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Ullrich Krause's Critical Emancipation from Oppressive Reality

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Ullrich Krause’s Critical Emancipation from Oppressive Reality

by

Paul Derrickson Taylor

B.A., University of the South, 2010

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Ullrich Krause’s Critical Emancipation from Oppressive Reality 
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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.
In this Master’s thesis, I explore the relationship between German philosopher Herbert Marcuse’s critical theory and German author Uwe Timm’s aesthetic rendering of an individual’s critical experience. I focus specifically on Timm’s novel *Heißer Sommer* and its realist depiction of the 68er Bewegung (the West German, leftist student movement). I examine the works of Marcuse that discuss societal domination and its totalizing effects on the human consciousness—*One-Dimensional Man* (1964), *Repressive Tolerance* (1965), *An Essay on Liberation* (1969), and *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1977). The German 68er Bewegung (the student protest movement) was dialectically analyzed by each figure, albeit through different mediums. First, I examine previous criticism on Timm, which overwhelmingly attempts to disenfranchise Timm by accusing him of inundating *Heißer Sommer* with his subjective and ideological bent. I then discuss how Timm is intimately tied to social criticism, and by association, critical philosophy. For my purposes, Marcuse functions to provide the legitimizing theory that informs Timm’s oft-maligned project of political realism: protagonist Ullrich Krause’s progression into a liberated member of society hinges on the exposure of “one-dimensionality”, societal “insulation”, and the annihilation of the private sphere. I argue that Timm succeeds in aesthetically illuminating the progression of the (social) individual into a Marcusean critical stance: fully aware of societal domination and the totalitarian nature of capitalism.
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West Germany, despite stewardship over fifteen years of peaceful democracy since Nazism’s downfall, was fraught with political and social tension during the 1960s and early 1970s. Protest movements, inspired in part by American civil rights movements, arose in opposition to the rigid conservatism of the older generations, and a terrorist group (the Red Army Faction [RAF]) was even founded by a radical minority of the leftist protestors in response to the general inefficacy of traditional peaceful protest in engendering action against domestic and global injustice, and in more immediate response to state violence against Shah demonstrators in Berlin and the death of university student Benno Ohnesorg (June 1967). These groups focused their critical voice on the totalitarian behavior and continuations of fascism they perceived within western democracies. Frankfurt School critical theorist Herbert Marcuse as well as writer and social activist Uwe Timm came into intimate contact with the student movement and its objects of critique in 1960s Germany. They challenged the capitalist instrumental rationality, administered and cultivated by capitalism’s ruling and producing elite, which they perceived to be utterly and oppressively pervasive in industrial-technological society. I focus on how Marcuse’s challenge arises within his philosophical works and lectures, and how Timm aesthetically engages with instrumental rationality and capitalism’s machinations in his 1974 novel Heißer Sommer. They both expose the ways in which
capitalism and its guiding positivist rationality, through a system that creates and relies on a permanent and inequitable class structure, overwhelmingly direct the lives of the lower and middle classes in a way that makes them a mere means to economic ends instead of free individuals with their own passions, dreams, and other sensual-emotional yearnings for human experience. I argue that Marcuse and Timm converge on the following: the basic course toward liberating basic human experience and expression lies in the emancipation of consciousness from its administered and dominated state under capitalism. Timm crafts the countercultural figures and groups the protagonist Ullrich Krause encounters in such a way that they express the qualities and behavior of such dominated subjects. Timm illuminates societal ills to his readership through the illustration of an individual’s alienation within the society he inhabits, catalyzed by Ullrich’s shift from participation in stark “one-dimensionality”, toward knowledge of societal domination (*One-Dimensional Man*). Timm emphasizes the ways in which Ullrich attempts to reclaim his sensibility (his hold on his own sensual perceptions of the world and ability to contemplate everyday phenomena outside of the capitalist context) in order to illuminate a new form of experience that counters the dictates of capitalism’s instrumental rationality. Timm and Marcuse offer a prescription for the liberation of consciousness from instrumental rationality that stresses the need for a general receptivity to alternate forms of experience (guided by a “new sensibility”) and imaginative thinking (for Marcuse, in imaginative/radical aesthetics—for Timm, in imaginative/radical living).

Uwe Timm, born in Hamburg in 1940, was of political maturity at the time of the student movements and actively participated in its events without committing himself to its more radical ideological periphery (Hielscher 64, 69, 78). Shorty after the West
German student movement’s (the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund [SDS], in particular) dissolution he wrote the novel *Heißer Sommer* (1974), in which he documents a young man’s (Ullrich Krause) experience of the West German student movement (68er Bewegung) during the peak of its activity and influence in 1968. This account is very much informed by Timm’s firsthand experiences within the SDS and the Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP) (Hielscher 54). *Heißer Sommer*, through the lens of a limited third-person narrative, follows the transformative path of Ullrich from a disengaged and womanizing student to an ardent worker who places his political faith in the virtues of honest labor and the unrealized political potential of the working class. At the novel’s commencement, Ullrich struggles to complete a term paper that contains content that interests him little. Instead of working on the paper, he avails himself to the numerous distractions (scenic lakes, various female companions, beer gardens, protests, etc) present in his West German environment. While he originally joins the student movement because it provides for entertainment and distraction from his looming term paper deadline, he eventually becomes intimately and enthusiastically involved and finds himself devoting nearly all of his time to the counterculture’s lifestyle and aims. Ullrich eventually becomes disillusioned with the movement itself and finds himself working in a factory for a brief period, which is followed by his ultimate decision to pursue secondary education as a means of meaningful, change-inducing work. The vehicles of Ullrich’s personal and political transformation are his tribulations in oppressive democracy, the institutions and figures that he encounters while living through the peak of the German student movement, and his burgeoning critical position throughout these experiences.
Framing the Discussion and Analysis of *Heißer Sommer*: Common Criticism, the 1960s Context, and Marcuse and Timm’s Experiences of the 1968 Student Movement

General literary criticism on *Heißer Sommer* focuses most generally on the social-political implications brought about by Timm, especially regarding his realist framework and outspoken views on the novel’s subject matter. The criticism can be broken down into (1) the perceived compatibility of Timm’s choice of narrative perspective and his goal of employing realism to aesthetically challenge the premises of modern society, and the corresponding question of whether or not Timm successfully cultivates the potential for a future utopia realized within literature (Prinz; Williams; Grumbach), (2) criticisms that lament or laud the use of third-person perspective and the filtering of actions and perceptions through Ullrich (Widmann; Kircher) (3) Timm’s success or failure in connecting “the personal” and “the political”, and thus achieving didactic elements with universal applicability as characteristic of a “Bildungsroman” (Jurgensen; Grumbach), (4) whether or not the novel suffers from a “political injection” of Timm’s beliefs, i.e., whether or not he undermines the very realist project upon which he embarks by letting his own notions and interpretations live within the content and especially Ullrich (Widmann; Prinz), and (5) the consistent reduction of female characters to their sexuality and their function as a reflection of Ullrich’s fickle psychological state (Rinner; Wildner; Görke). My own analysis of Timm will serve as an extension to some of these criticisms.

The negative criticism of *Heißer Sommer* generally considers Ullrich a mere representation of Timm’s own ideology and political leanings, and thus, an ineffective figure in pursuing a project that aims to cause its readership to critically engage with and
expose capitalist society. In brief, critics like Williams, Widmann, Martus, Rinner, and Kircher argue that Timm fails to convincingly demonstrate the integral interrelationship between the political and the personal as a means to tear down the illusion of the emancipation of the individual in democratic West German society. Further criticism targets Timm’s approach to “Erzählform”, and accuses Timm of operating from an unsuitable perspective compatible with his goal of exposing the non-ideal nature of relations within capitalist society (Jurgensen, Grumbach, Williams). Timm, however, was not without support for the novel’s realist framework. Some critics praise Timm’s strictly realist approach to the West German content and dismiss the presence of strong autobiographical ties as irrelevant to the novel’s aims (Prinz, Williams, Durzak). In other words, they argue that the novel is less about the author and protagonist’s political progression within the student movement, and more about the delineation of the general psychological and social effects that capitalist society not only induces in the individual (Ullrich), but also in nearly every social grouping and community that he encounters. The literary critics examine and rebut Timm’s claims to realism because they perceive Timm to have written the novel’s third-person perspective, one they suggest is too easily tailored to Timm’s censoring the novel’s content through the narrator’s unavoidable control on all associations, under the strong influence of his own subjective-ideological filter (i.e., he is unable to resist the pressure of his own subjectivity and writes idealistically). They claim that the work is not realism, but rather, a biased reflection on historical events that channels Timm’s definitive ideological agenda¹. In conversation

¹ “Auch Piwitt trifft sicher etwas Richtiges, wenn er moniert, daß mit der durchgängigen Er- Erzählweise ’das Sensorium des Mittelpunktindividuums zum Umschlageplatz und zur Schaltstelle aller vom Autor autorisierten Gefühle, Ideen und Wahrnehmungen des Romans' gemacht werde, und
with these critics, I argue that Timm provides for critical inquiry and exposition of the
deficiencies of capitalist society. I rebut some of the criticism by examining the whole of
the text and relating its historical-objective content to the individual progression of its
protagonist, and examining the implications of what it universally signifies for an
individual to engage in the identification and resistance of paradoxically democratic
forms of oppression within modernity.

In order to reasonably suggest that Timm successfully delineated an inseparable
relationship between the personal and the political within the literary an analysis of
Timm’s subjective filtering of experience through Ullrich must be analyzed in
conjunction with evidence of a disassociation from any form of ideology. For Timm,
ideology is replaced and made obsolete by refined sensibility and sensuality. The ills that
Timm portrays are remarkably similar to what Marcuse critiques within contemporary
capitalism. The reality principle Marcuse discussed in his own writings appears within
the universe of Heißer Sommer, lending it credence as a project with realist and
philosophical concerns, one that delineates the problematic nature of the sustained
politics and society governed by the status quo. Timm’s own concept of realism was
informed by his perception of “contradictory reality” and the need to expose the
domination of the many by the few. His chosen method of doing so, examining the relationship between individual and society through literature, is compatible with the radical goal of questioning reality (“die Wirklichkeit in Frage stellen”) (Volkmann 101).

In order to highlight ills within common societal experience, Timm uses the aesthetic medium as a way of engendering new perceptions and views of reality, as a way of causing people to question their current passivity and participation in extant society. He also utilizes Ullrich, the representative of the individual in society, as a way of resisting “dogmatic” and “normative” notions in his portrayal of society. Instead of idealizing an alternative set of beliefs or propagating the blueprints for a new social and political system, Timm lets his work function as “truth finding [Wahrheitsfindung]”, as a means of exposing the miserable human conditions engendered by capitalism and its elite.

