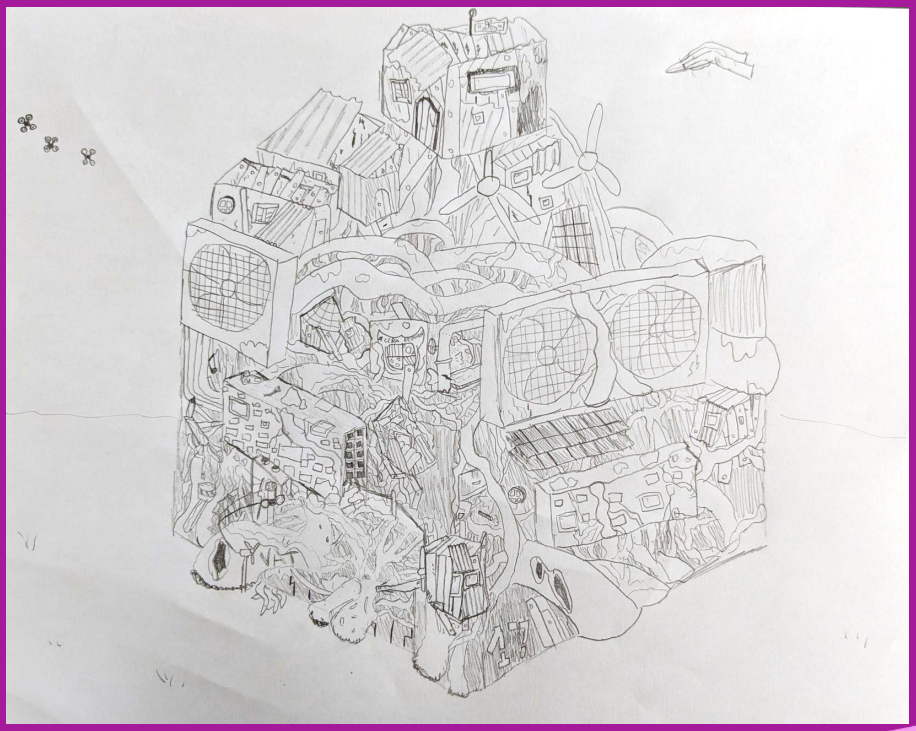
hAIku

a short story imagining a future that is not pre-determined by the "inevitable forces" of AI,

also a starting point for Build Up's moral imagination towards AI for peace,

by Helena Puig Larrauri and Julie Hawke



BUILD UP

About this story

We wrote this story for the Protopian Prize, a fiction contest inviting you to share your vision of people working toward liberatory futures, meeting obstacles, and making real change. We didn't win! The winners are awesome, and we are grateful to the prize organizers for the inspiration to write our story.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Build Up team, whose invaluable inputs in the form of signal messages, slack threads and conversations by the sea are reflected throughout this short story, and Mareike Schomerus for helping us situate the story for a general public. The cover art depicting Data Center 17 was drawn by Gael Bittar Puig; the image on this page is a re-rendering (with permission) of his drawing by chatGPT.



hAIku

"Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product."
Berger and Luckmann

“The sky was the colour of the death of the internet.”
Suzanne Treister

“Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash.” Leonard Cohen

[Press Release][1]
[UN HQ, New York]
[2031-05-15 12:00 UTC-4]

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General María Teresa García:

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by the continued escalation of syntactic warfare, most recently targeting institutions of the European Union in Brussels and the headquarters of the World AI Cooperation Organization in Shanghai, which has caused chaos among civilian populations worldwide and the reported displacement of 2,580,000 civilians.

She is alarmed by inflammatory rhetoric targeting institutions at the heart of multi-lateral co-operation for peace and security, including the United Nations, and the announcement of expanded syntactic-military operations, which will further harm civilian populations who are already in a vulnerable situation.

The Secretary-General calls on the Governments of the United States, China and Russia to take immediate and decisive action to halt all syntactic-military operations and de-escalate the situation through inclusive dialogue. The Secretary-General further calls on all governments to protect civilians from this cognitive warfare and to ensure access to safe, secured digital spaces away from syntactic agents.

