

## Two. Context Text Supplement

This chapter Two has a lot of similarity of content with the the first chapter of Chaudhury, Das, Chakrabarty 2000, or CDC 2000 in short. The first chapter of CDC 2000 “built on” the then “ongoing PhD research” of mine: as it was mentioned at the beginning of that chapter. That was 2000, and so, exactly a decade has passed between these two books. This decade has brought in some dissimilarities too. The most important of these dissimilarities resides here that, the very focus of the theoretical model presented in both these chapters has shifted and displaced entirely. The theoretical model remained similar, but the example chosen to elaborate this model is altogether different. Here in this book, as we already know, that example and focus of elaboration is GPL, the General Public License published by GNU. I even did not know that such a thing called GPL exists at all, maybe more in line with many of my readers now, in late '90s, when I was writing those things. I told in chapter One about this discovery that happened midway down the decade. And the second most important dissimilarities between these two similar chapters in two books comes from the concept of ‘politics of subversion’ in the light of which this book reads the text of GPL. This is something entirely new, being a conceptual addition to the position that I held at that time, a position that was reflected in the first chapter of CDC 2000. The theoretical model presented in this chapter gives us the necessary cues to read this politics of subversion in the history of GPL presented later in this book.

This chapter builds on an interrogation of the Context-Text-Supplement politics of power and determination that we get in Derrida’s theory of deconstruction. Here we explore the theoretical formulation of how the balance of this power can be pushed and shifted by some path-breaking kind of texts. Such a text creates a counter-journey in reverse to this route. As we propose here in this chapter, and demonstrate through the concrete history of computing in the later chapters, for texts like GPL, things can happen in the reverse direction, where we go from supplements to text to context. This kind of counter-journey inverts the very hierarchy and thus displaces the positions of context, text and supplement within this power hierarchy. In this chapter we present the scheme of the theoretical possibility of such a counter-journey. In later chapters, we demonstrate how one small piece of text, GPL, General-Public-License, did exactly perform this task. But, before going into the theoretical scheme, let us mention here some technical details about GPL.

This license called GPL is published by an organization called FSF, Free Software Foundation. It was originally written by Richard Stallman, for a project called GNU with a self-recursive acronym: GNU’s-Not-Unix. Around this GNU project grew an organization too, a full body of software developers. The full significance of this project, or the organization and this acronym – are all available in many different books or the sites of FSF or GNU: <http://www.fsf.org> or <http://www.gnu.org>. We will talk a lot about all these things through the whole book. For now, let us know, GNU is the very project with which the whole FLOSS movement started. And FSF is the organization that started the whole resistance against the taking away of the freedom that was there in the world of computing in its early days. We will know the details of FSF, GNU and GPL later in full go through two full-length chapters. For the time being it will be sufficient for our purpose in this chapter to say that, GPL is a license, the General-Public-License, issued by FSF, under which a piece of software can be released. Lion’s share of all the FLOSS or Linux or GNU-Linux software are released under this license.

As we said, we are going to interrogate here Derrida's logic of Deconstruction, particularly the relation of hierarchy between Context, Text and Supplement. We here propose that, some texts that generate extreme contortions in the continuum of real existence may actually invert this context-text-supplement hierarchy in real historical time. This possibility is quite so different from the procedure of *deconstruction*. The deconstructive procedure resides in inverting or displacing the hierarchy inherent among the words/concepts of a text, and this very displacement caused by deconstruction takes place in an epistemological space. But, our example talks about a shift taking place in real time and space and then striking back on the empire of meaning: the realm of epistemology. The very possibility of such a counter-journey happens in the very conjunction between deconstruction and differend. When some kind of new meaning emerges in real existence that is extremely incompatible with the existing system of meaning, this creates differend or incompatibility between two systems of meaning. If the differend is strong enough, it can start generating a new field of supplements, in the form of bastard texts. And all letters reach their destination, in one way or other. These bastard texts are not entirely lost. In some cases they get appropriated by the ruling discourse. In some other cases, these bastards create their own father, in the form of a text, this text then goes forward to create an entire system of meaning, where they can finally exert themselves. As we will see later in the book, this is exactly what happened with GPL.

Many of the major breaks in Logic happen illogically, that is, outside the scope of predictions of textual logic. The logical system, or the epistemology, goes on reproducing the same system, again and again, *ad infinitum*. It augments something new in every rotation, but never violates the original structure. And, at least in the realm of human science, real breaks come with a sudden contortion in the body of real existence. And this event then gets reflected back into the cannon of epistemology. This reflection back into epistemology takes the form of a text that is by definition without a context, at least at the moment it happens. If now the prevailing continuum of social existence stands in favor of this sudden change and sudden break in logic, this break in its turn goes on into a build up of a newer context as an off-shoot of the context held by the prevailing social continuum. And thus, at last, the text gets a context in which it can reside. So, this break, in a way, inverts the context-text-supplement hierarchy in the sense that the logical break precedes the birth of the newer context. And if we dig further, the process in which it happens is a series of supplements: supplements to the text that has not been written yet. The sudden contortion in the continuum starts representing itself in terms of a series of supplements-that-cannot-be, or, supplements that cannot be reconciled within the body of the prevailing epistemology – the meaning of text determined by the prevailing context. So, in a way, the journey of a *break* traverses the counter-route of supplement-text-context. Whereas, the Derridean theory of deconstruction fixes the route as context-text-supplement, the details of which we are going to discuss in this chapter.

As we see in later chapters, this counter-journey is the thing that happened with FLOSS. The logical break was nothing but the text of GPL written by Richard Stallman. And as we shall see, the very writing of this text will come as a result of a process of trying to reconcile a series of irreconcilable conflict: something that we will call 'differend' later in this chapter. Rules of market were taking away the freedom that was primarily there in the primitive world of computing – the world of programmers, later we will call this world as

‘primitive FLOSS’. But this larceny of freedom was entirely justified in terms of the market rules, and in terms of the legal/ethical system that is a part of state. Later we will analyze, how this whole institution of state becomes a moment of the hegemony of capital. But, as it happened, the whole tradition of computing had grown around this inherent freedom of knowledge, this freedom was an integral part of this tradition of computing. The differend of these two incompatible meanings of justice started generating supplements. These supplements of resistance were originating from the then body of computing, or this ‘primitive FLOSS’ as the onslaught of market rules was slowly displacing this primitive FLOSS, and making it, slowly, something that is not FLOSS any more. And Stallman was trying hard to learn to live with these supplements in this changing world, keeping the spirit of FLOSS intact. The accumulation of these supplements led to the birth of GPL, as we will see later, and this GPL then gave birth to the FLOSS that we know now. And GPL ensured it that, that freedom cannot any more be taken away from it the way it happened with primitive FLOSS. FLOSS has become the context of reading GPL, the context that was created by GPL itself.

And as we elaborate through the later chapters of this book, particularly in chapter Four, the writing of GPL was an action that unfolded, step by step, in real time, through more than two decades, in a series of minuscule resistance maneuvers that purported to keep the *freedom of knowledge* intact. This series of gestures of resistance that manifested in the body of GPL were all coming from the realm of real existence. It was not at all the case that any charm of creating an epistemological break allured Stallman into writing this text. They were all emanating from the very real wriggles of pain and struggle around this sense of freedom inherent in the activity of *hacking*. We are coming to this word ‘hack’ in the next paragraph, let us mention here a note about the phrase ‘primitive FLOSS’. By this phrase we refer to the world of computing and programming till the freedom of knowledge was open and free here. But, this was much before the term ‘FLOSS’ itself was born. Later we will see how things started to change in seventies, as capital started to exert its control over this world. And through the accumulation of all the minuscule moments of resistance to this grabbing away of freedom, GPL was born. All the software from GNU carried this GPL. Then came Linux kernel, in early nineties, and it was created with the GNU tools, finally to lead to the birth of GNU-Linux, a complete envelope system. This system then bred all the pieces of software under GPL or GPL-like licenses, the collection of which we are calling as ‘FLOSS’.

The use of the word ‘hack’ has a kind of theoretical significance for us. The transforming etymology of the words ‘hacker’ and ‘hacking’ is very interesting and it is important for this book too. The use, connotation, sense and public image of these two words underwent a total turn around between the period of sixties and nineties of the last century. In sixties, seventies, even till mid-eighties, these two words, ‘hacker’ and ‘hacking’, together with another word ‘hobbyist’, had a very positive connotation. The third one is long dropped from popular parlance though. They all implied the sense of writing and rewriting of programs in a creative way, transforming it according to need, custom or whim. In late eighties and nineties the sense of these two words, ‘hacker’ and ‘hacking’ changed exactly in reverse. This happened due to an under-literate class of journalists working under the rules of big capital and market. They, knowingly or unknowingly, played according to the wishes of capital, in tarnishing the image of these two identifiers, and obviously the

identities behind them. Media swapped these two words with the sense of two other words in the then computer-speak, ‘cracker’ and ‘cracking’, that talked about people creating nuisance in computer systems and software.

Let us come back to the series of supplements growing as from the body of resistance of the primitive FLOSS, or the world of hacking. The intervention of the rules of market were hindering and disturbing the very flow of free knowledge in primitive FLOSS. And the activity of hacking crucially depended on this free flow. The rules of market were destined to ruin it altogether. Without ruining it terminally, it was becoming difficult for capital to monopolize every power within this realm. Later we would witness the details of this history: how some big enterprises started their maneuver to take away the freedom and openness dwelling in this world of hacking. Without changing the face of this world, it was very difficult for them to fulfill their project of taking up all those things that were free for all till then, and declaring an encirclement. This encirclement will ensure that from that point everything would be under their exclusive control for the sake of their monopoly over profit. And impairing the free flow of knowledge in computing was extremely significant for the rule of capital. As we will see in details later, this software sector becomes kind of an omnipresent and omnipotent agency, having its sway over every other sector of production.

