
REVIEWS AND NOTES

UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL WORLD

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Review of Alexander N. Chumakov's *Philosophy of Globalization. Selected articles*. Moscow: Moscow University Press, 2020. 368 pages.

In 2020, the Moscow University Press published the third edition of a book titled 'Philosophy of Globalization. Selected Articles' by Alexander Chumakov, an outstanding Russian philosopher, one of the leading scholars in Russia and in the world in the field of global and globalization studies. Planned to coincide with the author's 70th anniversary, the book has become a landmark in the development of not only the author's globalization concept but also the world discourse on globalization.

The third edition of 'Philosophy of Globalization' was released at a turning point in human history. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, further research on globalization will radically change both its content and ideological foundations. The year 2020 introduced not only new global problems, but also new meanings in the ontology of the humankind. So 'Philosophy of Globalization' has appeared today in a new light – as a kind of a key to the understanding those grandiose transformations in the life of the humankind that will become apparent in the near future.

The title of the book is very revealing; it combines two facets of Professor Alexander Chumakov's research: philosophy and global studies. Being a collection of articles, the book, nevertheless, is a holistic and self-sufficient work, systematically revealing the various aspects of globalization. The Philosophy of Globalization is the quintessence of Alexander Chumakov's globalization theory. Therefore, it would be hardly correct to consider 'Philosophy of Globalization' separately from his other works devoted to this topic.

Written in English, 'Philosophy of Globalization' has become a kind of bridge between the global studies developed by the Russian-speaking academic community and the international society of global studies. The exchange of scientific ideas, the convergence of knowledge, the openness of academic borders are the important factors in civilization development, and now (in the current context) they are the factors in preserving the very foundations of human existence on Earth.

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Professor Chumakov's ideas have received much attention from his colleagues who have highly appreciated his book. 'Philosophical interest in the global arena, as proclaimed in the work of Professor Chumakov, has been more or less absent in the West,' writes Roland Robertson, one of the greatest representatives of contemporary global studies, in the Introduction to the first edition of 'Philosophy of Globalization'.

On the other hand, his philosophical approach does deal with globalization multidimensionally. The Russian intellectual tradition has tended to be much more inclusive than that which has obtained in the West. We should all be in debt to Professor Chumakov for his important and thoroughly insightful efforts to make Russian contributions central to the global project of self-understanding. In the extremely fragile condition of humanity at this time – not to speak of the rapidly increasing problems associated with climate and related changes – the inclusion of the vast Russian region is vital (Robertson 2020: 34).

In addition to Roland Robertson, such eminent scientists and public figures as Erwin László, Ioanna Kuçuradi, Luca Scarantino, Evandro Agazzi, William Gay, Igor Abylgaziev, An Qinian, William McBride, Tomas Calvo-Martinez, Glen Martin, Thomas Daffern, Victor Babu, Werner Bush, Michael Tobias, Jane Morrison and others have also hailed Chumakov's book 'Philosophy of Globalization: Selected Articles'. All of them share the author's main ideas and concepts. They also express their deep respect for Alexandr Chumakov's efforts devoted to the development of global studies and the theory of globalization. For example, Erwin Laszlo wrote,

I welcome the embracing analyses carried out by Dr. Chumakov and his collaborators as a major contribution to the challenge that now faces the entire human family: the challenge of mastering the processes of globalization based on understanding and reason rather than on opportunism and the search for short-term ad hoc solutions. It is my hope that this book will be read by everyone who wishes to become a conscious and therefore responsible participant in the current and coming processes that shift the conditions of life for humanity from local, national, and regional levels to the level of the globe – and shift it with due attention to the individuality, the wellbeing, and the evolution of human beings, and the societies formed by them (Laszlo 2015: 30).

Professor Chumakov's colleagues note that the third edition of 'Philosophy of Globalization' has become particularly topical due to the COVID-19 pandemic as a new global threat. The current pandemic harshly reminded about the vulnerability of human beings and the fragility of human civilization, as well as the enormous importance of social foundations of human existence, which have repeatedly saved our population at some catastrophic moments in global history.

Today, the fundamental principles of organizing human communities are being implemented at the global level. Globalization, which appears primarily as a process of shaping a global community, is a kind of social mode of human development. The institutions of the global society, the norms and values laid in their foundation, the relations regulated by them – all these points are revealed by 'Philosophy of Globalization'.

Philosophy of Globalization is not just the title of the book; it is also the name of the scientific field that allows summarizing the long-term scientific searches of the

international academic community in the field of global and globalization studies, as well as identifying the most significant patterns of global development.

Professor Chumakov made a huge contribution to the formation of the Philosophy of Globalization as a field of academic knowledge. He stood at the origins of Globalistics; his first monograph was dedicated to the philosophy of global problems; he wrote a series of papers on the metaphysics of globalization. Among eminent scientists on the theory of globalization, Professor Chumakov is the only one who has been addressing substantively and consistently the philosophical aspects of global issues and globalization and creating a general theory of globalization throughout his whole academic career. Universalizing and integrating other concepts and approaches, his theory has played a very significant role in the world globalization discourse.

In addition, it was Professor Chumakov who spearheaded the integration of globalization sections into the structure of not only the Russian philosophical congresses but also the World Philosophical Congress. It was an extremely important step in shaping the Philosophy of Globalization as a special field of philosophical analysis.

