

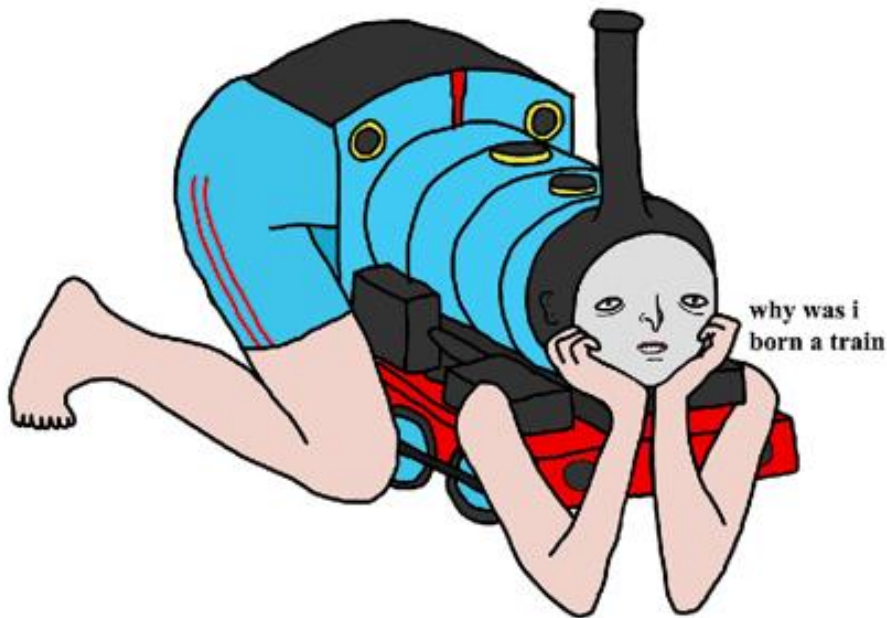
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Industrial Society and Its Manifestation

Since the early 1800's, the world, and more specifically the United States has been in a constant state of technological evolution due to the Industrial Revolution. There has been a consistent increase in the size of the Proletarian class and the theme of Industrial Society is frequently discussed in the media, arts and literature. Anonymous UK artist, *Chris* through a piece of art titled *Thomas the Tank Engine*, discusses and portrays the existence of Industrial Society and how industrialization has confined us each to a certain social duty.



Thomas the tank engine depicts a young man with human features in his face, hands and legs, but the midsection of a train. He is situated in a crouched, contemplative state, with the text “why was i born a train” hovering in the top right-hand corner of the piece. The body and machine of this man resemble that of the main character of a classic children’s show, Thomas the Tank Engine. This detail suggests that this combination of train and man is the modern, current version of the show’s main character, Thomas. This is a strong example of the author utilizing pathos to convey their message on Industrial society. This is used effectively as the viewer feels the evolution and pain of a childhood icon and friend. In this piece, Thomas appears as mid-aged millennial (perhaps late twenty’s). This would place him at the peak of his working career, fully immersed in the pressures and requirements society asks of him. A similar comparison to the age and responsibilities of many of the viewers of the show, as the series began airing in the late 1900’s. Thomas’s evolution from a childhood friend to an overworked machine symbolizes Industrial Society, as the artist attempts to convince viewers that industrialization is exhausting our physical resources, a point many of them are able to relate to. As the need for specific careers increases, applicants are required to have more degrees, more work experience, stronger resumes etc. This escalation in qualifications puts an extension of pressure on millennials, the age it appears Thomas is. This evolution of a childhood friend and the relatability of the new Thomas character shows the use of pathos as one of the many tools Chris utilizes to persuade viewers of his portrayal of Industrial Society.

Other authors and philosophers have used society as a basis for many of their works. Although Chris uses Marx’s and Kant’s philosophy in deciphering the class system (specifically

between the Proletariat and Bourgeoise), his work refers mainly back to writers such as Nietzsche and Kaczynski. Chris attempts to elevate the thought of freeing oneself from the chains of society and owning their own life, specifically in reference to the physical and mental restraints that Thomas holds. Thomas's physical mutation of man and machine demonstrates the literal evolution of Industrial Society, and the terrifying future of modern society. This is exemplified as Thomas still has the head, hence mind, of a man but the restraints and requirements of a machine. His human features stress the artist's use again of the rhetorical device, pathos. This is demonstrated in the contrast of the combination of man and machine. A human is warm, emotional, and capable of feeling, whereas a machine is cold, harsh and emotionless. Ethically the viewer feels this mutation is unjust, wrong and inhumane to witness as his human face, legs and arms, relate him still as a man, where as his body is that of an unemotional callous machine. Chris's use of pathos here, furthers the audience's discomfort with Industrial Society.