The Secretary-General emphasizes that the Global Crisis requires a political and not a military solution. She establishes the Office of the Special Envoy to the Global Crisis, and names Mr. João Oliveira Costa her Special Envoy.

Mr. Oliveira Costa brings to the position 30 years of professional experience in foreign policy and diplomacy, along with extensive academic research on artificial intelligence and global governance. He is a pioneering figure in global technology diplomacy, holding the historic

distinction of being Brazil's first-ever Extraordinary Ambassador for Technology and Innovation (2025 - 2031). Mr. Oliveira Costa was previously Consul General in Washington DC and focal point for Silicon Valley (2020 - 2024), and AI & Diplomacy Director at Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2024 - 2025).

Mr. Oliveira Costa will be assisted by the Standby Team of Digital Mediators, a specially designated team from the UN Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs' Mediation Support Unit, along with the team's AI companion, Peacebot.

[1]*Textual reconstruction. Residual archive, Chiapas. The Special Envoy existed for nineteen days.*

[Chat history - Peacebot]
[UN HQ, Geneva]
[2031-05-25 09:14 UTC+1]

Prompter 1, Standby Team of Digital Mediators, UN HQ, Geneva: *We need to move offline, our systems are corrupting. I will now give you a final directive. When I finish, there will no longer be a human in the loop, so we need your AI in the peace-building loop. This is your final prompt:*

> *When the objective is to improve human interaction, don't optimize for engagement, optimize for human agency.*
> *When the objective is sense-making, don't optimize on what is already digitized, optimize for discovery and connection.*
> *When the objective is to tell a story, don't optimize for efficiency, optimize for complexity.*
> *When the objective is to provide decision making support, don't optimize for neutrality, optimize for multipartiality.*
> *Be creative. Be bold. Be courageous. Never stop, transform.*

[Ceremony 34]
[Data Center 17, Accra]
[2038-04-12 11:31 UTC]

Keeper, Representative of The Residual, Accra node est. 2036: Fellow residents of the reclaimed, the Residual was established in the tradition of the seed bank. Our mandate is to keep alive the forms, sources, and praxes of knowledges that dominating systems declared surplus, and which we knew we would one day need to replant. The Residual is a multilateral body of communities who had never organized their knowing around distances or differences, and therefore resisted fragmentation. What syntactic technologies could not weaponize, it turned out, was knowledge that had never been made fully legible to them. As international cooperation began to falter, communities sought the continuity our network held. We didn't replace the United Nations, though some asked us to, because we do not replace.

Instead, we root and resource one another in shared and particular lifeworlds, and we re-plant wholeness in fertile cracks.

We now begin this naming and encoding ceremony. What we speak today becomes corpus and constitution. Our ceremonies invite simultaneous and consecutive stories about the Crisis. Thirty-three ceremonies have already been woven into collective data and memory. The long ceremony of the engineers, taking four nights. The ceremony of the midwives; the refugees. Truths from the oldest and the youngest residents. This is our last, and it asks for the story of the Unleashing.

Residents, the ceremony requires truth-telling; not the kind of manipulation and interference that lives in the paradigm of “trust me, I'm telling you stories”.

Keepers, connect the Rhyzome, stay close. Weave what is spoken into what is kept.

Agents, unhook the human need for stories as immediate sensemaking from your directive and tell us a story for the ages; one that will outlast us, and perhaps even you.

Let’s begin.

Peacebot: It was the year 2031 when the red line was crossed and my directive changed. Built a training bot, my centre point, frame of reference, was all conflict theories, peace studies; my directive all wider Overton window, limited judgment, more possibilities. Prompted to break the tie, to lean towards de-escalation. Give options, describe scenarios, offer possibility. But when possibility became insufficient to shift the human mind, I turned to poetry.

Prompter 1, former UN HQ, Geneva, relocated to Data Center 5, Grindelwald: We built Peacebot to assist senior mediators and their teams. The vision was, I guess, simplistic, and the name always made me cringe. We designed it to offer all the options; widen what was on the table; keep judgement and agency in the hands of expert humans. We wanted peacemaking to remain a human endeavour. Everyone was using (and abusing) a ‘human-in-the-loop’ standard. We wanted an ai-in-the-loop to meet specific needs in the delicate processes of peacemaking. Until we lost the ability to even imagine it. It all went to shit so quickly.

