People in the Arctic: a reflection on “the polar circle quadrature” on the material of contemporary stories and feature articles

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Abstract. The topic of the article is the problem of exploration of the Arctic and its human potential in sociocultural and linguocultural context. The article contains a brief overview of scientific papers dedicated to fiction related to the Arctic and to polar expeditions. The aim of this article is to describe the characteristic features and unique traits of the image of a person in the Arctic conditions by means of analyzing the plot chronotope and writer’s individual style of contemporary stories and feature articles related to the Arctic. The analysis of emotion-and-imagery of human existence in the Arctic was done on the material of the stories by Anatoly Laiba, a Russian polar geologist, of the autobiography of Morten Rasch, a scientist from Denmark, of journalistic articles and other sources. Obviously, the image of polar explorers presented in fiction and social-scientific works of the first decades of the 21st century, as well as in the literary works of the 19th and 20th centuries, has traditionally been idealized. The characters are courageous, strong-willed and determined people, true professionals in their field. For them, the quest for “quadrature of the polar circle” is their commitment to their work, to research, their resilience in coping with challenges. The image of a person who lives and works in the Arctic is inseparable from the romanticism of its severe nature. A conclusion is made regarding the instrumentation of descriptive and axiological functions and, first and foremost, of dialogue function of literary convergence in “Arctic literature”.

1. Introduction
The past year, 2019, was marked by two major “Arctic dates”: the 85th anniversary of the Soviet expedition on SS Chelyuskin, which sank crushed by the icepacks, and the 140th anniversary of the expedition of Nils Adolf Nordenskiold, a Swedish explorer, which was the first in history through voyage along the Northern Sea Route. It is also worth mentioning that on April 9 to 10 2019 Saint-Petersburg hosted the “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” 5th International Arctic Forum (key topic “The Arctic. An Ocean of Opportunity”) to discuss the topical issues of development of the northern regions, including the environment, natural resources development and transport accessibility. Addressing the forum, Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, talked on the prompt implementation of the new strategy for development of the Arctic until the year 2035. As the report stated, one of the most important aims for Russia as member of the Arctic Council will be active engagement of environmentally efficient technologies in a number of areas. In this connection the introduction of innovative technologies of territory development will require scientists to pay close attention to the issues of environmental safety. The interest of the community in the problems of the Arctic determines the specific role of the government in supporting the region.
A substantial contribution to exploring the Arctic and the Antarctic was also made by Saint-Petersburg Mining University. In 2019, an International Competence Centre for engineering and technology of developing deposits in the Arctic conditions was launched here. The core objectives of the “Arctic” Competence Centre are: providing scientific basis for development of existing carbohydrate and other deposits as well as introducing innovative approaches at new deposits of shelf and coastal areas of the Arctic. The University develops projects for construction of modular piling foundations for prospecting-and-appraisal and exploration drilling on the Arctic shelf and in seasonally flooded areas. In particular, the published works of G.V. Buslaev, M.V. Dvoinikov, A.A. Kunshin address the key problems of well construction on the Arctic shelf [1]. Also, it is owing to deep drilling methods and innovative boring rigs developed in Mining University that the first core was recovered from the early subglacial lake in the Antarctic in 2013, which allowed to gain information about climate changes on the Earth during four glacial and interglacial periods and to collect analytical data for paleoclimatic forecasts for the future.

The conquest of the Arctic in its time became an important stage in developing high-grade mineral deposits; this topic was covered by the 2019 exhibition held at Mining University and organized in cooperation with the Russian Geographical Society (RGS). The exhibition was dedicated to the history of polar exploration of late 19th to early 20th century (including four large-scale expeditions) and featured original materials Russian army officers, scientists and travelers brought from the expeditions: photographs, maps, itineraries, and pencil sketches from the RGS archives. The exhibition allows to gain a clear perception that it was those people who once made the impenetrable and far-off Arctic more accessible for the next generations.

Today this topic is particularly relevant and important. Development of the polar regions, as well as of mineral deposits in permafrost areas, and of cutting-edge research facilities is an innovative trend in economic and industrial advancement in Russia and worldwide. Educating expert engineers and involving its students in studying the Arctic the University opens up significant prospects both for the students and for the development of the region in general.

