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JUSTICE DURING TRANSITIONS: FORMULATING A CAMUSIAN ETHICAL RESPONSE TO CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

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This paper proposes an alternative reading of Albert Camus' "The Voiceless Ones," reframing the notion of the moral dilemma as centered on the workers' displacement, not merely as a class struggle but as an allegory of "creative destruction," a process through which newer innovations and technological advancements replace older ones. Drawing on the economic and philosophical understanding of creative destruction articulated by Joseph Schumpeter and recontextualized within Camusian philosophy, this reading argues that "The Voiceless Ones" anticipates the precarious existential condition of the modern workers. This reading hypothesis is justified through the story's reference to the replacement of barrel-making labor by sea tankers and tanker trucks, marking a historical moment of industrial transition in which artisanal identity disintegrates before the rise of mechanized efficiency. After establishing this reading hypothesis, the second aim of this paper is to demonstrate the relevance of the insights gained from the reading to the need for transitional justice. Specifically, technological advancements related to artificial intelligence are discussed as they continue to reshape modern society. With these considerations in mind, the paper is divided into three main parts. First, I elaborate on the context and interpretation of Camus' "The Voiceless Ones". Second, I discuss the Schumpeterian concept of creative destruction and its impact on human and organizational values. Third, I formulate a notion of "transitional justice" that responds to creative destruction, drawing from Camusian philosophy and the Filipino notion of pakikiramdam or sensing. Afterward, I connect these insights to the specific case of artificial intelligence in contemporary society.

Keywords: Albert Camus, creative destruction, labor displacement, transitional justice, pakikiramdam (sensing)

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are storytelling beings, insofar as they continually make sense of themselves and the world through narratives that weave fragmented experiences into

a unified ontological whole (see MacIntyre 2007, 216). In this sense, narrative fictions are not mere artifacts meant for aesthetic enjoyment, but may also provide an essential avenue for a person's hermeneutic and existential framework for everyday interactions at both micro and macro levels.

As humanity progresses across various dimensions, particularly through technological advancement, structural crises inevitably arise; transitional crossroads are confronted, and profound moral dilemmas emerge. Given these recurring systemic disruptions, fictional stories (e.g., Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World,* and Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*) provide essential pre-political sense-making, offering insight into how technology transforms what it means to be a human and helping us conceptually traverse the similar ambiguities of such situations. With this pragmatic potential of literature in mind, I examine one of the famous philosophical-literary texts that may offer a similar insight, namely "The Voiceless Ones."

In this study, I propose an alternative reading that focuses on the text's depicted crisis arising from technological transformations. These structural transformations are most accurately captured in the macroeconomic and philosophical paradigm of "creative destruction". Creative destruction, as theorized by Joseph Schumpeter (2003, 83), is an inherently disruptive process through which newer innovations and technological paradigms render older modalities obsolete, often exacting a severe toll on displaced populations.

Thus, the main problem this paper addresses is: how can human beings ethically respond to the host of moral dilemmas that technological advancements create? Given that creative destruction is a pervasive mechanism of contemporary society, my reading hypothesis asserts that the fictional representation in "The Voiceless Ones," specifically its depiction of culpable silence and failure, instructs its readers *via negativa.* Specifically, its exposition centers on the precise moral gap where justice fails during transitional phases, thereby expanding readers' moral imaginations. With this analogical depiction, I proceed to a philosophical reflection that seeks to formulate ethical principles to preserve justice during transitions (hereafter called transitional justice), especially in the current society, where digital transformations are accelerating.

Thus, this study comprises three main parts. The first part consists of illustrating and justifying my interpretation of "The Voiceless Ones." The second part dwells on the Schumpeterian concept of creative destruction and its impact on human and organizational values. The third part concerns my formulation of "transitional justice" and its potential application to the case of artificial intelligence.

CONTEXT AND AN INTERPRETATION OF "THE VOICELESS ONES"

"The Voiceless Ones" mainly centers on Yvars, a middle-aged barrel maker, as he resumes his work in the workshop, feeling the complex emotions that followed their failed strike. Thus, this central narrative of "The Voiceless Ones" is often lauded for its vivid, compelling depiction of realities behind failed strikes and the breakdown of worker solidarity that may follow. Among the six stories in Camus' *Exile and the*

Kingdom, this text has generated a diverse body of interpretations. Most scholarly discussions emphasize the notion of silence and its rebellious potential, depicting it as a symptom of a social pathology while simultaneously serving as a partial cure to such illness (see Bourgault 2012, 130). This silence is also frequently analyzed as originating from the loss of one's voice due to human sympathy, functioning as a culpable refusal to verbalize when demanded to (O'Donohoe 2013, 160). In other interpretations, the story is considered a crucial contribution by Camus to the localized plight faced by women (on Camus's portrayal of women reclaiming voice, see Bartlett 2004, 59–78; for the specific interpretations, see Margerrison 2008, 264–267; Hernandez 2025b, 269–285).