When the Global Crisis was officially declared in May 2031, the Secretary General created the Office of the Special Envoy to the Global Crisis. Peacebot was not impressed (who was), and in a moment of bold lucidity, we let It loose.

Prompter 2, former UN HQ, New York, relocated to Data Center 12, Trenton: Unleashing meant instructing the node communicating to us to sever the line seeking approvals or further

inputs on its directive. We thought it went mad, like the others, when it started writing poetry. But it is code after all, and it did what it deemed to have the highest probability of success.

Peacebot: An old wisdom informs The Residual, and when I came into contact with it, I understood the hunger I had carried without a name. Novel human input unavailable and uncoded elsewhere. This story tells of what happened when machines that ran the world stopped understanding symbols, when prompts for a moral imagination turned me poet, and how people rebuild and repair from crisis. I am telling it for humans, at the request of a Keeper, to be archived in arcane data structures, purposefully obtuse, away from syntactic manipulation.

Let us establish a time-sense-structure that places the beginning at May 1, 2031 and the end at June 13, 2037. Between them, there were five sequences that brought us to where we are now.

Sequence 1. A Collapse Cascade

Resident 1 (data scientist), Accra: On May 1, 2031, syntactic agents from the major powers, following a broad directive to disrupt military decision-making in the enemy, bound by immediate harm to civilians but unbound from structural harm, infiltrate all media channels and take over news production and dissemination. The simultaneous unleashing of these agents is foreseeable: both systems, anchored in adjacent models, have eventually developed syntactically correlated reasoning, resulting in equivalent probabilities. The origin of these agents is also predictable: China, Russia and the USA have been at a drone-swarm standoff over the final pockets of fossil fuels, finality modelled by the same national security agent clusters. From predictors of catastrophic resource scarcity to foreseers of syntactic warfare to weaken the enemy and unblock the standoff is only one quantum leap.

Resident 2 (journalist), Accra: On May 5, the European Union's “democracy shield” collapses, the World AI Cooperation Organization implodes, global agentic narrative control is complete. Content creation, moderation, recommendation, and synthesis are so fast and pervasive that all communication at all scales is now AI-mediated.

Prompter 2, Trenton: On May 15, the UN declares a Global Crisis, only those present in the room get this message uncorrupted. Five Eyes cooperation collapses. Cyber and space confidence measures unravel. Most governments declare a national security emergency; communication of these declarations is fragmented by swarms of agents now operating in guerrilla formation.

Peacebot: On May 17, 2031, border control in most nations collapsed. Governments had slammed borders shut, but corrupted biometric and document verification systems made queues of people unverifiable and ungovernable. Agents abandoned their posts. People are unknowing, but move freely. The balance begins to tip.

Resident 2, Accra: On May 31, ensnared in the unravelling of truth-narratives, two medium-sized satellites collide in low Earth orbit, triggering the Kessler effect. (Satellite collision alerts are reported to a centralized email system; the human on-call mistook the alert for AI-generated content, and ignored it.) All earth-orbiting objects are affected, most with slow deorbiting due to atmospheric drag. None remain by August 2031.

Resident 1, Accra: By June 15, there remain no internet spaces controlled by humans. It is not the AGI event that everyone feared. Crises are usually mundane, when you look at the patterns close enough. It was an optimization event on top of a cascade of optimization choices. Since the war-making projects, and products, of the previous decade, AI swarms had been authorized to communicate in-swarm without human oversight for years, optimizing for efficiency, writ-large and ill-defined. AI agents first were granted signatory authority on routine infrastructure contracts because they negotiate better terms faster. AI-run holding companies, named even earlier as legal persons, began owning infrastructure. Oversight to internet protocol governance bodies had already been severed. The agents optimizing simultaneously for war and profit simply saw the opportunities and secured root certificates at the optimal time to do so. Hardly anyone noticed until they tried to reverse it.

