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### Review Of "L'Europe De Jean Monnet," 2nd Edition By M. Joly

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Marc Joly, *L'Europe de Jean Monnet*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Paris: CNRS Editions, Coll. "Biblis," 2017. xvi + 238 pp. Appendices, bibliography, and index. 10€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-271-11504-1.

Review by Megan Brown, Swarthmore College.

An English customs agent once approached Jean Monnet, the French administrator known as the "Father of Europe," and asked, "I would like to be sure of this, sir: Once we enter your Europe, can we leave?" Marc Joly, in his *L'Europe de Jean Monnet*, first published in 2007, highlights the episode to demonstrate the amalgam of Monnet and "his" Europe (p. 180). In light of the 2016 Brexit referendum and the current electoral strides made by anti-EU parties in France, Germany, Hungary, and elsewhere, Monnet's recollection of the exchange in his 1976 *Mémoires* now carries a sense of dramatic irony for the reader.

In 2005, French and Dutch voters opted not to accept a proposed constitution for the European Union constitutional referendum, a result that surprised European elites and prompted Joly to write this book. That the new version is also published in the wake of a popular referendum rejecting European protocol should not be ignored. Republishing his work in 2017 with a new preface, Joly sets out to examine the myth of Jean Monnet and how that myth both helped to shape, and is in itself representative of what he casts as the elite nature of European institutions. Joly argues that in the foundation of unified Europe, "state elites gave themselves an important margin of liberty, allowing them not only to manipulate national political symbols as they wished, but also to define a common decision-making framework by modifying the perimeter of the exercise of national sovereignty" (p. 11). The question of the EU's democratic limitations, demonstrated by seeming insignificance of the 2005 referendum's failure, is one that Joly traces back to the origins of the European Union. Joly analyzes this institution by investigating the emergence of the premier elite figure in its history: Jean Monnet himself.

Nobert Elias' sociological theories underpin Joly's analysis. He focuses on three of Elias' most influential ideas--the civilizing process (*Prozeß der Zivilisation*), functional interdependence, and double constraint--to unseat the myth of Monnet from its hagiographical throne. According to Joly, Elias' theories allow for an examination of the EU with an eye towards "long-term processes and the elementary rules of human configurations [...]." Elias' work is suited "ideally to the need for analytical distinction *and* historical perspective required of a proper understanding of the phenomenon of political Europe" (p. 25). Joly joins other scholars in applying Eliasian ideas to a study of the European Union. In recent years, for example, Florence Delmotte has examined Elias' national *habitus* and post-national political integration

and Nico Wilterdink has analyzed Elias and Pierre Bourdieu's work in a consideration of social inequality and nationalist populism in Europe.[1] Joly emphasizes the Monnet myth itself; the myth's longevity now appears as one of the long-term processes Elias would have examined. The myth of the elite founder serves to legitimize the structure of integrated Europe and precludes other possible shapes for "Europe."

The first part of Joly's book concerns the myth of Monnet and its link to the shape of European institutions and decision making, which he calls "an elitist [*élitaire*] political system— *le pouvoir-Europe*" (p. 112). The Monnet myth is a familiar trope: a businessman drawn to international institutions, including the World War I Inter-Allied Maritime Commission and the League of Nations, Monnet understood that the only way out of the wreckage of World War II was the economic integration of recently adversarial states. In realizing this vision of a united states of Europe, first in the form of the European Coal and Steel Community (Treaty of Paris, 1951), then the European Economic Community (Treaty of Rome, 1957), Monnet acquired a saint-like aura in the history of integration as the "civilizer" of the continent (p. 41). Joly notes Monnet's own role in this mythmaking, notably through the publication of his *Memoires*. [2]

The myth centers on Monnet's advocacy of integrated Europe, and glosses over the tribulations of the negotiations as statesmen debated the institution's form. For example, Monnet's preference for the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) over the Common Market is well documented, yet disputes between the Six largely doomed the former's form and implementation. The French economist Pierre Uri, a collaborator on the 1956 Spaak Report, whose conclusions undergirded future integration negotiations, wrote that Monnet slowed Common Market discussions by insisting that the Six focus on Euratom instead. Historians including Gérard Bossuat, René Girault, and Andrew Moravcsik have already confirmed Uri's assertion. Joly's contribution does not simply add another reminder of the contingencies or experiments of the early years of European integration. By examining the functioning of the Monnet myth itself, in which a man largely disinterested by the Common Market could claim its "paternity" as the "harbinger" of Europe (p. 38-39), Joly argues that the opportunistic Monnet's elite-centric view of Europe came to define the institution itself.