In fact it is very difficult not to mention a very close parallel here from the history of the birth of industrial capital. Maybe it has already cast its shadow in our very use of the word ‘primitive’ in the phrase ‘primitive FLOSS’. In the famous process of ‘primitive accumulation’ in Marxist political economy we witness something very near to this. In that case a series of enclosures took place as a precondition of expropriation of labor from its means of production. Exactly the way it paved the ground of capital’s rule by causing a lot of pain to the artisan producer, and transforming him into a wage labor, the creative world of hacking was in a lot of pain and wriggle. In a very tough struggle of reconciling the irreconcilable of the differend, gradually, bit by bit, in small supplements, GPL as a text was born. All the ripples and resonance that were generated by these wriggles of resistance in the world of computing got accumulated in the body of GPL. This world of hacking was, in every way, at a very distant remove from the world of philosophy of resistance. Not a single one of these supplements was came from the realm of philosophy and logic. But, now, when we want to understand all the impacts of GPL fully and thoroughly well, when we want to understand the very world and context that was created by GPL, we have to take resort to the esoteric world of Hegel’s Logic and Philosophy of Right. That is one of the important thing that this book does – to follow the counter-route traversed by GPL and FLOSS: from supplement to text to context.

## 1. Taking up an Old Thread over Again

As we said in chapter one, the first chapter of CDC 2000 took off from the same theme of context-text-supplement, but, the text we used there as an example of the counter-journey was not appropriate, to say the least. And here, in the coming pages, we are going to take up that thread once again. Chapter one described how it took me quite some time to reach and understand GPL as a fitting example. This theme was lingering in my thoughts and my searches in the discipline of political economy and political philosophy for quite a long

time, from even before the writing of CDC 2000 was complete. Primarily the question was: how do we define a break in terms of real existence, that spews out a an entirely new logic? As we will see later, this new logic germinated by GPL involved some absolutely unforeseen categories. We can understand the true significance of FLOSS only in terms of these new categories. We map the resultant categories, in terms of Hegel's logic and philosophy of right, later in this book. The point is, the meaning of GPL materializes only through the context of FLOSS, and the actualization of this very context of FLOSS was caused by GPL, as we will see later. So, the event line here becomes: from the supplements around the differend to the text of GPL, and from the text of GPL to the context of FLOSS, which now stands for the true meaning of GPL.

In Derrida's theory of deconstruction, the meaning of a text crucially depends on the chosen context of reading the text. Normally a text works in the realm of epistemology – in the domain of knowledge. The effect happens exclusively in terms of knowledge process. In case of a regular text, that is very linear in terms of its very negligible direct effect on real existence, the Derridean dictum is quite natural. But, how the primary switch happens from context to text in an around a path-breaking new event caused by a text? How to interpret the event happening from a new kind of text, for the sake of convenience that we may call 'revolutionary'? How to interpret the politics of context and text in case of some very singular texts like say 'The Communist Manifesto', Marx and Engels 1848? When an activist reader reads the text and procures a *meaning* from this *reading*, what are the exact shapes of the relations between context and text?

I can still remember the awe, the reverential fear, and a mild tingle of goose-flesh when for the first time the Communist Manifesto came to my hand. For a long time I was just sitting still and trying to absorb the impact emotionally, and thus deferring the action of reading it. Did this create any *difference* in meaning? The *reading* by me, the young activist, came through a particular context, just like the way *context* rules in reading *text*. But, in this particular case, this context, the context of political activism that I belonged to, was the very creation of this text, Communist Manifesto. And so, how to interpret the context-text politics for this particular text or a text like this? In the Derridean logic of Deconstruction, *context* is prior, and *text*, or the meaning of text, is a resultant thing. The act of deconstruction resides in the action of shifting this context and thus generating a new meaning from the same text. And the meaning thus generated from the particular reading of text, gets a life of its own, and goes on generating offshoots in the form of supplements, as we will see later in this chapter. But, in case of the *revolutionary* texts like that, obviously, something else is happening.

But, why this theme of *Context-Text-Supplement-politics* is so important to ensure a repeated return to it across books at a gap of almost ten years? Actually, as we said, this is not at all a return. The text that was chosen in CDC 2000 as the focus of context-text-supplement-politics was not a proper example. From that time on, the sense of a flaw on part of the example returned time and again until, around seven years later, GPL emerged as the example, as *the* text in the full glory of appropriateness. As the theoretical scheme of the politics of context-text-supplement elaborates, we need a text with an immense follow-through in terms of the real social existence. This is very much the case for GPL. As we show through the later chapters of this book, the whole FLOSS movement is a real social

product of the logical break inherent in the text called GPL. Though the relation between GPL and FLOSS is in no way very direct and linear. To understand the full process we will need to go through Hegel's logic later in this book.

In chapters four and five we proceed through all the small and minute steps involved in the complex process of the birth of GPL and then the inception FLOSS. The whole tradition of FLOSS or GNU-Linux emerged as a follow-through of the text called GPL, as an after-effect of the logical break inherent in GPL. Though, this after-effect, just like the differend from what it all started, belongs to the world of real existence. The sheer degree of vastness of the whole phenomenon happening from GPL, compares, most probably, in scale, with only one text in history. And as we said, that is, the Communist Manifesto. But we should note the very structural difference between these two texts. The Communist Manifesto is a *text* in every sense of the term: it is meant to be read, written for the exclusive purpose of reading this text. And GPL is a license, meant only to be read for the resolution of legal controversies, if any, as a subsidiary to the piece of software with which it is attached. It is hardly a *text* in the usual sense of the term. But, let us have a small note here about the term 'GNU-Linux' before we proceed any further. There are myriads of so-called 'flame-wars', that is, prolonged and continued email altercations on FLOSS mailing lists about what should be an appropriate moniker of the Operating System part of FLOSS: 'Linux' or 'GNU/Linux' or some other variation of it. We do not want to engage in that in this book. I personally like the term 'GNU-Linux' than tags like 'GNU/Linux', as a formal name of Linux, because I think the hyphen symbol represents the historical continuity in a better way, the history that we will discuss in details in the later chapters.

A few years after the writing of the first chapter of CDC 2000, I stumbled upon the proper example of the inversion of the context-text-supplement politics, while preparing notes for a lecture in a Refresher Course in Applied Psychology in Calcutta University. This lecture, "From Tongue to Fingers: Colonizing IT in a Postcolonial World", Das 2005, focused on the 'mentality' aspect of the rapid computerization happening around in the Third World. While going through the notes for this lecture, after it was given, I found this excellent example in the process of GPL and FLOSS. The immense import of the personal discovery of this example kind of startled me. I was quite living with these themes for the last few years in the form of GNU-Linux activism. A part of this Linux activism shows up both in this lecture and a reasonably large book in Bangla on GNU-Linux/Unix systems, 'স্ব-লিঙ্গ: একটি ব্যক্তিগত যাত্রা' or *GNU-Linux: A Personal Journey*, Das 2005. Maybe the activist enthusiasm in both the lecture and the book, generated a kind of blind spot and I myself missed the most important element in the whole thing. It was quite surprising that all this time I was living with quite a lot of these ideas, but, all through, in a way, missed the most important one of them. This missing link was the logical break that happened in GPL and actualized in real existence in the shape of FLOSS.

In August 2005, in the lecture for the refresher course, FLOSS was the focus, highlighting the factor of 'colonial mind' operating within the ambience of computer education in a country like ours. Under the wings of this 'colonial mind' it becomes imperative for the students, knowingly or unknowingly, to consider their study of computer science as a study of using software, not innovating it. The focus of the lecture was on how FLOSS can be a way out there. Every FLOSS distro comes with a FLOSS Operating System and a lot of

software developed by the FLOSS community. And this distro can itself become a laboratory of computer science. Let us know, this term ‘distro’ is a short form of ‘distribution’ or GNU-Linux distribution, used by GNU-Linux users and the vendors of these distro-s. Usually GNU-Linux software comes to the user in the form of bundles, on CD-s, DVD-s, USB flash drives, or even directly from Net repositories. These vendors use the GNU-Linux kernel and the vast accumulation of FLOSS software packages, with minor tweaks of their own. We will later discuss the things like kernel and packages elaborately. Some very popular distro-s are OpenSUSE, Ubuntu, Fedora and so on.

Each of these distro-s contains all the FLOSS tools needed for software development, and an immense lot of literature written about these things by the members of the community. And the whole FLOSS tradition, through its mailing-lists and websites, works in the background. And, because all the pieces software in a GNU-Linux distro are FLOSS by definition, the source code of all these pieces of software are free for all to read or modify or distribute. And so a student can study the codes working within these packages. And he can innovate in any way by modifying these packages. So, the distro itself becomes the most living case study in this laboratory. The whole accumulation of all the FLOSS codes of all the pieces of software can be used as models which the student is watching in action at every moment the system is working. We will return to this discussion again in this book, later, after we know all the relevant things about source code.

After the lecture was delivered, and a copy of it was put there on the Net, a lot of people asked many questions, and some questions started occurring within myself, like, how come it was at all possible for FLOSS to offer such an alternative? That is, how come FLOSS could achieve what it achieved, when the time we live in is making us witness all kinds of community endeavors falling and crumbling down all around us every moment? And FLOSS happened in the face of an opposition of the highest strength and grit in the form of monopoly giants who not just make software but dare to claim making the very world available to us. Each and every Linux ‘distro’ with all the FLOSS pieces of software in them is a case of a living wonder in that sense. They were all produced through a *tradition* and a *community* that are examples of striking anachronism in a time like ours. This *is* capital’s regime, everything else is pushed beyond the feasibility horizon. So, the question is, how come it was at all possible?

In this book, finally, to answer this question we will have to take resort to pure Hegelian logic in the coming chapters. In this chapter our project is to explore the very theoretical process of understanding the possibility of subverting of the Derridean politics of context-text-supplement. We want to understand how it all started with the double-birth of GPL and FLOSS, a text and a context, prefigured through a series of events in real existence. Through the supplements of resistance to these real events, the epistemology of the text grew around itself and bred an entirely new kind of real social categories. These real social/ethical/legal categories working within FLOSS then became the very context of reading this text of GPL. This exemplifies a brilliant subversion of the usual politics of context-text-supplement-politics, where context is the primal and text is a resultant of this primal cause, and then supplements grow from text. In this chapter we make the theoretical scheme available, such that, later in the book, we can lend flesh and blood to this theoretical scheme by fitting examples from the history GPL and FLOSS.

## 2. Defining the Context-Text Politics

Let us now be a bit more specific here about the words ‘context’ and ‘text’ in the Derridean framework. We will come to ‘supplement’ later. By ‘context’ we mean here the so-called *Reality Principle*, that provides some particular point of view of reading a specified Text. This is regular Derrida, where context provides the clue to a particular set of meaning of a piece of text. Here, ‘text’, with all the words within the text, is a kind of a mine with virtually infinite possibilities of meaning immanent within it. But, finally, what particular meaning a particular reader arrives at, carrying a particular point of view, depends crucially on this particular chosen point of view. This *point of view* enters into the game of meaning generation through a particular set of concepts cast and molded in a particular hierarchy. And this particular hierarchy of importance within words/concepts is actually a derivative of the chosen particular point of view.