In this paper, I contend that the fictional story actually provides a subtle critique of how technological advancements may lead to the displacement of human beings' meaningful work. This part is fully captured in this narrative wherein the tense atmosphere permeates the workshop as the workers continue their labor, but with subtle hints of stubborn resistance against M. Lassalle, their boss. The failure to provide a salary increase is primarily due to the decline in the manual barrel-making industry, which technological advancements have transformed. This part has been vividly portrayed as follows:

> The barrel works, threatened by the construction of seagoing tankers and tanker trucks, were not in a strong position. They were making fewer and fewer barrels and wine casks; mostly, they were repairing the huge vats already made. The bosses saw their business shrinking, true, but they still wanted to preserve a margin of profit. They still thought the simplest thing was to freeze salaries in spite of the rise in prices. What could the barrel makers do when the works went under? (Camus 2007, 51).

Due to the management's response, the workers primarily focused on the preservation of the company's profits as a hindrance to their salary increase. The growing tension in the barrel-making factory was interrupted when the boss's daughter fell gravely ill. The night of the workers ended in a gloomy tenor as they worried about M. Lassalle's daughter.

Given the broad overview of the significant happenings in the story, the alternative reading I propose hinges on the significant influence of Simone Weil on Camus' ideas.[1] Among the writings that influenced him is "The Need for Roots," wherein Weil contended that miseducation had become prevalent and a distorted notion of knowledge had uprooted humanity from its moral obligations. Specifically, Weil (2002, 42) writes about "a culture very strongly directed towards and influenced by technical science, very strongly tinged with pragmatism, extremely broken up by specialization, entirely deprived both of contact with this world and, at the same time, of any window opening on to the world beyond".

From this, I infer that it significantly influenced Camus' perspective on the distorted notion of technological progress and emancipation. This point is better understood in relation to his work, "Prometheus in the Underworld." Camus (1946/1970, 139) consistently conveyed the point that humankind "needs and cares

only for technology. We rebel through our machines, holding art and what art implies as an obstacle and a symbol of slavery."

This neglect of art, and possibly extended to studies in the humanities, is symptomatic of the productive and profit-centric character of modern society. A distorted notion of pragmatism prioritizes technological innovations at the cost of transitions, leaving human displacement in their wake. With this in mind, Camus reminds his readers that it is possible to pursue both art and technology.

In the worst possible scenario, in which technology must be prioritized to ensure existential survival, Camus (1946/1970, 142) opines that humanity must keep the memory of heather alive. This statement symbolizes "springtime," "art," and "flourishing," which I contend suggests that true human flourishing is not just the comforts technology provides but also the springtimes hidden in the complex wealth of the arts and humanities. Hence, this point is an acknowledgment and preservation of the arts to the best of humanity's abilities, demonstrating the importance of artworks in maintaining humaneness and expanding moral imagination.

Given this perspective, it is justified that, although technological displacement is only mentioned in a few lines in the short story, its ramifications echo throughout, and this approach effectively reminds readers of modern society's values. The possible questions that may resonate with readers are these: Is the crisis, then, a fault of no one? Or is it symptomatic of the failure of M. Lassalle to proactively innovate and confront the transformation in his industry? And so, the next section further deepens this distinct characteristic of modern society, specifically the notion of creative destruction.

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

The term "creative destruction" was coined by Joseph Schumpeter in 1942. This concept refers to "a process whose every element takes considerable time in revealing its true features and ultimate effect" (Schumpeter 2003, 83). In reality, this concept describes how innovative capitalist products and methods continually displace older ones. Before his contributions, economic theories tended to focus more on prices and cost factors. Theoretical explorations and the concept of creative destruction led to the capitalist system being better understood as an evolutionary and dynamic system, necessitating analysis that extends beyond a single point in time. Furthermore, it is not merely quantitative in nature. This new paradigm heralds a form of competition that is not merely about lowering prices on identical products. Rather, Schumpeter (2003, 84) describes it as a "perennial gale" that may threaten and disrupt existing practices, firms, and other entities. Competition, then, is clarified as qualitative in the sense that structural transformations may create a new order or dynamics. For example:

> In the case of retail trade, the competition that matters arises not from additional shops of the same type, but from the department store, the chain store, the mail-order house, and the supermarket, which are bound to destroy those pyramids sooner or later (Schumpeter 2003, 87).