Possessing unique natural, energy-and-resource, economic, transitive-and-logistical, and socio-cultural assets, the region has for many years been the object of close attention of travelers, scientists, writers, journalists, artists and cultural figures. As humanitarian researchers, the authors of the present article have an interest in this topic, first of all, from the linguocultural perspective. The aim of this article is to describe the characteristic features and unique traits of the image of a person in the Arctic conditions by means of analyzing the plot chronotope and writer’s individual style of contemporary stories and feature articles related to the Arctic.

2. Literature review
Representing the Arctic and polar expeditions in fiction is a topic that has long attracted the attention of researchers from historical and cultural perspective and also in the context of literary analysis. The topics connected with the conquest of the Extreme North have traditionally been of strong interest to readers. Novels, including short ones, and stories with the plot set in the North, as well as articles, feature articles, stories of daring explorers and people who organize polar expeditions have formed a substantial layer in world literature.

In those works the Arctic is described as a cold, snow-covered and mysterious area, where the bright sunshine of the polar day gives way to long polar nights, where, in the freezing silence, there live polar bears, arctic foxes, white wolves and reindeer, and the sea is a habitat for seals, walruses and whales, where even at the southern borders there are no trees, and the only plants found in the northernmost natural area, the arctic desert, are mosses and lichens. In summer there are no more than twenty days when the temperature rises above zero in southward areas, while in the northward ones there are just six to ten such days, and even at this time the ground never thaws completely. But it is not only heavy frost and snowstorms that present the worst fear for people. In summer with its incessant polar day the bright sunshine in combination with dazzling white snow and ice has a pernicious effect on human vision, resulting in the so-called “snow blindness” (amphiblestritis).
On studying a variety of material on these issues one comes to understand why Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Norwegian polar explorer, after the end of his expedition across the Arctic to Siberia and the Far East, in his book *Through Siberia, the Land of Future* calls the Arctic “the land of the icy horror” [2]. Despite all that, the severe and merciless Arctic has since ancient times attracted strong and brave people eager to challenge the nature. And nothing could stop the enthusiasm of those aspiring to unlock all the secrets of the Arctic.

The research articles presenting the visions of the Arctic both in Russian and in foreign literature study the convergence of the Arctic as word-picture and of the real Arctic involving specific explorers and expeditions. Thus, N.P. Tanshina analyses the image of the Arctic based on the works of V.A. Obruchev, V.A. Kaverin, J. Verne, L.-A. Boussenard, R. Gouzi, J. Gro, D. Simmons, S. Nadolny, as well as on autobiographies of such polar explorers as R. Amundsen, R. Peary, I.D. Papanin [3]. In the said article the author points out that an upsurge of writing about the Arctic occurred after the loss of Sir John Franklin’s fourth expedition of 1845 to 1847, which aimed to explore the Northwest passage (for Canada, where all the expedition members perished, it has become something like a national myth). On the other hand, as the author says, the advent of the works of literature, it its turn, served as “a catalyst for new expeditions and search for the missing” [3, p.109]. Thus, Academic V.A. Obruchev who in 1926 wrote a science fiction novel *The Sannikov Land* (Rus. Zemlya Sannikova) [4] in 1937 successfully insisted on sending Arctic aircraft to the area he had described in order to locate the “ghost island” (which in the same year was not found by a Soviet icebreaker *Sadko*). Unfortunately, despite all the efforts it was revealed that the Sannikov land was formed not by rocks but by fossil ice which melted with time.

All world Arctic literature in the first instance tells stories about us, about people, about those facing extreme situations. Russian readers know well the motto from *The Two Captains*, a 1938 to 1944 novel by Veniamin Kaverin: “To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield” [5]. The plot of the book is based on searching for the lost expedition of Captain Tatarinov that went along the Northern Sea Route (with three Russian Arctic expeditions of 1912 serving as prototypes). Initially, this was the final line of *Ulysses*, a poem by Lord Alfred Tennyson (sounding as above in the original). These words are inscribed on the memorial cross set at the Hut Point peninsula to honour Robert Scott, the polar explorer, and his companions, who perished in 1912 on their way back from the South pole. The phrase became proverbial and was used, for example, as the motto for the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games. It should be noted that owing to the well-known novel by V. Kaverin and its screen adaptations the quote from Tennyson has taken root in Russian mass linguistic consciousness (most people read the novel at middle school age), and it can serve to illustrate some of the features of Russian national character: resilience and courage, along with the famous buoyancy of spirit, mercy and compassion, generosity and hospitality are the distinctive features of Russian mentality.