Thomas is pictured in an uncomfortable position, situated on his knees, a position that is able to be analyzed as one of traditionally representing servitude. This servitude relates to that machine portion of Thomas's body, the train. With the increasing population of society, there is no longer enough space for people and families in cities, thus causing a migration of inhabitation to suburbs or small towns. This coupled with the Industrial Revolution has led to an increase and utilization of automotive and travel vehicles, such as cars and trains. Therefore, causing Thomas to be needed by society in this position of travel, to contribute continuous work for the betterment of society. This is another example of Chris using a rhetorical device,

logos, to relate the logical definition and position of automotive transport in society. Thomas is literally serving the larger society, forced to put society's needs ahead of his own.

The face of Thomas rests in his hands, his eyes have large circles under them and his face depicts that of a wary man. The "bags" under his eyes give the reader the impression that this character is exhausted, supposedly due to the endless work hours requested by society as discussed previously. These descriptions and intentional details by Chris in the exhaustion of Thomas, epitomize the industry, agony and effort that it takes to be constantly functioning, an extension of the constant state of exhaustion that Industrial Society implements.

Again, the position that Thomas ensures, was an intentional detail materialized by Chris. Resting one's head in their hands, shows that of not only wariness, but of contemplation, of pensive thinking, and of questioning. The reader may wonder, "What does Thomas contemplate? What aspect of his life or of his existence is he questioning?" Chris answers this question for the reader with a text hovering above the right side of Thomas's head. Thomas contemplates, "why was i born a train". He wonders, why he was placed into this role, into this duty of constant work and enervation. Thomas had no choice in his placement of this position, into this segment of society. Through the use of text and intentional details in the drawing, the artist gives the impression that Thomas most likely dreams of a better existence. In relationship to the theme of servitude that Chris uses, historically servants have been from lower areas of society, placing Thomas in the working or Proletarian class. Thus, Thomas dreams of escaping the constant state of oppression forced upon him in the Proletarian class. This further supports Chris's display of the effects of Industrial Society, specifically on the Proletarian class.

The text above Thomas's head only further contributes to Chris's evidence of the hardships of Industrial Society. Chris intentionally uses all lower case in this text, specifically with the personal *i* which is commonly and grammatically uppercase. The purposeful lack of capitalization could reflect the education that Thomas has received, as historically, lower class society has exhibited lower educational backgrounds and poorer grammar than other segments of society. This is most likely due to a lack of access to proper and formal education. Here, Chris refers back to the theme of confinement and lack of opportunity that Thomas has received, as he was not able to ascend social classes with a higher education, due to economic restraints and societal responsibilities. This is a depiction of the effort that one may put into their life and still never be able to climb social classes or remove themselves from the tasks that society has assigned them. Applying to Thomas, he is restrained by the increasing need of automotive transport, so that he may fuel and transport the bourgeoisie to their high-paying careers. This constraint amplifies the meaning of Chris's work: the extension of Proletarian efforts and positions of Industrial Society.

Society has been a topic of discussion for thousands of years with recent philosophers (post 1800's) introducing the concept of Industrial Society into their works. Chris's art demonstrates the confinements and exhaustion rooted in Industrial Society, as well as how difficult it is to advance from the Proletarian class. Although tastefully displayed and demonstrated, Chris's art is evidently biased towards the Proletarian class. This could negatively sway a viewer's knowledge of Industrial Society, if they were not to have further information on the class system and Bourgeoisie. Although it does not have a thorough explanation of multiple views, *Thomas the Tank Engine*, illustrates the reality that industrialization is the base on which

our society lies and depends. Industrial Society confines us to our roles and duties and disallows us to be anything other than what it asks for. We have no choice. Thomas has no choice. We must keep chugging.