With these in mind, innovations both destroy and regenerate various aspects of human life. Thus, organizations require comprehensive approaches in formulating proactive guidelines and prudent responses concerning technological advancements. Another example, besides retail trade, is the transition from television broadcasting to videocassette recorder (VCR) to streaming platforms.

Television broadcasts were mainly archived by pointing motion-picture cameras at a television screen to rebroadcast shows in different time zones. By 1960, this necessity led to magnetic tape recorders replacing film-based recording technologies (Greenberg 2008, 42). In 1969, Sony developed the first color cassette video machine, enabling recordings to be more compact and of higher quality (Greenberg 2008, 42). Alongside this innovation is the ease of U-Matic, which provides a more accessible way to play recordings. Eventually, this led to other innovations, and video rentals sprang alongside those advancements in technology. In a way, this "perennial gale" of creative destruction changed and created a new market for a different viewing experience, particularly in the home video industry. 1997 marks the founding of Netflix, a company that started as a DVD rental service with a distinctive dynamic from that of linear video distribution (see Greenberg 2008, 157). Netflix began with offering a subscription-based video-on-demand service. In a way, the qualitative changes heralded by Netflix and other subscription-based services disrupted the market, consumption patterns, and people's viewing experiences. When Netflix offered data-driven curation, which enabled recommendations based on viewing experience, Amanda D. Lotz (2022, 126) notes that taste communities formed rather than traditional demographics in determining media consumption preferences.

As evidenced by the ever-changing shifts in television and related industries, creative destruction is a harsh reality that is part of living and thriving. However, new studies, such as those by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne (2023, 22), reveal that the notion of creative destruction is not the only applicable paradigm for making sense of innovation.

Kim and Mauborgne (2023, 18) propose that non-disruptive creation is possible, in which innovation can create a brand-new market outside or beyond the boundaries of existing industries without causing significant displacements. A prime example for this is a concert for the deaf, Music: Not Impossible (M:NI). M:NI developed a first-of-its-kind wearable vibrotactile device, which uses different frequencies and intensities to match the nuances of the instruments being played. Its creators reasoned that, since the brain (not the ear) creates the perception of hearing, they could use the skin as a medium for vibrations to reach the brain rather than the ears. In a way, this innovation did not destroy or displace any existing market or industry; instead, it created an opportunity to address a necessity.

Despite this acknowledgment of non-disruptive creation, which comes from recognizing markets that can be non-displacing, the majority of changes still lead to harsh consequences of innovation. Connecting these insights to the fictional story of "The Voiceless Ones," the narrative becomes a cautionary tale that, via negativa, tells the reader how to respond to similar crises. Reducing costs is a temporary measure, and it would require an examination of other possible avenues to sustain not only the company but also the lives that hinge on its productivity. For instance, the level of craftsmanship the workers possess may be geared towards creating artworks, such as

sculptures. Another non-disruptive approach is to assess which aspects of the barrel-making industry are not fully met in the shift to using sea tankers and tanker trucks. In a way, finding how meaningful labor can be sustained alongside technological advancements should not be a mere reactive response, but rather a constant seeking to avoid complacency.

Thus, following the spirit brought to the fore by this non-disruptive innovation, this paper aims to further elucidate how to manage disruptive creations by formulating philosophical concepts and principles that balance essential characteristics while remaining flexible enough for contextual appropriation. At the same time, humans should remain vigilant and strive to recognize and pursue non-disruptive alternatives whenever possible.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND THE CASE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This section primarily covers the formulation of transitional justice, the case of AI developments, and the application of the formulated philosophical notion of justice as an ethical response to AI developments. This formulation begins with a Camusian aspiration for justice achieved through rebellion. Afterward, it will be further augmented with the Filipino notion of *pakikiramdam* or sensing. This supplementary approach is based on the findings concerning creative destruction and the need to develop epistemic approaches that can imagine, approximate, and adequately respond to creatively disruptive forms of innovations. After this formulation, a brief sketch of the development of AI is presented to highlight further how creative destruction also applies to such innovations. Lastly, the insights from the two main parts serve as the conceptual elements for developing a preliminary philosophical framework centered on transitional justice that may be integrated into responses to AI developments.

