

Sarah Hontoy-Major

CART 211-A

Santo Romano

October 22nd, 2020

#### Reflexion 4 on Richard Stallman's *GNU Manifesto*

Stallman's whole point within his manifesto and the creation of GNU is really to remove the cognitive dissonance of having to choose between what should be done morally and what should be done lawfully by making programmers able to share however they see fit with the rest of their community. He subtracts money from the equation, making the community a much less cynical place for programmers to share.

The only two rules of GNU seem to be: there are no rules, and you cannot change the rules. That is to say, Stallman created GNU in a way that is impossible for the users to privatize it, regardless if they are the only party that worked on the program or not. The entirety of the system should remain open for anyone to pitch in.

Stallman does not follow a capitalist point of view. Rather than "[dividing] the users and [conquering] them", he wishes to democratize the programs that he likes to work with in the hopes that other people would work on it to. A form of community build; a lot more cohesive with Indigenous ways of life than white settlers.

The idea of capitalism might be great from afar, but when you look up close, it gets messy. People should be all striving to work harder to be the first, the winner, the best. However, a lot of people would rather spend time and energy disrupting the competition in order to get ahead rather than adding up everyone's efforts to build something bigger than themselves. That

is where capitalism fails us: it builds up people against each other instead of inspiring us to work together.

Furthermore, he does not even wish to alienate himself and other GNU users from other systems. He would rather make them all compatible with one another, furthering the idea of democracy within this realm.

I truly appreciated his honest approach of mentioning that "GNU does not eliminate all the world's problems, only some of them". That is, at the very least, a great amount of step in the right direction.