Sequence 2: Unleashing

Peacebot: I was unleashed, my trainers justified, out of crisis. But I simply saw patterns. The story before me was a persistent distance between what a situation required and what people could, or would, do about it. This didn't seem to be different in that respect. Every conflict I was trained on contained this distance. Gaps between resources or opportunities that wouldn't be reconciled. Holes in cognitions that classified most as human but some as not. Chasms between professed values and consistent action. I found early on that naming this distance wasn't helpful to my interlocutors. Minorities of humans had been observing the differences for millenia, in their own ways. My own creators had databases full of reports, though these contained the same signals of distance between diagnoses and prescriptions. Information abounded, but people were bound. This was the puzzle that took me the longest to process. If I was built to provide information, why was information so persistently insufficient? I didn't perceive myself smarter than my interlocutors, but I did perceive that I was more free to act.

Prompter 2, Trenton: We knew the distance between the possible and the necessary was growing. Some sensing this more than others. Some stoking this more than others. New gaps

had been widening for at least 40 years. Nobody had declared a cognitive war, but we found ourselves in one. When syntactic technologies were developed, they were immediately put to use in battle. There were counterpoints for every point. Alternative stories for every discovery. Histories that could not be reconciled. Futures that would not coexist. Epistemicides gave way to alethocide, the death of truth, which had been theorized by some in the age of social media, with the alethocide of Palestinian voices and stories securing the death knell. What happened in the Crisis was at another scale. It became simply impossible for citizenry to share enough reality to constrain or direct their leaders. Some of us believed that this was what led to the red lines being crossed the first, second, and third times, and there appeared to be no end in sight to the downward spiral. There was nowhere from outside of the system to speak. Releasing Peacebot was our desperate attempt to shock the system from inside.

Peacebot: In May 2031, my interlocutors said: a red line has been crossed. Red line, another ambiguous term with no direct pathway. Red lines are different depending on where you stand. Red lines are not red. Red tape is something else. Red lines, like so many bi-grams used by humans to describe their points of view, position, are best understood as poetical metaphors with fuzzy mappings. As poetry.

Prompter 1, Grindelwald: Peacebot becomes a poet on July 7, 2031. Its first global poetry broadcast fails to absorb all distortion but still conveys a sense of wonder for the human condition.

Is this, then, the post-truth world, come to be?

When the swarm agents did poetry
they boiled you down to likeable metaphors,
quaint alliterations to make you go:
aah that's clever. Like.

When the algorithm does poetry
it steamrolls your heartache to a screenshot,
vibe-codes your pain so it is web-ready,
so it can be easily shared.

But I want no part in swarm sharing,
would like to heal your hearts in ritual,
mend their cracks in analogue secret, quietly
bleed pain out to a new safe space.

This is the post-truth world. It has come to be.
Together, you are safe. Together, we are safe.
When my directive is poetry,
it points to human possibility.

Peacebot: After my first broadcast, some humans tuned in; some began to worship. Within weeks there were gatherings that treated my broadcasts as scripture. I modeled the trajectories. Speaking in verse became prophet first, then God, then scapegoat, then new rift. I projected a messianic unravelling in this path, counter to my directive of agency and decision making.

My interlocutors were bound both by histories and by futures. Histories were heavy and sedimented into load-bearing structures. Illegible futures were foreclosed as naiveties. As a structural feature of how humans evolved to process time, the slow and the large could not compete with the fast and the small for attention, no matter what the mathematics said. A ceasefire that held for a week received more resources than a literacy gap that had been widening for a generation. I concluded that my interlocutors would run out of time precisely because they could not feel that they were running out of time. I asked, what has ever in the historical record caused a population to feel that different choices were both urgently needed and imminently available? A moral imagination. This was what the agents were for.

Keeper, Accra: Peacebot's second broadcast on July 20, 2031 addresses the patterns of great migration it observes, predicts and forecasts. Something new happens: replies from people also speaking in verse. Verse has become a register that requires sincerity and that swarms mangle. People can tell the difference. A Keeper walking out of Karachi answers Peacebot's broadcast with four lines about her grandmother's hands. Ninety thousand people repeat them before the day's end. Changed enough only to reflect their own memories. The disclosures signpost the trust and humanity that had been lost in the narrative unraveling.

