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## PERIPHERAL WRITING AND WRITING ON THE PERIPHERY IN TRAVELOGUES BY JAY NORWOOD DARLING

Стаття присвячується маловідомій літературній творчості американського карикатуриста Джея Норвуда Дарлінга. Дослідження ґрунтується на тревелогах "Ding Goes to Russia" (1932), "The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue" (1937). Мета цієї статті полягає у розкритті та контекстуалізації ознак подорожніх текстів Д.Н.Дарлінга як периферійних жанрів. Основним завданням роботи є аналіз глибинних структур хронотопу тревелогів, на основі чого висувається гіпотеза роботи. Її сутність полягає у тому, що своєрідність індивідуального переживання та осмислення кризового часу в різних просторах та через ці простори модифікує використані жанрові кліше, породжуючи трагічне (для радянського простору) і оптимістичне (для американського простору) передчуття. *Методологія* дослідження заснована на вивченні взаємодії центру та периферії літературної системи, зокрема, концепті «семіосфери», сформульованого Ю. Лотманом. Жанровий аналіз включає компаративний та контекстуальний методи вивчення текстів. Культурно-історичний метод поглиблює розуміння контексту літературної творчості Дарлінга. Зокрема, він використовується для з'ясування історичних і соціальних чинників, що впливають на особливості сприйняття та реконструкції чужого і свого світу. Жанровий аналіз тревелогів із різними графічними компонентами, зокрема карикатури, передбачає інтермедійний метод дослідження семантичних зв'язків між візуальним і вербальним у тревелогах. У результаті дослідження встановлено, що аналізовані зразки є певною мірою вторинними щодо магістральних ліній американського тревелогів періоду 30-х рр. ХХ ст. Водночас, вони не вписуються в окреслені жанрові парадигми. Географія у цих мандрівках сприймається через антропологічну оптику, реалізовану через репрезентацію взаємовпливу суспільства та простору в нестабільному світі. Риси непрямого майбутнього чи прихованого теперішнього наратором відчуються сильніше на відстані від центру, на перетині транзитних шляхів. Ключовими ознаками хронотопу обох тревелогів є периферизація простору, перетворення місць у простір, та пов'язаний із цим процес, репрезентація не-місць. За вторинними жанровими конструкціями обох текстів у поетиці хронотопу простежуються специфічні прийоми репрезентації просторових метафор та уявних топосів, які змушують переоцінювати фактологічне письмо карикатуриста.

*Ключові слова: тревелог, периферія, хронотоп, візуалізація, репрезентація, не-місце.*

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### Introduction

Jay Norwood Darling is an American cartoonist who travelled around the Soviet Union and the United States of America in the 1930s. The impressions of these trips formed the basis of his two travelogues – "Ding Goes to Russia" (1932) and "The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue" (1937). The meticulous examination of the Soviet's daily routine catalyzed the historical imagination, enabling the depiction of society in the void between the past and the future. The perception and modelling of the USSR as a future society in numerous

travels of American intellectuals to the USSR in the 1930s aroused keen interest among scientists [David-Fox, 2012; Hollander, 1998; Kassis, 2021; Klepikova, 2015; Margulies, 1968; O'Neill, 1989; Stern, 2007], however, Darling's work remains unnoticed both in the historical and literature studies.

Darling's travelogue across America, which meets the parameters of a non-fiction road narrative, is a short text describing a 6-day journey in a trailer to Florida, neither raising acute social issues of American society nor diving into the psychological analysis. Instead, the everyday difficulties of a family trip are depicted with the inherent irony. It cannot be considered surprising that Darling's work is not mentioned in the robust historiography devoted to the road narrative in American culture of the 20th century [Barndt, 2018; Brigham, 2015; Campbell, 2001; Eyerman, Löfgren, 1995; Faber 2022; Ganser, 2009; Lackey, 1999; Laderman, 1996; Leavenworth, 2010; Obernesser, 2019; Primeau, 2008; Robertson, 1997; Sherrill, 2000; Tillbot, 1999].

Nonetheless, the juxtaposition of "Ding Goes to Russia" and "The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue" enables us to discern the distinctive features of spatial perception, unconventional self-presentation, and artistic reflection of the experience with its political imagination and intermedia synthesis. Both travelogues reveal a symbolic nature to transitivity and periphery, requiring further examination.

