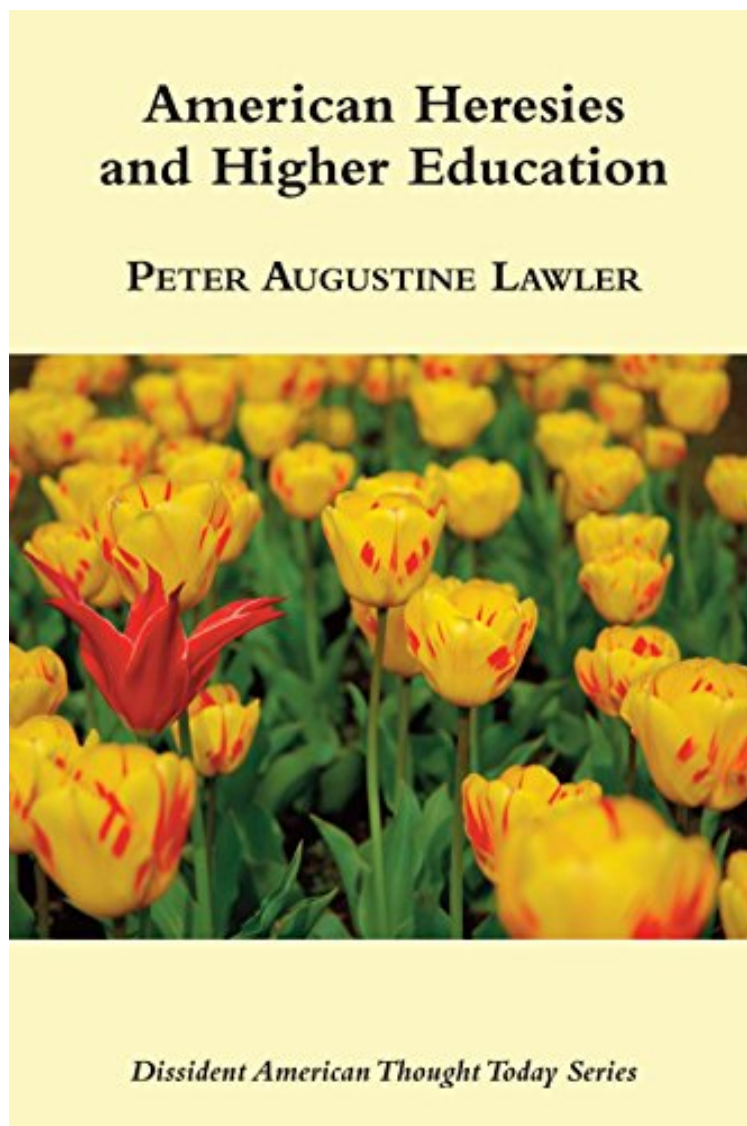


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Peter Augustine Lawler

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Peter Augustine Lawler : American Heresies and Higher Education (Dissident American Thought Today)
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Heresies and
Higher Education (Dissident American Thought Today):

4 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Tough as NailsNo other book like it.

These closely interrelated essays explore who we think we are and what we believe we were supposed to do as free and relational persons these days. Our country is rife with heresies, which shouldn't be regarded as all that negative. Heresies are always partly true, and they highlight part of the truth we might otherwise ignore. Our insistent efforts to maximize our autonomy is based upon the truth that each of us free persons is more than merely part of a species or part of a country. Our libertarians who are typically our most savvy futurologists constantly remind us that the freedom we won for ourselves through our technological capabilities. They typically fail to remind us, however, that those gifts are a challenge to our free wills. Technology is only good if limited and directed by our relational responsibilities, as well as by authentically living in the truth. Similarly, our evolutionary psychology is a heresy. It highlights the fact that we are irreducibly relational beings, and that most of our happiness comes from performing our natural responsibilities as members of a highly social species. An excessive concern with autonomy produces loneliness and disorientation, and it is surely the main cause of the birth dearth that threatens the future of our basic entitlements and threatens to become a national security issue. But evolutionary psychology can't even begin to account for the greatness and misery of our irreducible freedom, and it has little to say about what really animates priests, philosophers, poets, presidents, physicists, and so forth. Our Lockean pretensions toward autonomy need to be chastened by what the Darwinians know about the eusocial animal, just as the Darwinians stand in need of guidance by the Lockean insight that each of us is not determined by some impersonal, species-driven biological destiny. And there's more: It's the Christians who teach us the whole truth about who we are as free and relational beings under God. Reform in higher education these days, which is the concern of roughly half the essays in this collection, is driven by the truth that each of us is a free being who works, and that it is irresponsible not to prepare students for the techno-realities of the 21st century marketplace. Those efforts at disruptive innovation, however, are at the expense of who we are as more than techno-vocational or middle-class beings, as who we are as a relational being born to know, love, and die and given a singular destiny that takes us beyond our biological limitations. They're at the expense of genuinely higher education. The purpose here is not to reject the blessings of technological progress, but to understand our various new births of freedom in light of the one true progress toward wisdom and virtue that occurs over the course of a particular human life. These essays are all about creating a safe space for liberal education in our increasingly one-dimensional techno-vocational country by deploying all means necessary to defend our genuine moral and intellectual diversity. The only way to create a safe space for diverse heresies is to from a point of view that grasps what's true and what's not about each of them. This book is part of the series in dissident political thought, highlighting, as it does, countercultural ways of challenging our dominant forms of techno-progressivism and political correctness.

"Wise, funny, and clear-sighted, *American Heresies and Higher Education* is a book for anyone who wants to know what's really wrong with American higher education and what might be done about it."--Micah Mattix, Washington Free Beacon