained how in a debate with me, I could see that he had a point that I had to concede. Namely, fraternal and neighborly community can feel fulfilling, but they can feel oppressively intrusive too. We think is a good thing for the sick and elderly not to be a burden on their children or neighbors, which is a problem that government programs addressed. Liberation from community is at once a real gain and a real loss. The loss was not inevitable. While people today could live with their grandchildren even when they have enough money to live independently, the observable reality is that they don't. That seems to reveal a preference for independent living, but it may be evidence of a subtle constraint as well. Namely, we avoid being an *unnecessary* burden—even though being a burden might make for a richer community in some respects.

We can admit that markets have a way of making life easy. And in making life easy, markets make community less necessary. In making community less necessary, markets decrease pressures that drive us to form community. Markets economize on the need for close-knit community thus robbing close-knit community of some part of its rationale. Necessity is the mother of community. That can be a shame insofar as our responses to the pressures that drive us to form community can be defining moments in our lives. To have been what our loved ones needed us to be when it really mattered is what will really matter to us over the course of our lives. Of course, that doesn't mean that life ideally would consist of shouldering burdens.

And we can join Smith in a lament. It is a good thing that markets make life easy, but easy life is not the kind of life we write novels about. The easy life is not what makes us heroes,

[16] Jan Kandiyali ("The Importance of Others," 578, 571) describes how a communist society is one where our work is oriented towards "the satisfaction of another's need," in contrast with the idea that in a capitalist one such needs are satisfied "contingently (if at all)" (24). But it is a routine observation that people in a communal setting are prone to seeing the people around them as free riders, to a point where even the first person to defect conceives of himself as having done so in self-defense.

or even true friends. And markets do not systematically drive us to find new challenges that turn otherwise uneventful lives into grand adventures.

In passing, there is a stranger kind of exclusion worry from Adam Smith's perspective. Namely, we don't concern ourselves with the whole person even when the whole person is ourselves. As social animals, we are wired to be of service, to do something and become something that our neighbors can esteem. So, we just keep working overtime, without taking time to think about how that is supposed to make us better people living more estimable lives.

IV. Autarchy and Community

As Frye notes, "Cohen contrasts his ordinary camping trip with a market-based camping trip where each camper makes his/her contribution conditional on receiving special remuneration."[17] For example, Harry the fisherman demands the best selections of fish in order to continue fishing. For Cohen, this market-based camping trip is inferior on all fronts to the ordinary camping trip. Cohen believes that Harry's fellow campers would balk at this sort of behavior. Obviously, this purportedly market-based trip damages community, but Frye asks, "what exactly makes Harry's behavior uncommunal? And (the less asked yet equally important question) what exactly makes it market-like?" (6). Frye's question is a good one. It would be odd to be treated as Cohen describes by siblings, to be sure. It would be roughly as odd to be treated that way by a merchant as well, or by anyone whose livelihood revolves around being of service. People who care about their own success in the market-place do not present themselves as obtuse and oblivious. There comes a time when money should not be discussed. Yet, even when the point of the relationship is to live together as brothers and sisters, there are times when money needs to be discussed (as anyone who has been a brother or sister can attest). But the same is true, at least sometimes, when the purpose is to be there to support a customer or a business partner.

Hutterite communities are about as close as the world has ever seen to socialist community operating at scale in an arguably excellent and sustainable way, but it does not mean they never talk about money. Hutterites believe in a notably strict sharing of productive assets, along with notably strict rules pertaining to the ownership of consumer goods. They forbid radio and television, to give one example of how strictly they control contact with the outside world. However, the communities still engage in trade. Although Hutterite society is not market society, neither is it autarchic. When I was growing up in Saskatchewan, if we came to town on a Saturday morning, we would see Hutterites buying pots and pans, fishing rods, or whatever they needed, and selling their surplus agricultural products to pay for it.

Just as Hutterite colonies made no effort to be autarchic, neither would Cohen's campout. People do not make camp with the idea that when they need a new frying pan, they will start by digging for iron ore with their bare hands. No community small enough to be fraternal is large enough to do everything for itself. Even the most fraternal campers need to restock from time to time. In the real world, Hutterites migrate to locations where they can keep their distance from larger cultures while maintaining trading relationships with larger cultures that sustain their thick community. Hutterites do represent an extreme, though. Unlike almost any other culture, Hutterites want theirs to be entirely home-grown, untouchable by winds of change, and altogether illiberal, yet even Hutterite communities are not autarchic. They survive only by partaking of the economies of scale of a larger community.

What would be inimical to close-knit community? Not being able to obtain the tools one

[17] Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* 7.

uses to be of service to fellow campers would be a problem. But neither division of labor nor specialization nor even economies of scale are a problem as such. In fact, not even the price mechanism is a problem per se. The problem would be a price mechanism that intrudes into what should be a familial relationship.[18] But if you need to go to the camp store to restock, having the opportunity to do that is conducive to community rather than inimical to it.