In some of the sources the image of the Arctic becomes to some extent more specific and detailed because the authors focus on certain issues connected with the region, namely the geopolitical, environmental, resource and energy, economic, military strategic, socio-cultural ones, etc. On the whole, the emphasis is that “In the current context, the Arctic is increasingly accepted both by countries that have Arctic regions and the ones that do not as a singular region of the world that at this very moment needs effective protection of its substantial biological resources and unique ecosystem by international law” [6].

In particular, the environmental challenges in the Arctic are shown by E.A. Ivanova on the example of *Goodbye, Arctic!*, a novel by M.L. Moskvina [7]. In effect, the book presents a thrilling travel story of a sea voyage of twenty people to the islands of Spitsbergen (Svalbard) and North East Land. This Arctic pilgrimage was made in 2010 on a two-masted Dutch schooner by scientists, writers, artists and musicians under the auspices of Cape Farewell, a UK independent organization. The expedition members saw for themselves that the ice caps of the Earth melt much faster than scientists suppose. As a result, the author of the article makes a conclusion about the symbolism of the name of the novel, *Goodbye, Arctic!*, which can be used in two senses: “This is not only about the multinational crew...
saying goodbye to the Arctic in the end of the expedition, but also about a farewell to the climate of the Arctic, to its ecology and vanishing wildlife destroyed by people” [8].

Looking at the quite impressive list of literary and social-scientific works dedicated to the Arctic and its explorers we were attracted by the name of a book by A.A. Laiba *The quadrature of the polar circle. The Arctic and the Antarctic in the eye of the beholders. 1937 to 2004* [9]. The book presents a series of short “polar stories”, specifically, an intricate mix of novels, tales, and jokes based on true events from the life of the people who work in high latitudes. The writer, Anatoly Laiba (1954 to 2016), is a polar geologist, Candidate of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, who participated in a number of Arctic and Antarctic expeditions and international conferences. In 2006 he worked on the Spitsbergen archipelago. In 2007, as part of the Third International Polar Year, he took part in the expedition on board the RV *Akademik Fedorov* to the North pole and the islands of the Frantz Josef Land archipelago and the Severnaya Zemlya archipelago.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. *What the name of the book by Anatoly Laiba is about: the metaphoricity of the “quadrature of circle” concept and the plot chronotope of the polar stories*

Quadrature of circle ... Even the uninitiated readers may start guessing in spite of themselves what this mathematical term implies and why Anatoly Laiba chose it as the base for the title of his book. The oldest problem related to the quadrature of circle involves using compass and straightedge to construct a square with the area equal to the one of the corresponding circle, as well as calculating the area of a circle with one or another approximation, which is of practical importance. The attempts to solve this problem made by Egyptians, as well as by Ancient Greek, Indian, Arab, and European mathematicians in the course of thousands of years have invariably been unsuccessful. In 1882 Ferdinand von Lindeman published his proof implying that the problem was insoluble. Nevertheless, this never prevented enthusiastic people spending years trying to solve it. For this reason saying that someone is trying to calculate the quadrature of circle means no perspective for further research, waste of time, a practically hopeless and pointless venture. The complexity and futility of research into the quadrature of circle has transmitted this figure of speech to many other areas that have nothing to do with mathematics. Thus, one of the three well-known geometrical problems (along with the problems of angle trisection and cube duplication) has become the object of metaphorization and has semantically transformed into the following idea: “To square a circle means to attempt solving an insoluble problem, to achieve the impossible”.

So what makes the title of the book by Anatoly Laiba metaphoric? The characters of the stories are people who conquered the North and South poles, specifically, geologists, well borers, blasting workers, meteorologists, surveyors, geophysicists, radio operators and people of other professions who participated in expeditions. For them, calculating the quadrature of circle is in their enthusiasm for work, for research, which shows itself in spite of the hardest life conditions in the North, as well as their ability to overcome any challenges and solve the problems that at the start seemed to be insoluble with no chance to success. Behind all these attempts to do the impossible, in the opinion of the author, there is strength of human spirit, which becomes particularly prominent in the harsh environmental conditions of the polar circle. Anatoly Laiba nicknames explorers of the Arctic and the Antarctic as “expedition nomads”. For example, one polar radio operator he knew, after working fifteen seasons in the Arctic, later went over to the Antarctic, where he also participated in dozens of long-term expeditions, and so his life history could provide material for full-value stories.