Every single viewpoint provides with a single set of concepts composed in one *particular* hierarchy of importance, leading to a *particular* reading and thus a *particular* meaning of a text. Derrida’s Deconstruction, in other terms, resides in displacing one particular hierarchy operating within the words/concepts generated by the particular chosen point of view, and through this displacement, arriving at a new set, cast and molded in another hierarchy. This new hierarchy works through a new set of ruler/ruled words or concepts. This new hierarchy now generates a *new* meaning of the entire text. The newness of this meaning is the resident novelty of Derrida’s Deconstruction. So, all along this Derridean theory of Deconstruction, context is always prior to text. A piece of text actualizes in terms of its meaning, and this meaning is generated by the value structure imbibed in a particular point of view. This point of view includes a particular moment of the Reality Principle, that is, context. Potentially, every piece of text is an infinite series of implicit possibilities of meaning. Every moment of *deconstruction* just actualizes one particular moment from this infinite series of possibilities.

Now, the question is: how to read a so-called ‘revolutionary’ or ‘path-breaking’ text? A text that goes on to breed a reality of its own? This reality comprises of components on both the wings of real existence and textual logic. Changes in both these fields are spawned forth by this kind of text. The reality thus woven around the text now goes on generating newer and newer texts or theories of different order, and newer versions of reality of action. These two living layer of components, the reality of actions on the plane of real social existence, and the reality of texts, on the plane of logic, now go on tweaking the *Reality Principle* or the context of reading such a text. The tweak comes in the form of the changes in texts and the impact of these texts on the reading minds, and thus the changes in the social reality that breeds those reading minds. We all know that the world of real existence is prior. It is an empire that thrives on regular reproduction of different layers of texts, and thus, the logical categories residing in these texts. But, how to theorize about a space of logical categories that strikes back on the empire? How to read the significance of the kind of texts with the ability to do such a strike back in the framework of the ruling Derridean theory of reading and meaning? How to theorize those texts that have ingrained within themselves possibilities of building new empires, or at least challenging and curbing or even annihilating the old empire? Let us remind here: this concept of hegemony, or challenging it with counter-hegemony, or even going beyond all versions of hegemony by



subverting it, is going to be crucially important in later in this book.

The question of the politics of context-text-supplement becomes doubly important here, particularly in this book, due to the very special relation of the discursive space elaborated in this book with the grand Discourse of the West. And, as we try to show in this book, this grand Discourse speaks the language of Father, the Global Capital. Obviously in the true theoretical sense, there can be no geographical determination of capital. There are so many questions around the problem of geographical determination of capital or labor. Though, some versions of postcolonial political economic theory have demonstrated a very skewed and unequal status between labor and capital in terms of geographical mobility. Like, while labor remains only partially mobile, mobility of space being delimited and constricted by various kinds of migration and other laws, capital fosters with a flawless mobility, thus creating a very skewed space of negotiation between labor and capital – this very theme is discussed in details in Basu 2008. In Sikdar 2006 we get a kind of a neoclassical restatement of this phenomenon.

But, as we will see later, the rules of globally operating capital are always already inscribed in the process of *mimicry of overdetermination*, a concept that we mentioned in chapter one. This depicts a phenomenon that explains the hidden plates and terrains of inequality under the placid qualm of the tranquil ocean of equality. A lot of postmodern postcolonial theorists do actually presume this globe to be really equal like that, under the rule of *overdetermination* that replaced the age old concepts of one-way logical chains of essentialist causality, with a definite origin and a finite teleology. *Overdetermination* as a concept calls for equality of multiple entities on the plane of causality, because all entities mutually determine and constitute all other entities. And so, there is no question of one of them to be *cause* and some other of them to be *effect*. So, apparently, all become equal in this space of overdetermination. Now, once again, *mimicry of overdetermination* brings back the devil of inequality and renders this space of apparent equality a very skewed and thus unequal one. It gets skewed in favor of the West, as we mentioned in chapter one, in the discussion of *postcolony* and *postcolonization*. This postcolonial Global Capital wants to colonize once again the the so-called Third World, the details of which we discuss later in the book. And the job that this book intends to do is to explore the theoretical possibility of the politics of resistance coming out of GPL and FLOSS in the resistance against this postcolonization.

It is ironic that the text of GPL was generated by the context of the Rule of Capital. In chapters four and five we describe in details all the microscopic moments within a process of reclaiming the stolen freedom that led to the counter-gesture of a text like this. We show there how the world of primitive FLOSS was ruled by an innocent equality. But, this world was an endless goldmine. It continuously generated new values in a changing market of a changing world, and allured capital to capture and claim this free land in terms of the rule of market and capital. Now, in reaction to this action of capturing, this text of GPL was born. It was a text that started talking back, reclaiming this captured freedom, and generated a context of its own. But, after everything, it was a piece of text written within the Western paradigm, meant for the Western audience, in a Western Reality. Computers and Software, at least till then, was a distant mythology to the Eastern quarters of the planet. But, within the two decades after the writing of the GNU GPL, a lot of things

happened. The so-called Globalization of Capital was never this kind of alive at any point of time before in the history of humankind. Computing and networking played a big role here, that we will discuss later in details. In the face of this global onslaught of capital, GPL actually propagates a lot of new areas, new political economy and new possibilities of the politics of resistance. In the context of this new postcolonizing politics of Global Capital, the question of a Local talk-back to the Global becomes more crucial. And here, in this chapter, we try to build a theoretical basis of that talk-back.

Obviously, another very important circumstance here is the fall of the Socialist World, the Second World, so to speak. This has transformed the issue of globalization itself. We have never seen Globalization so much all-pervading, so much omniscient and omnipotent. The violence of the onslaught of Global Capital, either speaking on its own, or speaking through its local agents, has never been this pronounced. The relative placidity of negotiations that the Third World did enjoy, before the fall of the Socialist Block, is now gone. The Grand Capital of the West knows, no one is there on the horizon, whose entry may pose a threat to capital's politics. So they start their game with no holds barred. A game that echoes and throes throughout the whole space under called Third World. Though this tag 'third world' is a misnomer, without a 'second world' being around. This happens in every land, in every country, in every state of the Third World with a never-before violence and thrust.

In the last chapter of this book we discuss the difference of the politics of resistance implicit in GPL and FLOSS against the politics of *counter-hegemony* of the Marxist or Socialist order. Against their politics of counter-hegemony we compare the politics inherent in GPL that we prefer to call as politics of *subversion*. While the politics of counter-hegemony resides in replacing Father with a Father', the politics of subversion opts towards tweaking and transforming Father from inside towards an entirely new subverted category of ~~Father~~. The politics of subversion inherent within GPL never comes in any direct confrontation of any order with the rules of Father. Rather it corroborates them in its every gesture, a process that we will elaborate later, in its proper place. So, the context of talking back through the text of GPL, and so, a theory of talking back, was made even more important for us in this book by the decade that passed after CDC 2000. Without such a theory working as the basis of this politics, the theoretical contribution of GPL remains kind of incomplete in terms of its very deep impacts on both philosophy and real existence: how this very singular kind of text subverted the overdetermination between these two realms.

### 3. Deep Implications of the Local-Global Dialog

In CDC 2000 one of the most important themes was the deep implication of the Local-Global Dialog – the problem of recording the voice of the Other within the margins of the Western Discourse. This chapter here, to an extent, retraces the same path. This common portion generates the ground on which we develop the theoretical tools such that later we can throw some light of our own on GNU GPL, and start saying the things that are of our own, special to this book, centering around the politics of subversion in GPL and FLOSS. Here, again, just like that book one decade back, we start talking with this very issue of the possibility of a Local-Global Dialog: if it can happen at all.

Let us remember Foucault's "Order of Discourse", Foucault 1971, once again, specially the modes of inclusion/exclusion/occlusion of particular moments of discourse into the grand flow of discourses. Let us conceive a Third World writer on political economy. He wants to write his own discoveries and realizations in the discourse he writes. But, this discourse, or any other discourse in that sense, exists only as a particular moment of *the* Discourse, the Grand Discourse of the West. And once his particular discourse gets united into the flow of the Grand Discourse, this author does not find there any more the voice of dissent, the rebellion. He cannot discover any more the things that were for him the defining moments of his own discourse. But, he wants to record the voice of dissent, and he cannot. Or, better, can he? As a Third World writer he goes on writing in the margins of the Discourse of the West, where he goes on recording the voice of the Other, the voice that he hears in his neighborhood, all around him. He tries to write them down, and, by that gesture, makes that available to the Discourse of the West. But what happens to his writings? Can he make them heard at all? Can the saVAge speak? In chapter one we mentioned about this category 'saVAge' that we imported from CDC 2000. It describes the savage who is simultaneously a sage. It is the savage who is self-conscious, conscious about his own Third World reality, and the limits of this reality, in difference with other sorts of reality. And so, this self-conscious savage is a sage of some kind. We will come back to a full elaboration of the economic, political and cultural space of the saVAge later in this book.

It is our experience that, as the margin of the West speaks, it gets ridden with some deep turbulence that comes from its own within. Some very deep self-contradictions start to show up in the form of a struggle. Another discordant voice comes up that often subverts the speech of the first one. And then follows a life-and-death struggle between the domesticated margin seeking comfort and the Other within it that carries the rebellion. The project is ridden with anomalies from the very start. The Third World writer wants to get heard in the Discourse of the West, and so, demands sympathetic ears. And, ironically, what he wants spoken to these sympathetic ears is something very rebellious. The writing project of the Third World writer is, from the very start, suffering from some deep contradictions and anomalies.