Timm’s novel is crafted in a manner that clearly demonstrates an affinity for Herbert Marcuse’s general critical theory on revolutions and societal change—undeniable manifestations of “one-dimensionality” and mankind’s “insulation” to societal oppression appear in Ullrich’s navigation of West German society. The portrayal of Ullrich’s personal-psychological crisis, while exhibiting strong autobiographical resonance with Timm, does not lose its broader political and social significance in its inherently subjective content. Because Timm focuses on the wholesale annihilation of Ullrich’s and other (countercultural) figures’ individuality and the highly reduced potential for emancipated action within a society that imposes totalitarian constraint upon rationality, his particular illustration of “one-dimensional” society’s particular effects on one

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individual are relevant to his readership. The progression of Ullrich’s experience imparts a lesson (as a “Bildungsroman”) in general human experience under contemporary societal conditions in a democracy. Timm provides, through the presentation of an ordinary, struggling middle-class individual in Ullrich, for a clear and relatable expose of “dominant rationality” and its universal implications for human experience. It is through Ullrich, a decidedly average individual, that Timm magnifies “one-dimensionality” and discloses the extraordinary injustices heaped upon the non-ruling majority that are so implicitly and quietly tolerated.

The 1960s was a decade marked by political and social upheaval in the western world. In Germany, where Nazism and Hitler’s Third Reich constituted a bitter facet of national memory for those living in its aftermath, World War II served as a reminder of the dangers of unchecked technological progress and stubborn nationalism. Instrumental rationality, the object of Timm and Marcuse’s critique(s), is extremely visible in the large-scale actions of “first-world” countries. While Germany’s military might was used toward particularly destructive and malicious means, the fact that military power was just as active and readily available in the former allied nations like the United States and Russia alludes to the emphasis the general democratic and socialist ruling elite placed on establishing and cultivating military might. One of the key threads of philosophical inquiry for the emerging school of critical theory in West Germany arose in the notion that reality is “sick” and “dominated” by a privileged elite (politicians and the industrial-capitalist elite), and that the general population is too oppressed by the machinations of capitalist society to knowingly and decisively act upon pervasive unhappiness and violence (Adorno; Adorno, Horkheimer). The fact that war was (and still is) waged by so-
called democracies in pursuit of peace is an example that attests to the fact that the ruling elite pursues an agenda that contradicts its inherently “human(e)” foundations. The “one-dimensionality” of democratic society leads all such acts to succumb to instrumental rationality, which pursues perverse notions of progress regardless of their detriment to the majority of humanity.

**Contrasting Timm’s Expectations of Socially Motivated Literature and the General Ideology of the Student Movement**

The basic progression, similarities, and peculiarities of Marcuse and Timm’s respective dialectical meanderings through “one-dimensional” society, the former through philosophical inquiry, the latter through critically exposing dominated reality in an aesthetically crafted, yet distinctly West German literary world, reveal similarities between Marcuse and Timm as critical participants and observers of society. Marcuse coined the term “one-dimensionality” to describe his notion that society and its human constituents participate under the dictates of a single, exclusive rationality. This exclusivity leads to highly constrained, guided, and monitored (“one-dimensional”) human thought and action. Uwe Timm was no stranger to activism himself. He planned, organized, and campaigned for leftist and socialist movements, and was later occupied with the literary and shared editorial duties of the socially-motivated and avant-garde publishing venture *AutorenEdition* (Hielscher 64, 90). Martin Hielscher alludes to the revolutionary nature of the project in allowing for a great variety of subjective determination. This took shape as more individual power being given to determine the course of one’s work and the corresponding concerns to remain true to one’s laurels and moral/literary sensibilities, instead of succumbing to the desires of the traditional
boss/publisher figure that operates on more economic incentives and principles. This provides for an autobiographical link to Ullrich’s pursuit of self-determination:


(73)

In addition to fulfilling the basic member responsibilities by publishing socially- and politically-critical works, Timm was one of the group’s four original publishers in 1973, the year in which it was founded (Hielscher 80). The group’s goal to pursue a course that explicates the social ills that plague reality clearly had a major role in Timm’s 1974 novel, which appears as an initial literary attempt toward this goal. Timm himself offered a rationale for his pursuit of realism within literature:

[Timm:] Und vor allem Dingen kommt es mir darauf an, daß das Gedicht ein Thema und einen Stoff bekommt, der nicht durch die Struktur und das rein Sprachliche von sich aus da ist, sondern daß es ein Objekt, ein Außen hat.
[Hielscher:] Hier zeichnet sich bereits ab, dass sich Timm, so sprachbewusst er ist, immer mehr für eine erzählende, wirklichkeitsbezogene Literatur interessiert und nicht der primär sprachexperimentell operierenden Literatur folgen wird. (Hielscher 41)

Timm clearly expressed his desire to create literature that would have implications in reality, literature that would have concrete ties to common experience. His interest in realism leads him to examine the relationship between the individual and man-made society, which is the reason why he utilizes a single protagonist and a third-person narrator to relay commonplace events. In order to confront everyday readers with a comprehensible depiction of the societal oppression they face on a daily basis, Timm highlights and uses the development of Ullrich’s psychological well being as a way of revealing the burden of society placed on the individual. The negative content, the negation of capitalism’s dictates, arises in the negative form and representation of Ullrich’s experience.

Heißer Sommer’s content, a description of events in 1968 as relayed through Ullrich Krause and his inner perceptions, alludes clearly to the fact that its university student protagonist is not content with the society he inhabits, or with the track on which his life appears to be. Despite Ullrich’s attempts to free himself from the clutches of industrialized capitalist society and its dominant rationality through various diversions, he struggles mightily to completely escape the dominance of the status quo. Timm works, like Marcuse, toward the exposure of “false consciousness” (Williams 58). Surrounded by fellow West Germans, institutions, social groups, and a West German student counterculture, Ullrich functions as a viable exemplar of the development of critical
consciousness, which he achieves through negative and existentially critical reactions to
commong experiences within various walks of society. Through Ullrich, Timm documents
and critiques the loss of untainted, emancipated forms of individual experience within
capitalism, and ultimately contemplates a prescription for their recovery. Ullrich’s
experience aesthetically represents and extends upon Timm’s own experience of the
student movement and reflects major parallels with Marcuse’s project of “aesthetic
emancipation”.

Susanne Rinner, in an article on 1968 and Timm’s novels, provides for an apt
description regarding the origins of the movement’s critical social commentary, its
founding ideals, and eventual demise, as she reads them in Timm’s novels:

In a radical tradition, all four novels (Heißer Sommer, Lenz, Eduard’s
Homecoming, Rot) question homogenizing notions of “Germanness” and
critique the many ways Germans and Germany in the twentieth century
have attempted to come to terms with the Nazi past. Lenz and Heißer
Sommer chronicle the disillusionment with the attempts to break
completely with the past and with the apparent failure of the movement to
achieve a complete liberation of the individual and society. (141)

The account Timm puts forth in Heißer Sommer, among other works, reflects this initial
object of the movement’s social critique; the younger generations of Germans had trouble
with accepting capitalism, with its use of oppressive force and institutions (such as that of
the police powers during the Shah visit to Berlin) and totalitarian characteristics, as a
satisfactory system with which to better the human condition after the recent ravages of
World War II. With regard to West Germany in particular, its citizens harbored an
increasing concern regarding the “mangelnde Aufarbeitung der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit” (Hielscher 53). In addition to this silence and wariness within public West German discourse regarding the guilt tied to Germany’s recent fascist past, capitalist society’s similar tendency to global, often violent, initiatives, such as in Vietnam, deeply shook many democratic citizens’ belief and confidence in the so-called project of modernity and the ever-expanding efficiency (economic) goals of its technological driving forces within capitalist and socialist societies. While breaking the silence regarding the actions of their fascist forefathers through outright protest of the state’s actions served as an initial iteration of the developing student movement, there was much more at stake than a simple identification and ousting of the fascist elements that had remained in politics and other elite spheres of influence. The more ideologically engaged members of the 68er Bewegung, like Timm himself and well-known former journalist Ulrike Meinhof, were deeply interested in critical and Marxist theories that explicate how societal oppression is built into the groundwork of society and its power relations in order to sustain the aims of capitalism and this ruling elite’s cultivation and administration of instrumental rationality. Stefan Aust, a reporter closely tied to the extremist offshoot Baader-Meinhof gang, also cited the efforts of countercultural ventures like Commune I toward “revolutioniz[ing] the bourgeois individual” in order to remove him from capitalism’s pervasive influence and mainstream society (Aust 20). Even the motivated ideological intellectuals of the student movement, however, could not circumvent its critical failures. The ideological and intellectual foundations of the majority of the movements were weak because of the highly spontaneous nature of membership; Aust and others suggest that the movement did not draw students in by
virtue of its ideological strength, but rather, through its highly public and thrilling actions. It was a “political culture of happenings that attracted a great many adherents” (Aust 20).

While the student movement attempted to look beyond the events that contributed to recent German Nazism in order to address more longstanding injustices, they were inextricably mired within a crisis of revolutionary legitimacy and identity. Unable to retain the public support of prominent critical theorists like Adorno and Marcuse, the movement struggled to provide a convincing rationale to back its antiauthoritarian aims. The majority of the working classes and toiling general public was unable to identify or relate to the movement’s notions of oppressive systemic state mechanisms.

Keeping in mind that the sixties in Western societies was a decade of widespread global liberation movements of varying popular appeal, one can perceive why there was great controversy concerning the consistency of ideology and legitimacy within the 68er Bewegung. Philosophers and social theorists were concerned about the movement’s methodology and commitment to ideology, while the German general public was either unsure or indifferent about whether or not the movement was warranted by local and global social conditions. Even the very designation “movement” was scrutinized.