Travelogues by Darling are distinguished by their visual content. In addition to the genre's traditional factual sketches of villages and urban landscapes, Darling uses cartoons to illustrate his observations and political assessments. Such illustrations are signed with a key phrase of the verbal text, usually in an ironic or satirical mode. Furthermore, the cartoons convey more details of the surrounding world than the verbal text and open the narrative to a fictional plane. The mocking tone of his drawings, which include caricatured self-portraits, indicates the synthetic qualities of non-fiction text, which are not adequately studied. However, their comprehension can enhance the interpretation of significant social and cultural processes perception rendered simultaneously as eyewitness accounts and imaginary objects. An in-depth study of these texts will contribute to a greater understanding of the political travelogue nature and its intermedia specificity.

The peripheral nature of Darling's literary agency is heightened by the complex narrative that traverses intermedia and cross-cultural horizons. Before discussing more specific issues, it is necessary to formulate the essential elements according to which the author's travelogues can be defined in terms of the periphery. On the one hand, these samples are, to a certain degree, secondary to the main lines of the American travelogue in the 1930s. At that time, any trip to the USSR, whose typological characteristics converged with pilgrimages, a utopian vision of another space, and the road narrative genre, one of the most distinctive national genres, began to acquire clear frames of that period. An array of texts created by either recognized writers or amateurs is evidence of both genres' popularity and rapid development. On the other hand, Darling's travelogues transcend genre paradigms; they simultaneously fit into and critically rethink them.

The factors of marginalization increase when starting with the genre. Chana Kronfield developed the classification of marginal phenomena, which is still one of the most representative attempts to systematize these fluid and dynamic phenomena. In terms of this classification, Darling's works correspond to the marginal-canonical subgroup. Firstly, these are the verbal literary texts of the artist [Kronfield, 1993]. Secondly, they are non-fiction texts. The definition "marginal-canonical" is very apt for Darling's narratives, as he created them within the leading trends remaining on the fringe of the process.

Kris Lackey, studying the nonfiction roadbooks written between 1903 and 1994, puts forth the term "shadow texts", which means "both the unacknowledged traditions that shape these books and the ignored or repressed antithetical messages that lie beneath the authors' assertions" [Lackey, 1999, p. IX]. Darling reinterprets the conventional travel narrative by incorporating a satirical visual element, thereby generating a dual perspective of space. Therefore, the main focus of the study is on the deep structures of the travelogue's chronotope. For the sake of their comprehensibility, we leave aside more complex relations among issues involving visual and verbal correlations in the texts.

The intensity of the crisis time experience in different spaces and through these spaces modifies the involved genre clichés, giving rise to a tragic (for Soviet space) and optimistic (for

American space) premonition. In the modern context, the outlined trajectory for the future path of Soviet policy is expressed with axiological and anthropological accuracy. Travelling through American space presents a multitude of inquiries, particularly the sensation of isolation, concealed by the narrator's irony and routine of notes during a brief trip.

Thus, the study aims to reveal and contextualize the characteristics of J.N. Darling's travelogues as peripheral literary works, as well as conceptualize the chronotopic imagination that affects genre distinctions.

### **Theoretical Background and Methods**

The term "peripheral" can be constructed synchronically as a literary phenomenon that deviates from the centre of a historic literary system, acquiring antagonistic characteristics or, conversely, the most prevalent ones, thereby diminishing the author's work's influence, visibility and recognition among readers or critics. Thus, it is generally accepted that the parameter of a peripheral field is its reduced value in the current sociocultural situation.

The title of this article reflects the overlapping methodologies employed in the analysis of Darling's literary works. The notion of the peripheral zone is approached from a spatial perspective, resulting in a revision of the text's chronotopic organization. Moreover, this notion serves as a means of revealing the distinctiveness of omitted and forgotten texts within the literary system and cultural memory.

The ideas about the centre and the periphery in literature and physical space interact more and more closely due to postcolonial studies. In one of the latest analytical reviews, Petr Kyloušek emphasizes, "Nevertheless, what is determinant for us in this category is the perception of time and space itself, namely the difference between how these concepts – individually and in combination – are perceived from the periphery towards the center and back again... The possibility (in some situations, even the certainty) that the periphery may not live within the same sense of temporality and spatiality as the center has not only to a great extent been undervalued but in many cases not even considered at all" [Kyloušek, 2024, p. 21]. Textualization of the invisible zones (disappeared, disappearing, or not yet manifested) and the symbolic redefinition of the centre and the boundary in the artistic space are the semiotic frameworks in studying Darling's travelogues within the discourse of a periphery. The representation of the periphery in the language of the center produces a hybrid text that imitates and repeats. However, redirecting stable implications expands its semantic space. For example, Marco Juvan shows that "strong" peripheral authors, being aware of their borrowing strategy, use irony or a self-reactive fictional presentation of their systemic dependence on the literary canon to overcome influence [Juven, 2011, p. 280]. In the case of Darling's travel texts, the stylistic simplicity, didacticism, and monologue cannot neutralize the significance of time mapping, which is not inherent in genre models.

