Twitter Thread by Carlos E. Perez



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Star Wars has a simple dichotomy between good and evil. But as the stories have evolved, the nuances between these distinct poles also has acquired a richness that is hard to dismiss.

In the latest trilogy, we discover a dysfunctional civilization even after the defeat of the empire. The argument that the remnants of the empire make is that the galaxy stills seeks a need for order. Order and chaos are at seperate poles where evil is aligned with order.

We know however from D&D alignment charts that good and evil, order and chaos can exist in many combinations:



It is also interesting that the Sith (the Evil sorcerers) only come in pairs as opposed to the Jedi that can be entire communities. Apparently, to sustain evil one has to restrict agency and individuality to just a few. A community of evil-doers very quickly turns on itself.

So at one extreme we have evil, order, individuality and at the other we have good, chaos, collective. Which brings up the question, what is the definition of evil and good? Something that we took for granted ever since the first Star Wars movie.

What is evil? Perhaps Yoda has some wisdom:



Is the opposite of evil really neutrality? Is the correct alignment chart then: individual - collective, order - chaos and the good actually implies the neutrality and hence balance?

But the need for balance exists only because there is motion.



Therefore, the definition of good is the constant practice (or process) towards balance between the individual and the collective, order and chaos.

The definition of evil is the absence of a process to achieve balance. The evil in order and the evil in chaos is the acceptance of these states without question. The evil in individuality and in the collective is the rigid application of the concerns without question.

What then is this process of constantly seeking balance? For what purpose do we seek this balance? For the purpose of good (of course). But is this not a recursive definition if good is the process?

Recursive definitions appear problematic when one cannot identify a termination condition. For processes, the termination condition is the disappearance of the process. Therefore, it is a necessary condition that the process of good is a sustainable process.

The process of good thus itself a balancing and sustainable process. It is an open-ended and evolutionary process. Balance is always in the context of change.

Therefore, when we speak about ethics (which happens to be the inquiry of what is 'good'), we realize that it also is an evolutionary process.

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