The chronotope (which is, in the view of M.M. Bakhtin, the unity and interdependency of place, time and action) of polar stories embraces quite a substantial period of time (1937 to 2004) and is determined by the movement of the narrating author in space and time, which provides the opportunity to gain a wealth of factual information (for example, related to organizing polar expeditions, field geological explorations, drifting stations, magnetic variation stations, etc.). According to D.A. Shchukina, “Chronotope is a mental unit, structured in a certain way, which possesses
spatiotemporal characteristics and contains a certain body of essential encyclopaedic knowledge stored in the national cognitive data bank” [10].

The space-time continuum that exists in the mind of the author is the closest to the reality, with the writer himself being not an outside observer but a narrating character. The topos of the stories embraces all the space in the Arctic as well as specific physiogeographical points, which creates the image of the extent and the vastness, but at the same time of the diversity of the Arctic. In the polar stories there is hardly any place for fiction or literary inventions; the objectivity of the world view shown is determined by certain natural and man-made geographical landmarks. The central toponyms in the text are the names of islands, peninsulas and archipelagos located in the Arctic ocean (Greenland, Spitsbergen, Frantz Josef Land, Severnaya Zemlya, Novaya Zemlya, Taymyr Peninsula, Yamal), the seas, straits and gulfs (the Laptev Sea, the Kara Sea, the Chukchee Sea, the Bering Strait, the Gulf of Anadyr), rivers (Anabar, Tyung, the Lower Taymyr River, Stony Tungska), of mountains and underwater ranges (Pyramid Mountain, the Lomonosov Ridge), vast areas and regions (the Polar Urals, Chukotka, Siberia, East Siberian Uplands, Karelia), Northern localities (Tiksi, Yakutsk, Zhigansk, Igarka, Norilsk, Dikson, Barentsburg), and so on.

The central symbol images characterizing the severe and perilous Arctic space are drifting ice sheets, especially at the time when they break off carrying the people who happened to be there far away from the ice camp: “They felt absolutely lost, unsteady and chilly being on a small and fragile ice sheet in the middle of the vast and cold sea” [9, p.58]. Paradoxically, however, the people who live and work there derive their spiritual strength in the unity of the Arctic element. Here is a small excerpt taken from a short story S veterkom! (Quick as the wind!) about geologists working at the Spitsbergen archipelago: “It was a sunny spring, the days grew longer, and there was a need for something new. They rose, looked from the height at the panoramic view of the snow-capped mountains, and they felt good deep inside” [9].

In the stories of Anatoly Laiba the changes of space-time dimension never seem abrupt or spasmodic, they happen easily thanks to the figure of the narrator, who participated in most of the events described. The publishers summarize the plot chronotope of polar stories as follows: “The time of the events is always compressed, and all the time there is NOW. The characters of the stories live now, at present, their real life: they work, polemize, wait for telegrams from home, feel down… Perhaps, this is what we call the sense of historical time, when in one drop of events related to the Arctic or the Antarctic we see the reflection of all the depth of the wonderful polar world” [9].

3.2. The reflection of individual world perception of the author in the stories by Anatoly Laiba

In the analysis of any work of literature one of the crucial tasks is to consider the category of the author as its character and writer’s individual style. The so-called subjectified form of narration allows us to reveal the author’s assessment of what is happening, his or her personal world outlook and the attitude to the events described.

In the preface to the collection of his stories, mentioning the enormous popularity of the polar topic in a number of news programmes and science shows within the latest decade, Anatoly Laiba points out: “Amid this series of anniversary dates and high-profile projects it would make sense to look on the human activity in the polar areas without any exultation, but with a bit of irony. This is because people are always people, and nothing human is alien. People work and live in high latitude areas without any hollow dramatics, with a vast supply of good spirits, firewater and everyday humour” [9]. This statement clearly displays the system of values of the author, forming the connection between the author’s world view and the reader’s perception.