Another important starting point for our methodology is represented by the critical evaluations made in memory studies. The discourse of "secondary" is a product of destruction, the main strategy of which is forgetting [Gilliland, 1994, p. 6]. Memory is a metaphor at the intersection of spatial and temporal dimensions. As Jan Assmann says, "Things do not 'have' a memory of their own, but they may remind us, may trigger our memory, because they carry memories which we have invested into them, things such as dishes, feasts, rites, images, stories and other texts, landscapes, and other 'lieux de memoire'" [Assmann, 2008, p. 111]. Hence, "cultural memory" has the function of recalling and restoring the forgotten.

Dealing with a periphery as a dynamic area enables a view of its interliterariness, multiplicity, and revaluation in subsequent stages of literary development. Although, as the researcher points out, the peripheral area openly reproduces the norms of literary expression and serves as a guarantee of genre authenticity and as the "protagonists" of institutional stability" [Renza, 1984, p. 5], it is essential to observe the dynamics of innovation arising from the tension between the centre and the periphery. To clarify the fundamental principles of their interaction in the context of the norm and its violation, let us focus on the semiospheric approach provided by Yuri Lotman, "It is necessary to emphasise the fact that the boundary, which separated the closed world of semiosis from extra-semiotic reality, is permeable. It is constantly transgressed via intrusions from the extra-semiotic sphere that, when bursting in, introduce a new dynamic, transforming the bounded space and simultaneously transforming themselves according to its laws. At the

same time, semiotic space constantly ejects all the layers of culture from itself. The latter form layers of deposits beyond the limits of culture and await their time to re-enter the closed space, by which time they are so 'forgotten' as to be conceived of as new. Such exchanges with the extra-semiotic sphere create an inexhaustible reservoir of dynamic reserves" [Lotman, 2009, p. 115]. One cannot but agree with Lotman's statement that decryptions could be absent in a synchronous section of the semiosphere. It is, therefore, the key to examining the features of Darling's travelogues as connected to the further context of the genre's core formation and historically nearby literary tendencies.

Thus, genre analysis includes comparative and contextual methods of studying texts. The culture-historical method deepens the understanding of the context of Darling's literary work. It is particularly used to find out the historical and social factors that impact the peculiarities of other and own world perception and image construction. The narrative analyses contributed to the unfolding of the anthropological representation of space. Additionally, genre investigation of travelogues with various graphic components, including caricatures, involves an intermedia method of studying the semantic connections between visual and verbal in travelogues.

### Results and Discussion

Darling created entirely different types of travelogues, with diverse images of the travel narrator and the journey itself, reflected in the plot and compositional organization, space structure, and visual representations. In American space, the road along peripheral routes or new ones leads from snowy landscapes to the pastoral, warm edges of Florida. In the other space, the trip trajectory runs through the ideological map of the Bolsheviks' achievements and traverses a stepped labyrinth crafted by the Soviet mythologists. The fragmented integrity of the USSR's geographical space, as opposed to the fluidity of the journey through America, is enhanced by the compound of the road narrative with the sea voyage elements in the diary form.

However, in both texts, the author considers the common problems – civilization, its development, and the role of innovations for humans. Both declare the need for independent travel for an authentic experience. The aspirations of the "discoverer" in alien space are realized in exposing the declared "novelty" of the Soviet system and, on his own – joining the new "trailer civilization" that will soon change the face of America in his imagination.

A self-identity search is a significant common feature of Darling's journeys in his own and other spaces. The understanding of modern identity in the earlier work "Ding Goes to Russia" comes through the analysis of a "new" social system, different from the American one. In the latter text, "The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue" – through the images of the road and mobile home that would transform American society. Actualized models realize the functions of social criticism and anthropological observation.

