



A premonition.

In the future there will be a monopoly on thoughts. Nearly everything is guided by a level of empirical research which codifies human reactions, decisions, motivation and opinions.

As the attention economy grows, and the ability to record public opinion increases in scale and complexity, the value of thoughts reaches a point where its value exceeds even the most important natural resources used by man. The most successful of all neuro-entrepreneurs is a proud man, and at the completion of his latest triumph, the largest harvest and sale of thoughts and opinions in history, he commissions an artwork for the entrance of his headquarters, a centrepiece to display his economic and cognitive vision.

It was finished in the highest quality, with much of the work outsourced to ageing artisans, those who knew how to complete bespoke wiring and manage moving parts. The monolithic machine had been constructed in a basement area of the headquarters and was a working model of the thought based system. Molten wax represented the valuable ideas used in this economy, was fed into a variety of analogue reservoirs, and was designed to flow around the apparatus to indicate the different markets of opinion and taste, in the major sectors of profitable thoughts.

The Entrepreneur was excited. The completion of his trophy apparatus represented a major step in this relatively new market. It could win him the respect of his doubters, those who considered the thought economy to be another rendition of the emperors new clothes, and the others who believed that it was dangerous territory. He pestered the head engineer of the project, and could hardly wait until he could revel in not only his own self proclaimed achievement, but have a physical object to illustrate the future of his ascending business.

It was getting late, and the engineer had only just begun the first round of tests. Slowly the wax melted down, and flowed into the machine. Colours representing different markets of thought, red for pleasure, yellow for fear, purple for indecision, and many more variations. The machine was purring, each chamber was working, filling up with the correct amount of wax to indicate the distribution of thoughts to different parts of the industrial and business sectors, more or less thoughts could be added to simulate future scenarios and predict specific needs, and profits. The heat generated from the apparatus billowed over the engineer, it was late and he was exhausted. He sat momentarily, and admired the colossal chrome plated creation. He wondered if it bore any real resemblance to the collective thought of the billions of ideas it represented.

The engineer was woken by a cry. His vision took a while to focus, but when it did, it revealed a destructive scene. Gone were the neat lines, the geometric flows of rainbow coloured wax, the fluid representations of thought. The entrepreneur was visibly shaken, and above him a towered a mass of brown wax, dripping, and squelching, stalagmites formed where there was no vessel, no indication of reason, and covered over the machines control panel. It looked like a mass of uncontrollable life and a little bit like chocolate.
