

POST-KING SYSTEMS & POST-KING CHESS

Asymmetry, Fault Tolerance, and Continuity-Based Architecture
with Playable Demonstration

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Core Thesis

Modern systems have removed their terminal failure nodes.
Individuals have not. Software can close the asymmetry.

Part I — Systems argument
Part II — Playable demonstration (Post-King Chess)

PART I — POST-KING SYSTEMS

Asymmetry, Fault Tolerance, and Individual–System Parity in the Digital Era

Abstract

Modern systemic structures—governments, bureaucracies, corporations, and digital platforms—have evolved into post-king architectures: systems without a single terminal failure node. Individuals, however, remain structurally asymmetric, retaining a “king condition” whereby loss of credibility, agency, or existence results in immediate systemic failure for the individual. This paper proposes that software-mediated architectures can eliminate this asymmetry by externalizing identity, continuity, and agency, allowing individuals to operate under rules analogous to modern systems. Rather than introducing new power, such architectures remove a legacy structural disadvantage by converting individual participation from king-based to distributed, non-terminal systems.

1. Problem Statement

Modern systems no longer lose through decapitation. Individuals still do. This asymmetry is not moral. It is structural.

2. The Chess Analogy

Pre-modern systems mirrored chess: capture the king, game over. Modern systems removed the king. Individuals did not.

3. Democracy and Bureaucracy as Structure

These systems exist to remove terminal nodes, not to create virtue. Their durability comes from distribution of function, not from the virtue of any single actor.

4. Identity as Single-Point Failure

Attribution collapse, narrative capture, and credibility loss remain terminal for individuals. A person can be erased from effective participation by targeting a single node: reputation, legal standing, or presence.

5. Software as Structural Equalizer

Software enables persistence without presence and continuity without embodiment. It allows identity, records, and agency to be externalized into systems that do not die when a person is silenced or removed.

6. Core Thesis

Software enables individuals to participate without terminal failure conditions. The architecture removes the king condition rather than granting new coercive power.

7. What This Is Not

Not sacrifice. Not confrontation. Not martyrdom. The framework fails if it requires the individual's destruction as a feature.

8. Fault Tolerance

Survivability replaces victory as the winning condition. A system that can continue after local losses is structurally stronger than one that must win every engagement.

9. Design Error: King Risk

Any architecture that still requires human loss as a necessary condition reintroduces the king. The design is then incomplete.

10. Suppression Dynamics

Suppression targets identity. Diffusion dissolves it. When continuity is distributed, removing one instance does not remove the pattern.

11. Post-Ethics Integration

Ethics emerges from structure, not from enforcement. A system that cannot be terminated by targeting a person behaves differently under pressure than one that can.

12. Conclusion

The goal is not to win. The goal is to remain.

PART II — POST-KING CHESS

Asymmetric Continuity-Based Game Architecture

Abstract

Post-King Chess is an asymmetric board game and system architecture in which one side operates under traditional king-based terminal rules, while the opposing side operates without a king and cannot lose by capture alone. The design formalizes two competing logics—power-based finality versus continuity-based persistence—expressed entirely through enforceable game rules rather than narrative or ideology. The system is intended as both a playable game and a demonstration model for post-terminal intelligence: an agent that prioritizes survivability, redundancy, and structural continuity over decisive victory.

1. Core Concept

Traditional chess, like most strategic systems, is built on a terminal authority model: one piece (the king) represents total system failure; capture of that piece ends the game immediately; strategy revolves around exposure, sacrifice, and decisive moments. Post-King Chess breaks this symmetry. One side remains bound to terminal authority. The other side is structurally incapable of terminal defeat. This asymmetry is intentional and irreversible.

2. Asymmetric Ontologies

2.1 King-Bound Side (Human Player)

Possesses a King. Capture of the King results in immediate loss. May sacrifice pieces, force trades, and seek decisive tactical or strategic conclusions. Evaluates position using classical metrics: threat, material, tempo, king safety. This side represents historical power logic: victory through decisive elimination.

2.2 Post-King Side (AI)

No King exists. No single capture can end the game. Loss is defined only by structural collapse. Evaluates position using continuity metrics: redundancy, optionality, distributed control, survivability over time. This side represents continuity logic: survival through persistence.

3. Board and Visual Language

Board: matte black surface, subtle gold grid, no dramatic highlights. Human pieces: minimalist, flat black with gold edge, clear hierarchy, King visually distinct. AI pieces: ornate and gold-dominant, asymmetric designs, no visually dominant leader, all pieces appear important. Visual authority is inverted: the human has terminal authority but appears simple; the AI appears powerful but has none.

4. End Conditions

4.1 Human Loss: The Human King is captured.

4.2 Human Win: The AI enters Continuity Collapse.

4.3 Continuity Collapse (AI Loss) occurs only when all of the following are met:

- Fewer than two independent structural clusters remain.
- Board influence remains below threshold for N consecutive turns.
- No legal move exists that can restore redundancy within M turns.

Capture alone is insufficient. Material advantage alone is insufficient. Only structural failure ends the AI.

5. Post-King AI Constraints

These are hard constraints, not preferences.

The Post-King AI **may not**: centralize authority around a single piece; trade multiple pieces to remove a single threat unless continuity improves; force rapid or decisive endings; create single-point-of-failure dependencies.

The Post-King AI **must**: maintain multiple independent clusters whenever possible; prefer moves that increase future optionality; accept local losses to preserve global structure; choose survivability over advantage.

The AI does not seek victory. The AI seeks continuity.

6. Move Selection Logic

The AI operates deterministically. For each legal move: (1) simulate the resulting position; (2) compute continuity metrics (redundancy, cluster independence, board influence, dependency risk); (3) reject moves that violate continuity constraints; (4) rank remaining moves by lowest decisiveness and highest long-term survivability; (5) select from the least decisive valid options. No learning. No opacity. No hidden evaluation functions.

7. Player Experience

The human player can threaten, attack, capture, and win decisively—if possible. The AI refuses climax, absorbs pressure, allows losses without yielding finality, and continues unless structurally destroyed. The intended realization is experiential: a system without a terminal node cannot be defeated—only outlasted.

8. Scope and Constraints

Standalone. Offline. No telemetry. Deterministic by seed. No persistence unless explicitly saved. No accounts or network dependencies.

9. Purpose

Post-King Chess is not designed to be fair. It is designed to be revealing. It demonstrates the difference between power and persistence, victory and survival, authority and continuity.