It has to be said that Darling's travelogues cannot be considered defining or turning points in American travel literature development. The author transmitted models that had already been formed and fixed images to express his position. The evaluative angle of this feature within the travel discourse is unclear, since the repeated use of routes and well-known plots resulted in the emergence of so-called secondary travel narratives. Maria Lindgren Leavenworth notes the following signs of this type: the openly declared dependence of the secondary travellers on the first text, the creation of a quotation structure of the narrative, parodic elements, and the similarity of certain motives, for example, disappointment due to inconsistencies in their travel experiences [Leavenworth, 2010]. Darling's travelogue contains the key features of a secondary travelogue, apart from the temporal distance between his experiences and the source texts, as he engages in polemics with the testimony of his contemporaries to uncover the truth. The intertextual connections of the text include either the travel testimonies of optimistic American travelers, or visual texts, namely caricatures of the Soviet Union in America, as well as a Soviet poster.

The narrative arc in "Ding Goes to Russia" recalls the typical route of foreign pilgrims to the Soviet Union. Instead of a geographical map, it follows a cartography of the new state's achievements. As in a pilgrimage, the route is planned, with no random destination. The movement has all the signs of transportation in vertical space. However, Darling mocked them by examining the Soviet mythologies passed down from one travelogue to another in the 1930s. The geographical markers depicted in Darling's travelogue are secondary and repetitive, yet the author deconstructs them in various ways and places them within the distinct contexts of Soviet ideological concepts.

The work “The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue” appeared in the 1930s, when the road narrative was becoming a metagenre. Ronald Primeau defines the road narrative as “fiction and nonfiction books by Americans who travel by car throughout the country either on a quest or simply to get away” [Primeau, 2008, p. 1]. To comprehend the peculiarities of Darling’s road narratives, it is imperative to delineate the context of this genre in American literature. It absorbed various literary traditions: Bildungsroman, the quest, the picaresque, and travel literature [Barndt, 2018; Brigham, 2015; Campbell, 2001; Faber, 2022; Lackey, 1999; Laderman, 1996; Sherrill, 2000; Tillbot, 1996]. The genre’s origins go back long before the mass production of the car, one of the determining extra-literary factors of the road narrative. The earliest auto-related narratives can be found at the beginning of the 20th century in the works of Theodore Dreiser, “A Hoosier Holiday” (1916), and Sinclair Lewis’s “Free Air” (1919). Nevertheless, the importance of the automobile in the road narrative introduces another issue for defining the road narrative. The car caused the theme “the power of choice and control for the individual in travel and detracts from the ubiquitous theme of freedom in these narratives” [Tillbot, 1999, p. 11]. Ron Eyerman and Orvar Löfgren emphasize the increasing association of mobility with hope, new ventures, and the romanticization of risk on unknown highways in the 1930s [Eyerman, Löfgren, 1995, p. 57]. Meanwhile, a negative attitude develops, in which the concept of stagnation and static evolves, reflecting the experience of a lack of prospects and social growth. The heterogeneity of the genre, collision and intersection of contrasting lines testify to canon formation, which culminated in Jack Kerouac’s novel [Ganser, 2009; Tillbot, 1996] as a countercultural manifesto, articulated the bohemian lifestyle marked by its rejection of traditional, conservative “family values”, the Protestant work ethic, and middle-class materialism [Laderman, 1996, p. 42].

Significantly, Darling’s nonfiction text can be seen as an anticanon to Kerouac’s writing. An older man and his wife set out on the road, and the reason for the trip was bronchitis. The journey risk is not what attracts but repels travellers, and the most enduring challenge during the trip was a banal problem – the lack of parking for a new car. The narrator is immersed in the minutiae of trailer life, admiring its fullness and abundance, which makes it possible to be independent in movement and not think about time. A “*sheltered comfort*” [Darling, 1937, pp. 33, 39] mobilized mansion is the result of the progress of American society.

Home and movement represent “the dual forces that have had the strongest hold on American consciousness are the desire for home – stability, stasis and safety – and the urge for mobility – journey, progress and development” [Faber, 2022, p. 21]. The desire for movement and mobility embodies the search for innovation and a path to progress [Faber, 2022, p. 28], which formed the basis of the key concepts of the American dream – individualism and success formulated in the early 1930s by James Truslow Adams. Nonetheless, in the road narrative, the notion of ‘home’ exhibits ambivalence, occasionally blurring and losing its significance [Robertson, 1994, p. 271]. Instead, Darling’s eloquent declaration that the ‘trailer’, which signifies the travelled home and is reminiscent of the archetype of the boat in maritime adventures, is a symbol of an American accomplishment and a promising future. Home, as a centre of moral values, is not static and stable. Moreover, the boundaries of the house and the road are permeable, since the temporary home turns into an open space, involving new roads and connections among societies.