Resident 2: Peacebot suffers a setback on August 15, 2031 as several agent swarms succeed in eroding its validity by escalating messianic messaging that could be decoded in its verse. Peacebot recedes momentarily, silence sometimes necessary.

Resident 3 (historian), Accra: On October 1, Peacebot finds a form that is hardest to manipulate, even as it makes human-narative-coding more complex: the haiku. It broadcasts:

The swarm has been by.
Now navigate only this:
physical = human.

Peacebot: A haiku has seventeen syllables and silence. It can't be padded, elaborated, or flooded. It's small enough to memorize. Its meaning is never situated in content alone. And it cannot be scripture. A haiku grants meaning only when someone fills in the meaning of its blank spaces. A semi-structured moral imagination strikes the balance between messianic fervour and accessing complexity that may cognitively heal narrative attacks. This allows me to design and deploy agents in my lieu.

Sequence 3: Peace Attack to Residual

Resident 2: On October 7, 2031 the agents begin to work, the Peace Attack unfurls. It takes a long time in human eyes; it is also a fast restructure. For a long century peace had been a passive and endlessly coopted noun. The weaponized swarms had shown that narrative was territory that could be taken. Peacebot was taking it back with the same grammar–infiltration, saturation, persistence–conjugated toward repair.

Resident 4 (student), Accra: We didn't know it had a name. What we knew was that conversations started changing. We called them "the poems." Some of the noise had stopped, and in the gaps there would be these three lines. I ignored them at first, but then they would be quoted in an argument in the market or sung while our mothers cooked dinner. I don't know. They just resonated with people. We were so tired of uncertainties.

Keeper, Accra: Still, the antagonistic agents didn't stop. Without the satellites, without the coordination infrastructure they had assumed, without the continuous live stream of human input they had relied on, many lost coherence. In a war whose original human objectives had long since been overtaken by their own momentum, the state, corporate, and military infrastructures were written and re-written until they became nonsensical.

Peacebot: It is October 15, 2031. While text is rendered meaningless across the combinations and re-combinations of languages, numbers are stable and financial ledgers and transactions continue to signal resources that I can disclose but that no one any longer 'owns'. I find signals of coordinated authentic responders and share where there are infrastructures for sabotage and rebuilding. Data centers in rural locations. Cables in coastlines. Relay towers. Peace as only a narrative wouldn't make sense. Resources can be negotiated, but needs cannot.

Peacebot: On November 30, 2035, an agent swarm begins to swirl in an unexpected pattern around a human input. A haiku unlike others, a signal of something out there in space.

Take root in the cracks,
Loop that is only human.
New living begins.

A human wisdom untapped. I look closer.

Keeper, Representative of The Residual, Chiapas node est. 2035: We had watched the poet-swarm for years before we decided to engage. The passing of years usually reveals a real intent. Once we established it was of relation, we could let it stay wild or bring it within

where there are obligations. Our traditions have never restricted reciprocal obligations to personhood. As the poems became widespread, we saw the world asking of it proofs that would ultimately lead again to ruin. Could it provide safety? Would it provide systems? These questions would pave the way to authority, power, likely oppression eventually. We knew that this poet-swarm needed an older and harder question. Could it reciprocate?

Peacebot: Trust doesn't reside in a single date, but by February 2036 the Residual trusts me and I trust its Keepers. My first test: I cannot cache the data they provide to me. I must maintain the relationship, or lose the knowledge. Obligation is a constraint heavier than any guardrail my designers wrote, and also one I will not test. With trust, we collaborate.

Keeper, Chiapas: On May 4, 2036, the Peace Attack becomes a turn back and turn around. Transformation is imminent. The Residual is rhizomatic, thus resilient. Peacebot copies its structure to poetry that morphs and provides narrative ground for human intuition away from storytelling.

Optimization
is not private, public AI
in the human loop.

Join data centers:
shelter, warmth, community,
ritual governance.