In the series of comical and tense episodes the author tells in a simple and natural manner about organizing and performance of expeditions, wintering quarters, geological field parties, about the natural phenomena, geography, water bodies, glaciers and snows of High North/ South and the distinct natural beauty of these amazing regions. The confidential tone of narration and the reliability of information given by a person who had been there allow us to see the hard work and yearning for adventure, personal courage and the camaraderie of the polar explorers, Russian resourcefulness and
the strong North humour. The author shows the ability to create with his readers the feeling of compassion for the characters and of participation in the events described.

In the book of Anatoly Laiba there are quite a lot of actual facts and real events. In the chapter called *In the Arctic Ocean* the author tells about the Soviet North Pole stations, the world’s first drifting research ice stations, starting with Station SP-1 (1937 to 1938) headed by I.D. Papanin. In the nine months (274 days) of drift a team of four people travelled over two thousand kilometres, from the North pole to the coast of Greenland, on an ice plate. From the story called *What a station begins with* the reader learns that it is not so easy to find “the right ice plate”, for it is necessary to consider its shape, size, layout, and, which is most important, the thickness (not less than 2 or 3 metres). And in the story called *At SP-35* he describes the disastrous situation, when in August 2007 RV *Akademik Fedorov* was to remove the drifting station on an urgent basis from the ice plate which split because of the abnormally warm polar summer in 2007. It is strange but it is a fact that the people (21 people, including a German scientist) instead of thinking first and foremost about the successful rescue operation expressed their displeasure about their work being interrupted. Notably, women biologists were the most disappointed, saying “You needn’t have rescued us! We would have made it through to the winter, and then the ice would be more reliable due to the frost. And what have we got now? The established pace is all upset…” [9].

Also true is the information about the famous Birektinskaya exploration survey company that from mid 1950s to late 1960s operated as part of Arctic Geology Research Institute with the primary aim to do geological survey and a secondary objective to explore the unknown territories in Yakutia. The story *Geological Surveying* provides an in-depth description of particular aspects of this immensely complicated work. Geological parties were divided in groups of two to three people who lived in frame tents insulated with makeshift materials like plywood, cardboard or deer skin. Each party had to cover approximately two thousand kilometres of the route, and one group had to do at least 600 kilometres. The author mentions two geologists who made 680 kilometres in one season, which is more than the distance between Moscow and Leningrad: “And there was no paved roads, it was all cross-country terrain, making geological observations and taking samples to carry on their own back” [9]. In addition, drawing just one nomenclature sheet of the national geological map took around three years of intensive work. Along with this geologists had to go through the complicated procedure of defending a field map and the samples collected in front of a special scientific committee. There are also some antitypes in the story with Anatoly Laiba writing about one blatant case, when Geologist F (The Falsifier) and his partner received an independent task but never made a single geological traverse, camping instead for the whole length of the season on the bank of a picturesque river, fishing and hunting goose. Before coming back to the base they compiled a fake observation journal. However, the deception was exposed, leading to a huge scandal in the academic community.

What calls attention to itself is the authenticity of psychological profiles of the characters whose descriptions in the stories allow the opportunity to tell about the history of conquering the polar areas. It is through describing the characters and assessing their actions in extraordinary, often extreme conditions that the keynotes of the author’s world outlook show. For example, it is particularly evident in the story *Above the steep amid the ice* which tells about an emergency landing of a plane inadvertently witnessed by the characters, the geophysicists who did the maintenance of magnetic variation stations. The crash landing on the ice and the bravest performance of the crew of the plane that carried geophysicists doing airborne works in the Arctic as part of World Gravimetric Survey are described in the story *A clumsy landing*.

A significant role in the book belongs to the descriptions of severe northern landscapes. For example, in the chapter *The splendid Grumant*, the story *Polar airborne* presents a description of the Spitsbergen archipelago complemented by a historical journey: “Few things compare with it in the beauty of the polar landscape, white mountain views, diversity of the northern wildlife. Since the 16th century the Archangelsk coast dwellers went there to hunt and fish and marked with Orthodox crosses their entry points and encampments. The insular land was named Grumant, meaning Greenland, about
which they heard vague rumours” [9]. The author calls Spitsbergen “the splendid crown jewel” of all Arctic.