Cohen's campout has a place within a wider world—it is one campsite in a campground, for example. If someone in your group anticipated that you might like to share a can of beans, but no one in your group thought to bring a can opener, you walk over to the next campsite to see if they can help. They probably can, in which case they surely will be happy to help. Although they are strangers, not brothers, the larger community of the campground is fraternal enough for that, as are many neighborhoods in market-oriented societies. If you offer occupants of the adjoining campsite a rental fee for lending you the can opener, rather than a simple heartfelt thankyou, you will be failing to grasp what it means to be neighbors.) The neighborly yet not brotherly campground is itself embedded in a larger community. There comes a point where, if you ask a cashier whether they want you to pay a fee for a can of beans, that will be another case of you failing to grasp the nature of your relationships. The problem is not that you raising the topic of paying but that you didn't simply hand over your credit card and get out of the next customer's way. We live our lives in a plethora of markets, a plethora of neighborhoods, and a plethora of brotherhoods too. We sustain them partly by learning to keep them separate.

V. When Thin Is Ideal

We can observe day-trading, electronic markets, pit auctions, local bars, and general stores. Some services aim to offer customers a sense of community; others aim to offer something impersonal that respects privacy. Different kinds of markets serve or fail to serve the ideal of community in different ways. There is a limit to how intrusive we want our community to be.

People who want thick community enough to migrate in search of it exhibit an observable pattern of migrating toward, not away from, thin frameworks. When like-minded people want to form a thick religious community, they tend to migrate to a larger society that is committed to freedom of religion. A thin community is an infrastructure within which thick community has a chance to develop in a healthy and organic way.

Accordingly, it is not a legitimate criticism of thin community to accuse it of not being thick. Market infrastructure's purpose is not to be thick in and of itself, but rather to be a infrastructure within which thick can emerge. Making voluntary association possible is the larger community's contribution toward thick community.

Frye notes that the thin sort of community found in the ideal of mutual benefit does not require any deep convergence of perspective. We make deals, and need not think past the deal to consider whether your hopes and dreams are ones I endorse (37). This is the sense in which exclusion is a feature not the bug that exclusion would become if it were to intrude upon what ought to be a more intimate relation. It is a virtue of markets when I need not endorse your religion to endorse your shop. When thick community emerges in the real world, it seems to do

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[18] Yet, even this last thought needs some qualification, for of course it remains the case that families can be settings where children are introduced to prices as ways of acknowledging that they have done their chores and to that extent have been of service to the family. I cannot see this as merely a regrettable concession to the anticipated roles that children will take up, and this need to be trained for, in a commercial society. Children take pride in *earning* money, like adults, and not merely receiving it like children.

so in times and places where people are free to associate with like-minded people, and not meddle in the lives of people who march to the beat of a different drummer.

Some communities seem to function fairly well, so long as people are free to exit when they change their minds or find themselves born into an arrangement where they do not feel at home, or in any case they want to be free to try something else. Implicitly, an ideal community is one that people enter by choice, and stay by choice. To be ideal, a camp cannot be the kind of camp to which you are sent, or sentenced. It has to be something you enter by choice, and retain a right to exit if you so choose.

VI. Realistically Close-Knit Community

Carol Rose summarizes empirical tendencies by noting several correlates of relatively robust success in sustaining communal organization. First, successful communes are small and face to face. Second, governance in successful communes is by local custom, not distant bureaucracy. Third, successful communes are not open access; rewards are internal to the group. Fourth, successful communes are communal in ways that are modest and partial. What needs to be communal is; what is best left private is left private.[19]

There are other features we could add to a list like Carol Rose's. First, simply allowing voluntary association is one way to encourage a proliferation of voluntary associations. Toleration of diversity—not watching each other like hawks but instead trusting others to mind their own business even when their business seems idiosyncratic—fosters diversity, experiments in living, and close-knit communities.

Second, close-knit community tends to emerge in response to immediate crises that neighbors chose to regard as shared problems. Solidarity may or may not outlast the crisis that gave rise to it. The commune depicted by the camping trip metaphor is short-lived. Differing opinions about the value of individual contributions won't have time to make a once-collegial atmosphere toxic. If people needs to band together to defend a border, protect a community against flooding, or even simply to enjoy a campout, then people will band together and we will see collegiality and trust, at least for a while.

Third, group identity tend to be facilitated by identification of a contrast class. The place to find camaraderie is inside a group whose members share a value that is not widely shared. Frye (36) illustrates a similar point: your interest in shred guitar might in context strike me as salient and as the basis of a bond. But it is not a kind of bond I can feel with you simply by virtue of sharing the trait of having opposable thumbs. Our basis for community is not merely that we have something in common, but that some aspect of what we have in common is distinguishing, and in some way gives us a basis for feeling less like strangers and more like siblings.

