SECRETS OF THE BURIED SELF

ECHOES ACROSS TIME

Secrets of the Buried Self: Echoes Across Time

Preface

Dreams have a lag. Twenty-seven years back, I had a dream as a budding instructional designer and creative writer who was then venturing into technical communication and technical content for mass consumption.

The dream was simple, like the simplicity of the atom hiding the complexity of the Universe.

The dream was about joining imagination and logic in a *never-before-seen* essence. Three aspects exist in the atom of creativity living within the molecule of utility. First, the always-moving electrons act like the short stories with the highest intensity. Next, protons that are the positive building blocks tie together the short story, the characters, their evolution, intent, and progression. Finally, neutrons, the ever-neutral bond that connects the thin line of continuity and change, the baton passed by the past to the future, of hopelessness to hope, and longings to belongings. All these are bounded within the environment of an atom, the larger story, book, or novel.

> *What if the artist side of the human brain imagines the scenes and applies* creativity, *putting imagination into meaningful, readable blocks aided by the logical side of the brain and with tools available to it to build structure, progress, reusability, and evolution?*

In the waning years of the twentieth century, I presented a book proposal to Purdue University Press and a Research idea to IEEE, where the book was a series of poems organized in chapters and chapters serving as macro stories in the book, the book being the epic collection. You can read it anywhere to find atomic meaning, at a chapter level to find a different meaning, and end-to-end to find a more significant, more extensive sense. For IEEE, it was more of structured writing and reusability principles that allow for single sourcing, multi-publishing, and contextual understanding of micro-stories and epics in an elegant way. It was the fag end of the last century, and both sides were excited (or so the young optimist me thought!).

> *The concept was clear of two archaeologists getting lost during a massive expedition, moving to a part of the jungle without communication, experiencing an earthquake that lifted layers of soil, exposing a 3100-year-old civilization, and discovering a book. Archaeologists tried to make sense of the events that led to the ruins by imagining the lives of the people who once used the tools, weapons, ornaments, ritual objects, and skeletons they discovered. Finding the past, the challenges in a brutal landscape, opened the archeologists to an enormous discovery of the journey of their ageless souls. As if the things we discover are the people we have been.*

The genius in me thought the entire project would be 500 hours, and I should have excellent output; 2,500 hours later, I realized I needed another 10000 hours and gave up completing the project; or, should I say, I gave up at that time.

But dreams don't give up. When unfulfilled, they stay dormant. I became a technical communicator managing super-large operations in the next two decades. The dream returned for creativity. I

wondered how to create a hugely popular Instagram account. I built one named Go2Words, which was like an ATM of Happiness, and it grew to 1.2 million followers in 2018-19, and I got slowed when I realized what I liked doesn't always work, while what I felt people wanted would work.

That was a crazy question on how to carry the creative imagination of the mind, fulfillment of the soul, and balance it with mass and class interests. My interest had been growing in AI, where I spent tens of thousands of hours creating new models and application layers. I applied the best large language models and technology built around them to industrial use cases across the enterprise and individual setups.

I have always believed that dreams never fade; subconsciously, they steer the body's path to a gradual discovery that explains the gut's journey choices. I realized the march of AI had reached a point where **the era of I+AI** was truly being born, where I, the human cerebral brain, act as the steering wheel. AI brings in the massive power and acceleration of the engine of the fastest car.

As I explored more, writing hundreds of thousands of prompts and creating thousands of documents, I realized AI as a whole – text-to-text, or generative writing, is already a winner for mass use cases like blogs and social media posts to create fantastic content. *Where facts are involved, AI can synthesize superfast. Where emotions are involved, AI can generalize reasonably accurately.* But AI stands shallow where creativity is about managing the blurred line between fact and fiction, imagination beyond tradition, use of word orders beyond generative writing's predictive power, and its Boolean application of ethics.

Was I disappointed that AI is still not ready for intense, multi-layered, multi-context, refreshingly new, amazingly sharp, brilliant content that breaks the norm? No. This was an opportunity for humans to be in charge, act like architects and not masons, and yet use AI as hundreds of thousands of masons at the cost of one.

As I dived more into the ocean of generative writing AI, I realized that AI does not have all the answers, but it has the path to the solution, speed, memory, and synthesis element to search for those answers for me. It can't decide, but it can help me decide. The human mind will always win on intuition, but it can be misinformed, just like AI, so the ability to tie intuition and logic and scale it up makes **I + AI** super-powerful.