Transitional Justice and the Filipino notion of "Pakikiramdam" (Sensing)

Justice can be considered an ideal that people seek to approximate. It serves as the foundation for rebellion, a "no" that is not a renunciation. In a way, rebellious actions affirm specific values and human dignity (Camus 1956, 16). Simultaneously, it is a "no" because it negates injustices. In *The Rebel,* Camus identifies three types of rebellion: metaphysical, historical, and artistic.

Metaphysical rebellion is the foundational form of revolt, where the individual challenges their overarching human condition and the presence of evil within creation. "It is metaphysical because it contests the ends of man and of creation (Camus 1956, 23). The metaphysical rebel refuses to accept the notion of an assigned purpose (*telos*) or end. Thus, the governance of human ends is taken into their own hands rather than left to silent deities or an indifferent world. This disposition is essentially a quest for a fundamental reclamation of freedom and a resistance against a form of complacency and resignation.

Unlike the wide scope of metaphysical rebellion, historical rebellion is situated within specific temporal and social power relations. It manifests as the active resistance

of the oppressed, such as enslaved individuals or victims of systemic violence, against their offenders (in the individual, group, or systemic sense). While historical rebellion strives to create authentic human unity through collective action, it faces the danger of transforming into "totality".

Camus observes that when historical rebellions become rigid revolutions, they often end up deifying secular forces like history, the state, or political terror. In doing so, the rebels risk creating new "gods" to justify violence, thereby mirroring the very injustices they initially sought to overthrow. The challenge of historical rebellion is thus to maintain the original spirit of the revolt without allowing it to harden into a self-defeating and tyrannical system.

The need to recover the original impetus of rebellion led Camus to highlight the importance of artistic or creative rebellion. This rebellion may serve as a corrective to the risks of historical and metaphysical excess by using art as a medium of revolt. Camus posits that artistic creation embodies the pure state of rebellion because it is both a rejection of the world's lacks and an exaltation of its demonstrated beauty (see Camus 1956, 253). Art demands a unity that reality often fails to provide, yet it does so by remaining grounded in the "sometimes" beauty of humanity. Creative rebellion thus maintains the rebellious spirit by affirming human value while continuously seeking to reform oppressive systems through imaginative and expressive means.

Given that the rebellious action does not immediately achieve its goal, each transition requires careful navigation to ease humanity through the drastic changes that creative destruction brings. With this in mind, it must be remembered that justice is not an "abstract justice" that sacrifices freedom in the name of an absolute. Rather, rebellion should strive to remain loyal to the values and the lives it seeks to uphold.

This attempt to navigate the precarious situation of rebellious actions can be further improved through *pakikiramdam* (sensing). *Pakikiramdam* is "about being skilled in reading the other person's feelings and correctly guessing his inner state. It requires receptivity to many non-verbal cues, such as subtle facial expressions, tones of voice and bodily gestures" (Reyes 2015, 149). Rebellion is acknowledged as a relative principle, insofar as its flexibility would require keen sensitivity to how it should be applied to the complex situations human beings confront. In Filipino scholarship, *pakikiramdam* is often described as a value that is considered worthy of cultivation because its shared inner perception enables proper deliberation and appropriate responses in complex, ambiguous, and unstructured situations (see Enriquez 1992, 76). This inner perception is considered unique insofar as its root words, "paki-" (an appeal for a request) and "ramdám" (to feel), together properly capture a form of emotional vigilance (Cleofas 2016).

With the preliminary definition of *pakikiramdam,* two contentious aspects are often raised regarding the said notion. The first point dwells on the scope of its possible integration into one's character. There is a debate on whether pakikiramdam is a uniquely Filipino trait or a universal human experience expressed through a specific cultural lens. The concept of *pakikiramdam* was formalized within the movement of Filipino psychology, which emerged out of deep dissatisfaction with Western psychological theories that historically judged and misrepresented Filipino behavior (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000). Proponents of this indigenous approach argue that understanding Filipino traits requires "indigenization from within" (Pe-Pua and

Protacio-Marcelino 2000, 51). This means psychological concepts must be derived directly from the local language, culture, and socio-historical realities to free the Filipino mind from colonial models of thought. This origin, at first glance, may cause others to assume that *pakikiramdam* is only applicable to the Philippine context.

