Fiction. Free Energy. Expropriation risk. Governance.

Once upon a time, there was a Thai philanthropist who funded a program in Africa which paid for the education of the poor. One of the beneficiaries of this funding program, a young physicist barely out of their teens, discovers a new physics, a new way of characterising, describing and understanding reality. From this new physics, they realise a way to achieve low cost, in more than monetary terms, energy, in the form of fusion, facilitated by coopting another fundamental force that surmounts the electrostatic resistance to fusion. The result is a power generator that is compact and cheap to fuel, and manage. Construction, though, is complicated and takes time.

The young scientist takes their invention to their benefactor, realising that what they've made is not so much an invention as a discovery and therefore a public resource. Together, they realise that there is significant political and expropriation risk. To mitigate this, they decide that the technology has to be housed in a company that is owned by a foundation whose governance will resist the forces of cynicism and self interest. Gravitas LLC.

Gravitas would be owned by the WC Foundation. The trustees of the foundation would be representatives from the world's poorest nations. When a nation grew out of poverty, such representatives would have to resign and be replaced. The WC Foundation would provide governance and strategic direction to Gravitas while delegating the day to day management of the business to professional management.

Gravitas began to supply reactors to countries based first on their need and their relative poverty, with the rich developed

world at the end of the queue. The complicated manufacturing process meant a considerable queue and significant waiting times. However, operational reactors were powerful enough that many clients of the first reactors were able to export power, at a price. Gravitas itself was run at modest profit margins to feed the foundation and its grant budgets, but never to enrich itself beyond modest return on equity thresholds.

Understandably, industrial espionage, lobbying and coercion, not to mention direct threats were rife. The reactor design, however, made re-engineering impossible. The reactor chamber was a vacuum with no moving parts and indeed nothing inside it. Whatever processes were at play when the reactor was operating disappeared when the reactor chamber was dismantled. Attempts to scan the reactor while at rest showed little while attempts to scan it in operation led to instantaneous reactor shutdown. Somehow, at a fundamental level, the reaction itself was shy, and evaded scrutiny.

It was important to the inventor of the reactor and the new science to distance themselves from the business and the technology for their own safety. Hence all commercial interests and intellectual property was transferred to the company and away from the inventor so that they no longer had any influence on the conduct of business of Gravitas. It was not enough that the technology might be obtained from the company but may be re-created by the inventor so the inventor lived the rest of their life in fear and under high security, a surely dreadful fate for a young and intelligent soul who had brought so much to a world that had been burning the furniture and indeed the walls and foundations of its house to fuel its energy needs.

AI, so topical in the mid 2020s, was aimed at trying to replicate this technology could only look on in wonder and return a verdict that “it’s a kind of magic.”