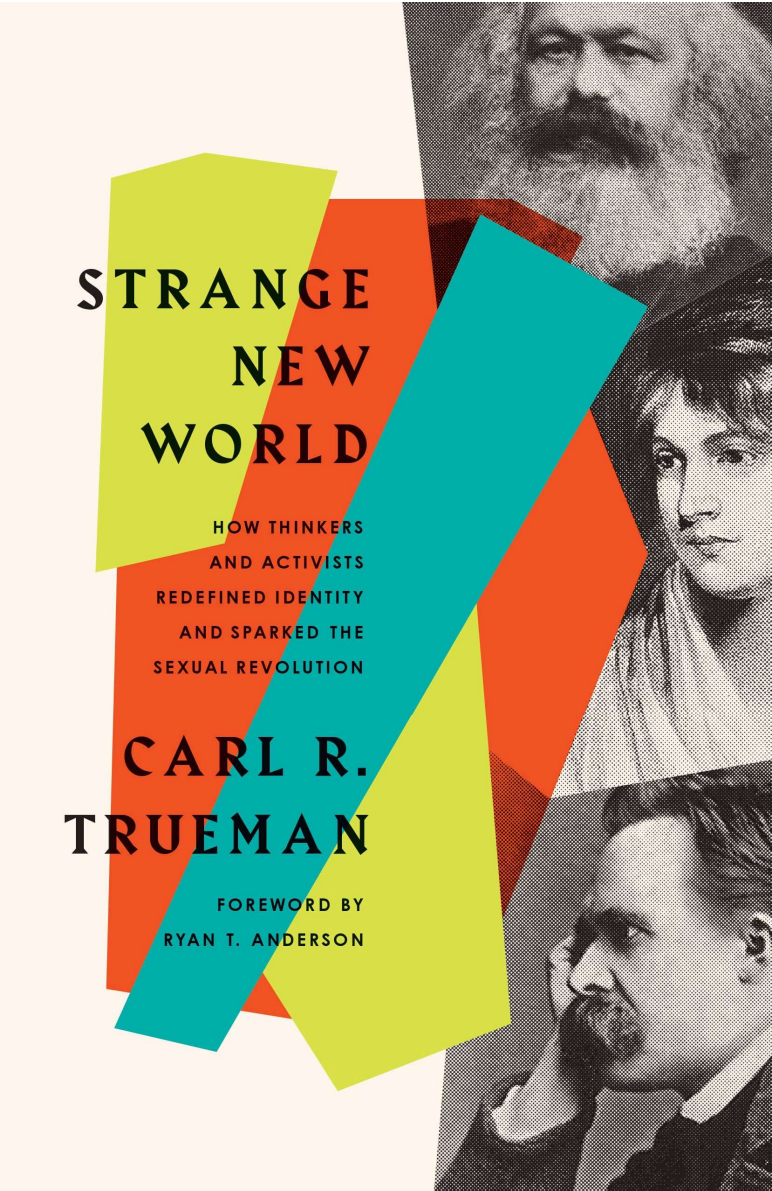


CHAPTER 5

The Revolt of the Masses

Major Premise:

The ideas of the thinkers from the 18th to the early 20th century that led to the sexual revolution infiltrated the culture through the influence of technological advance, the collapse of traditional authority, the loss of “sacred order,” easy contraception, and the mainstreaming of pornography.



STRANGE NEW WORLD

HOW THINKERS
AND ACTIVISTS
REDEFINED IDENTITY
AND SPARKED THE
SEXUAL REVOLUTION

CARL R.
TRUEMAN

FOREWORD BY
RYAN T. ANDERSON

The Influence of Technology

The advance of modern technology has transformed our way of understanding the world and ourselves. In the traditional view the world had a “fixed, stable, and solid” nature to which we submitted. Now “the modern cultural imagination sees the world as raw material to be shaped by the human will” (p. 95).



The Collapse of Traditional Authority

A crucial factor in enabling the rise of the authority of the self and its feelings and the idea that world is “plastic”—moldable to our desires—is the “collapse of traditional external sources of authority & identity”, particularly that of church, family and nation (p. 97).



The Loss of Sacred Order

Western culture has largely abandoned the idea of a “sacred order” which undergirds and justifies the moral order of a society. In this situation “society’s moral order defaults to pragmatism and . . . to the matter of who shouts loudest and has the most effective lobby groups” (p. 101).



Easy Contraception

The arrival of the first commercially available birth control pill in 1960 “made it very easy to sever the link between sex and pregnancy” (p. 102). Regarding sex casually and without commitment became “far more plausible in a world with access to the pill” (p. 102).



The Mainstreaming of Pornography

Beginning in the 1950s, the efforts of Hugh Hefner and others like him started the process of legitimizing pornography in American culture. The internet has made pornography freely & easily available. “No longer does use of pornography carry the social stigma it once did” (p. 103).



The Revolt of the Elites

The role played by the cultural elite class in Western societies has been transformed from that of conserving the traditions and values of the past to one of denigrating and overthrowing past values and beliefs. Cultural elites, including the “ruling class” are now characterized by aggressive secular progressivism.



Discussion Questions

1. What other key factors in Western culture & American society have helped to bring about the rise of expressive individualism & the sexual revolution?
2. In what ways has advanced technology been harmful as well as helpful?
3. Some sub-cultures—including ours—still believe in a sacred order and traditional authorities. What is their future in a culture whose social imaginary is increasing one of expressive individualism and secular progressivism?

4. How have our views toward contraception influenced our beliefs about the purposes of sex?
5. What should be the role of cultural “elites”? Do you think Dr. Trueman has accurately described the transformation of cultural elites? Why or why not?
6. How has the presentation of families in pop culture and entertainment served to undermine their traditional authority? The Church and Christians? The Nation?