According to Julienne Kamya, there existed a general uncertainty as to exactly what kind of organization the students constituted:

Diese Schwierigkeit [the difficulty of defining the student movement] fällt schon auf, wenn man sich die verschiedenen Bezeichnungen der Bewegung ansieht. Es herrscht keine Einigkeit darüber, denn in den Texten wurden Benennungen wie ‘Bewegung’, ‘Protestbewegung’, ‘Revolte’, oder auch ‘Rebellion’ je nach der Stellungnahme genannt,
I mention the controversy over the nature of the student movement because it connects the movement to Herbert Marcuse, whose philosophy and lectures led some to call him the, “‘geistigen Vater’ oder ‘Mentor’ der Studentenrevolte” (Kamya 44). Marcuse’s philosophy provides for clear descriptions of societal injustice and even offers a blueprint for substantiating theory with practice in reality. The students, prone as they were to action, were quick to appropriate from the works of critical theorists inspired by Marxism, like Marcuse, and to claim them as a theoretical legitimation of their methods. A dispute arose regarding whether the student movement merely misappropriated Marcuse’s critique of capitalism, or whether Marcuse’s philosophy indeed saw its realization in the movement’s practices. Timm’s novel depicts the student movement to have been mired in the immaturity of its intellectual development, thoroughly unable to provide a clear alternative framework of human relations and their guiding principles with concrete implications for the improvement of the human condition.

Intersections between Herbert Marcuse’s Philosophy, Timm’s Novel, and the 68er Bewegung: “One-Dimensional” Society and Emancipatory Aesthetics

Marcuse came into the limelight of West German public discourse in the 1960s due to growing recognition and appreciation for his own critical philosophy of capitalist and socialist societies at that time (primarily: the United States, Germany, and the Soviet
Marcuse developed a critical theory of society that informs my analysis of Uwe Timm’s ‘68er novel *Heißer Sommer* (1974) as a critically-oriented work that functions as a productive expose of the administration of individuals’ consciousness by the dominant instrumental rationality which drives capitalism. His most pertinent works are those that arose in nearest proximity to 1968, the year in which Timm’s novel takes place: *The Problem of Social Change in the Technological Society* (1961), *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), *Repressive Tolerance* (1965), *An Essay on Liberation* (1969), and *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1977). The works are often separated from one another as reflecting different periods and thus distinctive revisions of Marcusean philosophy. While the progression from an originally Marxist standpoint to his own conception of emancipatory aesthetics is significant and certainly merits discussion, I do not see Marcuse’s self-distancing from Marxist musings on class struggles as a break that negates insights made under his previous philosophy. In fact, the progression of Marcuse’s philosophy provides for a link to Timm’s crafting of Ullrich Krause’s own progression and contact with socialism, the technical base, and aesthetics within *Heißer Sommer*.

The critical controversy regarding the student movement boiled down to the following question: Is it a legitimately revolutionary force, one that can catalyze meaningful transformations of society and human experience? The fact that the movement quickly died out after the events of 1968, that it failed as a revolution, required Marcuse, who was criticized for his optimistic comments on the movement’s revolutionary potential, to revisit his theories in the light of this failure. Marcuse’s philosophy never really contradicts itself; I do not consider Marcuse’s turn from Marxist-
inspired theories of human emancipation, which base potential for emancipation on an actual human revolution, toward his newly developing theory of the potential of aesthetics to negate extant “unhappy consciousness”, to be a renunciation of his previous theory. Rather, it can be seen as an admission of his realization of the irrevocable extent to which a historically dominant rationality has guided the consciousness of individuals, predetermining their actions. For Marcuse the members of the student movement had been unknowingly operating within the very paradigms they sought to protest and thus failed to engender a truly revolutionary form of experience. In One-Dimensional Man (1964) Marcuse first makes mention that the path toward emancipation lies in the small-scale alteration of the attunement of one’s senses (“sensibility”) to negate the effects of “one-dimensional” elements of society brought about by the totalitarian influence of the capitalist instrumental rationality (1). Marcuse’s understanding of instrumental rationality is essentially that of a particular rationality that works ruthlessly toward an (usually monetary/material) end, with efficiency of the process being prioritized, and little regard and reflection directed toward the morality, environmental considerations, and social-economic outcomes of the relentless pursuit of such an end. To put an end to the humanity-crippling influence of instrumental reason, Marcuse called for a general perceptiveness to other dimensions of reason, dimensions that would break the “one-dimensionality” imposed upon all relations by the dominance of instrumental reason. Marcuse later gave new nuances to his definition of “new sensibility” and its implications in his 1969 work An Essay on Liberation. He discusses how the student movement is a mere expression of “new sensibility”—an awakening of human instincts and consciousness to the dominance of instrumental reason in society, and a requisite search
for the redemption of meaningful experience within human society (23). Marcuse calls for the refinement of a “new sensibility” in order to catalyze the release of previously suppressed libidinal desires, to provide material with which to aesthetically imagine a more desirable organization of society, to “desublimize” knowledge, that is, to reclaim knowledge from the reductive constraints of positivist thought, and for the negation of dominant society to arise from this ability to contemplate more ideal human conditions. He writes:

The liberated consciousness would promote the development of a science and technology free to discover and realize the possibilities of things and men in the protection and gratification of life, playing with potentialities of form and matter for the attainment of this goal. Technique would then tend to become art, and art would tend to form reality… The new sensibility has become…*praxis*…negation of the entire Establishment, its morality, culture; affirmation of the right to build a society in which the abolition of poverty and toil terminates in a universe where the sensuous, the playful, the calm, and the beautiful become forms of existence and thereby the *Form* of the society itself… The aesthetic morality is the opposite of puritanism. It does not insist on a daily bath or shower for people whose cleaning practices involve systematic torture, slaughter, poisoning… But it does insist on cleaning the earth from the very material garbage produced by the spirit of capitalism, and from this spirit itself. (*An Essay On*...24-28)
Marcuse yearns for an “aesthetic” form of existence, a pacified form of existence in which notions of the “playful” and the “sensuous” replace the contemporary dominance of capitalism’s need for rigid structures, the practicality of economic thought, and its corresponding lack of appreciation for human sensibilities. In such a society with new forms in play, work and labor, for example, could become something other than the drudgery and crushing of the human spirit that is currently ubiquitous, it could turn into a phenomenon for sustenance and earned living based on moral principles that take into account human factors instead of favoring the primacy of economic incentives, as under capitalism. Importantly, Marcuse specifies that the technical apparatuses already in place (“technology”) are still capable of constituting the framework and structure of a liberated society. Their “development” must be redirected and “false needs” must be purged from the productive apparatus in favor of life-affirming needs and organization (One Dimensional Man 3).

Marcuse claims in his essay The Problem of Social Change in the Technological Society (1961) that “one-dimensional” society contains subversive mechanisms that appropriate human thought and action, causing revolutionary movements and ideas to be poisoned with instrumental rationality before they can even set out to combat it. Societally critical thought is precluded by instrumental reason’s monopoly on consciousness and human relations. He outlines the ways in which capitalist society resists progressive social change3, or in other words, the ways in which emerging critical theories and practices are reintegrated into the system as a positive critical element, i.e.,

3 Repressive Tolerance: “According to the dialectical proposition it is the whole which determines the truth, -- not in the sense that the whole is prior or superior to its parts, but in the sense that its structure and function determine every particular condition and relation. Thus, within a repressive society, even progressive movements threaten to turn into their opposite to the degree to which they accept the rules of the game.”
to feign the presence of healthy opposition in society in order to dispel notions that the ruling elite have simply and arbitrarily removed them from the equation with force (Farr 79). Critical movements are tolerated because they divert attention from the authoritarian policies of the ruling elite upon the whole of toiling society, and allow for the government to behave as protectors and guardians when the movements become too publicly unruly. The government takes advantage of critically intentioned movements by using them to build itself positively in the public eye. Marcuse develops the notion that technological society has advanced oppression and domination into forms that are nearly imperceptible—the “obvious tools of oppression” were absent from Western democracies’ public spheres, causing socially progressive movements to falter because of the difficulty of identifying a clear oppressor. In One-Dimensional Man, Marcuse spoke of the “defense structure” and the manipulative method by which the capitalist elite garnered complicity from the working, toiling class: because of the material spoils of the defense structure, capitalism, “makes life easier for a greater number of people… Under these circumstances, our mass media have little difficulty in selling particular interests as those of all sensible men. The political needs of society become individual needs and aspirations…” The public’s support could not be garnered against an aggressor that they perceived to be their protector and sustainer — thus they continued to view capitalist democracy as satisfactory. The 68er protestors’ often destructive and violent acts further made them into a public nuisance, which in turn allowed for the state and police to quell the situation and function as protectors of the vulnerable populace. The protestors, unable to convince the majority of the working class of the revolutionary and morally imperative nature of their acts, were doomed to remain an outspoken, yet ineffectual minority.
The Societal Veils of “Insulation” and "False Needs"

Marcuse’s insights into societal dynamics led him to coin the term “insulation”, which describes the phenomenon by which the ruling elite maintains its monopoly on rationality and corresponding social relations (*The Problem of Social Change, Repressive Tolerance*). He argues that “insulation” causes members of a capitalist or socialist society to be unreceptive to alternative, more human-centered understandings of reality. Marcuse calls upon the intellectually driven members of society to break through insulation by contemplating alternative possibilities for human relations.⁴ A basic facet of Marcuse’s social critique involves the normalization of instrumental rationality: within technological-industrial societies, the average individual is “insulated”, i.e. has his/her life administered to an extent that leads him/her toward an ambivalent acceptance of the status quo⁵. Marcuse expresses the idea that technological-empiricist society sustains the oppressive status quo by stating that it, “insulates the facts against their negation, i.e., against the forces which make for their transcendence toward modes of existence rendered possible and at the same time precluded by the given society.” (*The Problem of Social Change* 2) Marcuse seeks in part to identify and expose the agents and social dynamics that contribute to subjective and critical “insulation” against alternative possibilities for social organization and goals. This appears to closely relate to his notion that the working class, in general, “tolerates” and thus sustains the actions of the

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⁴ *Repressive Tolerance*: “I believe that it is the task and duty of the intellectual to recall and preserve historical possibilities which seem to have become utopian possibilities—that it is his task to break the concreteness of oppression in order to open the mental space in which this society can be recognized as what it is and does.”

⁵ *Repressive Tolerance*: “…violence and suppression are promulgated, practiced, and defended by democratic and authoritarian governments alike, and the people subjected to these governments are educated to sustain such practices as necessary for the preservation of the status quo.”
government. This same government has written the societal rules, so to speak, under which any emerging forces of opposition must operate.

Marcuse realized the obscured nature of so-called irrefutable positivist facts and their supporting instrumental rationale as man-made and historical entities that are easily filtered and administered to a populace that knows nothing outside of this dominant form of experience. In a state of “passive” tolerance, the “constituted authorities” are given full servitude and valued as a necessity to humanity. Marcuse calls for a new kind of sensual experience to counter the force-fed technological-industrial ideology of tainted capitalist experience. In other words, members of Western society should catalyze societal transformation with cultivation of the aforementioned “new sensibility” (a new mode of experience) that has authority and liberation-potential over the goals and claims of instrumental rationality.