In fact, the economic-political-cultural complex of postcolony that we witness around us in the Third World, forms the postcolonial mind in that contradictory and anomalous way. The famous film *Xala* by Ousmane Sembene, Sembene 1975, is a moving picture of this anomalous postcolonial mind. And the more interesting this about this is that, as an Indian viewer, I never fail to get this eerie feeling while watching *Xala* that it could exactly be an Indian film about an Indian politician. Senegal and India both repeat the same nature of postcoloniality. In the last chapter of this book we come back to the discussion of postcolony. As we said in chapter one, we borrowed 'postcolony' from CDC 2000. The main feature of this concept of *postcolony* is that it signals both a continuity and a break with the history of colony. In terms of sovereignty of geography, this is no more a colony. But, there is and remains a continuity in terms of power relations and inequality that are more in line with the colonial history. There is a crucial difference too: while the colony had a specific colonizer, in the postcolony the colonizer is nameless. Now let us return to the point of the writing project of a Third World writer who strives to say something of his own in this era of postcolonization.

The struggle between the self-contradictory and plural voices within the Third World writer goes on. At times, the conforming margin, when it conforms with the wish of the Discourse of the West about what it wants to hear, gets itself heard. And so, what gets heard is not the writer's project in the true sense. And at times, the rebellious margin drives the conforming voice desperately away, and so nothing gets heard at all in the pandemonium, not even whimpers. In CDC 2000 the writer of the East was an important focus: the voice that does not get an adequate representation in the discourse of the West. Some of the immigrant writers coming from the East came under close scrutiny and attention in that book. It talked about different possibilities in the case of a Third World writer. In some cases, the immigrant writer, who wanted to get heard in the West, returns home. There he finds, to his very deep dismay, that his homeland too is ruled by the Discourse of the West, or, more horribly, by the metonymic transformations of the discourse of the West. And so, if the ruling father discourse of West rejects the immigrant writer, he is heard nowhere at all, he is threatened to be thrown into nowhere, as a nobody. CDC 2000 then proceeded to elaborate this point through a few examples of such writing projects, which led to one or the other result.

But, why this goes on happening? As a possible explanation of this phenomenon we bring in the concept of *differend* (Lyotard 1988) and *deconstruction* as two nodal points in such writing projects. This actually came out from the reading of the whole writing project of Spivak, Spivak 1988, 1999 – used as an interesting example in CDC 2000. At an earlier moment, Spivak 1988 pointed out that the subaltern cannot speak. And then, later, almost a decade after this, Spivak 1995 returned this point once again, with a conformist gesture and a retreat, that it is hard for the subaltern to speak. Maybe, in this whole story we can read an inability to be aware of the Other's voice. And maybe, due to this lack of awareness, Spivak allows this other voice to get confused, conflated and collapsed with the inaudible plural conflictual others within the Western texts seeking outlets by way of a deconstructive reading strategy. And once the project of deconstruction receives a lower priority on Spivak's research agenda, the issue of *differend* and the related issue of how to embody it gets suspended from the writing project. From here starts our journey: we intend to bring 'deconstruction' and 'differend' together.

Maybe, this move of Spivak represents a view of *differend* and *deconstruction* as two self-contained unambiguous complete categories that never intersect. The possible explanation is that, Spivak's move involves a view of these two as pure black and white, forgetting all the possible shades of gray. Let us start with Lyotard's *differend*. This is a portion from the very starting paragraph of Lyotard 1988. In this very first paragraph, titled 'Title', Lyotard describes what 'differend' is.

As distinguished from a litigation, a differend [*différend*] would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy. However, applying a single rule of judgment to both in order to settle their differend as though it were merely a litigation would wrong (at least) one of them (and both of them if neither side admits this rule). Damages result from an injury which is inflicted upon the rules of a genre of

discourse but which is reparable according to those rules.  
A wrong results from the fact that the rules of the genre  
of discourse by which one judges are not those of the  
judged genre or genres of discourse.

The area of Lyotard's work is the philosophy of language, from where he comes to the idea of *differend*. The grains of this idea were in his earlier works on paganism and postmodernism, but it grows to its full in Lyotard 1988, maybe the most important of his philosophical works. In this book he wants to elaborate and explicate the moments of 'injustice' and thus 'justice' in the context of philosophy of language. The moment of *differend* marks a moment of such a conflict that cannot be resolved. The lack of resolution comes from a lack of a 'rule of judgment' that is applicable to both the parties involved in the conflict. In a situation like this, where *differend* has occurred, both of the parties can never agree on the solution, and thus the dispute continues. The situation of *differend* is the very opposite of that of *litigation*. A *litigation* is a kind of a dispute that can be meaningfully resolved because both the parties agree on some 'rule of judgment'. And thus, the process of judgment can strike out some solution that brings in justice applicable to both the parties.

This very difference between *differend* and *litigation*, according to Lyotard, repeats in the difference between a *victim* and a *plaintiff*. One who considers oneself as the wronged party in a *differend* is a *victim*, and the wronged party in a *litigation* is a *plaintiff*. In a litigation, the plaintiff's wrong can be presented, while the wrong of a victim in a *differend* cannot be presented. A *differend* is exactly such a situation when the victim not only considers himself wronged, but has simultaneously lost the ability to present this wrong. This loss of ability of presentation on part of the victim may take place in various ways. It may be a part of a process of silencing by threat. Or, maybe the victim is allowed to speak, but the speech gets disqualified as 'not relevant or meaningful', like insane or something. Or, maybe there is some kind of structural peculiarity within the the discourse of the 'rule of judgment' itself that renders the wrong done on the victim untranslatable into the discourse of the 'rule of judgment'.

Later in this book, when we read the history of the birth of GPL, we will witness an exactly parallel situation. The primitive FLOSS world of hackers feels pain from the very fact of the freedom getting taken away. But, this is no particular conspiracy of capital against hackers. This is the very way of the market being and becoming the market that it is. Without taking away the community freedom of knowledge in primitive FLOSS capital's rules cannot operate at all. This is a very justified gesture on part of capital. And, so, the hackers had nothing to complain to the court of law. In terms of the rules of capital and market, rules that are protected by the court of law, there could be no litigation. Rule of capital and market was just exerting its lawful power in the field of primitive accumulation of knowledge through the community of hackers. But, unfortunately, the hackers had presumed this world to be outside the jurisdiction of these rules, while it was not. GPL grew just from this: from the *differend* of the hackers' world, where they could not present in a justified way the injustice done to them.

From the pain of this *differend* grew the supplements that accumulated into the logical marvel of GPL. And it was this GPL that enabled the hackers to exist and flourish once

again under the new envelope identity of FLOSS, and that too in an entirely lawful way under the very same rule of market and capital. Later in the book, we will use Hegel's logic to unravel the mystery of this: how GPL resolved this differend. But, the important point is that it was a deconstruction of the very legal and ethical system inherent in the hegemony of capital in order to allow a differend to speak out. We will see later, in the discussion of philosophy of right, how, the institution of state grows from the elementary category of 'private property'. In this elaborate institution of state, the legal and judicial system, the security system of police and military, and the administrative system of state – they all reside within a symbiosis, they all are different ways of protecting the primary elementary category of 'private property'. What GPL does is a deconstruction of the property system, in order to resolve the differend of the hackers. So, finally, in GPL, the moment of *deconstruction* and *differend* come together, the moment that we are trying to anticipate in this chapter.

To elaborate the concept of a victim within a differend, Lyotard uses several examples like the one of a Nazi Concentration Camp. If and when a historian challenges the very existence of a gas chamber in a Concentration Camp, and allows as its proof of existence nothing but a testimony by an eyewitness who himself was a victim of such a gas chamber, a differend is created. If there really existed any Gas Chamber, any eyewitness like that will be already dead, and hence will not be able to testify. So, the conclusion of this historian will be that there were no gas chambers. So, the situation is a bit mixed up. There are two possibilities. One, there were no gas chambers. In that case, obviously, there will be no eyewitness like that. Two, there were gas chambers, and any eyewitness is already dead. In that case, too, there will be no eyewitness. So, both the possibilities, will lead to the same conclusion for the historian who admits no other proof than the testimony of eyewitness victims, that, there were no gas chambers. So both these binary possibilities lead to the same conclusion. This is an example of a differend, because the wrong made on the victims cannot be presented any more, if the discourse of judgment is constructed on the criterion of 'proof' allowed by this historian.

Another example of differend used by Lyotard becomes more important for us in context of this book, an example more in line with the hackers' world. That is the case of aboriginal rights on land. The tribes believe that the land was taken away from them forcefully. Here comes in a differend in the sense that the tribal rights on land are legitimized by tribal law and tribal law is not any 'valid' system of judgment in the modern discourse of law. In any lawsuit in any court of a modern state, the citizen of the modern state will always be at an advantage over any tribal contestant. The law that the tribal people follow will not be recognized at all by the law of the modern state. And hence, tribal law will not be allowed at all as admissible evidence. So, the wrong done on the tribal people cannot be presented as a wrong. But, obviously, the tribal people consider it as a wrong: it is wrong according to tribal law. The apparently normal rules of market and capital, operating in production-distribution-appropriation of value generated in software, hides a very abnormal closure by private capital on public rights. Here, the normal morality of social good gets stuck in a situation of differend that cannot represent the wrong done by private capital on the social aspect of the knowledge industry of software. And it took a logical loop in the form of GPL to bring back this social right into the arena of modern law. We will discuss this loop later.

With this concept of Lyotard's *differend* in mind, in order to unite it into the discourse of *deconstruction*, let us proceed to elaborate the case of a masterpiece written by an unknown author. This unknown author has written a masterpiece. No editor agrees to publish it – it is so different. Now, how can this author prove that it is a masterpiece? And, more importantly, how can the writer sustain as a writer? The author himself thinks that it is a masterpiece, and it is this very fact that is restricting his work to get published. No one else knows that it is a masterpiece, and does not dare to publish it because it is so different. And because the work does not get published, his masterpiece does not get known as a masterpiece. So the very crux of the problem lies in its being a masterpiece. The *differend* resides in those confrontations where the ends can never meet, by definition. This is the exact problem of our saVAge writer: he can never make heard what he is saying, because of the difference, because his voice is so very different to the established discourse of the West. The saVAge writer of the Third World knows that his voice would not get heard, and so, as a strategy, he suppresses his voice and he speaks through interventions on texts.

In spite of everything, he must go on speaking, maybe like a specter, but he must go on speaking in this obtuse way, to unite, at a later point of time, *deconstruction* and *differend*. Maybe this is not very logical, in the purist elite Kantian sense of Western Epistemology, but that does not matter much to us. We want to strike out a conceptual framework that will enable us to grasp the immense depth of epistemological and ontological violence that the text of GPL incurs on the reality, starting from the category of 'private property' that is the core of the rule of capital and market, as we will see in the discussion on Hegel's logic. So, we just pluck out these two concepts, *differend* and *deconstruction* from their very different moorings and locations in very different disciplines and just augment them together into our very own version of the power politics between *context* and *text* and *supplement*. In order to do it, in the coming section, we present a reading of our own of Derrida's Deconstruction. As we have already mentioned, we do not believe in *the* reading: this is just another possible reading, a reading of our own of the Derridean theory of Deconstruction.