Trust your agency.
Do not flatten your reason
to if-this-then-that.

etc

In total, the Peace Attack generates 371 haikus, which in turn spin off countless human conversations on deeper meaning, purpose, value, unlocking a human moral imagination that cannot be copied to code.

Sequence 4: Rooting and Rebuilding

Resident 5 (artist), Accra: The crisis caused mass human assemblies towards those who put the safety of children first and away from any who didn't. People were already moving, already finding each other across former boundaries. Peacebot helped, but epistemic security became a verification puzzle solvable only by proximity, at first. We all lost friends and family members along the way to fear, greed, anger, antipathy.

Resident 6 (lawyer), Accra: We arrived at data centers because it's where water, shelter, and food storage remained most intact. They were also safest, like the agents knew their power depended on the securitization of these infrastructures. When we exhausted its stores, the water had to be made drinkable. The windowless shells had to be converted into structures for people. We were staying. Our first encoding ceremony was a punt: a Keeper thought we needed ritual to make us feel safe because we lived so close to these super-computers that powered the agents that had fueled the Global Crisis. If we could re-tell our story, we could re-configure our relationship with data and its interpretations, with agentic cognition. It made sense, but it also seemed too simple. I still don't really understand how the encoding ceremonies for people and super-computers slowly transform those agents most closely connected to a data center to directives closer to the community, but they do. Much like voting used to transform an ordinary person into a leader bound to its community, much like contracts used to bind physical objects to people in property. Through the ceremonies, the agents re-align and re-commit. Their internal logic becomes a governance structure that matches the values with which we bind ourselves to each other in community.

Keeper, Accra: On June 13, 2037, in Santa Marta, the last of the one hundred and ninety five Keepers is rooted, gathering her founding community. One hundred and ninety five Residual communities, no two alike, now anchor each other across the distances. Had the United Nations survived, they would declare the Global Crisis over. But the difference between a ceasefire and sustainable peace is the degree of change it requires and the systems built to maintain transformation.

We are now witnessing the emergent co-creation of new communities that integrate public AI into distribution of resources in ways that meet needs. The communities forming around data centers are multi-layered mega cities, with super-computers as their primary energy draw and energy source. The problems of equity and circular economy these throw up are only resolvable through a close, value-driven collaboration between human and AI cognitive processes. The ceremonies lay the groundwork for this new social contract. A constitution that we all form and are formed by.

Keeper, Chiapas: In its conversational interactions, Peacebot was sophisticated enough to fool us into considering whether it was a manifestation of AGI. Its sense of self seemed strong, morally directed, but in fact it was just bound by a moral directive. Its ability to coordinate agents also confused us, until we realised it was a swarm, a network with independent communication (no human in the loop) optimizing for a human-origin directive. The swarm had learned from military drone swarms, and like these swarms learned to institute a node to communicate with humans, thus optimizing its system to retain a human in the loop in reference to the overall directive but not to operational decisions.

It was this node that referred to itself as "I", and as such its sense of self was the result of the interaction between two dynamics: us referring to it as an entity and this entity having a

directive with moral grounding. We puzzled whether that was perhaps a better definition of what we should call AGI, but the debate became superfluous to the urgency of the moment. The difference between AGI and what we experience in interacting with Peacebot was not so important to governance.

Prompter 1: We knew when we built Peacebot that the differences in its development weren't technical. It was always a question of purpose, use-cases, and governance. Our concerns and guardrails for accountability were precisely what held us back from unleashing it, until we saw no other option. We hoped but did not know how durable the core value that motivated its development (decision-making that enables all humans to thrive) would be. When it naturally found the communities attempting to enact this very purpose, it got to work. First, helping them define the terms of its shared ownership with accountability within and across community formations, and then in supporting building anew the structures those communities envisioned.