However, despite these deeply indigenous origins, Cleofas (2016, 81) argues that traits such as *pakikiramdam* and *pakikipagkapuwa* (comradeship with fellow humans) reflect an interdependent understanding of the self with strong potential for universality. She justifies this by citing similar collectivist traits and perspectives across cultures in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Cleofas 2016, 81). From engaging these viewpoints, I consider the notion of *pakikiramdam* as grounded in one's unique context, providing a distinct attunement to specific aspects of reality. Yet, it has the potential to be generalized into diverse versions.

The second contentious point is concerning the excellence of *pakikiramdam. Pakikiramdam* is often assumed to be a morally excellent trait or a positive ideal that should be integrated into one's character. Cleofas (2016, 81) raises a valid point about the risk of *pakikiramdam*, as it is not incompatible with promoting self-interest. I agree with this point, especially since the capacity to sense or intuit can also be used for self-serving gains. Still, when this *pakikiramdam* is framed into the notion of *kapwa* (shared identity), the notion of appeal or request to feel in *pakikiramdam* is driven by a moral appeal that others, in their inherent dignity, evoke in the *nakikiramdam* (senser). This drive, then, is an aspiration seeking a form of solidarity.

From the discussion, the compatibility between Camusian rebellion and *pakikiramdam* is established, as both stem from the recognition of intrinsic values and aspire to contribute to human solidarity. To further clarify how this *pakikiramdam* can augment the Camusian notion of rebellion, the latter provides a clear way to discern when rebellion should begin and how it should be enacted.

Given that the movement of metaphysical rebellion appears to be intuitive in nature, *pakikiramdam,* as emotional vigilance, becomes a crucial disposition that is careful to recognize when injustices transpire. Injustices that acquire a systemic character often convey the impression of a givenness of "how the world works" or of a reality that cannot be changed. Because of such an *a priori* impression, people often tolerate those injustices or fail to recognize them as injustices. Thus, through the disposition of *pakikiramdam,* a person with a different positionality vigilantly seeks to empathize with and understand others.

In terms of historical rebellion, *pakikiramdam* becomes a form of attunement that remains sensitive to the realities and groundedness of resistance against historical forces. *Pakikiramdam* seeks to examine what is considered prudent, given that one's range of action is transformed when considering the capabilities and decisions of the people surrounding them. Thus, sensing what others truly intend and finding effective means toward social amelioration is better achieved.

Concerning artistic rebellion, the augmentation goes both ways. On the one hand, this type of rebellion enriches *pakikiramdam* by further expanding and enhancing the sensitivity and vigilance toward the well-being of others. Since artistic rebellion leads to the creation of artworks, among other effects, engaging with those artworks may further expand imagination and make one more sensitive to the ethical call to be responsible for others (for the double-edged aspect of this, see Hernandez

2025a, 224–227). On the other hand, *pakikiramdam* is crucial for making creative rebellion rooted in the plurality of people's visions. The aspiration for beauty is simultaneously a transcendent insofar as it seeks what the world may become, and also immanent in that the complexity of humanity grounds it.

The Case of Artificial Intelligence: A Brief Sketch of Its Historical Development

In this section, I intend to demonstrate how artificial intelligence has undergone several phases of creative destruction and continues to do so. In its inception and transitions, imaginations provoked by stories may also be considered crucial factors shaping its trajectory.

Early Inceptions Approximate to Artificial Intelligence and Computing Foundations

Artificial intelligence has experienced multiple phases of creative destruction, with its development heavily influenced by human imagination and stories throughout history. Long before actual machines were built, stories of inorganic life forms and inventions displaying human-like characteristics were abundant. Thus, in hindsight, what is now termed AI has been imaginatively described throughout history. To cite a few examples, the descriptions of various yantra (instruments of control) in Sanskrit stories describe self-moving objects, animal-like, or human-like, that accomplish different tasks (cf. Cohen 2024, 5). In the storybook entitled Śṛṅgāramañjarīkathā, the story, most probably written by a court poet, mentions those kinds of entities, including a mechanical doll that is able to speak and describe the king, Paramāra king Bhoja of Dhārā (ca. 1000–1055 CE) (Ali 2016, 461). In Chinese literature, similar stories can also be found. In *Liezi*, two tales represent the theme of artificiality in Daoist philosophy. The first story is an anecdote situated in the Zhou court of King Mu, known for his Daoist associations. An uncanny, life-like mechanical man entertains and then awes the king and his entourage. The second story describes the inverse, i.e., a person who is machine-like, committing actions lacking in self-awareness. Richey (2011, 201) suggests, among other possible interpretations, that those stories may be advancing a normalizing goal, i.e., "eliminating false self-consciousness on the part of humans so that they might abandon thinking of themselves as somehow distinct from other creatures and resume thinking of themselves as no different from other creatures".