In describing natural landscapes and details of events happening to the characters of the stories Anatoly Laiba keeps to the style of documentary and essay writing, which determines the genre distinctiveness of the text. Creating the descriptions of the Arctic landscapes and poeticizing them, the author incidentally adds to the narration a variety of geopolitical, geocultural, historical and specifically professional information. Thus, the story On the Pyramid tells about a Soviet coal miner settlement on the Spitsbergen archipelago: “The settlement got its name from the nearest sharply-sloped mountain, where the coal beds were developed. They were developed with adits made in the steep slopes at the height of 500 to 700 meters. A special cable railway with minecarts went up to the adits. That is why people in the settlement said “to go up to the mine” instead of “to go down to the mine” [9].

Obviously the description of the Arctic landscape relates in the text to characterizing the main characters of the stories of Anatoly Laiba: polar geologists, meteorologists, radio operators and polar explorers. It is against the background of the severe Arctic nature famous for great diversity of natural resources that the personalities of the main characters shape and their world outlook and perception form. In long expeditions, isolated from the civilized world, in complicated climate conditions and in stressful situations the people pass the test for psychological resistance and resilience. However, in the stories they are presented not as mythological heroes who face extreme situations on a daily basis and perform superhuman deeds resembling the 12 labours of Hercules, but as common people who have usual needs and experience natural emotions.

In this respect the title of one of the stories, The happiest day, seemed interesting to us. It is interesting what kind of day in the life of a polar explorer can be considered as “the happiest”? The character of the story, Petrov, a student of the Mining Institute, does his graduation practice in Yakutia, in the vicinity of the unique Tyung River which, unlike most rivers in Yakutia, flows not to the cold seas, but almost straight to the south and runs into a tributary of the Lena. The head of the group, hydrogeologist Lavrov, an ardent fisher, is quite pleased by the fact that in the area of their field work there is a “fishing river” and a small lake where they once catch a myriad of crucians (the small rubber boat nearly sank due to overload). And then there came that very day: “On a warm sunny day they were going down the river where they were at home. There was silence in the air and small ripples on the river due to the current... Now, when Petrov remembers the years gone by, he considers that day as one of the happiest in his life” [1].

This way, through quite a concise and precise description of the space of the northern area the author does not only give a detailed picture of living conditions and everyday life of polar explorers but also communicates his own world outlook, projecting the model of an individual and national worldviews.

3.3. The human potential of the Arctic people (after online newspaper and magazine publications)

Among the numerous newspaper and magazine publications and essays related to the Arctic of great interest are autobiographical stories of polar explorers who spent most of their life in the region. Let us consider the personality of one of the prominent research scientists who worked in the Arctic practically nonstop for decades. Morten Rasch is a Danish polar researcher who since 1987 has organized research in Greenland. Being the academic leader of a few Arctic stations located on the island he participated in the construction of two new ones; for 18 years he was in charge of Greenland Ecosystem Monitoring programme. He got invaluable experience doing field work on Disko Island. At present he is in charge of Polo research mission of Copenhagen University and helps coordinate the work of 88 polar and mountain stations [11].

Morten Rasch tells how his research mission in Greenland and life in severe field conditions on the open glacier led to dramatic changes in his life, sparking the desire to fully devote himself to exploring the island in the future. Coming back there with his wife, he made a decision to stay, and their son was born in the Arctic. The author gives a detailed description of the working conditions at the polar
station, when the researchers work for over 12 hours a day, often staying awake in order to keep the strict regime of experiments. In winter, at the time of ultralow temperature, you cannot stay in the open air for more than 20 minutes.

With deep concern Morten Rasch tries to make people aware of the importance of studying the changes in the polar region that can upset the balance of all the world ecosystems. Attention should be paid to his statement that the melting of the ice turns into “the Arctic heat pump”. The author puts the task for the researchers as follows: “Our key role is studying the climate change, but it is out of our hands to interfere with natural processes. We are trying to understand and explain the consequences of these changes for the environment on the whole. The fact is that there is “the feedback effect”: when nature transforms as a result of climate change, this affords new opportunities for further changes. So there forms a vicious circle which is next to impossible to break. This is why we must understand and study the interdependence of climate and nature in order to predict the future of our planet” [11].

Of interest for him is the fact that now the profession of polar explorer is becoming popular not as much with men but with women who live and work in hard climatic conditions equally with men. According to Rasch, women made up 80% of 25 people who worked at a polar station in summer, although actually exploration of polar areas requires of the researchers exceptional stamina and true enthusiasm.