Marcuse claims that an individual’s consciousness has been compromised and “colonized” to an extent that allows the working-class democratic citizen to accept common, yet paradoxical governmental actions and behavior routinely. A commonly cited example is that of the United States’ methods of war and conquest to ensure peace. American citizens are “insulated” against the possibility of peace without conflict. In Marcuse’s words, citizens blindly accept pursuits deemed rational, yet which clearly pursue an irrationally destructive agenda:

At the stage of advanced industrial civilization, however, “rational” seems to defy any definition other than in terms of national or social expediency.

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6 Repressive Tolerance: “Tolerance is turned from an active into a passive state, from practice into non-practice, laissez-faire the constituted authorities. It is the people who tolerate the government, which in turn tolerates opposition within the framework determined by the constituted authorities.”
This society is capable of ‘delivering the goods’ at an increasingly larger scale: the permanent risk of a war of annihilation and the permanent waste and abuse of resources is no telling argument for replacing the established system by another, which may- or may not- reduce oppression and injustice. (*One-Dimensional Man* 3)

Marcuse laments that the standard rationality appears so absolute, especially in light of the fact that it leads to such irrational decisions. Individuals in such a society completely lose the capacity for independent reasoning and alternative modes of experience in the midst of pre-determined outcomes and choices. Furthermore, this stifling of independent thought is generally unperceived because of its integral nature to the system. Indeed, Marcuse states: “The total character of the achievements of advanced industrial society, and the integration of opposites which is a result as well as prerequisite of these achievements promote material and intellectual stabilization” (*The Problem of Social...* 40). For Marcuse, socially motivated movements and actions were originally and historically situated externally or apart from the political sphere—they were social precisely because they escaped state administration, making them independent of political-ideological mechanisms of control. Within capitalism, social concepts like ‘the family’ and ‘the individual’ tend to be integrated and subsumed into a tool of social control by the elite who already hold a monopoly on productive and political power. The economization of the private sphere, an instance of which is the economic reduction of families into cheap and manageable units of labor manpower, is just one manifestation of what Marcuse calls “one-dimensional” society. The “one-dimensionality” of society and social relations, and the corresponding “false needs” that arise therefrom, are ultimately
sustained by the administration of individuals’ lives by the all-encompassing instrumental rationality that operates under the authority of a claim to objectivity.

Marcuse's analysis reveals how the manufacturing and production of “false needs” substantiates and gives evidence of the lack of actual self-determination and within modern society. “False needs” are artificially created needs that do not contribute to the basic requirements for human life and satisfaction, but which are highly superfluous, usually ecologically unsound, and financially beneficial to capitalism’s beneficiaries in industry and in government. In a sense, they embody capitalism’s instrumental rationality’s tendency to ignore the interests of everyday consumers and toiling workers in deference to the pursuit of ends in the form of wealth and other economic incentives. He writes, "For 'totalitarian' is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole." (One-Dimensional Man 3) “Vested interests” like big businesses and other marketable ventures work within such a society to create new, material products that they insinuate modern man needs for fulfillment and even basic functionality in society. Productive forces, led by a minority of industrial elite, provide largely for the ephemeral, yet expensive gratification of “false needs” that distracts mankind from omnipresent suffering in society but provides just enough enjoyment for one to remain mildly content. Marcuse writes that false needs are those needs which are “…superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression; the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery… the satisfaction of these needs can be gratifying…but they obscure the disease of the whole from him.” (One-Dimensional
When needs are “superimposed upon” a blindly accepting humanity as a controlling mechanism, we lose the very capacity to conceive of an alternative system for fulfilling actual needs because we are so enchanted by the ever-changing fruits of production. One of these actual needs is the need for an alternative (critical) form of experience that perceives and seeks to undo the miserable reality brought about by the contemporary organization of technological-industrial society. In the following, I argue that Uwe Timm aesthetically structures Ullrich Krause’s experience to reflect and magnify Marcuse’s critical theory and prescription to combat instrumental rationality—he describes Ullrich’s course toward the emancipation of consciousness. He perceives his inability to escape the dictates of capitalism and its controlling mechanisms.

**Timm’s Aesthetic Rendering of Marcusean Social Liberation Philosophy; The Pre-Revolution of Human Sensibility**

Ullrich Krause, the protagonist of Timm’s *Heißer Sommer*, appears to the reader in the midst of a leftist societal uprising in 1968 Germany, which ultimately fails. The 1960s context and conditions within which he operates are the very ones that Herbert Marcuse critiques and also the very ones that Timm experienced as a university student (Hielscher). Within the novel’s universe Ullrich is surrounded by blatant manifestations of recent fascism and the unsettling trends of contemporary capitalism, manifestations that restrict his life, in particular the libidinal compulsions brought about from his sensual drives. With respect to Marcuse’s and the New Left’s call for a new sensibility, Timm places Ullrich in a phase of life common to many in the working class: while at the university attempting to piece together a sense of direction in his life, Ullrich initially espouses a tainted, yet commonly held critical position within the opposition, one that
indicates his “tolerance” of the rules of capitalist society. Timm clearly insinuates this fact by emphasizing Ullrich’s initial feeble perceptions of his oppression in society, in particular, his sensual uncertainty and his fealty to his university professors. Ullrich moves, through the course of the novel, toward a more progressive position in which he exhibits critical desires which hearken to Marcuse’s musings on societal liberation: Ullrich perceives his utter lack of original and personal choice; his language and thoughts throughout reveal his gradual alienation from nearly every social group; he is clearly in a crisis regarding his own subjectivity; he realizes the foolish, capitalist hypocrisy of wearing revolutionary style articles like parkas and sheepskin vests; and so forth. Timm employs literary realism to masterfully expose societal domination as it occurs in and characterizes everyday life and interactions, as his novel suggests that Ullrich (the individual) is originally defined and simultaneously subjugated by his West German environs and social milieu, a theme that Timm seeks to highlight yet present neutrally through his portrayal of an average West German young man taking the typical course to the world of work. To initiate my analysis of Ullrich I present the conditions and devices employed by Timm that lead me to view Ullrich as a budding critical figure who struggles for self-determination and social acceptance in the novel’s early chapters. I later argue that Ullrich is unhappy in “one-dimensional” capitalist society because he is the only figure who actually expresses the realization that he has ceded control of the drives of his consciousness to capitalism’s instrumental rationality. To be sure, it takes Ullrich the course of nearly the entire novel to actually come to this realization, but the elements that foreshadow and shape Ullrich’s progression from dominated to critical consciousness are prevalent throughout.
The novel’s first passage concerns Ullrich and his girlfriend, Ingeborg. It contains two important qualities with respect to establishing Ullrich as initially at odds with the direction his own life is taking him: a clear negative emphasis on his senses and a constant repetition of the adjective “plötzlich”, which suggests a lack of individual control. The fact that Ullrich’s senses are stressed from the start indicates the import that Timm places on sensual experience and its determination of the human subject.

Significantly, Ullrich’s sensual experience seem tainted and out of his control: “Er (Ullrich) roch plötzlich ihren Schweiß: Sauer mit einem Stich Parfum. Das zerknüllte Laken drückte im Rücken” (Timm 7 my emphasis). In addition to the reader's immediate confrontation with Ullrich’s sensual experience, Timm’s word choice is very telling of Ullrich’s initial agitated psychological state, indicative in a Marcusean sense of the repression of his instincts. He concentrates on the petty things that bother him—he is not, for example, expressing satisfaction with being with his devoted girlfriend, but rather is merely perceptive to the distaste with which he considers her perfumed scent. His inner dialogue reflects negative sensual perception. The fact that his discernment of the smell occurs “plötzlich” (suddenly) is a subtle indicator of his initial inability to overcome his basic human senses and perceptions of his environment. Sounds, sights, feelings, and their associations assault him rather than comfort him, for his consciousness is oppressed in West German society, causing him to act with characteristic uncertainty. The reader quickly realizes that Ullrich is often lost in thought throughout the novel, and that reality often shakes him from his consciousness “plötzlich” because of its intrusive and alienating nature.
Ullrich, due to his uncritical state in Part 1, takes out his anger “plötzlich” on his many female companions (here, primarily Ingeborg) because he has not yet identified his real oppressors, the true culprits of his miserable existence; he blindly reacts to things in his immediacy—family, friends, and girlfriends/many sexual partners, and tends to blame them thoughtlessly for mishaps and frustration in his life. His father, who unsuccessfully runs a furniture store and helps finance Ullrich’s university lifestyle, causes him constant annoyance because he continually provides for a common pressure under capitalism: he implores Ullrich to finish his studies so that he can begin financially contributing to the family. The father, who is extremely concerned with having enough money to live comfortably and Ullrich's lacking sense of urgency in getting himself into the workforce in any capacity, exhibits qualities of an individual who unquestioningly buys into and follows the dictates of capitalism's material promises. Falsely critical and channeling frustration common to the working class, the father blames hard times on the capitalistic features of his environment, namely increasingly low prices and his son’s status as a non-worker, instead of questioning the premises of man-made society that dictate the ubiquitously harsh and fickle economic nature of work. His assumption that people should desire his furniture, and that low prices offered by wholesalers are the reason for his lack of success, demonstrates his inability to recognize his oppression under the profit principle and the natural conclusions brought about by its ambivalent moral perspective on the rigid and ruthless class system it engenders. The many moments in which Ullrich lashes out at his close friends and relatives indicate his similar initial failure to even recognize why he, too, is unhappy within society. Not knowing what to do and influenced
by an instrumental rationality, he uncritically vilifies those who participate in the same domination.