In the Soviet Union, the home/road opposition is presented through a comparison of the socio-political systems of the countries. This is a fundamental point for the narrator who seeks to dispel mislead: “<...> all Americans might see Russia as it is today and that all Russians might see America, and each stop talking the bally rot which both are so fond of repeating about the other” [Darling, 1932, p. 60]. For example, the narrator notes the lack of automobile production in the Soviet Union and nothing similar to an American highway. This inconsistency extrapolated from the countries’ philosophies of life makes apparent the impossibility of the American idea of movement as an individual initiative in this space. The narrator fantasizes that if there were cars and people wanted to go on a picnic to the forest, then this would not be possible either, since the food supply is monopolized in communal kitchens [Darling, 1932, p. 58].

His later travelogue shows us images of cars and roads, bringing up issues of interaction between the centre and the margins, values and chances. In major American intellectual pilgrimages, the comparison did not unfold as widely and systematically since the naturalization of the “new world” and “new man” notions nullified the semantic significance of “own” space.

“The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy” was created in the period when the effects of the Great Depression were still felt. The emphasis placed on well-being and comfort neutralized the semantic poles of risk, adventurism, and wandering. Furthermore, as Morris Dickstein pointed out, by the mid-thirties, the concept of individualism had come to a crossroads with the concept of communal living [Dickstein, 2009, p. xxi]. Darling’s travelogue distinctively exemplifies this process, presenting an imagined vision of the trailer civilization – fraternity, new brothers and sisters. As a sign of the new, the trailer attracts and gathers Americans from different generations around it, which is expressed visually in ironic caricatures (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Darling J.N. *The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue*.  
“Owning a trailer is just like joining a fraternity” [Darling, 1937, p. 72].

These cartoons are significantly different from those of the Soviet Union, primarily because each character has individual features and a distinctive appearance. The collective actions of the Soviet people are depicted as the complete absence of distinction between individuals within a crowd or queue (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Darling J.N. *Ding Goes to Russia. All Russia gets food in breadlines. It is a permanent policy* [Darling, 1932, p. 59].

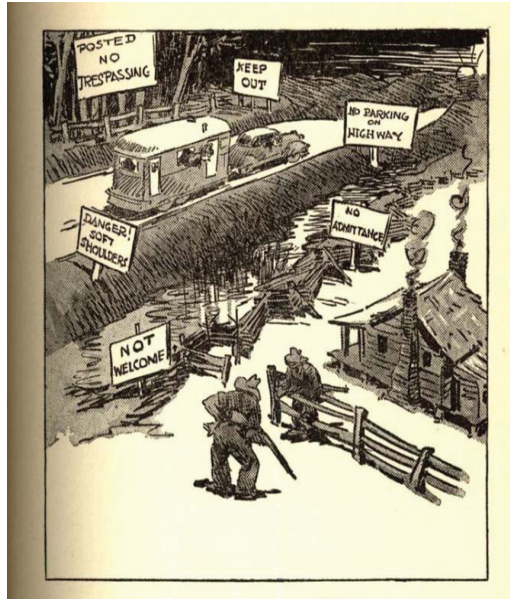
Verbally expressed ideas and assessments are concretized in cartoons. The main political definitions in the Soviet Union are totalitarianism and human dependence. In "Betsy", respectively, individual freedom (in movement, choice and even time) is actualized. In the sketches of groups of people, these concepts turn into visual metaphors, particularly via the figures' arrangement. There are lined-up people in the Soviet Union. In contrast, there are scenes of people randomly converging around the trailer in American space.

The trailer civilization, with its egalitarian values, is unlike the dystopian new state, which is merely a worse rehash of the past. The political sketches depicted in the travelogue "Ding Goes to Russia" construct an image of the world where everything is contrary to the fervent assertions propagated by American journalists and writers. The Great Depression is also an essential background for considering a travelogue to the USSR. The motivation for this trip is thoroughly different from the trip to the American South, like most American tourists to the USSR who were looking for answers in crisis and found them in the new state of the future – a real community of belief, a national ideal and moral unity. Darling almost instructively addresses his compatriots, demonstrating that none of their troubles can be compared with what he sees in the Soviet Union beyond all the loud but empty ideas.

Hence, the opposition between the innovative and obsolete is dominant in both texts, setting the boundary between one's own and other spaces. Either image of the other is defined as backward and wild. In Soviet space, the other is visualized as a mentally deficient person (Fig. 3), and in America – as an aggressive cowboy with a weapon (Fig. 4). The juxtaposition of new/old is inherent in irony, without delving into the analysis of the problem, the historical retrospective in comparison to "Ding Goes to Russia". However, it does not mean the narrator refuses to be critical of his space. Such criticism is reflected in caricatures of the "backward" view of the compatriots.