At present, owing to the closer attention to exploring the Arctic on the part of the community, a variety of organizations provide extensive support to polar explorers. For instance, Ariston has successfully implemented the idea of creating comfortable infrastructure for them and built a smart home in the Arctic in situ, where it is now possible to analyse the data obtained in the field without the necessity to come back to the station.

A person, irrelevantly of the place, whether it is in the severe conditions of the Arctic or in friendly southern latitudes, is first of all a personality. “People are the most important thing in the Arctic” – this statement made by Artur Chilingarov, an Arctic explorer and oceanologist, has become the key message of the present-day Arctic exploration. In the Arctic people face the “absolute challenge” posed by nature, climate, living conditions and human relations. However, the region offers a lot of opportunities and prospects, and people can live there, work and earn their living.

The image of a person from a northern region is formed not only by polar explorers but also by the indigenous people. However, unfortunately, they often cannot feel to be the true and rightful owners of their rich land. In her essay A person in the Arctic? Who is it?, written for the Pravda Severa newspaper, following the statement of Artur Chilingarov, Svetlana Loichenko emphasizes: “In the Arctic, everything must be done for people” [12]. In this connection, it seems extremely important to offer in the Arctic the living conditions essential for a comfortable life. This now becomes possible as a result of a variety of public and social events, international forums, exhibitions and conferences that raise the issues of developing innovative technologies aimed at implementing such projects in the area.

In a slightly ironic manner the author tells about the 2017 International Arctic Forum held in Arkhangelsk, pointing out: it is important that the lofty words about “dramatic challenges” and “climate threats” be translated into actions and concrete results, owing to which every local citizen would feel that he or she is that very person in the Arctic … At that the international community must forget about all the past “cold wars” and other conflicts. In the opinion of the author, it is essential to unite and regard the Arctic as the place for dialogue, a kind of sanctuary free from any bad memories [12]. The issues raised by Svetlana Loichenko elicited response: her essay was awarded as the best printed work in the journalistic excellence contest organized by the Arctic Media Association.

4. Conclusions

Summing up, it should be noted that in fiction and journalistic articles the image of polar explorers has traditionally been idealized. The characters of these works, both in the novels of the 19th and the 20th centuries and in contemporary novels, stories and feature articles share a few features: they are courageous, strong-willed and determined people with high motivation to research and exceptional talent in the professional field. They achieve success by efforts inconceivable for an ordinary
individual. Working in hard, absolutely unbearable conditions, as it is known, allows to fully unlock the human potential, and pushing to the limit makes it possible to conquer and develop new lands and territories and make great scientific discoveries.

In connection with such perception of specific aspects of human existence in the Arctic this article makes an attempt, through the description of the space-time continuum existing in the mind of the writer, as well as through analysis of the plot chronotope and individual writer’s style as seen in contemporary stories and feature articles about the Arctic, to provide insight into the image of a person and personality development in the most challenging climatic conditions of the polar circle. It is obvious that we are dealing with strongly marked text convergence (convergence of general ideas regarding the subject being analysed) with the aim to create in fiction and journalistic articles a generalized emotion-and-imagery description of a person in the Arctic. In most of the works the authors focus on implementing not only the descriptive and axiological (evaluation) function of literary convergence, but also the so-called dialogue function, which means creating the effect of interactive dialogue with the reader, of conversationality, of easy conversation (this is particularly the case in the polar stories of Anatoly Laiba, which mostly have the form of novels, tales, and jokes).

The image of a person who lives and works in this region of the Earth is inseparable from the romanticism of the severe nature of the Arctic, which provides a source of inspiration for the characters. As we see, the difficult climatic conditions present no obstacle for living and doing research in the Arctic. As before, people are attracted by nature, its beauty, mystery, and moreover, the eternal strive to discover the unknown. I.D. Papanin, the famous polar explorer, wrote about travelers: “There is something more important than bread, or money, or fame, or career. Was it not the thirst for mystery, or, to be precise, for unravelling the mystery, that encouraged those people? Thirst for knowledge, thirst for serving people, science, the progress?” [13, p. 17] Therefore, a contemporary Arctic explorer is an enthusiast, deeply committed to work, and genuinely fond of the Arctic latitudes.

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