The first part (Erster Teil) is rife with similar descriptions of Ullrich in an oddly judgmental and pensive state in which he appears unsettled and unsure in his relations and encounters with other individuals. His unease indicates the agitated state of his consciousness and thus of some of the basic manifestations of “unhappy consciousness” that arise because of the absence of the capability to individually determine one’s path. The following description evinces Ullrich’s fundamental inner turmoil and its intimate connection to his senses, something which clearly contributes to his frequent outbursts and mood swings: “In der Dachrinne gurten die Tauben. Schön, sagte Ullrich. Ein leichter warmer Wind ging. Er hatte plötzlich keine Kopfschmerzen mehr. Aber als er sich wieder aufrichtete, war ihm, als würde die schräge Mansardenwand auf ihn stürzen” (Timm 8, my emphasis). In one moment, Ullrich’s headache dissipates when he senses pigeons cooing and a warm wind seemingly ameliorates his pain. However; in the next moment his general lack of certainty, of himself and of the world around him, leads him to irrationally fear the attic wall’s imminent collapse upon him. Because he is influenced by an alien rationality and thus faces limited realms of choice and strict societal expectations, such incompatibility with his inner drives causes him to appear to the reader exhibiting irrational fears and sudden changes of emotional state. When Marcuse speaks of the emancipated individual and liberated consciousness, one can be certain that such an individual would have to move past the constrained and self-sabotaging behavior such as that which Ullrich originally exhibits. Because Ullrich initially fails to accuse the unsettling premises of capitalist society itself, he instead arbitrarily (and
counterproductively) lashes out at fellow sufferers under instrumental rationality. It is clear in the novel’s first few passages that he is unable to control or moderate his mental and physical outbursts, indicating his unhappy existence within society.

Ullrich’s initial unease stems from his enslavement to a foreign rationality—namely, the empiricist, technological-industrial rationality of West German capitalism. His sensual discomfort causes him to act counter-intuitively to his own goals, which, early on, include female companionship and a desire to work on aesthetic projects of his own choosing. He experiences erratic sensual discomfort when operating within regimented, class-based society. In An Essay on Liberation (1969), Marcuse’s call for a “New Sensibility” evokes themes tellingly reminiscent to Ullrich’s sensual struggles with his own “life instincts”, and to humankind’s greater inability to overcome the current technological organization that guides and manipulates the members of capitalist society:

Freedom indeed depends largely on technical progress, on the advancement of science. But this fact easily obscures the essential precondition: in order to become vehicles of freedom, science and technology would have to change their present direction and goals; they would have to be reconstructed in accord with a new sensibility-- the demands of the life instincts. Then one could speak of a technology of liberation, product of a scientific imagination free to project and design the forms of a human universe without exploitation and toil. (Essay On... 19)

Marcuse emphasizes the necessity of a “new sensibility” in which technological organization, i.e. the fundamental teleology of technical ends and means, is to be reconceived and restructured in a fashion that naturally pursues a course of human
“liberation”, one that improves human relations according to non-political ideals. In fact, the cultivation and reimagining of a “new sensibility” seems to find its realization in Ullrich’s experiences throughout *Heißer Sommer*. He begins as an individual mired in sensual, personal, and political "exploitation and toil", and concludes as one who, through increasingly deliberate pursuit of experience and a rejection of capitalist rationality’s pervasive machinations, appears see the world anew, one with “all its possibilities unfolded” and real emancipatory potential (19).

Ullrich’s critical stance via his sensual perceptions is useful for illustrating his antagonistic attitude toward the society he inhabits, which initially suppresses his actual goals for his experience. While Ullrich certainly cannot be conceived of as an artist or aesthetic artwork (as a literary figure) in the traditional sense, his oppositional presence and participation within society demonstratively negates the dominant trends and paradigms, especially that of widespread public indifference; he tends to desire and/or pursue an alternative to every situation and/or choice society corners him into, thus leading him to occupy a position that is antagonistic to the roles which the consciousness of other individuals are so easily manipulated into fulfilling. Ullrich does not blindly accept the structures of authority, implications for work, and opportunities for human expression extended by West German capitalism, and eventually resists reification and subjugation to the schemes and preclusions demanded by capitalist society’s controlling elite. In order to actively resist reification, however, Ullrich first has to identify and wrangle with the integration of opposites (such as the private and political (public) spheres) that occurs as Marcuse described.

The idea that Ullrich is a budding critical consciousness may seem more plausible
than the more metaphorical notion that his experience within Timm’s literature is aesthetic. I argue for both. Marcuse is certainly critical of art that can be categorized as a mere reflection of extant society: “There was an exhibit [in an art department] that simply reproduced a garage sale. That wouldn’t do because it just isn’t art; it’s a repetition of the given reality. It does not have the *transcendence* and *dissociation* which in my view are essential for art” (Hartwick 421 my emphasis). Ullrich does in fact “transcend” and “dissociate” from his given reality, and his transcendence and dissociation within the universe of *Heißer Sommer* serve to open its West German readership to the possibility of radical aesthetic, emancipatory subjective experience. Such an experience would theoretically wrest an individual’s sensual and cognitive perceptions from the oppressive social organization that until now has so easily directed and defined them, and allow for an individual to see things as they really are, that is, in their one-dimensional and administered forms. Ullrich's course seems to suggest that radical individual experience can reveal the conformity of all societally produced critical thought to capitalism’s ends. Dialectical experiences of the world, such as Ullrich’s, are necessary to reinvigorate the critical opposition between an individual’s consciousness and dominant frameworks of thought, so that alternative realities and the non-ideal nature of our capitalist society might be realized.

**“One-dimensionality” in the University**

I continue now with an analysis of the manifestations of “one-dimensional” society as Ullrich perceives them and their contribution to the subjugation of individual consciousness within *Heißer Sommer*. One of the milieus in which "one-dimensionality" is clearly evinced is within the Western university, in which intelligence, freedom of
thought, and democratic ideals are acclaimed, but which, in reality, exhibits totalizing trends that require the complicity of students, and the surrender of their subjective freedom to certain authorities and instilled structures of learning that demand objective consideration. The university has to be considered “one-dimensional” because its presence dominates individual teleology in favor of its own. Students have little to no determination of the content with which they are to critically engage and are expected to simply imbibe the interpretations of their professors. Manifestations of this within *Heißer Sommer* are ubiquitous, such as the first mention of Professor Ziegler and his assistant cohorts, and are rife with the kind of authoritarian behavior characteristic of the elite Marcuse describes in *One-Dimensional Man*:


Ziegler, the first professor introduced, is presented with an air of absolute authority. His authority is provided in part by the appearance of his assistants, who tend to his whims and give the impression of paying homage to royalty. Ziegler’s assumed power and authority suggest that the contemporary system lends its public intellectuals such as professors with authoritarian “rational” power. Professors like Ziegler are not of the oppressed, but rather, take part in the oppression through their participation in the
domination of individuals’ capacity for varied interpretation. Timm shows their demand for authority to inhibit instinctual drives toward creativity (what Marcuse refers to as "play").

Ullrich’s early concerns about fulfilling professor Ziegler’s expectations show his original participation in his own domination. Because of his fear of Ziegler’s authority and perceived sway on his academic, and thus, overall ability to succeed later in life (especially economically), he searches for ways to assume the image of a diligent student. He does so through feigning intense reading of Ziegler’s assignment, something he has otherwise approached with disdain and disinterest. He wanted to show Ziegler, “daß er selbst die Wartezeit auf dem Gang ausnutze. Er hatte aber nicht gelesen, sondern sich immer wieder überlegt, was er Ziegler sagen sollte” (86). Not only does Ullrich feel compelled to prove himself worthy by simulating behavior typical of a diligent student, he additionally spends a significant amount of time carefully selecting his words to appease the professor. Because of the social constraints imposed by “one-dimensional” society, Ullrich, whose outward behavior must constantly shift to fulfill societal expectations, is unable to rely on his ability to freely guide his own self-expression. Instead, he has to re-rationalize and reconfigure his thoughts and speech so that they adhere to dominant conventions, and to satiate Ziegler's professorial authority in the alarmingly hierarchical university setting he ignores this sacrifice of his basic human independence.

Aside from putting up simple feeble resistance to the university and the influence of its elite through skipping lectures and avoiding his major Referat project, Ullrich harbors many critical thoughts that reflect the oppressive nature of his university studies
in general, especially regarding his lack of individual freedom in choosing the content and interpretative direction of his studies. Timm also provides the reader with descriptions of Ullrich’s involuntary physical reactions to the schoolwork he has to do. More often than not, Ullrich starts to sweat, or is described as having “dies[en] Druck hinter der rechten Schläfe” whenever he forces himself to work (37). In Part 1, Ullrich is at a lake with his partner at the time, Ingeborg, and critically considers the fruitlessness of going to yet another seminar in which he will be merely dictated to confirm or value professorial opinion, or else keep his thoughts to himself due to pressures to conform. Ullrich thinks: “Er überlegte, ob er ins Seminar fahren sollte. Er hatte den Heidegger-Aufsatz nicht gelesen, der in der heutigen Seminarsitzung diskutiert werden sollte. Maier konnte ihn mit dem Finger zwingen, die Sätze zu Ende zu sprechen. Da war wieder dieser Druck hinter der rechten Schläfe” (37 my emphasis). Ullrich does not abstain from attending the seminar simply because he has not done the reading and fears a moment of public embarrassment—his issues lie deeper than that, as Timm suggests that Ullrich suffers, not from laziness or a lack of work ethic, but rather, the general pressures to conform to predefined roles with limited lifestyles. Instead of entering the university setting with an open and eager mind, Ullrich, due to stringent expectations and hierarchical university structures, goes in with a fear of university authority figures and their ability to dictate discourse and content unquestioningly. As the reader later finds out, Ullrich is a voracious and eager reader when he gets to pick the content. He voluntarily devours the writings of Augustine in one scene, and at the end eagerly reads a book on pedagogy (Timm 40, 300). Because he instinctually fears the loss of individual, subjective control—he might have to fulfill stringent professorial expectations and/or
repeat lines preselected from a canon, he has to say exactly what the professor expects to hear—he avoids the university seminar, the very liberal place of free speech and development of ideas where his intellectual mind is purportedly to grow and take individual shape through dialectical confrontations with other inquisitive and supposedly unconstrained minds. However, during this nascent stage in the development of Ullrich’s critical consciousness, he still has a merely physical (“dieser Druck”), instead of critical, reaction to his lack of self-determination at this point. He appears to react simultaneously to the paradoxical aimlessness of his personal life and the forced guidance of his public life, but has not yet identified the problem as the dominant, oppressive technological-industrial rationality of capitalism. Like his father, he is still mired in his blind acceptance and ambivalence toward capitalism’s fundamental promises and thus in his acceptance of its necessity.