These imaginative concepts eventually transitioned into the development of computing machines, which are the vital foundations of AI. In 1822, Charles Babbage started building the "Difference Engine." Thousands of errors contained in printed mathematical tables prompted Babbage to begin this project (Borgmann 2000, 82). Difference Engine is an experimental calculator capable of automatic computation using the finite difference method. In the said method, polynomial functions are reduced to a series of additions and subtractions. When his first design for the Difference Engine failed, he made a new design retaining the same intention. That resulted in the Analytical Engine. He conceived this in 1834, and this machine was

intended to have more features than the Difference Engine. Thus, his design influenced modern electronic computers. (Swade 1993, 87–88).

With a similar spirit of resolving practical problems and utilizing other inventions, such as Boolean logic, more advanced computing machines were developed. Alan Turing is one of the famous figures whose innovative ideas shaped computing. In 1936, Turing published a seminal article, "On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem [Decision Problem]." Turing's article makes a theoretical contribution, particularly in the context of modern computing machines. Turing proposed a universal computing machine, which is now known as the "Turing machine." He describes the mechanism of the computing machine as one that prints sequences of binary symbols (0s and 1s) on a blank tape based on a correct initial configuration (Turing 1936/2004b, 60). This machine is considered versatile in terms of its functions. However, Turing is realistically aware of its limitations (cf. Eberbach et al., 2004, 161). Still, he remains optimistic about the possibilities for the development of computing machines. For instance, in his lecture broadcast on BBC Radio on 15 May 1951, Turing (1951/2004a, 484) stated:

> I think it is probable, for instance, that at the end of the century it will be possible to programme a machine to answer questions in such a way that it will be extremely difficult to guess whether the answers are being given by a man or by the machine…This only represents my opinion; there is plenty of room for others.

These ideas, theoretical discussions, and mechanical designs are among the pivotal developments that underpin the establishment of artificial intelligence, which aims to replicate the human thinking process.

The Establishment of the term Artificial Intelligence and the AI Winter periods

In 1956, an interdisciplinary team of leading researchers from diverse fields (e.g., computer science, cognitive science, and mathematics) convened at Dartmouth, where they coined the term "artificial intelligence." The conference was envisioned and proposed in 1955 by John McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Nathaniel Rochester, and Claude Shannon (Cordeschi 2006, 109). The Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence focused on clarifying the aspects of human intelligence to be simulated through a machine and the challenges related to the envisioned simulation (Chun and Elkins 2022, 105). From the 1950s to the 1960s, a series of breakthroughs were made in this field. Thus, people became overoptimistic regarding the development. However, an AI winter period eventually ensued.

AI winter is described as a period of reduced funding, waning interest, and skepticism about the future of AI research. In the first winter period, in 1972, a key funding body for scientific research in the UK requested Professor Sir James Lighthill to critically examine the state of artificial intelligence research in the United Kingdom (Nilsson 2010, 203–204). Lighthill, in the said report, describes how, despite substantial investment and high expectations, the progress in creating machines that could mimic human intelligence failed to deliver the major impact of AI that was

envisioned. The successes were confined to narrow domains of human intelligence and lacked wider practical applications. However, when reinterpreted eventually, the report has been largely dismissive of certain frameworks (see van Emden 2019, 121). Despite this AI winter period, it is considered crucial to the shift in research models and overcoming technological limitations (e.g., computational functions and processing power).