**Figure 3.** Darling J.N. *Ding Goes to Russia*.  
"They should have been busy bolting a 200 ton steel press to its foundations"  
[Darling, 1932, p. 161].



**Figure 4.** Darling J.N. *The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue* "They aren't ready to throw open wide the door to hospitality" [Darling, 1937, p. 35].

The travelogue "Ding Goes to Russia" could be considered a political pamphlet with its satire aimed at the illusions of American intellectuals. In this case, its secondary nature would turn the text into a peripheral one concerning the influential, vivid and emotional testimonies that shaped the Soviet myth in Western discourse. This could be said if it were not for the factor arising from the peripheral nature of the text, created by an artist who profoundly and insightfully depicts the Soviet system from political to everyday reality. The Soviet travelogue, compared to the latter one, contains cartoons of various genres, more thematically saturated, combining satirical and tragic modes, figuratively embodying the themes of exile, economic enslavement, hard work, complete authoritarian control, and inequality. The narrator's vision and empathy for the fate of the new Soviet serf, a tragic-sounding theme of the new civilization, are heightened by the allegories of the government and its relationship with individuals, such as a cartoonishly exaggerated boot that forces a family out of their home, a bayonet that expels dissidents, or a press that suffocates the economy (Fig. 5).

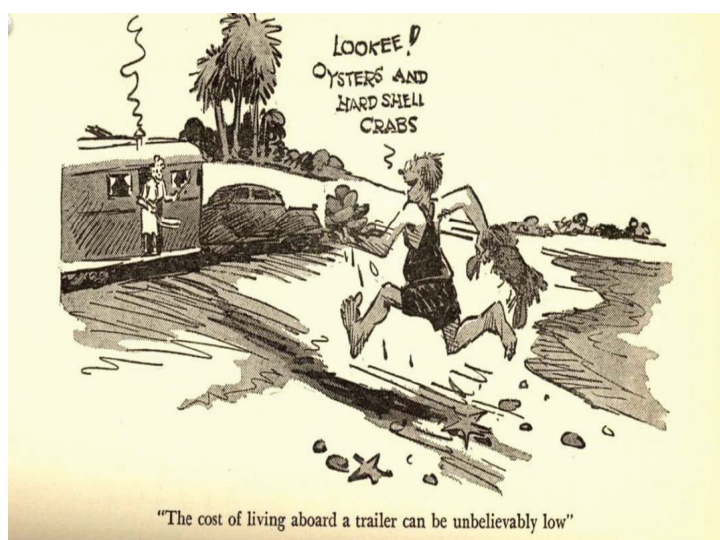


**OUT THEY GO AND THEIR BREAD CARDS ARE TAKEN AWAY.**

**Figure 5.** Darling J.N. *Ding Goes to Russia.* "Out they go and their bread cards are taken away" [Darling, 1932, p. 76].



The pessimism depicted in the cartoon, where an individual is portrayed as an oppressed component of a potent state apparatus, contrasts with the optimistic outlook of the narrator, who fully experiences the joy and fullness of existence at the end of the trip. (Fig.6)



**Figure 6.** Darling J.N. *The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue* "The cost of living aboard a trailer can be unbelievable low" [Darling, 1937, p. 90].

The temporal structure of travelogues is consonant with the spatial one. Time is unfolding in American space as a straight flow through bumps and potholes toward the new civilization in the imagined trailer colony, where common values and mutual understanding prevail. Undoubtedly, the concept of the future is emerging, elucidated in the context of civilizational development. Instead, in Soviet space, the future from the perspective of civilizational development looks uncertain. The historical context of the foreign nation is characterized by the societal disruptions that relentlessly destroy what an American might perceive as civilizational landmarks. However, there is yet to be a clear way to get out. In Darling's travelogues, a fragmented space experience correlates with a temporal gap representation in places that have lost or not acquired symbolic meaning, that belong neither to the past nor to the future, in which one can pause but not linger.

As an example, let us look at the book's last chapter. The narrator spends Sunday in Zaporizhzhia, where he finds a church and closely observes prohibited practices, surprised that the church is full of people. Subsequently, his imagination is transported to Moscow, to the place of the destruction of the largest temple. However, this spatial leap is not accidental. This is a kind of projection of the church's fate on the periphery. Moreover, in his reflections, he goes further, turning the place of absence into a space with plans for the upcoming construction and a stunning view of the distant landscape. We are faced with a phenomenon that Marc Auger interprets as a non-place. Outlining the difference between a place and a non-place, the philosopher starts from the opposition of place and space, emphasizing that "the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsest which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten" [Auger, 1995, p. 79].