Alexander Chumakov played a central role in the creation of the international *Global Studies Encyclopedia*, published in 2003 in Russian and English. The book was created on the principle of philosophical encyclopedias: arranged in alphabetical order, the articles represent a system of generalized knowledge about the most significant global problems, global phenomena and processes. To carry out such work, it was necessary to assemble an international team of scientists, experts in various fields, who developed a work that was truly philosophical in its methodological and theoretical significance. Perhaps this encyclopedia (team, long creative process, discussions, *etc.*) became the main platform where the Philosophy of Globalization was born. Later, some sequels of the encyclopedia and other foreign encyclopedic projects in the field of global studies stated to appear. However, none of them was able to achieve such a level of consistency, methodological accuracy and philosophical depth, which characterize the first Russian encyclopedia 'Globalistics', created on the initiative and under Alexander Chumakov's supervision.

As already noted, 'Philosophy of Globalization' was created in parallel with other works by Professor Chumakov to include his principal scientific work that is a series of three monographs on the theory of globalization. In the monographs, globalization is presented not as a purely social process, proceeding in isolation from other spheres of global evolution, but as fitting a complex of co-evolving geological, biological, social interactions (called by the author geobiosocialepometamorphosis). Philosophy allows us to consider globalization in the context of generalized knowledge about it, created in the framework of particular sciences. 'Philosophy of Globalization' is an essay representing selected key milestones in the development of this theory.

The author's definition of globalization is the central position of 'Philosophy of Globalization'. Alexander Chumakov writes,

Different authors define it in different ways: some as a process, some as a situation, and some as a phenomenon; some equalize globalization with modernization, some consider it a myth. There are numerous discussions between opponents and supporters of globalization. With regard to the above-said, I define globalization as a multi-aspect natural historical process leading to the emergence of planetary holistic structures and connections. Globalization is immanent to the world community and covers all basic spheres of human life.

It becomes the more visible, the more humankind moves along the way of scientific and technological progress and socioeconomic development. Globalization is a process having no time limits. It connects the past, the present and the future. Today we are passing through a new stage of globalization. It not just becomes visible, but requires corrections made via rational human intervention, in other words, people should take responsibility for the nature and consequences of globalization that remains an objectively evolving process (Chumakov 2020: 68).

Particular attention in the book 'Philosophy of Globalization' is paid to such issues as the natural-historical roots of globalization, objective and subjective factors of globalization processes, anthropological and humanitarian dimensions of globalization, political and social aspects of the formation of a global society, demography and technology, ideology and value system of the global peace, *etc.*

The problem of intellectual responsibility of philosophy for the world future in the context of globalization challenges is considered by Professor Chumakov separately. The following idea can be defined as the central issue of the book and his other works.

While the world is becoming more and more interdependent, holistic and global engendering at the same time new challenges and dangers, philosophy is being transformed from just an intellectual game into a tool for overcoming these problems. It should be mentioned that philosophy has always been this or that way a reaction to the threats to humankind and that it made attempts to confront these threats (Chumakov 2020: 189–190).

The third edition of the book comprises the discussions about the role of culture and civilization in the globalizing world. When comparing civilizations with tectonic plates, and cultures – with the resources of their movement and development, the author unites these concepts in the integrative category of 'cultural-cum-civilizational systems (ecumenes)'. Culture is a sphere of human transformative activity, and civilization is a kind of result of this activity, a result of cooperation and interaction between different cultures. While cultures appear in the prehistoric era, civilization appears at the level of the emergence of statehood and writing.

Among the substantive discourses on the role of world cultures and civilizations in the shaping of the global world, Alexander Chumakov's book pays special attention to Russia and China. The peculiarities of these countries' shift to the global community have repeatedly been subjected to the author's scrutiny.

There is also a methodological reflection in his book 'Philosophy of Globalization. Selected articles'. This is the author's reasoning about global studies and the limits of the discipline, about the place of the theory of globalization in global studies.

Global studies have been born thanks to integrative processes typical for modern science. It is a sphere of research and knowledge where various scientific disciplines and philosophy tightly interconnect with one another and analyze various aspects of globalization and problems it engenders (each from the viewpoint of its subject matter and methodology) ... Global studies should also provide solutions for global problems studied both separately from one another and as a holistic system. Finally, we should stress that this new interdisciplinary sphere of scientific knowledge is a domain for specialists from all disciplines. This principally differentiates global studies from specific disci-

plines where ‘specialists’ speak a language often understandable only for a limited group of the like professionals. Under the umbrella of global studies specialists in various theoretical and practical spheres study world processes and problems engendered by them from the position of this or that natural or human science. This predetermines diversity of opinions about what globalization is. Scholars of natural sciences are often carried away by details and separated facets of this complex process, while scholars of humanities mostly concentrate on subjective factors and struggle of various interests (Chumakov 2020: 67).

Today, the Philosophy of Globalization as a key to understanding the essence of the processes for shaping the united global community at the planetary scale has assumed great significance and topicality. In the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, globalization was interpreted from different perspectives, including as a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon. Many prominent world-famous scientists – economists, philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, and historians – wrote about globalization. All of them greatly contributed from the heights of their professional fields to our understanding of globalization, its nature, structure, and contradictions. However, the book in question has one significant difference – it is written by a thinker who placed globalization at the center of his scientific research, a person who has devoted his creativity as well as public and scientific activities to globalistics *per se*, a philosopher, thanks to whom global studies have turned not only into an independent discipline, but also into an institutionalized sphere of knowledge having its own scientific journals, seminars, conferences, encyclopedias, associations of researchers, *etc.* This review is a tribute of great respect to a person who has been working consistently and enthusiastically on global issues, advocating the academic sovereignty of Global Studies and promoting research excellence in the most important aspects of global studies and the theory of globalization.

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