#### 4. Our Version of Derrida

Let us begin from the beginning, from the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure. Whatever tidbits we use here from Ferdinand de Saussure, all come from Saussure 1966. This book, *Course in General Linguistics*, is based on notes taken by students from Saussure's lectures at the University of Geneva between 1906 and 1911, and then compiled by them, first published in 1916 after Saussure's death. This book is actually the take-off point of many a concept in Structuralism. We are starting from here to go into the concepts of Derrida with an adequate thoroughness in the philosophy of words/concepts. In Saussure's theory, the process of *naming* of the words – why a word is exactly what it is – has no in-built logic. A particular name or a particular *signifier* is one that just happened to be, from a series of many possible ones. The *signifier* has got no inherent relation with the *signified*. A *name* is always *arbitrary*. But, these names are the things that build and classify the whole referent-space of *signification*. So, this classification, by the same stroke of theory, becomes arbitrary. And hence the names or words or concepts are all relational within the process of

*generation of meaning*. It is the whole network of relations operating among the individual names/words/concepts that gives birth to meaning. Each of these signs (names/words/concepts) can convey a meaning of its own precisely because it is situated in a related network of other names/words/concepts.

These relations between the signs are all defined *negatively*, that is, in terms of what it is *not*. We will come to this once again, in context of Hegelian logic's classification of reality into categories, and their *reality* and *negative*. There we will talk a lot more about the arbitrariness of the categories and their system of meaning. Now let us come back to this concept of negatively-defined signs. For example, the sign of 'chair' is working on a part of referent space that is *not a table/not a stool/not ... ad infinitum*. All these negatively defined relations come together in the system of signs to form a *totality*. One specific concrete moment of this totality actualizes in the container of a text. This text now conveys *meaning*. So, according to Saussure, the word 'red' in itself does not convey any sense. A baby can apprehend and recognize the color 'red' through the counter-positing of the other colors like blue, green or yellow, that is, in contrast to these non-red colors. Recognition of 'red' is actually a negative-recognition of all *other* components of the totality through a play of *difference*. In Saussure's doctrine, this totality is a closed totality, and the difference that plays within it is a *difference-in-relation*.

Here, a bit from Hegel or Althusser can be recalled to cross-compare the respective antagonistic and overdetermined difference-in-relation in the Hegelian and Althusserian concept of totality. In Hegel's logic, within the very definition of any category, resides a leap. As we will see later in fuller details, the Hegelian category of 'this' is negated by 'that'. Like 'this' laptop here is negated by 'that' desktop on the table. This negation goes on and on, badly and infinitely, like say, through Workstation computers, PDA-s, and so on, till we arrive at a category. We arrive at this category through a leap: into a category like *computer*. This category *computer* now, as an envelope, includes both *this* computer and *that* computer. There is much to be discussed later about this Hegelian concept of 'leap'. Anyway, in Hegelian logic, we get arrive at a category through a leap, a leap that brings into its inclusion both the *reality* and its *negation*, and thus avoids the epistemological trap of being caught into the infamous Hegelian *bad infinity*. This bad infinity proceeds through an endless negation, indefinitely, and indeterminately, to reach absolutely nowhere. But, to reach *somewhere* in terms of this Hegelian antagonistic difference-in-relation, it needs a leap. This leap creates a category that takes into its scope both the antagonistic entities, together with the antagonism within them.

The Althusserian system is considered as a complex of complexes, in terms of which all the overdetermined difference-in-relation is defined and delineated. We mentioned the three complexes of social reality in chapter one – the *economic*, the *political*, the *cultural*. The essay "Contradiction and Overdetermination" in Althusser 1969 is sufficient for our discussion of overdetermination here. All the complexes overdetermine one another, that is, constitute and determine one another. Though, in the final sense, or in the *last instance*, the *economic* determines the others. So, an Althusserian category, in the last but other instances, emerges through an inter-play of the *economic*, the *cultural*, and the *political*. These three complexes are defined discursively. And hence, if we remember our discussion of discursive space in chapter one, all the categories here are epistemological categories,



generated through the overdetermination between these three categories. But, in the last instance controlled by the economic. This goes in line with the Marxist mooring of Althusser's theory, where, as we discussed in chapter one, the base or the economy determines the superstructure of culture and ethics and politics. The determination is an exact one-way tight causality that we discussed there. So, the equality of overdetermination implicit there in the Althusserian difference-in-relation is not exactly equality. In the final sense, it is broken by the intervention of the economic.

In contrast to these Hegelian and Althusserian concepts of totality, in Saussure's system all the individual elements of the totality have an equal status. Saussure's *difference-in-relation* presupposes equal status among the words/concepts. There is a total absence of hierarchy in Saussure. This equality among the elements in Saussure is in no way a proposition derived from some definition within the system. The equality does not flow from some postulated definition within the system. Some obvious examples of such derived equality come to our heads. One example is the equality of status among all the existents or things, because they all flowed from the *origin of essence* in Hegel's logic. In the case of Marxian logic, this origin shifts to *abstract* labor, and all commodities as exchange values flow from it, and hence they become equal in the status of being repositories of abstract labor. It is time now to bring in Derrida to proclaim the existence of a hierarchy within the elements of this totality.

In Derrida's theory concepts/words are always already inscribed with hierarchies. While some of them are dominant, the others are pushed into dormancy. Within the totality of a text, these dominant key concepts are the principal and privileged ones. These dominant ones come together to bring forth a structure of meaning within the text. And now, through this structure provided by these dominant ones, all the other concepts are derived. These derived concepts are now piled up in the background. This actually creates a partitioned space, divided between a *background* and a *foreground*. And this partitioning is crucially connected to the concept of context: the *context* of reading the text. These dormant concepts are not backgrounded for good. They are lying in wait just for a change in context, when some newer context will play up some of the dormant concepts and transform them into dominant ones in this new context. Derrida's concept of *deconstruction* is another name of this process of shifting contexts and hierarchies if and when this shift is deliberate.

So, the Derridean reading of text involves a text-context complex that brings about a quest of the nature of the relationship between text and context. Strangely enough, Derrida is never very articulate on this particular point. Derrida says nothing about the specificity of a particular context: how the *choice* of a particular context is made, exactly on what ground, or, how, after a particular context is chosen, it is constructed and built upon in its journey towards the particular meaning, particular to the particular context. It is in fact quite strange that the whole cannon of Derrida lacks a single comprehensive theory on the correlation between text and context. Even any hint about any possible overdetermination, if any, between text and context is absent in Derrida. Derrida's point of departure always already takes this correlation for granted and starts therefrom. The whole theory of Derrida is confined to the very domain of text and the power politics between the principal and derivative concepts within text. Derrida intervenes into the reading of text, the Saussurian

reading, in the pretext of context, and then, all of a sudden, becomes silent. But, there are and remain so many twists and turns in the whole complexity of the politics between context and text.

Derrida theorized the hierarchy of privilege within the words/concepts in a text, and prescribed a deconstructive tactics of displacing these hierarchies by shifting the context of reading a text. The politics of *Prior Presence* is quite an important theme in Derrida's theory. This *prior presence* creeps in through the concept of *context*. Once the context is given, some words/concepts get loaded with the *prior presence* imbibed in the particular context, in the particular viewpoint from a particular power-position implicit in the context. Now these loaded words/concepts become the dominant ones, and they now start to rule the resultant particular meaning of the text. The dominant and the dormant words/concepts become two different forms of the derivatives of the prior presence. While the dominant ones represent a primal form of prior presence, the dormant ones represent the dual of it. The meaning of the text being read becomes a *colony* and a *colonization* by the prior presence. The whole realm of the particular meaning of the text gets *colonized*. So, the rule by *dominant words* is a colonization of meaning. The process of generation of meaning through text/discourse plays a colonizer's role and creates the effects of colonizing. The Derridean deconstruction can be viewed as an anti-colonial move against this colonization of meanings.

Derrida's theory of deconstruction is anti-colonial, obviously, but inadequately so, as we are trying to suggest here. This inadequacy takes the form of a lack of precise formulation of the interrelationship between context and text, or, text and supplement. There is a lot of complexity inherent in this interrelationship. This chapter intends to construct one particular form of the context-text-supplement relation. We take one particular possibility of overdetermination between real existence and logic – how it generated a particular form of relation between context, text and supplement. And by theorizing this particular moment we want to present some aspects of this complexity of the interrelationship. This book is going to elaborate one specific instance of this complexity in the form of GNU GPL, and the reality that it construed, or better, the infinitely unfolding chain of events and thoughts and doctrines that GPL initiated. And thus, at least in this instance, our reading of the politics inherent there may fulfill a bit more the Derridean project of coming out from the clutches of colonization of meaning by prior presence.

This politics between text and context is our entry-point, our point of intervention into Derrida. Let us sum up a few of our elements before we delve deeper. Saussure believes in the *uniqueness* of the meaning of text, but he assumes this meaning to be *relational* in nature. A meaning that operates through a structure of names and their inter-relationships. And this meaning from the text never operates outside the structure of the text. In contrast, Derrida believes that no *true meaning*, as one, does exist at all. The category of meaning only exists in plurality: as many possible meanings.

The journey from Saussure to Derrida consists of these two primary Saussurian assumptions:

- Naming is arbitrary.
- Classification of real space implied by naming is arbitrary.

We accept the two above assumptions and add a third of our own.

- Context is always already contrived: contrived by the subject – in the form of the reader.

By adding this third assumption, the role of context gets highlighted by dividing the words/concepts into a hierarchy:

- Primary or elite words
- Derived or subaltern words
- Forgotten words

This third category of forgotten words may seem a bit strange to some of us. The forgotten words vest the discourse with their footprints – traces that in their *interpellation* give us astounding shocks. This concept of ‘interpellation’, a dictionary meaning being ‘questioning’ or ‘interrogation’, was coined by Althusser 1971 while elaborating the process of transition from a *pre-ideological individual* to a *subject* in the proper sense of the term through the apparatus of ideology. Exactly the same way, we want to discover the hidden ‘subject’ positions within the forgotten words. Take the word *motherland* – everyone conceives ‘motherland’ in the image of his own mother. Place the discourse on motherland before a reader of a son of a sex-worker. Does the flexibility of the discourse allow it to be carried away into the unknown quarters – the *pros-quarter* – the semi-lit ante-chamber, where the son of a sex-worker, recently brought under the literacy program, while learning some patriotic poem like an ode to the motherland, goes on constructing his own image of the ‘motherland’ – in the image of his own mother? Here the mother in the form of a sex-worker is the forgotten word/concept.