Professor Ziegler’s response to Ullrich’s request for an extension on his paper definitively portrays the subservience of the students to professorial authority. It exhibits Ullrich’s inability to determine and hone his intellectual faculties through projects and interpretations of his choosing. Ziegler bluntly defines Ullrich’s project for him while simultaneously reaffirming his superior class position:

[Ziegler:] Verlängerungen sind nicht üblich, das wissen Sie, sagte Ziegler, ich kann da keine Ausnahme machen… [Ullrich pleads]… Hastig berichtete Ullrich. Ziegler hörte ihn zu, dabei über ihn hinweg an die Decke blickend. Dann sagte er, der Ansatz sei etwas einseitig, man müsse doch verstärkt die verschiedenen Lesarten heranziehen und nicht einfach so ins Blaue hineininterpreiterien, das sei sicher unterhaltsam, aber

Remarkably, Ziegler gives credit to Ullrich for his choice of approach to the material, but immediately denounces it as unscientific, thus discrediting the uninitiated student’s ability to meaningfully engage with academics and intellectual thought. It is unscientific seemingly because it does not take into account previously approved interpretative approaches, which are honed and perfected in the highest circles of academia—a realm most untouchable and inaccessible to the common man. Ullrich again has a reaction involving his senses after he feels compelled, by Ziegler’s arbitrary authority, to subserviently thank him and even bow to him for the favor given. Ullrich, who is clearly disinterested in the topic he has been assigned, grovels and makes himself meek in order to be awarded the rare exception that Ziegler so cautiously gives him. He also has to tailor his interpretation directly to the way ("Hinsicht") that Ziegler deems fit. Ziegler, meanwhile, has effectively moved Ullrich to a position of social debt. Because he showed mercy from his societally esteemed position, Ullrich is likely expected to appreciate this manifestation of his own oppression. The rational thing to do, in the event of oppression, would be to resist or to cry out for justice. Instead, irrationality prevails, as Ullrich has to accept oppression as normal and literally beg for acceptance within such a system. In a
sense, he is being further conditioned, like so many of his contemporaries, into ambivalent acceptance of the status quo.

The state of university affairs shows more than just Ullrich’s personal dissatisfaction with the direction of his studies and his particular lack of control; it sheds light on the complete subordination of students’ minds and subjective freedom to the dominant instrumental rationality. This domination is made starkly apparent with Timm’s further descriptions of professors’ behavior and particularly, his satirical description of the narcissistic Professor Betz. Betz functions as a caricature of the dominant rationality; he makes declarative, seemingly objective, statements that are heeded because of the effects of his professorial authority on students who depend on his good word in the future. The absurdity of Professor Betz’s influence on rationality within his classroom and circles extends to the very pronunciation of his name, which normally would rhyme with the German word Netz (short e) according to standard German phonetics. Professor Betz requests for his name to be pronounced Bëtz (with a long e). Simply put, he expects his elite personal preference to override commonly held standards of pronunciation. The implications of Betz’s greater characterization of the one-dimensional university system do not end simply with his name and alteration of standard phonology, as evidenced by his following assertion: “Zum Beispiel kann der Vietnam-Konflikt wirklich objektiv nur in einem mehrsemestrigen Oberseminar von Politologen soweit erhellt werden, daß eine Meinungsbildung annähernd möglich wird—allerdings nur annähernd—zuvor wird nur geredet. Kein Betz-Schüler widersprach” (Timm 65). Of course Betz holds this opinion—only his upper level students, now given formal class distinction as Politologen, who as meek introductory-level students were thoroughly
indoctrinated with his views on Vietnam in previous seminars (where students aren’t quite willing to contradict professorial opinion) could possibly speak objectively and meaningfully on significant issues. This instance of unquestioned professorial authority is just one manifestation of the ways in which instrumental rationality undermines subjective freedom; it signifies the greater trend of the suppression of critical, non-conformist thought. Because the university is a nearly required stepping-stone that leads students to successful careers within capitalism, they cannot afford to contradict him. In an even greater affront to his students’ capability to provide for their own interpretation, Betz asserts that all other talk (outside of this seminar) would be trivial (“nur geredet”) and that his seminar, which consists of a handful of students and his own professorial voice, would most closely and effectively represent honest popular opinion (“Meinungsbildung”) (65). His students, so willingly subservient and eager to secure their own advancement in an uncertain capitalist economy driven by ruthless profit motives, do not contradict him because it would equate to self-alienation within their future field, where professors’ references and one's high grades are practically essential for chances at economic success. Thus the status quo which favors mindless indulgence to such agents of the dominant rationality seems preferable and good, and the general public is so easily manipulated, or “insulated”, into tolerance of rampant oppression and relinquishment of individually-inspired, progressive thought. With such a statement, Betz effectively precludes the legitimacy of any informal discourse, despite its earnestness, that occurs outside of upper-level seminars. In a manner that defines the behavior of the ruling minority (the lawmakers and the owners/magnates of production) of industrial-technological society, he appears to be able to influence the continued general acceptance
and even dependence of the dominant rationality and participates in the oppression of
Ullrich and the toiling and working majority of “one-dimensional” society.

Ullrich’s Experience of the Ideologically Compromised 68er Bewegung

The manner in which Timm situates Ullrich within a markedly Marcusean “one-
dimensional” society is not limited to the academic sphere and the behavior of
particularly domineering intellectuals. Much of the unfolding of dominant rationality’s
influence occurs in other, more unexpected contexts. Ullrich’s participation in the student
and leftist movements, his experience as a Schwarzarbeiter (unregistered worker), his
experience of the counterculture in communes and illicit meeting places, and other
experiences generally perceived to be at least minimally critical or opposed to
mainstream society in nature, are commonly characterized by the pervasive and
subversive presence of a capitalist rationality which so easily and amiably tolerates the
presence of opposition. Individual and group behavior tendencies reflect adherence to
capitalistic values: the use of advertising-like language within countercultural groups, the
subconscious urge and continued desire within these same groups to utilize and acquire
the products of capitalism’s vast market, the tendency of supposedly
revolutionary/resistant individuals to value easy money, and the Hollywood-inspired and
anarchic participation of many of the counterculture’s members (Conny’s propensity for
violence, the empty and chaotic laughter of counterculture members) all suggest a crisis
of revolutionary legitimacy that owes itself to the counterculture’s continued tacit
adherence to capitalist ideology.

Similarly to the television and radio jingles that help wealthy companies
effectively advertise their products, the protestors within Heißer Sommer come up with
rhyming and rhythmic chants and slogans with which they make their attempt at societal-critical rhetoric heard. The following chants and shared protestors speech patterns reflect the presence of socially induced language proclivities within the countercultural groups, evidence of their inability to escape the capitalist rationality:

Ein Sprechchor bildete sich (in the lecture hall): Renke vor, noch ein Tor.

(115)

Im Saal bildete sich ein Sprechchor: Haut dem Renke ins Gehenke. Ullrich war aufgesprungen und schrie mit, die Stilben mit den Fäusten betonend.

(130)


Nur wenige kennen den Text. Aber alle singen den Refrain. (203)

In these three instances, the protestors are guilty of exhibiting their capitalist social conditioning, likely without even realizing it. In the first instance, the chant steadily gains intensity and reflects the mob mentality inherent in the restless students. It does not suggest a critical voice, but rather a simple and unquestioning willingness to disrupt a lecture in favor of something simply more novel and exciting. The chant’s structure lends itself to easy participation, even by people unfamiliar with the group’s actual ideological agenda. The fact that the protestors resort to a rhyming chant [vor/Tor] indicates that they readily adopt the strategies of successful businesses within capitalism—they advertise loudly, publicly, and with entrepreneurial flair, leaving the smaller, potentially more critical and pensive voices completely drowned out because of the ever-present acceptance of the capitalist monopoly on thought and action. In a sense, the continued
influence of capitalism within the counterculture suppresses critical thought. Instead of the emergence and contemplation of new forms of experience and thought, reified reproductions of capitalist thought are regurgitated throughout a vastly non-critical counterculture. The last passage, in which Ullrich notes that many of the protestors know only the refrain, and not the actual substance of the song, is aptly characteristic of the protestors’ actions in general; they’re willing to learn the jingle (willing to join the ruckus in the Vorlesung during the sit-in protest), but unwilling to actually delve into the deeper content behind it. They show themselves all too eager to participate in the practices of the West German counterculture while knowing little about its actual theory and implications. Ironically, Timm suggests, they perpetuate the capitalist status quo by allowing it to have strong influence within the very movement that seeks to undo it.

Marcuse describes conformity (conformity to Betz, the university system, to capitalism in general) within “one-dimensional” society as enabling societal domination under the status quo, domination that is made nearly imperceptible via “insulation”. Within Heißer Sommer, each countercultural and cultural group and individual is distinctively stamped with a particular appearance, a general aesthetic. The importance and frequent usage of these particular articles and styles of clothing and certain genres of music signal that these seemingly revolutionary groups are, due to illegitimacy arising from a blatant oversight of theory, hindered by a basic inability to escape forms of experience provided by capitalism. The values of capitalism, which the German leftists profess to protest, have stark and well-rooted manifestations within the protest groups and in the countercultural groups they spawn. As in dominated everyday existence, false needs abound within the very counterculture that attempts to combat them. A simple
example of the impracticality of Ullrich’s tight-fitting jeans shows the total extent to which he himself had originally accepted the negative implications of conforming to society: “Ullrich wühlte in der Hosentasche nach seinem Feuerzeug, mußte doch dann aufstehen, weil die Jeans zu eng waren” (Timm 13). Ullrich wears tight jeans because they have been marketed to him as necessary in order to maintain his (false) need to maintain his social status with stylish clothing. Despite the fact that they actually restrict his bodily movement and ability to function without complication, he seemingly feels compelled to wear them when searching for female companionship in the streets of Munich. His goal, providing a lighter to impress one of his many female targets, is impeded by the simple, yet sheer irrationality of his clothing. Somehow, and he is certainly not alone in his conviction, he has been convinced that he requires restrictively tight jeans, that he needs to augment himself with one of the plentiful yet absurd offerings of capitalist society in order to make a favorable social impression as an individual. Ullrich eventually comes to prioritize human needs over “false needs”. For now, however, his attempt to distinguish himself as an individual by wearing tight jeans is emblematic of the behaviors demanded by the dominated consciousness Marcuse so deeply contemplated. Ullrich attempts to express his individuality by trying to stand out and maintain his aesthetic, but in so doing submits his individuality to the predetermined styles and articles offered on the marketplace. Other articles at which Ullrich directs initial and typical materialistic lust inspired by capitalism, such as the parkas and sheepskin vests worn by leftist protestors, also seem to affirm “one-dimensionality” within a movement proclaiming its own countercultural, socially-critical status. In the following I discuss the key groups and figures with whom Ullrich comes into contact,
with particular emphasis on how Ullrich eventually comes to critically react to their exhibitions of “one-dimensionality”.