VII. On the Logic of Markets

Sam Arnold ("No Community without Socialism" 19) suggests that there is "a deep *structural* connection between capitalism and precisely the sort of instrumentalizing, community-destroying behavior we all found so objectionable on the capitalist camping trip" (14). Arnold describes how even a capitalist angel would be forced to run a factory (in his example a bow-making factory) under pressure of market competition, "She'll have to sack unproductive employees, slash wages, haggle for better input prices, peddle ever-increasing piles

[19] Carol Rose

of bows, and so on, *not* because she's inherently mean or greedy, but because this is simply what [she] has to do to stay in business" (25).[20]

To be sure, what Arnold is describing could happen, yet what Arnold is describing manifestly is a model, not something based on observation of angels running factories. Neoclassical models of market competition developed in the late 1800's in tandem with models of natural selection in which only the "strongest" survive. However, it manifestly—observably—is not a generic feature of real-world competition that only the "strongest" survive. Neoclassical economics models survival in business as contingent on maximum profit, but survival in reality is contingent on something different, namely positive cash flow. Positive cash flow is a real logic that imposes a real limit. It is by no means angelic. However, it is not a logic that turns angels into cut-throats either. Are some market agents cut-throat? Presumably. Indeed, some kinds of markets—the floors of stock exchanges populated by day traders, say—may be examples of markets that encourage cut-throat competition. But not all markets do that.[21]

Some of the markets with which Adam Smith was familiar are likewise not as incompatible will fellow feeling as meets the eye. Smith says, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages."

As Frye observes, Smith's passage is notably complex…" (7).[22] Why do we address ourselves to the brewers and baker's self-love? Because that is what a fiduciary does. For some of us, the point of thinking first about their interest is that we care about them. This passage comes at the beginning of a book that Adam Smith wrote as an encore to his first (and in his mind main) book, namely *A Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith, at the start of his second book, is still doing what he was doing at the end of his first, namely telling us what is involved in being a person of true benevolence. When Smith introduces his chapter on division of labor this way, asking what drives the emergence of the division of labor, the twentieth century history conditioned us to read Smith as telling us that the answer is the profit motive. That is not even close to what Smith actually says. He says what drives us is a propensity to truck, barter, and exchange, or in different words, community. Smith says exactly what we should expect from an author whose first book revolved around the drive to secure and be worthy of esteem in the social world. We read our customers to find out why they came to us. Why? Because we are benevolent, because we want their esteem, because we want to be worthy of it, because that is how we want to make our living—by being what our customers need us to be.

Some (although by no means all) market structures sustainably encourage our propensity to put ourselves in our customer's shoes and think about what will make them happy to be in our orbit and to be part of our community—the community where we make a place for ourselves by making sure our customers are better off with us than without. Cohen's campers do that too. Seeing what their friends are working on, they announce their common humanity by saying, "let me help you with that." In a different context, they might have said, "how may I be of service?" Not the same thing, yet intelligible as a way of acknowledging the humanity of a stranger.

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[20] Frye cites Arnold, "No Community without Socialism," 18. See also Jason Brennan, *Why Not Capitalism?*, 22-36.

[21] The Peter Lynch Fidelity Magellan model is intermediate. Lynch's investment strategy involved being constantly on the lookout for new products that customers greatly appreciate. Identify outliers in terms of delivering customer satisfaction as indicating stocks with potential to rise ten-fold in a decade.

[22] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981), 26-27

Conclusion

Frye wisely says, "I do not want to oversell the communal credentials of the market, even on the mutual benefit model. A market is not a camping trip, nor is a camping trip a market" (21). In the literature, when compared to observation of reality, the communal credentials of communal management appear to have been vastly oversold. Frye wisely wants to avoid making the same mistake by overselling the communal credentials of markets.

Still, the observable human condition is not a realm of market forces all going in one direction—against community. We are always in a situation where market forces are threatening to go too far, or not far enough, or possibly both—when change occurs on as many fronts as change is occurring in any society we know.

Regarding when or why or how close-knit community emerges in our world, and what we can do to encourage it, it will not be something we simply choose. Cohen knew that. He was talking about an ideal. He was not pretending to know how to get there from here, or how to hang on to it if we ever got it. Some communities are thicker than others. Some are frail; others are robust.

It is hard to think of anything that would make Cohen's lament unreasonable qua lament. Contriving models of capitalist community would not count against our reasons for thinking of particular observable markets as failing to foster community. But observation also suggests, repeatedly, that markets are a thin framework within which thick communities have a history of emerging.