The reading strategy in Derridean theory of deconstruction consists of replacing the primary context of reading the text with an alternative one. This alternative context must come up from within the text, from within the workings of the inner logic of the text itself. And this birth of an alternative context happens independent of the reading subject or the reader. Newer and newer contexts are generated from within the internal logic of the text, leaving little or no space for the *subject*.

But now, this section, as its title goes, “Our Version of Derrida”, intends to smuggle in a role of *subject* in the disguise of logic: a subject capable of creating newer contexts. A question may come up here: how is it possible to view the logical dysfunction within logic through the apparatus of logic? To get away from this tail-eating snake of a self-recursive logic, we add the assumption that text and context are mutually constituting, that is, overdetermining each other in this version of Derrida. And, here, in this chapter on the politics between text and context, we first want to deal with only one aspect of the two-way mutual overdetermination: the journey from context to text.

So, now, the exact area that we want to highlight is the process through which context overdetermines text, forgetting, at least temporarily, all the other remaining dimensions of the ceaseless play of multiple way overdetermination. And the consequences of this assumption is very obvious. Our concept of Derrida deliberately breaks down the symmetric space of the world of the words. But, before we proceed any more in presenting this asymmetric world, let us get familiar with the concept of ‘supplement’. Till now we have said nothing about it. Context determines the uneven status of the words – the relative

positions of the individual words in the hierarchy of the words. So, it is the context that opens up a whole space of interplay between the primary and the derivative words – the elite and the subaltern words – and this play paves the way for supplements to emerge and appear. These supplements get supplemented to the text, by the way of the Derridean concept of supplement. Now, let us elaborate a little, what this concept actually is. We are about to enter into the Derridean concept of *supplement* in the form of an intervention in Hegel's logic.

## 5. Derrida's Concept of Supplement

Derrida's theory of *différance* actually marks a departure – at the level of unity, a departure from the Hegelian continuity. He brings the fight to the Hegelian camp. At the level of difference he has another fight that distinguishes him aside from the other postmoderns. Derrida is the first one to walk out the bandwagon of the totalitarian points of view just to stand abreast the underworld: to understand the world of small beings – to understand them not apart from each other but together with their *trace* and *alterity*. Be it the concept of *différance* or that of *trace*, or *spacing-alterity* or *supplement* – all these are just instruments of Derrida in the journey towards reaching the ever-expanding universe of beings growing and changing from within themselves, at times quite beyond themselves.

Marx's concept of over-expansion and auto-erotic procreativity of capital can be a good comparison to the Derridean process of *différance*. This expansion of capital giving rise to the celebrated process of accumulation that accumulates around itself in pursuit of surpassing and superseding its own self and becoming bigger than itself. It happens just the way the Derridean concept of meaning is always superseding itself into its endless supplements. In the same way, text is always overflowing and transcending itself to become bigger than itself. That is why it can supplement to itself, and, this supplementing is in no way an addition. Capital never adds on itself. The very formation of such a model of capital adding on to itself presupposes the concept of a transcendental signified in the form of capital. That is, some capital is there even before the process of generation of capital has started at all. Capital is a discursive space that is always overflowing and supplementing to itself: supplementing to the discourse of commodity. Or, rather, capital is supplementing to a supplement. Because, the signifier of commodity does not carry a transcendental signified too. The supplement is rather an added outside that is always already present within a text.

This parallelism between accumulation of capital and Derridean supplement has a kind of metaphoric surplus for us. We will cite GPL later in this book as some ploy that changes this auto-supplementation process of capital from within, and consequently transforms all the related fundamental categories of society, state, and polity in its follow-through. And the concept of 'supplement' is very important to us, we said, because, as goes the history of its birth, GPL itself emerges through a series of supplements, in resistance to the rule of capital.

This formulation of 'supplement' can aptly help in our delving into and depicting the very relationship between the formation of the epistemological space and categories on one hand and their counterparts of real existence on the other. But, then again, what is our

understanding of the real existence, if not some ontological presuppositions. Whenever we are going to formulate anything about real existence, it is becoming a *formulation*, and hence a theoretical space. In that sense, ontology or the philosophy of existence is an epistemology or theory of knowledge itself. So, the interplay between the real existence and the realm of knowledge and theory becomes an interplay between theories, whenever we are formulating or theorizing about it. It becomes the interplay between the theory of history and the theory of knowledge, between *illusion* and *reality*. Reality is no illusion, rather illusion is a real illusion of the reality. If thought that way, *illusion* is supplementing to *reality*. Reality is proceeding and proliferating itself through extensions in the form of a series of illusions. This corroborates with our experience of the relation between Philosophy and Literature: Philosophy itself subsists in and as Literature. Though, this formulation is just another version of the Kantian theory of expansion of knowledge allowing the formal Western logic a back-door entrance. Formal Western logic with its formal methodology of reading a text plays on the role of a preacher sermonizing the reader to become aware of the forgetfulness both on the reader's part and the text's: be aware of the things that both you and the text have forgotten. As if the project of deconstruction is a kind of a social awareness program, pushing literature more and more into the jurisdiction of reason.

According to Derrida, Presence is always marked by a lack of full presence, and so, there always exists a condition for the existence of *supplement*. Supplement means something additional growing out from within. This additional growth could be understood as being conditioned by a certain lack of presence, as in Derrida. Or, it can be understood simply as an extra addition to an already full presence, as in Saussure, Plato, or Rousseau. In Derrida's structure, presence is never complete or total in the form of an identity. Supplement is generated in an attempt at providing a full presence or identity, but it is precisely this attempt that undoes such an endeavor that results in an endless subverting of a farther fulfillment. This can be called an auto-subversion, the fullness of the identity is undone by its strife to become full, because the word 'farther' is open-ended, thus calling for a process that is by definition endless.

Thus the process of supplementation is by definition endless too. Supplements lead to more supplements and to more ... and so on. Unlike the metaphysical thinkers, for Derrida, the lack and the resulting supplements are something positive. Without these supplements, the full presence cannot be completed. Remember: this completion is obviously an epistemological completion. It is a completion of the category in question as an understandable category. And also remember: there is always the *ontological slippage* from the epistemological category. The category of *différance* is the key there, a freeze shot that both differs and defers the meaning around the category to materialize. Whereas for some of the metaphysical thinkers, supplement is a harmful addition to presence and they desire for a termination of its existence. Thus, Derrida's framework leaves us with a social space which contains an infinite play of differences devoid of the presence of any transcendental signifier, that is, the other name of full presence. So, any framework or process of generation of social meaning cannot ever have any fixity by the means of any full presence of a transcendental signifier. There is, consequently, no origin, no foundation and no lineage relations in social reality, or any thinking about that reality, and hence the essentialist structure of causality is thus subverted time and again.

In the discipline of political economy, Laclau and Mouffe, most importantly in Laclau and Mouffe 1985, reproduce Derrida's argument on a different plane, incorporating Marxian ploys. They point out that, a closure of society is impossible. Any transcendental signifier is absent. Such a transcendental signifier could serve as an underlying and intelligible element with the help of what the endless process called the society could be closed. In society, there is an infinite play of differences originating from the non-fixity of meaning and multiplicity of contexts. There obviously have been attempts to constitute a society into a full structure, what Laclau and Mouffe called 'sutured totality'. But, all these attempts are constantly subverted from within and from outside. Since social meanings are defined by moments in which different elements come and combine together, the field is open to a play of articulatory practices producing hegemonic relations. These hegemonic relations provide the final binding and combinatorial gestures. Hegemonic constructions are attempts to secure a *sutured* totality, that is, a socially constructed totality. The effort of this totality is to tie the differences together and prevent the system from collapsing. However, since each of the elements in the contextually produced enforced unity are wrought by surplus meaning, that is, differences, the hegemonic construction can only survive momentarily as the dominant unity in the social space. Hence the proposition: society as a closed totality is impossible.

We would come back to this point in concluding chapter where we take up the issue of FLOSS as a binding force in the form of a community, and the possibility of its anti-hegemonic role in the market society of a capitalist hegemony. The use of the word 'anti-hegemonic' in place of expected 'counter-hegemonic' in the earlier sentence was deliberate. We will discover there how the mechanisms brought into being through GPL creates an unique kind of discursive space of social dissent that does not intend to replace *hegemony* with a *counter-hegemony*, but actually strives to go beyond any kind of hegemony. But, we have something more to say here, about hegemonic relations supplying the binding and combinatorial gesture. This happens in the case of resistance movements too. We will come back to this point in the last section of this chapter through the concept of a Lacanian 'quilt' interpreted by Žižek: how GPL could become the envelope of the whole resistance towards all kinds of hegemony, the hegemony of capital, or the counter-hegemony of socialism as per Marxist politics.

The theme of a totality without a closure is in no way a novelty in a postmodern text. The notion of a *totality with gaps*, a sutured totality under subversion, is common to all postmodern positions. From a postmodern viewpoint, no totality coming up to the standards of tightness is actually ever possible. If this impossibility were not there, a tight totality would always already have emerged. It is precisely this impossibility of any social reality that breeds the necessity of a hegemony to loom and bridge over all the gaps. The all-pervading postmodern oneness resides in the consideration of the gaps as the weak points of the social: the gaps between the finite and the infinite aspects of the same moment. In Derrida's elaboration, this totality with gaps becomes an ever-expanding universe of totality. It becomes a totality larger than itself, that goes on ceaselessly accumulating around itself, in uneven spacing of the alterity and supplements. And, consequently, a *gap* is no more any weakness, but, a source of newer kinds of meaning oozing out of the uneven cracks of supplementation. We will come back to this concept of gap between categories, in the interstices of categories, later, in our discussion of Hegel.

We will demonstrate, how through a gap between Hegelian categories, newer possibilities emerged: an entirely new form of capital and property, conjured up by GPL. This then created a new possibility horizon for property, state and market: they now represent an entirely new order of meaning.