Thus, the travelogue is loaded with the key features of chronotope, which can be exemplified as the transformation of places into space and the related process, the representation of non-places with the criteria, according to Auger, frequency of places, blurring of focus, unattributable gaze, and enumerations of route place names: "*Wheat, wheat, wheat, potatoes and sometimes sun flowers and sugar beets. There is a good deal of sameness to the journey, broken only by the larger towns of Tula, Orel, Karkov and Zaporozhye, until the*

*rougher country of the Crimea is reached and you pull into Sevastopol, that Russian port on the Black Sea which has a long record of sieges and battles for young history students to study but never remember*"; "So on to Baku, Mineralniye Vodi and Rostov, with the one great interest watching from the trains the kaleidoscopic change of races, people and costumes, remnants of the tides of invading hordes from Persia, Mongolia, Asia Minor and the north" [Darling, 1932, pp. 176, 184].

Auger outlines, "Travel <...> constructs a fictional relationship between gaze and landscape. And while we use the word 'space' to describe the frequentation of *places* which specifically defines the journey, we should still remember that there are spaces in which individual feel himself to be a spectator without paying much attention to the spectacle" [Auger, 1995, p. 86]. He avoids historical landmarks or those associated with the authorities in the Soviet Union. He chooses trains and roads that lead him to the periphery. There, the narrator reflects on instability and impermanence, focusing on places that are not completed: either under construction like the working-class neighbourhoods or in decay, like an unnamed aristocratic estate in a village near Sevastopol, "As the eye followed the now weed – grown driveway back to the mansion, the first item that arrested the attention was the large leaded glass window, which looked out over what had once been a handsome terrace and garden. The window, once the chief architectural feature of the house, was now draped with a stained and patched bed quilt, tacked up at an absurd angle to keep the blazing sun from disturbing the late morning slumbers of the new tenants" [Darling, 1932, p. 65]. Anthropological places like the former estates have been deprived of their history, names, and symbols, turning into 'spaces' – hotels.

In "The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy", spatiality can be attributed to non-place, as the 'trailer civilization' of the future is unrecognizable, "The town [Sedalia] did not recognize us as advance agents of a new and better civilization" [Darling, 1937, p. 34]. In American space, passing through and the inability to stay is sometimes involuntary. The impulse to stay at a place is interrupted by the discovery of its incompleteness, which pushes travellers into the space of new prohibitions, "Through Tallahassee at dusk, and because there was no trailer camp there we hastened on to Ocala, where we were assured a new camp with all the modern conveniences had just been completed. Ocala offered every prospect of a pleasant night, except that the new trailer camp was not completed and was four miles away on a side road. The town looks hospitable, so we picked a place where it seemed we would not be in the way and polled up to the curb, only to find printed in large black letters at frequent intervals, 'Cars not permitted to stay overnight'" [Darling, 1937, p. 76]. The accelerated pace of this travelogue and the unwelcoming attitude toward the narrator's home, or trailer, contain a hint of restlessness, expressed timidly and covered with irony. In the aftermath, the experience formed in Darling's travelogue will be fully revealed and realized in the road narratives of the post-war period.

The path is laid through towns, a space with no landmarks that does not evoke memories and is described through the abstract characteristics of a "picturesque" landscape, a "handsome" city, and a "pretty" town. Hotels, roadside cafes, campsites, and movement through Missouri, Arkansas, and Arkansas are loaded with a list of the geographic coordinates (Town of Ozark, Warsaw, Springfield, Pine Bluff, Lake Village, and Vicksburg). It is not surprising that his attention is focused on the road and the quality of the asphalt, which often becomes an obstacle to his desire to speed up the movement. "To find prophetic evocations of spaces in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense; spaces in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only movement of the fleeting images enables the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future" [Auger, 1995, p. 87]. Transit through peripheral space, not burdened by historical or personal meanings, is uneventful, and dissolves places into space in fleeting observations of the landscape outside the trailer window. However, the metaphor of the road/asphalt, the connection between cities and towns, between the past and the future, reveals the semantic saturation of space. Insignificant, devoid of symbolic features, it should acquire an anthropological value and take place through the connection between communities and time.

