Trevor Shelley: *Globalization and Liberalization: Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and Manent*. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020. Pp. ix, 288.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670521000413

Learned and sometimes exasperating, Trevor Shelley's critique of "globalization" put this reader in mind of a long-ago faculty seminar on the topic. The participants, each bolstered by a favored interpretive muse, were ready to proclaim elaborate explanations. The seminar leader—the late Clifford Geertz—suggested a simple preliminary question. What is globalization? That question prevailed. We never got to grand theory. Shelley may have skipped the earlier step. With *his* favored and in this instance French muses, the classical authors Montesquieu and Tocqueville plus the contemporary thinker Pierre Manent, he has laid down his own version of grand theory, which is roughly that globalization was the project of "progressive" thinkers who sought "to inaugurate a universal state" (141), when instead they ought to have adopted the political perspective of the nation state, a posture that would mediate between universal ideals and particular solidarities and commitments.

The polemical tone would have more impact if globalization were still an untarnished ideal. These days there are few progressives pining for a universal state. When Shelley argues that "a self-governing people alone offers the capacity for both action and virtue" (199), the social democrat and Harvard political theorist Richard Tuck would be in effective agreement since he favored Brexit as more likely to preserve Labour Party rule in Britain. The same was true for John Pocock. Sometimes, however, the attack on a progressive universal state switches to being more like a complaint about an expanding metaphor. "Two kinds of modern empire," Shelley writes, are found in (1) the commitment to international law and (2) "a universal sentiment of morality" (141). Empire as the reach of a widely shared and expanding idea or ideal is not to be doubted. In this sense, however, the idea of science is also an empire. We recall that Tocqueville and Montesquieu were committed to their respective "empires," namely, "democracy" and "*doux* commerce." They did so without blurring the focus on particular regimes.

As for the modern Left, Samuel Moyn observes that the current "empire" of human rights has always depended on enforcement by particular nation states. He proposes no alternatives. Far from refusing to acknowledge the force of "loyalty and solidarity" (201), Stephen Holmes and Ivan Krastev split the difference between universalism and particularity, just as Shelley recommends. "Liberalism" is a universalist creed attracted to "trans-national globalization," but democracy "presupposes the existence of a bounded political community" and is "an exclusively national project" (Holmes and Krastev, *The Light That Failed* [Pegasus Books, 2019], 58). There has definitely been a right-wing "populist revolt in the name of national sovereignty"

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670521000413 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(Shelley, 198), but liberal political thinkers are not far behind in refashioning national sovereignty.

Manent's *Metamorphoses of the City* (Harvard University Press, 2013) is the backdrop to Shelley's thoughts on the significance of Montesquieu and Tocqueville. In this book Manent rejected his own earlier embrace of Tocqueville's democracy paradigm. Tracking Hannah Arendt and (in a different register) Paul Rahe, Manent found a more far-reaching achievement in the Greek "production of the commons," the mold for the primacy of politics whose ongoing metamorphoses shaped the evolution of Western forms of government in the sequence of city, empire, church, and nation. This stepping back from Tocqueville is, Shelley surmises—and one can only agree—a return to Montesquieu's understanding of forms of government (256n32, 260n51). For those students of political thought who consider themselves attentive to "forms of government," the fascinating exposition of these themes—the real heart of the book—will be richly rewarding.

For Shelley and Manent, Greek imperialism—their preferred term is "empire"—did not transform Athens or Sparta. Roman imperialism did change the great city republic. Rome "underwent the greatest political transformation ever seen" (152). The Greek city was destroyed by internal and external corruption, but Rome showed itself capable of self-renewal (154). The transformation of republic into empire solidified a new conception of executive authority and citizenship. This was the "Ciceronian Moment." In the Empire of Rome, the passage from antiquity to modernity had already been accomplished.

Montesquieu is a guide to this account of the metamorphoses of forms. It is possible, however, to tell a different story. When the French magistrate praised "our fathers the Germans" (*Spirit of the Laws* 6.13), he meant to reject the Romanist story that state and aristocracy were legitimate heirs to Rome. There was no *translatio imperii*—transfer of political authority—from Rome to modern Europe. The barbarian or German conquest of Rome was richly deserved. In its place a people whose form of government was originally tribal renewed the sense of freedom that had been suffocated in empire.

For Montesquieu, the Romans illustrated the freedom of a self-governing people, but this history contained a cautionary tale: republican conquest was moral disaster. In addition, the civil war that brought about the Augustan transition to empire only established a kind of militarized aristocratic republic instead of providing a solution to republican woes. Republican virtue had cracked under the burden of increasing commercial inequalities. Rather than opt for an austere republican rejection of commerce, Montesquieu defined modernity as the discovery of a political structure—monarchy—that could both contain and benefit from a luxury economy. This interpretation will be familiar to the readers of Istvan Hont, Michael Sonenscher, Catherine Larrère, and, in this instance, myself.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670521000413 Published online by Cambridge University Press

If, however, we ignore this dispute about the origins of the European idea of monarchy, the two sides to the debate converge on this theme: "The original and dynamic form of European monarchy set history in motion" (176). We are also agreed on the direction of this motion, namely, toward modern democracy. However, one side of the monarchy question stresses along with Montesquieu the movement toward democracy in the incipient pluralism of intermediate powers: a democracy of competing elites which accommodated heterogeneity and local prejudice. The other side of the monarchy question—that of Manent and Shelley, which is ironically the more "progressive"—stresses "unity" in a king that was "the nation to be" (176). This seems more like the claim of Tocqueville that the consolidation of executive authority in the democratic state was the singular achievement of the French Revolution, a result which pointed to the univocal representation of the will of the people.

Shelley departs from Manent on the question of where America stands. Shelley wants the United States to be "exceptional and exemplary" (181) and its government a model of dynamism (196). Manent is silent on the issue of whether European failures were visible in America. Shelley celebrates the Constitution and then suggests that its achievement stood apart from the "rooted" nationalisms of culture and ethnicity that one found in Europe (187). Were Europe and America really so different? However admirable the principles of balance built into the Constitution, it also effectively kept slavery off the national agenda. It left every question concerning racial, gender, and workplace hierarchies up to the common law and the individual states. The "rooted" ethnicity of America lay in narrowing the agenda of the American federal government and making it the vehicle of elite white men. To be sure, the constitutional concerns of the latter were important for everyone concerned with national security, domestic commerce, and international trade. Their other concern, however, preserving the "natural" hierarchy of things, was eventually (if only partially) undone by that same Constitution. This is a tribute to the dynamism of constitutional government, but it also reveals that ethnic hostilities in America were not different from those in Europe, even if in America they were directed inward and in Europe outward.

–Michael Mosher
University of Tulsa, USA

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670521000413 Published online by Cambridge University Press