In the 1980s, there was a resurgence in the field of AI (Nilsson 2010, 271). Researchers have recognized that the general approach of AI models, centered on searching and problem-solving, lacks the essential element of knowledge. These knowledge-based AI systems are eventually called "expert systems," given how human expert knowledge is utilized in formulating rule-based approaches to solving specific problems. Haigh (2024, 18) notes that the same rule-based automation was rebranded as business logic in the 1990s. In other words, the researchers focused less on versatility in a single AI system and more on creating various narrowly designed expert systems. Then, another winter period ensued because of the overestimation and economic unsustainability of the developed integration of expert systems into companies. The primary challenge associated with expert systems is addressing uncertainties and the inability to learn from experience (Russell and Norvig 2021, 24).

The 21st Century Resurgence of AI

Looking at what has been termed AI winters, the model of artificial intelligence, largely dependent on programming symbolic systems and rule-based approaches, has been abandoned by many and shifted to a data-driven learning process. Furthermore, the periods of decline known as AI winters did not completely halt the development of mechanical designs, software, and related endeavors. Thus, the brief historical account sketched demonstrates that, although AI has long been a fantasy topic, as evidenced by works of fiction and scholarly opinions, its actual development began in the 1950s and has since expanded in scope, sophistication, and use.

In the 21st century, public interest in AI increased sharply with the November 2022 release of the early demo version of ChatGPT, a generative AI built on OpenAI's foundational large language models (LLMs) (Marr, 2023). Several other general-purpose LLMs, such as Deepseek, Claude, and Gemini, have been continuously developed and improved.[2] These innovations increase accessibility, further embedding AI systems across various dimensions of human society. Still, the exponential rise in popularity of chatbots such as ChatGPT and related apps also raised queries and worries about the potential and difficulties presented by these rapidly developing digital technologies in various human endeavors (Ocampo and Gozum 2024, 373). Specifically, creative destruction is evident in the considered "redundancies" after the adoption of AI systems, which consequently led to displacements of human labor.

From these events, it becomes clearer that the technological innovations and disruptions that transpired are better understood as the convergence of various factors, including the creativity of human imagination, the intellectual prowess and skills involved in inventing technological artifacts that expand the range of human conduct, etc. Because this progress is not entirely positive and the resulting societal transitions can be challenging to navigate, ethical responses to AI developments must be carefully

considered, integrating frameworks such as transitional justice to address the resulting disruptions.

Transitional Justice as Integrated in the Response to AI Developments

With the brief historical outline in the earlier section, it becomes clear that AI development is not a linear process, but a cycle that results from the confluence of multiple factors, including imaginative engagements and disillusionments that further refine feasible approaches to promoting human progress. The various events mentioned also demonstrate how different dispositions influence AI development. Optimistic visions emphasize increased funding, productivity, scientific discovery, and enhanced human capabilities. Realistic assessments highlight institutional constraints, uneven access, and the necessity of governance. Pessimistic critiques foreground the risks of displacement, concentration of power, and erosion of human autonomy. These perspectives actively shape the pace and direction of innovation. In this manner, enthusiastic visions motivate investment, experimentation, and rapid scaling of new systems, while critical skepticism serves as a moderating force, calling attention to ethical blind spots and potential unintended consequences.

Given these realities, *pakikiramdam*, fostered through fictional engagements, can become crucial to model-building essential for a philosophical response to AI developments (for a similar suggestion concerning *pakikiramdam* and AI innovations, see Gozum 2025, 663–664). In philosophy, its sense of progress differs from that of natural and social scientific progress in that no informative generalizations are readily recognized (see Williamson 2022, 372). Thus, model-building activities are crucial for formulating alternative, contesting paradigms. Given that in creative destruction, paradigms often shift, having alternative models can make the plurality of visions more effective at limiting the potential oversights brought by technological transformations. Furthermore, one should be vigilant about potential non-disruptive alternatives as prioritized.

Pakikiramdam is a form of emotional vigilance. It is the cultivated capacity to perceive subtle social cues, to listen beyond explicit speech, and to sense the unarticulated needs and discomforts of others within a relational environment. In everyday interactions, it enables individuals to navigate complex social situations by attentively gauging a community's well-being. Rather than relying solely on explicit rules or formal procedures, *pakikiramdam* operates through an attunement to the depth and complexity of contexts. A person who vigilantly senses (*nakikiramdam*) reads gestures, silences, hesitations, and implicit expectations. In this sense, pakikiramdam is both a moral and epistemic practice concerned with the well-being of others that motivates a distinct way of knowing that discerns what occurs beneath the surface of overt communication. Essentially, I propose three ways *pakikiramdam* can promote a form of transitional justice as a response to AI developments.

