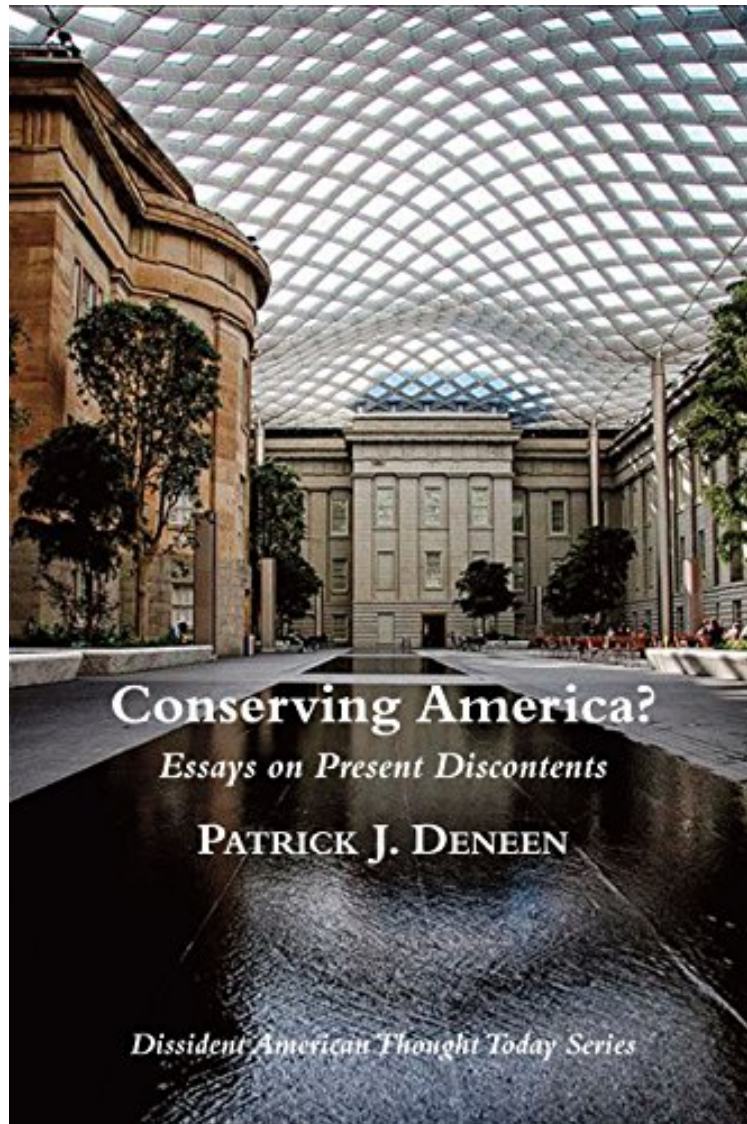


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Conserving America?: Essays on Present Discontents (Dissident American Thought Today)

Patrick J. Deneen

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Professor Deneen doesn't simply point out problems with the current (and past) political and cultural climate; he puts forth a consistent and corrective worldview centered on the human person. Putting aside the question of whether his ideas will ever be widely embraced, or even widely considered, the book is a hopeful one. It's hopeful in that it helps make sense of the state of things and suggests that there are indeed rational and common sense approaches to these issues that take seriously the dignity of the human person. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. absolutely excellent!!By David Spauldingabsolutely excellent!!! this is a book everyone who has any interest in the theory and history of our political culture should read and digest. It is a bit heavy going in places but the effort required to absorb the message is insignificant compared to the insight obtained.. There is real "meat" in this book that I have not found in any other comparable discussion. David19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. For the Future DiscontentsBy CustomerCaptivating, uncompromising, and at once challenging, this work calls into question our deepest held presuppositions as Americans. In an unflinching manner, Patrick Deneen forces us to confront the ills plaguing our society whether in the form of our cold and hedonistic economy, our deteriorating environment, our fraying communities, or our loss of identity and begs the question if these are not anomalies of the liberal order, but consequences of that order's very culmination.Perhaps never more timely than with the election of President Trump, as American politics comes to resemble something of a maniacal three-ring circus, Deneen artfully lays forth the metamorphoses that will occur, and have occurred, as liberalism comes further into its own. His conclusions leave us deeply disquieted, if not with a sense of foreboding dread, but nonetheless, this work provides us with something else a vision for an alternative future, one that draws on the lessons of the past, but looks deep into the future as it seeks to conserve and renew for generations yet unborn.Of special interest are the lectures, Community and Freedom OR Individualism and Statism, and After Liberalism, which discuss many of the points mentioned above. For the reader who is seeking an altogether different lens through which to consider politics and our country's future, I cannot recommend this book strongly enough.

"Opinions about America have taken a decisive turn in the early part of the 21st century. Some 70% of Americans believe that the country is moving in the wrong direction, and half the country thinks that its best days are behind it. Most believe that their children will be less prosperous and have fewer opportunities than previous generations. Evident to all is that the political system is broken and social fabric is fraying, particularly as a growing gap between wealthy haves and left-behind have-nots increases, a hostile divide widens between faithful and secular, and deep disagreement persists over America's role in the world. Wealthy Americans continue to build gated enclaves in and around select cities where they congregate, while growing numbers of Christians compare our times to those of the late Roman empire, and ponder a fundamental withdrawal from wider American society into updated forms of Benedictine monastic communities. The signs of the times suggest that much is wrong with America. This collection of thematic essays by Notre Dame political theorist and public intellectual Patrick Deneen addresses the questions, is there something worth conserving in America, and if so, is America capable of conservation? Can a nation founded in a revolutionary moment that led to the founding of the first liberal nation be thought capable of sustaining and passing on virtues and practices that ennoble? Or is America inherently a nation that idolizes the new over the old, license over ordered liberty, and hedonism over self-rule? Can America conserve what is worth keeping for it to remain--or even become--a Republic?"--

About the AuthorPatrick J. Deneen is David A. Potenziani Memorial Associate Professor of Political Science and Constitutional Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He is author of two booksThe Odyssey of Political Theory and Democratic Faithand co-editor of three volumes, as well as author of numerous articles and book reviews. His essays have appeared in such publications as First Things, The Hedgehog , Intercollegiate , Front Porch Republic, The American Conservative, and The Imaginative Conservative. He lives in South Bend with his wife and three children.