Morgan Gangwere
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Chapter 3 (reflection)

Reading through the chapter, I noticed something that made me think long and hard about the culture which I was raised in. The “hacker culture” is one that I feel is a very… *different* culture in the broad scheme of things. The hacker culture emphasizes a breaking of borders, that all people should be viewed on their ability to learn and ask questions, and that a free flow of information and skills is more important than a flow of money, ideology or power. This makes several of the topics within the chapter hard to apply for me.

Several concepts were hard to grasp for me. One of those is that of power distance. I can conceptually see it, but I have a hard time seeing it within my peer group, as skills define power, and skills are shared feely. This however, does not mean that there are no power gaps. For example, certain project leaders (e.g. that of Linus Torvalds, Benevolent Dictator For Life™ of the Linux project) are known for their harsh response to contributions, and many don’t contribute up their patches.

That note however leads me to the uncertainty avoidance that is seen in some parts of the hacker culture. Those who are a definite part of the hacker culture are simultaneously a part of their nationality’s culture. This comes into conflict sometimes; with the aforementioned avoidance of contribution back, the disparity between two national cultures is sometimes very visible. In the case of Linus Torvalds, Finnish culture is very outgoing, willing to take a leap at the chance that a fall will come afterwards; in some ways, American culture is less outgoing, with many American contributors having a hard time approaching Torvalds with their work.