I was sensing when facts meet fiction, fiction defines new realities, AI hallucinates them, but the human mind can define them. I wondered what is a dream but a projection into the future and what is reality, but an effort to preserve the past, not as a duty but as a habit or a conscious effort to make the dream's projection work despite the million obstacles in the path. To me, AI's hallucination represented an unrestrained creative imagination, human authority represented its limits and constitution, human projection represented what we call as vision, and AI completion represented a scalable, high-speed, and often strikingly brilliant reality. So AI was slowly becoming a thought machine, but thankfully one with no thoughts but intelligence that can help me sort my thoughts and my journey, both as an author and an individual, sharpening my abilities and refining my strengths while reducing my weaknesses. AI was learning. I was sharpening.

I started breaking the creative writing problem into parts, discovery, and development of the story, research for scenes, creation of primary and secondary characters, the march of the story, dialog process, scene description, interplay of emotions and feelings, and reflections. I looked at micro-to-

macro situations, character-dialog consistency, and the writing style optimizing for changing emotions. I weaved the tapestry of background scenes and imaginary places that let readers feel it as their journey, and I used AI wherever needed. I realized that while AI cannot write epic stories, it has all the ammunition to help write brilliant parts of stories. Through this book, I demonstrate that power and eventually complete a 27-year-long dream.

In the journey, I realized why AI is weak. Humans evolve. The story of a writer matures and discovers itself in the voyage. While the 10,000 feet writing process is the same, what happens in the journey is often spontaneous and curative. Micro-decisions are required at each line, using the right words or even their absence. The writer must build a story, style, jazz, or even stupidity for the characters; humans are fallible and are only sometimes logical. They are seldom reasoned though mostly disciplined and predictable, yet their variance defies the norm, always a product of situations, influences, opportunities, or constraints defining them. The blending of lines into emotions, and emotions into the journeys, is only occasionally scientific. The writer is a painter of words; she doesn't need excuses to be different, just a reason, which may be guided by intuition, belief, or determination. AI is too scientific. AI cannot understand that a writer may not know what she wants to know and yet knows what she wants and discovers that gap in the writing journey. These reflections made me use AI differently, at the border of logic and emotions, as a series of tens of thousands of interactions. Let's assume AI was the junior writer and I was the senior writer. Through this book, I demonstrate the union and power of I and AI.

AI is not only evolving writing but also art. Like generative writing, generative art has evolved or is growing super-fast. AI art allows scene visualization from an artist's perspective at an unfathomable pace. For the writer, I say writer and not a designer, AI art compliments the thought process; the visuals can help perfect the scene and emotions and vice versa. You will see layers of AI art in the book; hopefully, they complement the immersive experience of being a traveler, not a reader.

Since Go2Words is a part of me, and my question about why what I loved the most rarely worked, I tried presenting Go2Words in a new light. The book has six elements, story, character definition, scene intensity, dialogue play, motion, and reflection. It has two layers of examination of the past and present, the times we see, and the influences we interpret. The reflections are powered by the Go2Words philosophy of immortal proverb class new lines coming at the right point to amplify the meaning. Perhaps, I could never bring the ideas I liked to life; now, I probably can with AI. AI can't write Go2Words, but it can help me explain what Go2Words in itself could not explain and present it in an entirely new creative way.

The book is in your hands; you are the best judge.

Best,

Pawan Nayar

Byline: The use of AI doesn't make writing outstanding fiction faster. AI makes writing average fiction quicker and appeals to mass readers who love the same genre. If you want to write excellent, AI helps you in that journey, like a tractor helps the farmer, Photoshop helps the graphic artist, and a kitchen helps the chef. Excellence, thankfully, is still a human trait, and shall forever stay so, as it is the balance in following and breaking the rule book simultaneously and yet being humane and magnificent in

process. Even with the same resources, the master leaves a class impact and, in some way, along with other masters, forward marches the civilization.

I guess it's natural that the debate on AI and creativity, will be polarized initially, but each time humans experience new technology, the rising tide lifts all. Change is polarizing, but creativity eventually uniting. Experience the creativity in this book, and enjoy the journey.