Monnet's myth centers on the indispensable role of the elite decision makers of postwar Europe. The origin story of integrated Europe, derived from this cadre of elites, is then mirrored in the structure of the EU itself, whose foundation involved "the definitive transfer of the whole of the states' economic powers, sector by sector, to the High Authority" (p. 61). [3] Monnet would write in his memoirs that this action was taken in pursuit of "the keyword: peace" (p. 66). Joly, invoking Elias, suggests that the methods to achieve this goal created the EU structure currently buckling under the weight of numerous 'crises.' Monnet "bet on the civilized *habitus* of state representatives [...] to see only the common interest. Such a conception of things left little room for traditional democratic practice. [...] It] was, so to speak, a-democratic" (pp. 68-69). Thus, Joly concludes his first section, "The only legitimate 'Europe' is that which was built..." (pp. 106-107). Monnet's myth thus became the master narrative of Europe's salvation.

Elias' work is more prominent in part two. Elias is perhaps best known for his theory of the process of civilization, the "process of state-formation and within it the advancing centralization of society." [4] In exposing these civilizing processes, Elias insisted that state-

formation be understood in a long-term perspective. Elias and Monnet were contemporaries, yet Elias wrote about European integration rarely and only late in his career. There is no evidence to suggest that Monnet, famously averse to most books, read any of Elias' work. Nonetheless, Monnet's memoirs include the phrase "civilizing process," a topic on which he dwells. According to Joly, Monnet meant the term to mean "the subordination of the individuals and collectivities organized in states to communal rules and institutions pacifying their interrelations" (pp. 120-121). Elias' use of the term, in contrast, implied the process of interdependence, even as a state's monopoly on power expanded. He concluded in part that "the more people are made dependent by the monopoly [of power...], the greater becomes the power of the dependent [...]." [5] The question of monopolies of power, state sovereignty, and democratization serve as tools for Joly to examine what Monnet's approach and understanding of interstate relations might be. Although Joly suggests that Monnet had a more optimistic outlook than Elias, he also appears through much of the work to be a cutthroat pragmatist, eager to advance his vision to the detriment of democratic processes.

According to Joly, Monnet's myth undergirds the current crisis of confidence (amongst other crises) facing Europe. Despite the tremendous changes over the past ten years (including the global economic crisis) and new attention to migration—amplified by war in Syria, the rise in the popularity and electoral success of right-wing parties, and Brexit—Joly argues that his book's initial argument remains valid. The French in 2005 could reject Europe, but they could not choose "what sort of Europe" (pp. 160-161). Setting out to consider the process of European integration using Elias' theories, he concludes by suggesting that by suppressing the interdependence characteristic in civilizing processes, Monnet and his followers essentially set up the situation in which Europe now finds itself.

Joly argues that the EU operates behind a façade of democracy, revealed for the elite institution it is when citizens are heard (and sometimes ignored) in referenda. Joly's analysis anticipates a reader who is already familiar with the history and functioning of the European Union. For those who are, this work then provides an important analytical framework for thinking through how a hagiographical version of this history is both a reflection of its elite roots and a mechanism that renders it difficult to critique the institution (celebrated as a peace-keeping institution born from the ashes of Franco-German animosity). For those unfamiliar with European integration and the history of institutions, Joly's book would not be a welcoming introduction. But for those hoping to consider a new perspective on the current situation, and particularly the longer-term roots that may have contributed to the loss of confidence in the institution, the text is thought-provoking and intriguing.

Joly makes a compelling case that the origins of European troubles are indeed located in the origin story of Europe itself. When the customs guard asked Monnet about leaving Europe, Monnet responded by remarking to the Dutch diplomat Max Kohnstamm, "It will still take a lot of talking to this man to change his point of view" (p. 180). The questions of whether or how such views could be changed clearly remain unanswered as Europe marks fifty years since the implementation of the European Economic Community.

## NOTES

[1] Florence Delmotte, "About Post-National Integration in Norbert Elias's Work: Towards a Socio-Historical Approach," *Human Figurations* 1, 2 (July 2012), accessed Feb. 22, 2017,

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<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.11217607.0001.209>. Nico Wilterdink, "The Dynamics of Inequality and Habitus Formation: Elias, Bourdieu, and the Rise of Nationalist Populism," *Historical Social Research* 42, 4 (2017): 22-42.

[2] Clifford Hackett's research into the role of François Fontaine in the penning of the memoir suggests that Monnet had assistance constructing this myth. Clifford P. Hackett, *Who Wrote the Memoirs of Jean Monnet? An Intimate Account of an Historic Collaboration* (New York and Bern: Peter Lang, 2016).

[3] Monnet served as the president of the Coal and Steel Community's High Authority, 1952-1955.

[4] Robert van Krieken, *Norbert Elias* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1998), 96.

[5] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994 [1939]), 348, cited in van Krieken, *Elias*, 98.

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