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**Michael W. Cuneo. *The Smoke of Satan: Conservative and Traditionalist Dissent in Contemporary American Catholicism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. Pp. x + 214. \$16.95 (Paper).**

[1] This is the paperback version of the original hardback edition of *The Smoke of Satan* published by Oxford University Press in 1997. Although the 1999 edition contains a preface written for the Johns Hopkins University Press, Cuneo says nothing in that preface about the 1999 edition containing new information, further observations, or expanded coverage that renders it superior to the original hardback. Patricia Wittberg (*Sociology of Religion* 59 [Spring 1998]: 91) and William D. Dinges (*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36 [1997]: 630-31) wrote reviews of the 1997 edition. I am grateful for their insights, especially Dinges's penetrating critiques. What follows is yet another review that builds upon previous reviewers' work and offers additional comments about Cuneo's book.

[2] Cuneo claims that three strands of the Catholic right in the United States emerged following Vatican II. Conservatives, led by writers like James Hitchcock and organizations like Catholics United for the Faith, insist on the orthodoxy of their beliefs and commitments in rejecting the changes in the Church brought on by Vatican II. Among their ranks were those who focused on the abortion issue. Beginning in the 1970s these individuals, led by Joseph Scheidler, left the National Right to Life Committee to begin their own anti-abortion groups. They practiced nonviolent direct action, picketing abortion clinics and conducting sidewalk counseling for people entering the clinics for abortions. Eventually they found common cause with Randall Terry of Operation Rescue and other Evangelical Protestant anti-abortion activists. Their actions were motivated, according to Cuneo, by a sexual ideology that insisted on responsible use of the human body for procreation. Contraception and abortion, in their view, were symptoms of an irresponsible approach to sexuality running rampant in the ranks of the Catholic faithful as well as in American society generally.

[3] Separatists are those on the Catholic right who maintain a Catholic utopia composed of their own seminaries and chapels. Their priests in various organizations like the Society of St. Pius X celebrate the Tridentine mass. They have given up on the post-Vatican II Church, asserting that true Catholicism is only preserved in their separatist enclaves. They disagree

with conservatives, who still acknowledge the authority of John Paul II and the hierarchy, and see conspiracies emanating from the Vatican to destroy the moral and doctrinal foundations of the historic Catholic faith. Cuneo argues that they sustain community purity by avoiding participation in anti-abortion activities that would, for example, bring them into contact with non-Catholics and taint their separatist *communitas*.

[4] Finally, Marianists are those right-wing Catholics whose rejection of the post-Vatican II Church is based upon Marian apparitions, especially at Fatima, Portugal in 1917, but more recently to Veronica Lueken in Queens, New York and Fr. Gaston Tremblay of the Apostles of Infinite Love in Quebec, who says that he is the true pope for our time. Marianists are apocalyptic in style: Mary has prophesied the end of the world order as we know it unless Communism and other evils are eradicated by the Christian faith as embodied in the Roman Catholic Church. They disagree with one another about the sequence of events leading to Jesus's Second Coming, but agree that the present moment is among the last.

[5] *The Smoke of Satan* is a tribute to Cuneo's persistence in finding and interviewing traditionalist Catholics whose voices otherwise might not be heard in a scholarly context. And he is to be commended for ordering otherwise disparate groups, who criticize each other as much as they criticize the Roman Catholic Church, into a typology that allows for inspection and study. But this latter point is also a problem, as Dinges pointed out in his review. The three categories detailed in this book do not explain why we should consider all of these dissenters from Vatican II together. Cuneo, to his credit, points out their differences, especially in his conclusion, but he does not regard these differences as sufficient to question the organizing typology for his work. Perhaps we should understand this problem as an opportunity for future researchers to reconsider conservatives, separatists, and Marianists from other angles. Conservatives, for example, share with other culture critics in the United States a range of moral and social values that applauds the nuclear family and decries abortion and homosexuality. Separatists resemble other communitarians and utopians in American history who rejected dominant religious and cultural institutions and cultivated purified communal life among themselves. And the Marianists are intimately linked to international political intrigue within the Roman Catholic Church, as well as sharing with other Catholics the perennial need to affirm Mary's central role in faith and practice, especially when the Mary of the apparitions condemns contemporary departures from the moral and spiritual standards shared by the recipients and advocates of those apparitions. Marian apparitions are not understood very well by the scholarly community. The recent tragedy involving the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God movement in Uganda points to Mary's complex and multiple meanings among Catholics in various parts of the world. These apparitions resemble mystical, shamanistic experiences reported in diverse religious traditions, and would benefit from further comparative study.

[6] Finally, a word of caution about the 1999 edition of *The Smoke of Satan*. The interviews that Cuneo conducted are now nearly a decade old in some cases. This means that we have less confidence now, than in 1997, that Cuneo's work reports current opinions, and the current state of affairs, among Catholic conservatives, separatists, and Marianists. Instead, the 1999 edition gives us a snapshot of the Catholic right in the 1990s. The first edition was dated when it was published in 1997. Today this work is more valuable as a study of a

historical period in American Catholic history rather than an investigation of contemporary social groups.

[7] Given these considerations, Cuneo's work remains a hallmark in scholarly efforts to interpret modern and postmodern American dissenters to mainstream life. His willingness to allow these dissenters to speak for themselves is particularly praiseworthy. For those interested in the great diversity of contemporary American Catholic life, *The Smoke of Satan* should be essential reading.

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