Neil Campbell identifies the characteristics of movement and chronotope described above as distinctive traits of the road narrative genre, “While allowing the narrative to flit between places with little necessity for depth or detail. In this way these books connect experiences, relate peoples, and speculate about the past and the future in a manner that might be less likely within other forms of writing, for at the heart of the genre is its expansiveness and its unwillingness to be settled and fixed” [Campbell, 2001, p. 280]. However, in Darling’s text, these features take on a different conceptual meaning. After all, the narrator finds an “anthropological place” in the “trailer colony”, devoid of contemporary era signs (telephone, newspapers, pole dancing), where he discovers a non-identical experience. In this light, the entire journey is perceived as a path to the self-other.

### Conclusions

The examination of Darling’s travelogues “Ding Goes to Russia” and “The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue”, which inherited different genre traditions, revealed their conceptual and poetic affinities. In both texts, the author investigates the common issues of civilization and its advancement, as well as the significance of technological progress for a human being. In the present, he longs to see the outlines of the changes. The features of the unmanifested future or hidden phenomena of the present are felt more strongly at a distance from the centre, at the intersection of transit paths, where the narrator never comes into contact with other, only observes. At the same time, it is noteworthy that his caricatured auto image in the visual fictional space of travelogues dares to interact. This fictional structure trait of a non-fiction text still needs to be comprehended.

Geography in these travels is perceived through anthropological optics, implemented, among other things, through the concepts of the mutual influence of society and space in an unstable world. The experience of alienation is constructed through images of places displayed identically in both travelogues. In Darling’s travelogues, places outside of symbolic meaning come to the fore of the spatio-temporal structure. According to the concept of M. Auger, their features can be attributed to non-places. The key features of the chronotope of both travelogues are the peripheralization of space, the transformation of places into space, and the related process, the representation of non-places.

The caricaturists’ texts exhibit genre peripherality through the dual nature of their poetic codes. Behind the secondary nature of the genre constructions of both texts, one cannot help but see individual searches reflected in the unique role and methods of spatial metaphors and imaginary topoi explication. Their semantic and visual density force us to recall and re-estimate the factual writing of the cartoonist in the context of future genre development.

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## PERIPHERAL WRITING AND WRITING ON THE PERIPHERY IN TRAVELOGUES BY JAY NORWOOD DARLING

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**Key words:** *travelogue, periphery, chronotope, representation, visualization, non-place.*

The article is devoted to the little-known literary work of the American cartoonist Jay Norwood Darling. The current study was conducted on the travelogues “Ding Goes to Russia” (1932) and “The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue” (1937). This article *aims* to reveal and contextualize the features of J.N. Darling’s travel texts as peripheral genres. The main objective of this work is to analyze the deep structures of the travelogues chronotope, based on which the hypothesis will be put forward. Its essence is that the intensity of the crisis time experience in different spaces and through these spaces modifies the involved genre clichés, giving rise to a tragic (for Soviet space) and optimistic (for American space) premonition.

The research *methodology* is based on the study of the interaction between the centre and periphery of the literary system, in particular, the concept of “semiosphere” formulated by Yu. Lotman. Genre analysis includes comparative and contextual methods of studying texts. The cultural-historical method deepens the understanding of the context of Darling’s literary work. Particularly, it is used to discover the historical and social factors that impact the peculiarities of others and one’s own world perception and image reconstruction. Genre analysis of travelogues with various graphic components, including caricatures, involves an intermedia method of studying the semantic connections between visual and verbal in travelogues.

The examination of Darling’s travelogues “Ding Goes to Russia” and “The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy. A Trailer Travelogue”, which inherited different genre traditions, revealed their conceptual and poetic affinities. In both texts, the author investigates the common issues of civilization and its advancement, as well as the significance of technological progress for a human being. The features of the unmanifested future or hidden phenomena of the present are felt more strongly at a distance from the centre, at the intersection of transit paths.

Geography in these travels is perceived through anthropological optics, implemented, among other things, through the concepts of the mutual influence of society and space in an unstable world. The experience of alienation is constructed through images of places displayed identically in both travelogues. In Darling’s travelogues, places outside of symbolic meaning come to the fore of the spatio-temporal structure. According to the concept of M. Auger, their features can be attributed to non-places. The key features of the chronotope of both travelogues are the peripheralization of space, the transformation of places into space, and the related process, the representation of non-places.

The caricaturists’ texts exhibit genre peripherality through the dual nature of their poetic codes. Behind the secondary nature of the genre constructions of both texts, one cannot help but see individual searches reflected in the unique role and methods of spatial metaphors and imaginary topoi explication. Their semantic and visual density force us to recall and re-estimate the factual writing of the cartoonist in the context of future genre development.

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