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## I Want Friends, Not Community / My Comrades

Apio Ludd

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*Communities .. are best defined in terms of food relationships – we are asking who eats whom. –Marston Bates*

Damn near everywhere I go, I hear talk about community.

It’s apparently something everyone needs, something to which everyone should be willing to give herself. In big cities, it’s easy to ignore these calls to *belong*, since it’s hard for the *unarmed* proponents of community\* to intrude personally into other people’s lives. I now live in a rural area. It has many advantages, but its human population includes far too many liberals, activists, do-gooders, in short, busybodies for whom *community* is sacred, an impersonal deity to whom these believers want everyone to know.

These local communitarians make what they mean by “community” very clear in their complaints about those who don’t conform to community standards and their attempts to enlist others against these anti-social elements.

Indeed, it is a question of “who eats whom” – who spends their time gnawing away at the reputation of those who don’t fit into their code.

Community, as an ideal, stands in opposition to individuality, because it requires in the reining in of the unique for a supposed greater whole. I recognize no greater whole to whom I am willing to give such power, so I have no interest in community.

Does this mean I want to be isolated?

Well, at times, I do I value my solitude.

But at times, I want to play with others. I simply don’t want to give myself over to any “greater whole”.

And “community”, as its proponents use the term, is just such an imposed greater whole. These proponents use it to enforce a conformity to roles that make you and I into mere electronic bits coursing through the cybernetic social machine, suppressing the particularities that make you and I interesting to each other.

This increases isolation, as it becomes more and more difficult for anyone to meet each other except as these social functions. And your *function* doesn’t really interest me. Your particularities, those unique properties through which you create yourself, are why I desire to know you, to interact with you, and community standards serve to suppress them.

So I have no desire for community.

I desire friends, companions, lovers, comrades and accomplices.

In other words, I desire to intentionally and passionately create relationships with specific individuals, because I see a potential for mutual enjoyment and mutual benefit. Friendships, companionships, loves comradeships and compliciters are not things to which I belong, but interactions I willfully create with another.

The origins of some of these words make this clear.

- A friend is someone you prefer to spend time with out of a love for them.
- A companion is someone with whom you are willing to share food.
- A comrade is someone with whom you would share your room.\*\*
- An accomplice is someone with whom you would join forces for some purpose.
- And a lover is someone with whom you are able to share a mutual enjoyment and such delight in each other.

In every case, there is no greater whole, no higher power, enforcing obligations, merely two or more individuals choosing to interweave their unique particularities in order to better enjoy their lives or accomplish an endeavor mutually beneficial to them.

The *individuality*, the utter incomparable uniqueness of each one involved, provides the basis for the mutuality of these types of relationships – relationships that are never “greater than the sum of their parts”, but rather enhance the greatness of each of the individuals taking part in them.

There are two other relationships that I may not desire or treasure as much as those I just described, but that I still prefer to the mutual tolerance and acquiescence necessary to community: enmity and contempt.

To merely tolerate others is intolerable to me.

If your projects, aims or desires conflict with mine, we will be enemies. If you are not a worthy enemy, I will scorn you.

To do otherwise - in the name of community, of “getting along” – would be an insult to *your* individuality, to *your* uniqueness, and would reinforce the lie of community.

\*Of course, the *armed* enforces of the community, the cops, are there in force to impose *community standards*.

\*\*Of course, there are imposed “comradeships” in this since: the prisoner with a cell-mate or the conscript in the barracks.

### **My Comrades**

As for me, when I want to break my solitude, I prefer to go and seek my comrades, elsewhere, among the thieves of fire, the revilers of public authority, the walking dreamers, the furious night owls, the seducers of nuns, the libertines depraved by vice, the dabblers in underground cinema, the hunters for wild strawberries, the madcaps who harangue the clouds, the hooligans of the word, the polishers of the stars, the lone wolves who feed on the Golden Fleece, the drunkards of the absolute ... and all those vagabonds of the spirit who will never bow their heads before good people.

These, and these alone, are my comrades.

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