The counterculture within *Heißer Sommer* shows its inability to overcome the dominant rationality in more ways than mere speech patterns discussed earlier. In yet another demonstration of homage to the capitalist rationality they profess to protest, they exhibit a certain preference for its creature comforts and its fetishization of certain (life)styles. As Timm describes the protestors who disrupt the university lecture, he evokes the sense that many of the male protestors are enamored with the idea of the “revolutionary male” having facial hair (like compatriots Fidel Castro and Che Guevara):

“Das Rednerpult war von einer Gruppe Studenten umlagert. Bärte: Backenbärte, Kinnbärte, Vollbärte, Schnauzbärte” (109). A later description of Ullrich’s increasingly critical perception of his commune mates reveals the nature of individual countercultural figures as commodified caricatures of countercultural living. As he teases out a new critical experience within society, Ullrich perceives that the drugs, the styles, and the lifestyles embraced by the counterculture are counterproductive because they inhibit potential for critical thought. Ullrich sees them eagerly grasping at the immediate, at the products of the highly polarized capitalist society in which they live in order to carry out their so-called alternative and defiant way of living. This problematizes their capacity for societally critical thought and action. They seem to promise a mere reaffirmation of capitalist values, which they attempt to critically repackage by consuming drugs to alter their consciousness, styling themselves after Castro to borrow his revolutionary pull via impossible osmosis of his aesthetic, and other clearly doomed endeavors. Ullrich experiences such trends more suspiciously than his countercultural allies, and he starts to
touch upon actual critical territory as he exhibits critical reactions to the inefficacy and inaptitude of the counterculture itself:


Judging from Ullrich’s experience in the passage, the lifestyle of the counterculture does nothing to alter the dominant forms of experience. As Ullrich matures throughout the novel, his perceptions, particularly of the student movement and its counterculture, become markedly more suspicious and thoughtful—this passage shows Ullrich’s negative reaction regarding the unfulfilled promises of his first marijuana experience. After succumbing to pressure from other counterculture members to reinvigorate his sensual experience by attempting creativity while high on the drug, Ullrich responds critically to such shallow attempts at alternative living, which hardly bring about, let alone reimagine, a freer and more ideal society. Ironically, the student movement stagnates due to its tendency to reaffirm capitalist modes of experience. Individuality within the counterculture amounts to the same constrained individuality that exists under capitalism.

The students, with their obsession for Western (American and British) rock and folk music like Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones continually draw from
sources of Western inspiration in addition to their penchant for marijuana consumption. Ullrich expresses himself ironically when he describes the experience he doesn’t have while under the influence of marijuana—he realizes that marijuana, in and of itself, does not lead to a new sensibility, one in which he could “fly over chasms” (my translation) and experience a new, drug-induced reality. Ullrich cannot accept such a half-hearted and transient attempt. He senses the same oppression that he has experienced throughout the novel and starkly perceives its manifestations within the counterculture itself, stripping the latter of the ‘counter-’ designation. It is a continuation of the status quo repackaged as stylized revolutionary living.

Timm foreshadows Ullrich’s course toward aesthetic experience while Ullrich is still heavily involved in the compromised counterculture. When Ullrich revisits Petersen, the intellectually-oriented former protest leader for whom he ultimately harbors respect, he takes a haughty tone and explains to Petersen that he has finally found work that is “fun” [“Endlich kann man das machen, was Spaß macht” (219)]. He explains how he and fellow commune member Nottker write idioms and proverbs in well-trafficked areas around the city. He claims such “Stolperstellen” are to cause within citizens a moment of quasi-instant realization (“Aha-Erlebnis”) regarding the conditions of society. While he is still fixated on spontaneous action (common to student movement) as a means to inform others about the oppressive society in which they live, he also takes a decidedly aesthetic turn when he explains to Petersen the necessity of imagining and creativity within human experience: “Ohne Phantasie vertrocknet man doch, sagte Ullrich. Wie im Keller. Diese Diskussionen. Dieses Gequatsche über die Kategorien des Kapitals. Da trocknet man aus, da verdurstet man. Ohne Phantasie, ohne Spiel, was soll das für eine
neue Gesellschaft werden? Lauter vertrocknete Seminarmarxisten. Die Langeweile. Das ist der gesellschaftliche Wärmetod” (217). At this point, one can see that Ullrich’s discourse toes the threshold of critical thought. His call for “Phantasie” and “Spiel”, however, reveal that Ullrich is finally coming into dialectical contact with philosophical thought and attempting to tie it to his re-conceptualization of experience. In agreement with Marcuse, he suggests that the categories of play and fantasy, which effectively comprise an unrestrained imagination, are crucial to catalyze the contemplation of how societal relations might ideally exist. Fantasy and play indicate a human subject who is not content with his/her immediate surroundings and their implications. The human subject resorts to imagination and creative impulses in the face of capitalist one-dimensional existence that so uniformly values humanity in terms of labor power and profit potential. Instead of taking from the irrevocably corrupted material that already exists to spur on the status quo, Ullrich begins to aesthetically reimagine alternate forms of experience and education in order to dispel with the dryness and irrelevance of those such as erudite Marxists who enact little change with their droning lectures and lack of imaginative passion. This event serves as a springboard that thrusts Ullrich into Marcusean critical territory. The next step he takes is to remove himself from the environs of the compromised and publicly decried student movement.

The experience Ullrich pursues aligns itself to Marcuse’s notions of societal negation and utopian thinking as he struggles to rid himself of his reliance on “false needs” and attempts to envision and pursue a novel society in which each individual is fulfilled and represented in his work, in opposition to contemporary society in which individuals are alienated from their work. As Ullrich begins to distance himself from the
student movement and its toxic ineffectiveness in garnering more widespread support, he moves toward a more aesthetized form of protest, one that sees him organizing street theater productions near the factories where the actual workers, one such target of public support, toil. After repeated disappointments with the lifestyle and lack of revolutionary progress of the leftist protest movement, Ullrich leaves behind its false promises and its participation in capitalism. Street theater is his initial aesthetic attempt to reach the workers, on whom he now places importance as truer representatives of the toiling populous (as opposed to the freeloading students, e.g. Christian). Ullrich realizes the importance of educating the masses. He even willingly educates himself by submitting himself to grueling work in a factory instead of taking available, financially superior options elsewhere. The path he takes introduces him to other forms of experience, so that he might contemplate a new form that negates the dominant capitalist ones within society. He appears to understand the depth of the issue now (Part III).

Ullrich ultimately solidifies the development of his own newly critical consciousness with his break from the student movement. He shows the nuances of a new sensibility developing within him when he befriends the socialist-oriented worker Roland in the factory and even reengages in discussions with the bookish Petersen, toward whom he very recently held personal disdain due to his irrational jealousy of Petersen’s intellectual diligence and insistence. At this point, Timm makes the failings of the student movement quite conclusively clear. The worker Walter asks the students a simple question that sums up the corrupted essence of the student movement—Ullrich recalls this question as he considers his comrades’ (Renate and Nottker) empty laughter as they mock the demeanor of Lister and Walter, two workers who in the following scene
attempt to reach the members of the counterculture (240). Before coming to this question, it is important to note that the entire scene chronicles Ullrich’s disenchantment with the movement. First, he notices the sternness and “hardness” that sets Walter apart as a worker: “In seinem Gesicht war etwas Hartes, ein Gesicht, das Ullrich sich nicht lachend vorstellen konnte…. Ullrich hatte eigentlich sagen wollen: Endlich mal ein Arbeiter” (240). Ullrich first expresses a feeling of warmth (new sense/sensibility) as he is invited by the workers to the factory, which is followed by despair as he tries to answer Walter’s pivotal question and consequently realizes the student movement’s utter lack of critical understanding:


Ullrich’s inability to retort to the simple inquiry, “Just what do you live on? Wovon lebt ihr eigentlich?” (my translation) alludes to the stagnation of his development under the guidance of the student movement. He suggests that they have no experience of hard work; they expect the revolution to simply materialize from half-hearted anti-conformity and the consumption of mind-altering substances. Walter offers a direct challenge to the members of the student movement. Here Ullrich realizes that the movement has not taken him toward a new sensibility, but rather has firmly secured his place within the status quo and the uncritical masses. He is unable to come up with any declaration or explanation
[“Ihm fiel nichts ein’”] to justify the lifestyle and methods of the leftist protestors.

Walter’s question reveals the student movement to be an organization of bravado, distinct stylings, and high publicity, but with little willingness to pursue or experience a difficult course of transformation that would involve a revolution of the nature of work and the working class.

While Ullrich stands in studious appreciation of Walter as a worker, Renate and Nottker resort to actions typical of the theoretically disinclined student protestors; they imitate his mannerisms and speech, and laugh blindly at his expense, rather than attempting any productive actions or anything that would lead to a sharpened understanding and communication between the alienated proto-revolutionary classes (the students and the workers):


While Ullrich friends’ frivolously laugh off potentially enlightening resources-- a seemingly pat response for them-- a link to more widespread support, and more experienced and diversified people, Ullrich is struck by the learnedness of Walter and the
actual critical engagement that he provides. Ullrich realizes the absence of individual
determination and finally is able to put a name to his oppressors. Walter acts as a catalyst
to this realization. He notes that the elite would no doubt like nothing more than for the
current divide between students and workers to persist. Ullrich’s epiphanic reaction
following this is telling:

[Walter:] Wer nix tut, hilft denen, die wollen, das alles so blibt [bleibt],
wie es is. Ullrich war, als hätte Walter das extra für ihn gesagt. Einen
Moment glaubte er sich von den Umstehenden beobachtet. Undergrund
hat er gesagt. Renate machte jetzt Walter nach und zog wie er die Vokale
lang. [Ullrich:] Hör doch auf. Ullrich ärgerte sich plötzlich über das
Gerede von Nottker und Renate, aber mehr noch ärgerte er sich über sich
selbst, wie er dastand, in seinem langen schwarzen Mantel mit diesem
albernen Schlapphut auf dem Kopf. Wie lächerlich, dachte er. Gern hätte
er jetzt seine Parka angehabt, einen Packen Flugblätter unter dem Arm,
wie die anderen. Er nahm seinen Schlapphut ab. Unschlüssig hielt er ihn in
der Hand. Am liebsten hätte er ihn weggeworfen. (243)

In opposition to fellow countercultural members Nottker and Renate, Ullrich experiences
yet another realization through his personal crisis of the senses. He explicitly denounces
the stylization of the movement when he regards his “Schlapphut” disdainfully. He
denounces Nottker and Renate for their immaturity and inclination to noncritical,
spontaneous action, but also shifts the blame wholly upon himself for so unquestioningly
buying into the movement’s methods previously. Now in some sense newly aware of the
dominating subjectivity and its influence on the student movement, Ullrich sets out on a
personal journey, free from the immaturity and theoretical-intellectual weakness of the student movement. He enters the factory to experience actual hardship and presumably to pursue the answer of Walter’s question, “Wovon lebt ihr eigentlich?” through real experience, hard work, and by forging connections with the common workingman.