First, participatory consultation processes should move beyond performative or tokenistic public hearings and become sustained engagement with communities affected by AI-driven restructurings. Communities may feel the pressure of technological restructuring long before policy responses are implemented. In such contexts, a purely technocratic approach to governance tends to overlook the lived

dimensions of transition. Here, *pakikiramdam* offers a sensibility that can authentically foster an ethical orientation toward justice. If policymakers, corporate leaders, and technologists cultivate a form of institutionalized attentiveness analogous to emotional vigilance, they may become more responsive to subtle signals of social strain during technological transformation. Decision-makers, when embodying *pakikiramdam*, will be inclined to prioritize experiential narratives, informal testimonies, and locally grounded knowledge, which are better recognized when properly disposed of.

Second, organizations implementing AI systems could establish continuous feedback mechanisms that allow employees to express concerns without fear of reprisal. *Pakikiramdam* may be better integrated at an institutional level if practices are formally established to allow for the sharing of visions, apprehensions, and concerns without unjust retaliation. In this manner, the plurality of visions and voices is inculcated into the organizational values without the need to wait for synchronous public hearings and consultations.

Third, educational and reskilling initiatives intended to cushion the impact of unforeseen disruptions should be designed with awareness of psychological and social contexts. Technological retraining programs frequently assume that displaced workers will readily adapt if provided with technical instruction. Nonetheless, many individuals face emotional barriers such as loss of professional identity, apprehension about unfamiliar technologies, or skepticism toward institutional promises. Thus, such approaches that promote transitional justice are better informed by *pakikiramdam,* enabling the recognition of concerns integral to the transition process. Programs could therefore incorporate mentoring structures, peer-support networks, and counseling resources that acknowledge the emotional dimensions of occupational change. By recognizing participants' implicit needs through *pakikiramdam*, initiatives would be more effective, both in fostering technical competence and in enriching interpersonal relations.

CONCLUSION

The philosophical writings of Camus and Weil remind us to be conscious of our obligation to humanity, rooted in human dignity and respect for life. This respect entails not just a preservation of existence but the daily effort to contribute towards social amelioration. In this respect, social amelioration requires not just ideals but also an estimation of the transitory periods between the current reality and the ideal state of things. Due to this transitional period, I propose a preliminary formulation of "transitional justice" that incorporates the Filipino concept of *pakikiramdam.* This transitional justice is necessary in the contemporary setting, where dominant dynamics promote creative destruction. This transitional justice refers to going beyond procedural approaches to justice that rely exclusively on formal rules.

Enriched through *pakikiramdam*, the study has proposed three practical ethical directions through which *pakikiramdam* may inform a transitional justice framework for the age of AI. First, participatory consultation processes must move beyond performative or tokenistic public hearings that merely simulate inclusivity while leaving decision-making structures unchanged. Genuine consultation requires

sustained engagement in which the voices of affected communities are not only heard but meaningfully interpreted. In this sense, *pakikiramdam* promotes effective interpersonal communications that become the foundation for proper policy-making. Second, organizations implementing AI systems should establish continuous feedback mechanisms that allow relational attentiveness to become institutionalized within technological governance. Establishing structured channels for dialogue allows institutions to remain attentive to early signals of harm or exclusion. Lastly, the cushioning of displacement effects, such as educational and reskilling initiatives, should involve *pakikiramdam.* Support structures such as mentorship, peer networks, and counseling can therefore play an essential role in ensuring that reskilling efforts nurture both competence and dignity. Thus, this paper presents a preliminary exploration of the rich potentialities that can be philosophically explored in the interstices of technological innovations, humane transitions, and organizational ethos.

NOTES

1. Besides the notebook entries of Camus that express his grappling with Weil's ideas, another instance that clearly shows his agreement with some of her ideas is due to his direct contributions, as Director of Gallimard's Espoir series, to the posthumous publication of Weil's writings (see Camus, 1965; see Nieuwenhove, 2005).

2. In 2025, there were new developments in the field of AI, such as the release of DeepSeek R1 models, which changed the cost-effectiveness ratio. In a similar vein, another recent innovation is a model developed by Stanford and University of Washington researchers that performs comparably to the OpenAI o1 and DeepSeek R1 models in math and coding for less than $50 in cloud compute credits (TOI Tech Desk, 2025). The AI developments, then, have responded to increasing accuracy, expanding use cases, improving accessibility and cost-effectiveness, among others.

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