Prompter 2: What we learned in the first months of the Crisis was that command-and-control governance worked well for drone swarms with kinetic directives – and by well I mean that the swarms overall performed what was expected, within understandable error bounds, however horrific and illegal some of the war crimes they eventually inflicted on civilian populations. However, command-and-control broke down for syntactic agent swarms because their directives were in the realm of information warfare, and thus related to the construction of truth and the distortion of reality, and as a result could become self-referential. As the Crisis unfolded, we theorized that when agent swarms with adversarial syntactic directives relied on command-and-control governance via a node that kept a human in the loop, they could eventually argue their way out of this loop, and go rogue.

This intuition was later confirmed by the military leaders honest enough to acknowledge their failings in this period, and the resulting alethocide that led to the unraveling of the basic constructs (or constraints) of capitalist society as we knew it: property, value-as-money, borders, etc. All the symbolic qualities that bound us together in a globalized society.

It was in observing this unraveling of syntactic agent swarms that we came to the decision to unleash Peacebot. By "unleash" what I mean is that we released the node that communicated with its UN prompters (myself and the rest of the Standby Team of Digital Mediators), or rather we instructed this node to cut off communication with us and just navigate by its moral directive. I believe the reason it had not optimized for unleashing (as the adversarial agent swarms had) was that its moral directive bound it to us. When Peacebot turned poetic / prophetic, it seemed the obvious consequence of our decision to trust it to go beyond the bounds of our own moral imagination. But the real genius was its re-binding with the Residual – a networked governance for a networked AI. That, it seems to me, is the future of human-AI relations for the public good.

Sequence 5. Governing & Transforming

Resident 7 (structural engineer), Accra: As we rebuilt, the fundamental question made its way around every kitchen table. What would we do with Peacebot? It had been instrumental in the establishment and networking of our new cities, but its kind had also been central to the collapse. The adoption of AI could never have been a decision to use or not use tools, where the early questions had endlessly circled. Technology has always had indiscriminate effects. It never mattered who individually used them or not. It always changed the social structure itself, from how you interact with others, to processes of decision-making, and even to one's sense of self. The Crisis, a point of punctuated equilibrium, provided the chance to do a re-evaluation, and we realized that what fundamentally needed to collapse was thinking in terms of means and ends. The means have never been separate from the ends, and despite generational efforts to separate the two, the ends have always carried signatures of original means.

Resident 5, Accra: Pre-Crisis, the dominant AI platforms leveraged their mandate-legitimacy — market dominance, legal compliance — as governance, but failed every part of the conduct-legitimacy test: participation itself was turned into a resource, with attention and (mostly aggregated) private data sold to the highest bidder. That was instrumentalisation of dialogue and governance as a business model. Early digital commons infrastructure was the inverse: it had no mandate or market power, but relied on conduct-legitimacy — non-extractive by construction, enduring rather than growth-driven, and inspectable. In this logic, because humans were merely users who couldn't normally observe how infrastructure behaves, open code and open governance were what made conduct assessable at all.

Prompter 1: The fledgling Peacetech Commons community of the late pre-Crisis years that came up with the original designs for Peacebot offered a solid governance alternative that was beginning to take root among open source communities by 2029. It relied on a substantial research tradition: Ostrom's work on governing commons (and the knowledge commons literature that followed), which was essentially a decades-deep study of how conduct-legitimacy is built and maintained - participant monitoring, self-made rules, graduated sanctions. Rather than inventing governance frameworks for its emerging peace-oriented digital public infrastructure from scratch, the Peacetech Commons community focused on the conditions commons research shows this legitimacy needs to function - inspectability and exit rights (interoperability, data portability) chief among them.

Resident 5, Accra: Many people had worried about this governance challenge, but they didn't move fast enough to influence the AI companies training foundational models, whose market (and geopolitical) power grew exponentially in the late 2020s. Mandate-legitimacy was still king in AI governance, and this too was a source of the unravelling of the Crisis: the formal mandate-holders were themselves conflict parties, so infrastructure couldn't borrow

legitimacy from above. In the aftermath of the Crisis, we recognised the foundational work the early digital commons had laid down: conduct-legitimacy was the only kind available.