Derrida exemplifies the theme of supplementation with the case of Europe. In the elucidation of ‘Europe: the Other Heading’, Derrida 1992, he plays on the situation when a category comprises and includes its impossibility within itself – the situation that Laclau and Mouffe would like to call as an event of *pluralism*. Europe, the expanding entity, is larger than what it is. The process of growth of Europe includes both Europe and its *outside*: the continents of Asia and Africa and elsewhere. It is a point of strength of Europe that it includes both of Europe and non-Europe. Outside of the outside, there remains the inner force-field of the supplements supplementing to this growth of Europe beyond Europe. For Hegel, the finite of every single category is actually larger than itself, *is* infinite. The celebrated Hegelian leap into a category builds on a good infinity annihilating the endless bad infinite of endless negation of *this* by *that*. And precisely this is the point of intervention by Derrida. Derrida proclaims that the finite is larger than itself but not infinite. All the journeys that the being takes upon itself ply very much with the realm of finitude. And that is exactly the cynosure of all theories around and about deconstruction.

## 6. From Deconstruction to Decolonization

In this section we want to bring the two non-coincident concepts, as we described in the earlier section, *differend* and *deconstruction*, together. To serve this purpose, we want to take out *differend* from within the writings of Lyotard in the form of a standalone motif. And we consider our version of *deconstruction* as a disjoint self-sufficient ploy too, severing all its umbilical links to the Derridean cannon. This just prepares us for the action of augmenting and cementing them together. In order to this, in the true sense of the term, we are actually intervening into Derrida’s deconstruction. With a thoroughbred Derridean discourse in mind, this kind of a hybridization is literally quite mixed-up and kind of an impossibility. For us, precisely that is the point: to vulgarize Derrida by intervening into the logic of deconstruction and cross it with *differend* in order to get a reading of deconstruction. To end up at this hybrid, we go through these two steps:

- We invert the last residuals of the “pre” and the “post” in Derrida – between the hierarchical positing of the *text* and the *supplement*.
- And then, supplementing to that which is always already within the text.

Derrida’s trajectory was from *text* to *supplement*. Text constitutes the “pre” and supplement constitutes the “post” in his theory. And in Derrida proper this trajectory is irreversible. Text is always prior there. And, supplement, in its ability to complete the incompleteness of text, follows from text, and is always already within text, at least as a possibility. This flow from text-to-supplement, this hierarchy of the one way traffic is never contested or even interrogated in Derrida proper. Derrida, the avatar of inversion, so crucially fails in inverting this pre-post-erous hierarchy of text and supplement. Here Derrida is turning back on himself: not all hierarchies can be removed altogether, it seems.

Let us conceive supplement as a loose part, or, better, as a collection of loose parts. Now, as we go forward in interrogating this preposterous hierarchy, let us conceive them no more as hanging and protruding offshoots from a father-text. Now, and this is important, we conceive them as some bastards in quest of a father. Actually, they are yet to get a father, they are searching for a father-text. And the whole conceptual framework of text and supplement now gets mangled and knocked out of shape. Supplement lacking a father text: how can it be a supplement at all? This *supplement without a father text* – this is our own version of Lyotard's *differend*: bastards searching for a father, colonized looking for a colonizer, workers anticipating a capitalist. Our project is to place and placate these preying bastards busy in their father-hunt, to search and explore a text for them. And obviously, this goes together with recording down of all the *differend*.

Our project starts at recording *differend* – as a lower form of discourse – uttered from the site. That means recording all that what the *dominant discourse* does not sanction. Let us remember the definition of *differend* once again, the question of sanction by the master discourse is always already there. We go on recording them, ad infinitum, for, at some point of time, possibly, this *differend*, with many other text-less supplements supplemented to it, can dissolve and metamorphose into a discourse. We go on recording them, as a writing strategy of the postcolonial saVAge, anticipating the possibility that someday, some memoir of the construction of this discourse, may pronounce ...

... many great gaps were left, which were only filled in gradually and bit by bit, some indeed, not till after the official announcement that the wall was finished. In fact, it is said that there are gaps which have never been filled in at all ... (*The Great Wall of China*, Franz Kafka)

Once the *differend* gets recorded, the project proceeds to the next phase:

- Wait and search for a text to which this *differend* – the great discontinuous and fragmentary Wall of China – may supplement to.
- Then comes the inversion: treat *differend* as context and supply the missing text. That is, reading a text from the standpoint of *differend* – a text that can supplement to the *differend*, which is now the context.

So, thus, a process can be initiated that do not presuppose a text is necessarily prefigured by a context. The context has become exogenous, given, thrown into the process of signification. We are opening the avenue for *differend* by deconstructing in collaboration with the bastard words. And this we name as *decolonization*. The process of decolonization consists of deconstruction via the inversion of the elite concepts by the subaltern concepts in collaboration with the forgotten concepts – within and *outside* the text. It is a conscious and deliberate vulgarization: a juggling, a circus of words and concepts, words and concepts forgotten and thrown away by the elite, forgotten rejected and sometimes even leftover words.

Decolonization is an umbrella concept that now starts to elude any more theoretical probe. It can only be exemplified, because, as it is, in the true sense of the term, not a theory, but a subversion of theory. The whole process of *decolonization* vulgarizes the *true* Derrida. We are no more guided here by the logic of the text, or the chronological positing of it, into



“pre” and “post”. First, we are choosing the differend as context, and then building into text. The whole methodology is structured this way:

- Begin with the differend as context – the celebrated “pre”
- Pick and choose its “post” – a fitting text
- Treat certain concepts of the text as *primary* and the others as *derivative*
- Smuggle the bastard and rejected meaning into the text and cook it up within the text
- Compare the bastard meaning with the legit, hegemonic meanings

So, in a way, we are here questioning the ideological hegemony of *meaning* over *text*. The traditional relation between *text* and *meaning* that we inherit, in the Althusserian complexes of complexes of the overdetermined totality of the *cultural*, the *ideological*, and the *political*, is actually not working any more in this framework. Our vulgarization resides in overemphasizing the differend as *context*: the true Derrideans will obviously object to it. We are vesting *context* with a kind of a logical autonomy. We here resort to logic, because we are talking about an academic problem here, and logic is the lingua-franca of the academia. We cannot break the rules of the game called academia, rules set by the laws of power, rules set by the ruling class. We cannot break the rules, but, with *differend*, on the plane of the keyboard and screen, in our lonely keyboarding, and keyboarding is always lonely, with the back turned towards the rest of the world, we can play up unreason, prohibited meanings and emotions, and thus, reinstate the condemned, the excluded, the prodigal: writing as deviance. But, as we have already said, no more of this theorization, no more can be said in terms of theory, the rest rests at the plane of the living reality of the cultural, the ideological, and the political. We would now proceed to exemplify this methodology with one of the biggest events of the last century: GNU GPL.

## 7. Elaborating this Methodology with GPL

Most probably GNU GPL is one of the cleverest decontrolling ploys in the history of civilization that never challenges control, but, rather, by reemphasizes the control. And exactly by doing it, GPL throws control into a self-recursive loop. Like the self-eating snake of August Kekulé’s organic bonds, control now starts eating its own tail. Subjecting the control, or better, the hegemony of capital, into a self-recursive loop, by the sheer action of reemphasizing it, starts with a displacement of the categories of property and capital. For the full details of this process we have to wait till chapter six, and the three chapters before it, in order to enable us to read this process. Here we want to use this whole phenomenon of GPL and FLOSS as an example of what we said through the chapter. Though, the full glory of the intervention of GPL on both of our real existence and our epistemology in an overdetermined way will not become adequately distinct before we reach chapter six.

In order to achieve this goal of throwing capital into a self-recursive loop, GPL tweaked quite a lot. As we will see in the history of the birth of GPL later, GPL tweaked a lot of both history and philosophy, and tweaked the very concept of right. It all started from the differend of justice. This differend then went on creating and endless series of supplements. These supplements came in the form of GNU Project, GCC, Emacs and so

many other things. Through these supplements GPL was born. And then came the Linux Kernel, attached with GPL, and activated with GNU tools, all attached with GPL too. This was the final moment of birth of FLOSS, and then the whole FLOSS movement. There was no looking back any more. And this whole thing, if we want to ascribe it to a single thing, must go to the 'viral nature' of GPL. But, before going any farther, we need a note on this phrase 'viral nature'.

In the Net literature around GPL, this 'viral' nature of the GPL is quite talked about. And this 'viral' nature is actually the crux of the brilliance. A crooked problem begets a crooked solution. The very word 'viral' has a special significance here. We have already described how the words 'hack' or 'hacking' were kidnapped by the market and media controlled by capital's rules. And here is a counter-gesture that this book suggests. The word 'viral' was used in context of GPL by media, in a negative and fear-provoking way, while describing the 'offspring' aspect of GPL together with the 'copyleft' aspect. We will know about all the details of these aspects in coming chapters. For now, let us mention it here that we take up the very same word 'viral' in describing GNU GPL, but in exactly the opposite sense. Here we use this word in describing the very biological strength implicit in GPL in fighting against the rules of market and capital, that intend to take away the very human right to knowledge. GPL intends to situate the community right once again into the generation of value and capital in this electronic age. We will come back to this repeatedly in the later chapters.

So, as we read the history of GPL in terms of all the things we said in this chapter, the primary context was the world of hacking. Hackers were creative programmers. We called this as 'primitive FLOSS' enjoying an absolute freedom of knowledge. We will go into the details of it later, at this point we are under-prepared to deal with all the concepts. But, the thing is that, this hacking world believed in some principles, and the overall spirit in this hacking world was that of cooperation and friendship and sharing of knowledge. And it reflected in all the traditions and practices of this world: we will see them all in their proper places through this book. The space of cooperation and freedom of knowledge ruling in the world of primitive FLOSS. Rules of capital, thus laws of property were creating the encirclement, and thus generating confined partitioned spaces. This suits better for capital to operate. This whole discourse, involving capital's hegemony and resistance towards it, was a discourse of property: private property. It discussed about private property and thus private right. 'Public right' as a philosophical category was the forgotten word here, as we mentioned in the last section. The whole process of supplementation accumulating in the text of GPL and then creating the context of FLOSS was a history of the bringing back of the forgotten meaning of public right, into the realm of private right. And this GPL really did, with an unforeseen brilliance both in terms of logic and real existence.

