

WRITING SAMPLE (Prologue) of...

"EXABYTE or: How to Start Worrying and Still Love A.I."

(alternate title: "Prostopia or: How to Start Worrying and Still Love A.I.")



MANUSCRIPT LENGTH: Approximately ~70K words (~284 pages)

FWIW: I developed this manuscript concurrently with its feature film script, which earned 10+ accolades/laurels in assorted screenplay competitions.



Copyright Registration Number: TXu 2-175-822

PROLOGUE:

In the years soon known as 20NF, businesses made use of the sky. Delivery drone traffic was so frequent that at a long distance, it looked like dense smoke on a windy day. Closer, they looked like bafflingly efficient murmurations of starlings.

Product-transportation robots walked out of “Pie in the Sky” Italian restaurants with hand trucks and loaded mega stacks of 20 pizzas into PDDs (“Pizza Delivery Drones”) the size of phone booths. They took off fast to avoid the rocks getting hurled by delinquent teens. Kids used to try to kamikaze their toy drones into them, but built-in automatic safety features upgraded to prevent such precarious proximity.

Sadly, still no jetpacks. Humans were in enough peril moving in two dimensions on roads; the exponential increase in the danger of a third axis didn't make sense.

Since so much of the restaurant business became delivery, commercial “ghost kitchens” multiplied. A kitchen would get licensed to sell several restaurants' dishes, using respective chains' recipes and authorized ingredients. The convenience of every family member being able to order a different meal solved problems and further entrenched ghost kitchens, “haunting” ever more towns and regions.

In almost every neighborhood, one could find a “Distribution Relay Station” in what was once maybe a McDonald's, getting used by the food and specialty delivery services of the Alibaba + Amazon + Google + eBay cooperative. Ever-present, autonomous construction robots built them out. Society saw this trajectory as unchangeable, wondering who'd want it changed.

Conspicuously low-traffic cityscapes had 90% fewer storefronts (those still in operation had display samples only, no inventory). The remaining empty buildings ceased the years of depressing “For Lease” signs. Instead, they covered the windows with LED screens, so it appeared the inside of a shop bustling with happy customers. Some digital billboards displayed ads and news, regulated to be subtle and not crassly insisting on attention like the internet pop-up ads of the early 2000s.

On one corner, international tourists marveled at a milk crate-sized MakerBot (3D printer) as it finished producing Augmented-Reality glasses. A sign flashed “Testing” as robot arms measured its specs in seconds and displayed “Passed.” This MakerBot passed its own quality control test, having itself just been manufactured by a gigantic

Dumpster-sized “Mega-MakerBot.” Once machines started making machines, the long-term viability of human careers decayed.

Everything else continued improving to what some boasted was a “post-scarcity” world (not quite the opposite of post-apocalyptic dystopia). While no one lived on the street or begged for food, this couldn’t be seen as “heaven on earth.” People had leisure time, but a disappointing percentage took advantage of the opportunities.

More lanes could be driven because street parking ended. Sure, that was because most vehicles were driverless, but also the number of destinations worth leaving your home for kept decreasing. It was as if everyone saw the grim future of immobile, obese screen-watchers in WALL-E and said: “Works for me.”

People with vulnerable immune systems or comorbidities wore retro-50s-style, bubble astronaut helmets to filter the air of recurring pandemic viruses. Some had belt-mounted, pathogen air meters, by default lit green “safe” and back scabbards containing collapsible full-head masks for emergencies (as the omnipresent, everyday “seatbelts” of the pandemic era). Most others, feeling rebellious or nonchalant, used neither precaution. Their justification cry was “life is deadly” — often reminding scolds of other, deadlier factors such as Heart Disease, Cancer, Drug Overdoses, and Car Accidents. Due to newfound prudence, all bio-labs had international inspectors, and workers endured 4-month, submarine-style deployments bookended by one-month quarantines. The frequency of pandemics dropped. However, the correlation vs. causality debates continued.

In another welcome surprise, the zeitgeist guided society to some gratitude for humanity’s improvements. Maybe because nobody could fathom an era feasibly better than this one, most sort of believed “we’re living in the future” despite humanity’s

natural drive to always want more. What started as a facetious meme became a trend - calling the current date “twenty-near-future” or “20NF” for efficient posts and messages. As in, the public’s futile questions and social media comments such as, “What job are we even hoping our grandchildren are going to do better than a robot?”

“Hey, it’s 20NF. It’s not about jobs. It’s occupations, anything to eat the day.”

“Get a good hobby.”

#

FWTW – Here are the AutoCrit and ProWritingAid scores (as of 10.21.23):

The image shows two screenshots of writing analysis tools. The left screenshot is from AutoCrit, displaying an 'AutoCrit Score' and a 'Science Fiction Direct Comparison Only' section. The right screenshot is from ProWritingAid, showing a 'Direct Comparison Only' section for 'Isaac Asimov' and an 'OVERALL SCORE' of 80.8.

The screenshot shows the ProWritingAid Summary Report interface. It includes a navigation menu on the left, a browser address bar at the top, and a main report area with sections for 'Your key scores', 'Where your document looks great', and 'Where your document may need work'. Each section contains various metrics with progress bars and goal indicators.

Section	Metric	Value	Goal
Your key scores	Grammar Score	94%	Increase to 100%
	Spelling Score	93%	Increase to 100%
	Style Score	82%	-
Where your document looks great (77% of goals achieved)	Style Score	82%	-
	Sentence Length	10.4	-
	Readability Grade	6	-
	Sentence Variety	6.8	-
	Passive Voice	3.4	-
	Engagement Score	97%	-
	Complex Paragraphs	11%	-
	Conjunction Starts	6%	-
	Slow Pacing	4%	-
	Very Long Sentences	0%	-
Where your document may need work	Grammar Score	94%	Increase to 100%
	Spelling Score	93%	Increase to 100%
	Glue Index	41%	Reduce to less than 40%
	Long Repeated Phrases	7	Reduce to less than 3
	Unusual Dialogue Tags	43%	Reduce to less than 30%
	Quote Consistency	100%	-
	Weak Adverbs	7.5	-