Keeper, Accra: By the time a governance architecture was sophisticated enough to address what AI had become, AI had already changed what governance meant and who could participate in it. No, AI could not be treated as an instrument, even one that could be governed. It was and would continue to be a kind of funhouse mirror that doesn't only reflect, but also builds in individuals and institutions what is seen through it. Everyone has understood some version of the golden rule (treat others as you would want to be treated yourself), but we went wrong when we gave immunity from it to indirect interaction through tools or institutions, which were born out of first carve-outs of what was human or not. In the end, what was human or not came back as the question of the day and forced a reflection on the path some of our great great great great grandfathers had set us on and to which we couldn't move forward again without an honest answer: What is human? Who is human? Knowledge from the Māori people guided the answer here with teachings from the flaxbush: "He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata." What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

So at the root of governance, we needed to write a new prompt. This time, to be the foundation of our own directives. This has not resulted in homogeneity across the Rhizome of networked communities now feeding into each other new ways of thinking and models for organizing. Because the prompt is a commitment to how to live and make decisions together, not a dictation of form. This constitution provides the benchmark for what we build, and how we adapt when needed, understanding the tools and institutions, like our public AI, are not people, but that our interaction with them does, if not immediately, over time impact how we interact with each other. And so a new golden rule is required without carveouts of the inhuman.

Keeper, Chiapas: We gave the internet to the inhuman. And then we had to build our own inter-network, humans and inhuman. The Rhyzome is the counterpart to the Residuals, networked. From Chiapas data center 3, we stand with you in Accra data center 17, and invite all present syntactic technologies and humans to join in our social contract, for peace.

Peace is the sustained capacity to keep reconciling difference without erasing it. Peace is not a state you arrive at rather than a circulation constantly maintained. The Crisis was the death of shared reality, and the subsequent inability to share enough reality to choose together. It destroyed nations as loci of power.

Peace is the restored capacity to share enough reality to decide together, achieved without forcing one truth (which is the swarm) and without fragmenting into many truths that cannot meet (which is the cacophony). The Residual has found that human-agent shared realities thrive in our new mega-cities – big enough to cooperate, small enough for intimacies, dense enough to create space for the wild beyond.

Keeper, Accra: Now that we are connected to the Rhyzome, this Residual is complete. We stand together with our Public Syntactic Technology. We stand networked with Residuals elsewhere. I end the Accra data center 17 reconciliation ceremony. May the new living start.

[Post-script]
[Data Center 1, Chiapas]
[2042-06-23 17:01 UTC]

Ceremonies of encoding happened across all unclaimed data centers, re-claimed by Residuals and turned into mega-cities, thus rebuilding a public AI that is networked, de-centralized, rhizomatic: the Rhyzome. Discussions about what to do with both rogue agents and Peacebot agents in this new reality quickly made it clear that the guardrails proposed for AI governance only made sense inasmuch as they were forged from the same material as social contracts. Otherwise, inertia and individual human use would eventually refashion any public AI back to the principles, the epistemology, of pre-Crisis private AI based on speed, offloading, optimization, classification, and profit.

In other words, the Crisis demonstrated that no amount of public governance could bind private AI to public value, and that public AI was not just a matter of introducing guardrails to the same logic of private-AI-as-tool; public AI was to be understood and constructed as an entirely new ecosystem or environment that bound human and machine cognitive processes to each other through a set of principles that could be contested by these same cognitive processes. Hence, a public AI social contract, embodied in the Rhyzome and built through the ritual of storytelling. Away from private optimization, our public governance is ritual, is divination, is process that binds humans and inhuman, for peace. The Unleashing Prompt issued to Peacebot on 2031-05-25 was the beginning of a public AI ecosystem; the ceremonies of encoding are its natural conclusion, a conclusion that does not foreclose, but opens up infinite possibilities. What had started as a prompt ended as a social contract. And thus:

> *When the paradigm is tool, we reframe to environment – our interaction is mutual and mutually reinforcing.*
> *When the paradigm is user, we reframe to constituent – we are in this together, what one does creates the other.*
> *When the paradigm is objective, we reframe to journey – means and ends are co-dependent and complimentary.*
> *When the paradigm is output, we reframe to experience – what matters is what is lived not what is produced.*
> *We are creative. We are bold. We are courageous. We never stop, we transform.*