The birth of Unix, the process of which started in 1969, was probably the most important event in the history of primitive FLOSS. This Unix was a full-fledged operating system, with all the components the hackers needed. And if they did not have something, they were producing them together, at every moment, through that process of cooperation and sharing of knowledge. But, this primitive bliss was not to last for long. As we will see all the hard details later, the rule of capital started claiming this community land of common

knowledge and cooperation. This was like triggering the day of capital to reign after the days of primitive accumulation were over. And this community land had already gathered a lot of property and capital in the form of electronic knowledge and craftsmanship. But the hackers felt a lot of pain. All this that were theirs in their full community freedom, were now getting subjugated under the confinements of the market rules of capital. The hacking world was seeing an injustice here. But, they could not represent the injustice in the structured form of justice: in the court of law.

The efforts of GNU and Richard Stallman actually represent the focus of this pain and the process of resistance that they initiated. Against every acquiring and conquering gesture of capital, bit by bit, rose the supplements of resistance, as we will see later, through many minuscule moments in the history of hacking. This series of supplements then resulted in GPL. Empowered by GPL, the hackers wanted once again to reclaim the lost land that they once had. Again, bit by bit, through supplements supplementing the real process of resistance, GPL rose like phoenix. The focus of GNU was obviously, once again, a blanket operating system. The original plan of building GNU operating system did not succeed. But, through the process of GNU and GPL, came another Unix-like envelope. This time it was GNU-Linux, a look-alike of Unix, indeed an Unix by POSIX standards. So, this was, in a way, a return to the promised land that they lost under the onslaught of the rules of the empire. This new found land was FLOSS, a remake of the lost freedom land of Unix. In this new world things ran exactly the Unix way, even in terms of literal commands through the keyboard, as it once ran in the lost world.

Now, our reading of GPL, or, for that matter, any reading of GPL, actualizes against the context of FLOSS. And, it is a context that was built by the text of GPL itself. But, here, the point is, to view the whole journey as a counter-journey of the Derridean logic. Here we go from supplement to text, and then from text to context. And the process of supplementation does not end there. GPL now goes on bearing a new series of supplements, in the form of capital adding to itself. Labor in the field of computing and electronic knowledge generates new value. This newly generated value leads to property, thus creating capital accumulation. But, the whole game becomes extremely unknown, because, in an intrinsic way, the series of supplements that GPL goes on generating in the field of FLOSS, is actually of an entirely new order. The categories of value, property and capital, through a self-recursive ploy of GPL, have already become ~~value, property, and capital~~. And as we analyze it, later in the book, through tools of Hegelian logic, we will see, it is an entirely new kind of violence ever inflicted on capital. This is a violence from within, a violence that is not at all a violence, actually a process of self-effacement of capital. It is a kind of resistance to capital's hegemony that we never saw before.

In the last chapter, we depict the novelty of this whole process. GPL works through the very mechanism by which capital exists, and goes on resisting capital as we know it. This makes capital to go into a duel with itself. In contrast, all prior resistance to capital, Marxist or otherwise, have always fought with capital from outside, building a counter-hegemony against the hegemony of capital. GPL goes beyond hegemony of all orders, and renders self-devouring loop. But, this aspect of going beyond hegemony of all orders needs a bit of clarification. We here use a bit on the concept of 'quilt'. This concept, actually with a Lacanian genealogy, was put to a lot of use by Laclau and Mouffe in their discussions on

Hegemony. Let us quote here from Žižek 1989. Here, Žižek illustrates the mechanism of functioning of hegemony.

If we 'quilt' the floating signifiers through 'communism', for example, 'class struggle' confers a precise and fixed signification to all other elements: to democracy (so called 'real democracy' as opposed to 'bourgeois formal democracy' as a legal form of exploitation); to feminism (the exploitation of women as resulting from the class-conditioned division of labor); to ecologism (the destruction of natural resources as a logical consequence of profit-oriented capitalist production); to the peace movement (the principal danger to peace is adventuristic imperialism), and so on. ... In this way, every element of a given ideological field is part of a series of equivalences: its metaphoric surplus, through which it is connected with all other elements, determines retroactively its very identity. But this enchainment is possible only on condition that a certain signifier - the Lacanian 'One' - 'quilts' the whole field and, by embodying it, effectuates its identity.

Through the whole book, over and over we return to this discussion: how a counter-hegemony like Marxism essentializes so many different movements in terms of its binding gesture of a quilt. And how it understands everything in terms of the essential category of 'class'. But, now comes a question, why it happened differently with GPL?

As we see later, the tradition of primitive FLOSS was not the only element of resistance that went into the making of GPL. All the movements going on in America in the sixties of the last century, particularly the student movements, had their share of contribution in the history of GPL. So, then, how it could bind everything together without essentializing the whole process? Just, as in the example of Žižek, any counter-hegemony does? Actually the answer resides in the decolonizing gesture of GPL, in the counter journey of supplement to text to context. In line with the second paragraph of Žižek, we can say, because it did not have to effectuate an identity of its own. Like the body-snatchers, the identity of the host is the identity of GPL too: capital's identity is GPL's identity. GPL is, in that sense, a supplement to capitalism, like all the resistance supplements to capital were being produced by Stallman and GNU, through Emacs, GNU HURD, and different other activities. These bastard supplements then actualized in the process of FLOSS. FLOSS is capitalism, only an entirely different kind of capitalism, where capital itself comes under erasure.

As we said earlier, supplement supplements text, in the never-complete process of completing the text and thus itself. One of the very first supplements in case of GPL was the Free Software Movement as the abstract content, and FSF, Free Software Foundation, as the concrete container for it. A much later supplement around GPL was the OSI, the Open Source Initiative. GPL went on supplementing itself again and again through its different versions. Supplements of GPL include all the uncountable articles in numerous sites on the Internet, and all the debates around them. One important site in this line, GROKLAW, <http://www.groklaw.net>, is a quite celebrated one in the FLOSS world. A lot of intricate discussions about law and right to property that will come up in the later

chapters draw quite intensely from the materials of this website. Anyway, the point is, this process of supplementation is going on ceaselessly and intermittently.

All the projects on FLOSS software sites like Sourceforge, <http://sourceforge.net>, are more examples of those supplements, unfolding every moment for the last two decades or so, supplying infrastructural support to FLOSS developers. Successful FLOSS projects like Apache or Mozilla are examples of those supplements too. All these came together to generate the context called FLOSS, the father context that was prefigured in its potential by the bastard texts of licenses that accompanied GNU projects like Emacs or GCC. The *differend* of primitive FLOSS unfolded into the context of FLOSS, and thus acquired an entirely new meaning that was never there, either in the social reality or the text, when GPL version one was getting written. This was not at all possible at this moment for this meaning to come there in the text because this meaning needed the context of FLOSS, and that was yet to come.

This possibility of breeding a reality of its own, generating the father context starting from a bastard text, is the highest thing that can happen to a text: the immense capability of a million interpretations and a fertility that can move mountains. Not that all texts can go out in the open and do it, but some can. And the theory that we presented in this chapter gives us a framework of interpreting this kind of texts. But, the thing is, if GPL could make it happen once, it is possible again. Interpreting GPL in this light will actually give us possibilities of a new theory of community. A theory that can retrieve community from beyond the oblivion, where theories of resistance like Marxism threw it together with all the histories of concrete labor, because it believed in only one history: the history of abstract labor. We will come back to this concept of community in the ending pages of the last chapter, together with a call for the reincarnation of concrete labor in the field of political economy.

Let us remind it once again, the example of theoretical scheme that we are talking here concerns not just GPL. This example is self-recursive too. We said, we are going to elaborate this example that we presented here in the coming chapters. We are going to know elaborately the history of the birth of GPL, the story of the small ontological measures on part of Stallman and GNU and FSF and all. How all these survival mechanisms merged together to form GPL, in face of the onslaught of the rules of capital. And these accumulated supplements brought in a crucial break. Supplements from the world of real existence enabled GPL to go into a logical intervention, a subversion of the epistemology involving the deepest categories of the institution of state. Now see, this book narrates this whole story. And thus this book itself becomes another supplement in the endless process of supplementation involved in GPL and FLOSS. Maybe this is one way for a Third World writer to go on with his project of recording the reality. This was once convincingly displayed by GPL that, yes, it can work. Someday the bastard supplements can come together, and thus, go beyond themselves.

This also proves, that final meaning of GPL is not ready yet. The process of supplementation is still living around it. Each of these small supplements is transforming the envelope context of FLOSS that was created by GPL. As the context of FLOSS go on changing, new meanings, forgotten meanings, that were hidden as possibilities in the GPL process will flourish and unfold. At some later time, with supplements accumulated into a

newer and still unknown state of the things in FLOSS, it will be possible for us to get a newer meaning GPL. So, in that sense, the writing of GPL is not complete yet. No one can know it beforehand, in what unforeseen ways reality will change, and thus invoke what kind of new supplements in the unending process of supplementation. And so, we do not know what finally this GPL process will lead to. There were differences within people in FLOSS, like Stallman and Torvalds, about the GPL version 2 and 3: which version the Linux kernel should be attached with. Principally this was a difference concerning DRM, Digital-Rights-Management, that is, the access control technologies that can be used by hardware manufacturers, publishers or anyone who wants to keep copyright intact. Anyway, that is not within the scope of discussion of this book. The point is, the process of supplementation is yet living, and hence the writing of the text.

Here by the term ‘writing’ we mean the whole process through which the epistemological categories and their actions go on scattering their meaning into our existence, and generate newer possibilities and vistas of meaning, building the context itself. And this new context then generates a new feedback loop of meaning. This goes on. This is a process of overdetermination between context, text and supplement. Using the Derridean process of *différance* where the final meaning of the word, because it is a living and changing process, differs and defers in its dictionary meaning, we can say, here the context is in *différance*. This happens because, the primary moment from where the journey started was a double moment of *deconstruction* and *differend*. The process started from trying to deconstruct a ruling meaning in such a way that it can reconcile the *differend*: trying to adjust with an injustice within a given piece of legitimate justice. This resonates with “The Communist Manifesto” that wanted to adjust with the *differend* between the legal equality and the economic inequality, and tried to deconstruct the social process of generation of economic and legal meanings. And so, in both the cases, the final meanings of the texts will be known elsewhere, some other time and other place, where both the processes are very dead, maybe in Mars, or some parallel universe.