

**Mika Perkiömäki**

**The North of Boris Shergin**

This article examines from an ecocritical perspective the imagined geography of the North in Boris Shergin's works, a Russian writer of the Soviet period, whose stories were based on Pomor folklore. It studies the interconnections of nature and people in Shergin's stories in the contexts of Christianity and Soviet modernisation. The article argues that rich life by and from the sea in an area poor in natural resources, Christianity, rich cultural heritage, and mastering new northern regions with the help of new technologies are central for the narrative identity of the Pomors whom Shergin's oeuvre concerns. The research on Shergin from the points of view of the sacral geography of northern Russia and the northern text of Russian literature has outlined the collective identity of the Russian North, focusing on its mythopoetic meanings. This article builds more strongly on the material environment in Shergin's stories and considers the research on Shergin's northern text as part of the narrative identity of the Pomors.

**Karina Lukin**

**Colonial in-betweens in *The Month of the Small Darkness***

The article discusses the Nenets writer Vasili Ledkov's historical novel *The Month of the Small Darkness*, which describes the collectivisation of the reindeer in the Nenets national district in the 1920s and 1930s. The novel is analysed as a text using the textual and poetic strategies of the discursive space created by what was called the village prose movement. At the same time, the novel brought out the violence related to collectivisation and the ambivalence produced by changes in the ownership of the reindeer and the interaction between the humans and reindeer. The novel is read from a postcolonial perspective, emphasising at least two kinds of simultaneous interpretative models and the way they fold into each other. The analysis focuses on understanding the relationship of reindeer and humans in the practices of nomadic reindeer-herding and on explaining the differing actions of the characters and their relations with Nenets conventions or Soviet ideologies. According to the interpretation, the novel gains its critical gaze towards the Soviet past from its position within socialist realism and the discourses of the village prose movement that are, as such, hybrid forms of literature.

**Arja Rosenholm & Elena Trubina**

**The "Northern Text" – literary studies creating a national ethos?**

Regional narratives are actively examined in area studies and Slavic studies, but it is less-known how artistic renderings of spatial belonging and regional identity become included in current state ideologies. Drawing on cultural semiotics, geopoetics and geoculture, we highlight how the concept of the Northern text is applied to the text corpus of Russian literature on the North. Having examined the collections of articles published by Russian scholars based in Arkhangelsk in Northwest Russia in 2014–2017, we show, first, that the concept of the Northern Text combines language, literature, philosophy and space-oriented research in cultural semiotics; second, that the image of the northern region has been read through

“sacred geography”; and third, that the rhetoric of the concept creates national and ethnic unity in the nation by merging the borders of the region and the state.

**Eeva Kuikka**

### **Imagined Peripheries**

Abstract: This article focuses on Nenets author Anna Nerkagi’s short novels *Aniko of the Clan Nogo* (1976) and *The White Moss* (1996) and their film adaptation *The White Moss* (2014) by Russian film director Vladimir Tumaev. I approach these works by asking how they depict the Arctic tundra as a space and how they describe the relationship between this peripheral space and the power centres. The main theoretical frameworks used are geocriticism and postcolonial theory. Nerkagi’s works depict the tundra as a region that is disconnected from the rest of the country and defined by Nenets history and the relationship with non-human nature. Especially in *The White Moss*, the reader can also notice a social critique of the neglect of the region. Tumaev’s film, on the other hand, relies on Russian cultural conceptions of the Arctic tundra and reflects Russia’s urge to be profiled as an Arctic superpower in the 2000s.