Ullrich’s newfound critical consciousness is further unfolded through his discussions with Petersen and Roland in the final part of the novel, in which he places importance on education (he wants to become a teacher) and shows his will to individually determine his path, free from all societal administration. No longer is he “insulated” and thus uncertain and vainly attempting to follow others into a fruitless pursuit of revolution. At the end of Teil I, Ullrich was unable to answer his younger brother Manfred’s simple question: “Was willst du machen?” (104) Now, he provides for a fully concrete answer when Petersen asks him about his school term paper:

Here Ullrich appears completely aware of the path toward the emancipation of his consciousness. Although in this context he speaks about his paper, his monologue surely applies to all forms of the individual’s experience of society. Here he directly criticizes the lack of individual determination in pursuing such academic papers—he claims that one’s uninhibited subjectivity should play the essential role. He insinuates that through such an emancipation of consciousness and subjectivity, that, finally, “something new” will finally emerge (my translation). He speaks of the necessity to “change oneself”, to create “new perceptions” and to pursue one’s work under the guidance of one’s “new experiences”, feelings, and subjective ideas, rather than to write what is expected, to reaffirm the singular rationality which dominates reality such as he had to do at the university. He even channels Marcuse directly, stating that the “impossible” needs to be imagined, presumably as a negation of that which is already possible and thus of dominated society.

**The Emergence of “New Sensibility” in the Individual**

As Ullrich begins his first few days in the factory, he notices the utter exhaustion that envelops him, and the ways in which work dictates his life even though he was away from the workplace. He notices during one of his first early morning commutes how work in the factory is so physically and mentally exhausting that most workers have no choice but to dedicate their free time to constant sleep and recuperation, “Niemand sprach. Nur das Schlagen der Räder, das metallene Zwitschern in den Kurven. Es war, als schliefen sie im Stehen, mit offenen Augen. Wer sich einen Platz erkämpft hatte, las Zeitung…. Die Müdigkeit war wie ein Brennen in Ullrichs Augen.” (270) When Ullrich first enters the factory he only hears “unbeschreiblicher Lärm” (266). These workers
must satisfy their actual needs (sleep, nutrition, etc.) in the little free time they do have off of work, leaving them little time to pursue personal projects and new experiences.

Whereas such societal oppression was hidden from Ullrich previously (evidenced by his participation in it), it is now likened to a “burning” ("Brennen") in his eyes. While newly experiencing the work world, Ullrich immediately exhibits signs of a uniquely powerful attunement to his sensibility. When he first enters the factory, his untrained and neglected senses are unable to distinguish the cacophony of sounds that he hears, and he only hears an “indescribable noise” [“unbeschreiblicher Lärm”] (266). However, after a mere week, “konnte Ullrich schon unterscheiden: Das Kreischen der Fräsen, das Rattern der Bohrmaschinen, das Stampfen der Motoren” (273). The speed with which Ullrich is able to distinguish the factory sounds suggests that Ullrich is now, near the novel’s conclusion, better equipped to deal with societal domination. Basic sensual perceptions no longer assault him as before, as he is able to recognize them as false sources of consternation. If he has reached a point at which he values and positively receives his sensual perceptions, evidenced by his ability to distinguish and attribute value to the noises in the factory, he can extend his newfound appreciation of his sensibility to discern of oppressive instrumental rationality when it crops up in everyday society and attempt to actively resist it, to undo the “passive tolerance” which he had previously extended to it. With his outspoken emphasis on imagination and play, he is well equipped to contribute to a growing awareness of more utopian possibilities for society. Timm, however, suggests that Ullrich’s revolutionary path, however admirable and progressive it has become, still leaves him operating within society’s bounds. His strides in his personal sensual development and political awareness are numerous and significant, but he nevertheless
remains grounded in the medium of oppressive reality in which he started his revolutionary experience.

Ullrich’s decision to carry on with the revolutionary, critical cause through teaching concludes his critical progression within “one-dimensional” society. While there is undoubtedly room for the argument that he operates within society and does literally become an artist or other aesthetic producer, the progression of his experience in Heißer Sommer is certainly Timm’s aesthetic representation of how an individual dialectically comes to understand his personal relationship with political society. When Petersen asks Ullrich why he decided to teach after all his trials and initial resistance to university, that is, state, education, Ullrich responds with an answer that indicates his intentions to educate the youth who are still uninitiated in adult society: “Da (Volksschule) sind noch die Arbeiterkinder, hatte Ullrich gesagt, da kann man noch was machen.” (300) “Er wolle Volksschullehrer werden” (305). At this point Ullrich has come full circle. With the so-called revolutionaries of the student movement, Ullrich was still plagued by uncertainty from the popular criticism directed at him and his fellow students. Now, however, with the aid of new experiences, Ullrich harbors a strong, independent notion of the importance of revolutionizing education outside of the university in awakening realization within the passive working class. If he can shield the workers’ children from instrumental rationality through an education that somehow stresses receptivity to new forms of sensual experience and urges, he might be able to spur them toward lifestyles that negate its governing effects on human sensibility. He also expresses his desire to return to Munich to finish his studies, the initial position he occupied as the novel commenced. Now he tackles the same task with a reconfigured consciousness in his new
awareness of societal oppression. He appears motivated to work specifically against capitalist ideology and its oppressively administered rationality.

Further evidence of his newly developed sensibility and openness to new experience arises in the positive reaction that he has to Petersen’s laughter. This distinctly opposes the empty and occasionally malevolent laughter of the students and Ullrich’s previous bitter attitude toward Petersen, in favor of an open, genuine laughter that expresses genuine human understanding and empathy between Ullrich and Petersen, two of the few within the counterculture who were actually dedicated to philosophical critique, theory, and their application in counteracting capitalism. Ullrich’s positive reception of Petersen’s laughter seems to function as a barometer for both his self-certainty in moving forward and his new openness to societal/communal interaction. In the scene, Ullrich and Petersen contemplate Ullrich’s and the other students’ failed attempt to commit arson on the Springer corporation: “Hautspiritus, Petersen lachte, er legte dabei, wie gewöhnlich, den Kopf leicht in den Nacken und lachte. Ullrich fiel auf, daß er Petersen seit langem nicht mehr hatte lachen hören. Er mochte dieses Lachen” (310). Ullrich’s last thoughts after his happy reunion with Petersen, which concludes the novel, are pointedly sensual and evoke his newfound openness to his sensual perceptions. Timm evokes a sense of irony in the scene, as Ullrich revels in his new knowledge of oppression and in preparing himself to practice against it. He is, however, still blatantly immersed in its clutches. He remembers a passage from and while so doing sees, hears, and otherwise senses his surroundings:

*Es gibt ein realisierbares Glück für alle: Eine befriedete Welt, eine Welt ohne Ausbeutung und Unterdrückung.* Das rhythmische Rattern der Räder.

Whereas Ullrich originally exhibited frantic, fearful reactions to his alienated senses during Part 1 with Ingeborg, he appears here at the end liberated from capitalist conditioning and newly armed with his realization of what Marcuse means by: “Glück für alle” and “eine befriedete Welt… ohne Ausbeutung und Unterdrückung”. Because he now realizes the value and the power of imagination and play, and has behind him a collection of experiences in all walks of society, he has emancipated his consciousness in his awareness of the possibility of more utopian conditions. With a future as an educator, Ullrich seems ready to combat dominant rationality where it starts and where he most decisively encountered it: in the sphere of education. Timm, however, makes clear that Ullrich’s individual success does not in any way undo the dictates of instrumental rationality. The evidence of this is that his nearest neighbor exhibits the telltale markers of an oppressed individual in “one-dimensional” society. He sleeps off his likely work-induced weariness during broad daylight hours, which are not free for his enjoyment. He is indicated to have previously ‘entertained’ himself with one of capitalism’s material trappings—a magazine. Symbolic of the rest of oppressed society, Ullrich’s newfound hope is suggested to be commendable and deserving of significance, yet miniscule, a
mere component part of the springboard toward affecting further sensual revolution, in
the grand scheme of capitalism’s historical dominance. Thus, I finish by arguing that
Timm’s choice of medium—a work of literary realism—becomes a model for further
action and contemplation geared toward emancipation from instrumental rationality.
Much like Ullrich now strives to educate the young, who are yet to be fully immersed in
the oppressive social mechanisms and economics of capitalism, Timm strives to educate
his readership and provide a transparent depiction of democratic society’s undemocratic
tendencies. The irony of the scene—Ullrich revels in his self-proclaimed emancipation in
the midst of clear societal oppression—serves to strengthen Timm’s message.
Emancipation begins with a personal struggle, but does not find its conclusion with the
personal struggle. Once one’s consciousness has been, in a sense, redeemed and
reclaimed from alien ends, the progression moves onward. The contemplation of
alternative societal conditions appears to come next, and must take on a form that is
palatable to fellow travelers (such as Ullrich’s literal fellow traveler in this scene). While
Ullrich has indeed made headway with his experience of instrumental rationality’s
dominance, Timm appears to suggest here that his self-satisfaction is overvalued and
unwarranted.

Timm’s project of literary realism, which puts external reality into question,
appears fulfilled in his convincing and transparent elucidation of the dominated class
forms of society. Many manifestations of Marcusean philosophy and thought are present
within Heißer Sommer, and I have strived to incorporate these into an analysis that
substantiates Timm’s work as aesthetically critical, as a reconceptualization of a
redemptive path for common human experience in dominated, reified society. While
many the steps of Ullrich’s progression into critical experience seem accidental, the work as a whole defiantly opposes the totalitarian nature of society. The university system is shown to embody the opposite of a liberal, democratic education; it constrains thought. The counterculture further exposes what Marcuse called the “integration of opposites” by acting in a manner conducive to the plans of the ruling elite, simultaneously alienating themselves from a broader demographic of support due to the public destructiveness of their actions. In contrast to the critics that read this as an autobiographical, ideological work, I have refocused the discussion on the general implications of dominated experience as they arise from Ullrich, which allows for him to successfully and concretely expose, through aesthetic re-representation, previously intangible societal “one-dimensionality” to a wide readership.


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