
Humanity and Technology Explored Through Poetry

Taryn Bates

Department of Sociology

California State University, Los Angeles

EXPLANATION OF SOCIOLOGICAL RELEVANCE

A collection of five poetry pieces all featuring the social theory of interactionism through the ever-increasing hyperreality of digital technology influencing humanity; social identity is a main theme throughout all.

Streaming does not directly reference any technological devices, using analogous wording describing a stream of water; this illustrates how natural it has become to use modern tech as part of daily norms.

Can't Connect Right Now wrestles with “the looking glass self” being influenced by external perceptions.

No Data Connection explores “the I” & “the Me” of interactions with technological devices, playing with analogies of various features used both in and out of tech, such as how fingers are also known as digits.

The Vast Nothingness of Space follows a journey of cutting off humanity – both personally and socially – in an act of distancing the self from all else to avoid role strain and role conflict through the technological advancement of space exploration as a metaphor.

I Am Human essentially brings all the previous components together by focusing on the natural state of being human, putting a spin on roboticization of the modern world. The visual formatting of the piece is meant to resemble a spine.

Streaming

A stream of sound & images
Coursing like a powerful river
Never-ending, flowing one into another

Once it starts, it sweeps you away
Following familiar but undefined paths
Never questioning stepping into the stream
Just going with the flow
Mindlessly taking the course
Numbing the senses
Vaguely aware of the passing time

Until you find yourself farther than you expected
Disoriented and struggling to get back control
Leaving, but knowing you'll be back

Can't Connect Right Now

The connection is unstable
No strength in bandwidth
The audio is cutting out
The imagery fuzzy and frozen

These time zones
And packed schedules
The distance prolonged
By lack of conversation

Priority of minutes
Limited by plans
Mismatched carriers
Prevent any signals

Am I still seen
Even when not perceived
Free to speak my truth
If no one can hear me now?

No Data Connection

I am left to my own devices
Trying to establish a safe connection
Stable, steady ~ a secure net
Inter-dependent communication
Information at my fingertips
Digital era only opens options
Overwhelming the senses
Limited data capacity in an unlimited world
Wide web entangling understanding
Pages and pages to keep tabs on
The stimulation keeps me Wired
Less I lose the signal of affirmation
Fidelity to society
App-lying the expected tools
Rules of conduct instructing
To suffer no fools
Agreeing without reading
The terms of conditions
The policy of privacy
White noise in a stream of static
Taken for granted
When my access is gratified
But woefully distressing
When not found Online
Prone to servicing my need for confirmation
That I'm never truly alone

The Vast Nothingness of Space

I carved out my heart long ago
Cleaved it from my chest
Put my instincts on ice
Locked them up, laid to rest

Instead of using bandages
I built an outer wall
Sealing off infected areas
Quarantining from all

A resolute mission developed
Becoming a satellite
Jettisoned out into space
Spinning in never-ending night

But then the deep ache came
In the absence of the whole
I longed for healthy living
But my actions undermined that goal

While my spirit was claimed redeemed
My head pulled a heavy load
Spinning from intellectual plates served
From a diet of self-preservation mode

Slabs of frozen meats applied
To dull the swelling senses
Trying to fill the emotional void
While not fully letting down defenses

The time was passed with fairy tales
Surely I was a cursed victim in need
Believing all the stories
Awaiting a brave, heroic deed

A taste of being understood
Instilled a persistent craving
Desire for deep connection
Awakens hope I'm worth saving

Looking for any signals of fulfillment
Embedded in me since birth
I hear my purpose calling
Free falling back to Earth

Overpowering destiny
Real love is to be known
Truly seen and heard, received
Finally welcomed home

I Am Human

I am Human
Framed in bone
Stoney support
Standing tall yet fragile in its own way
Grasping onto what life can give
Sometimes breaking in the process
But becoming stronger for it

I am Human
Streamed in blood
Flooded with tears
Sweating the small stuff
Mingling into a concoction unique to this species
A life juice of courage and persistence
Of filling this existence with meaning

I am Human
Networked in nerves
Serving a variety of sensations
From pain to pleasure
And a multitude in between
Ending and beginning connected as one
Increasing the experience ready to be had

I am Human
Covered in flesh
Freshly encompassing all
Though time will leave its marks
Like the rings of a tree trunk
Weathering changes while still growing
A visible sign of a signature story

I am Human
Bone, Blood, Nerves, & Flesh
Combined in the Physical
Composed of the Emotional
Corroborated in the Mental
Creatively singular within the sameness
That is Human