

Breakfast in Valentīns Jakobsons's Short Prose

Abstract: Latvian writer Valentīns Jakobsons (1922–2005) has published three collections of short prose – *Brokastis zaļumos* (*Breakfast in the Greens*, 1986), *Brokastis ziemeļos* (*Breakfast in the North*, 1992) and *Brokastis pusnaktī* (*Breakfast at Midnight*, 1995), which all have the word “breakfast” in the title. In Jakobson’s stories, breakfast holds a diverse role – in the titles of collections and stories, the name of the painting of Édouard Manet “The Luncheon on the Grass” is used and the breakfast time and dishes are described. In his stories, breakfast satisfies a person’s need for food, describes the historical and social situation in the Soviet time, and somewhat highlights gender differences in the depiction of this meal. While describing the traditions of eating breakfast in Siberian exile, the author of the article draws parallels with Varlam Shalamov’s *Kolyma Tales*.

Jakobson’s stories show that hopes for love, the restoration of self-esteem, deportation, relocation of an arrested and deported person to another correctional labor camp of strict regime, the beginning of a new life, all start with breakfast. The writer ironically reveals that the hope for a new beginning is an illusion; an individual in the Soviet social system cannot strive for change, but only survival.

Keywords: breakfast; Latvian short prose; irony; the Soviet daily life; Siberian exile

Breakfast is the first meal after several night hours and it is a ritual established in gastronomy in recent centuries in the European cultural tradition. Breakfast takes place in the morning and in a certain social environment. In his article “Grünzüge einer Literaturwissenschaft des Frühstückes”, Professor Burckard Dücker emphasizes that in the fictional world of literature, music (opera) and fine arts, “food has a nutritional and social (community) function” (Dücker, 2018, 374). The monograph *Kulinaristik des Frühstückes* edited by Professor

Alois Wierlacher not only reveals how many different sciences can be used to study breakfast as a cultural phenomenon, and how diverse are the traditions of breakfast, but also shows that about 25% of people do not eat breakfast for social or geo-ecological reasons (Eichler, 2018, 51).

In Latvian, the word *brokastis* is borrowed from German, from the form *vrōkost* (Ger. *frühkost*, “early food”), but the modern Latvian speaker no longer understands the original meaning of the word *breakfast*; the word no longer refers directly to the early meal as in German (Karulis, 1992, 147). But of course, in Latvian culture too, breakfast is associated with the beginning of the day.

When studying the role of breakfast in a literary work, it is important to mark the frame (*Rahmen daten*) for the consumption of food in the literary text. Burckard Dücker writes that it is necessary to find out “when, for how long, where (in private, in the kitchen, dining room, café, restaurant, hotel), who (family, invitation, working breakfast), the order of people sitting at the table, what food and drinks are served, the situation (weekday, Sunday, vacation, business trip), what form (dishes, tablecloth, decorations, service, buffet)” (Dücker, 2018, 374).

Breakfast in literature has been observed as a textual element by scholars; Alois Wierlacher analyses Thomas Mann in *Bedeutungen und Funktionen des Früstücks im Werk Thomas Mann*, edited by Dieter W. Adoph. In Latvian literary studies, Ingrida Kupšāne has addressed breakfast in her article “Valentīna Jakobsona *Trejādo brokastu ēdienkarte*” (“Valentīns Jakobson’s Menu of Three Kinds of Breakfast”), in which she observes: “The breakfast situation is also becoming a structured principle on which his prose is based as a whole” (Kupšāne, 2014, 197). In this paper, I will use the comparative literary approach and base the study on the conclusions presented in the collective monograph *Kulinaristik des Früstücks*, contrasting the Siberian stories written by Valentīns Jakobsons with stories by Varlam Shalamov.

Latvian writer Valentīns Jakobsons (1922–2005)¹ has written three

1 Valentīns Jakobsons was born in Rīga, studied at a prominent school – Rīga French Lyceum, but he did not pass all the final examinations, because on June 14, 1941, Valentīns and his family were sent to the Vasjugan district of Novosibirsk region, where he worked various jobs. In 1945 he was sent to Tomsk, where he worked in a factory. In 1947, he was sentenced to another 25 years in prison, serving in a particularly strict correctional camp in Norilsk. Jakobsons was released from prison and rehabilitated after Stalin’s death in 1955. In 1956 he returned to Riga as a deportee. First, he was a construction worker, then from 1957 to 1964 he worked at the Puppet Theater, and from 1964 to 1982 he was the director of the puppet film group at Riga Film Studio. In the film studio, he began writing screenplays for puppet films, eventually writing his first short story in 1977.

collections of stories: *Breakfast in the Greens* (1986), *Breakfast in the North* (1992) and *Breakfast at Midnight* (1995). Each collection has at least one story with a similar title to that of the collection; I will dedicate my paper to these stories. Latvian literature researcher and critic Guntis Berelis describes the titles of V. Jakobson's collections as follows:

Valentīns Jakobsons's debut collection, playing upon the title of the famous Manet painting, was called "Breakfast in the Greens" (1986). This was followed by the book "Breakfast in the North" (1992), the cover drawing of which did everything to repel the reader from Jakobson's virtuoso prose. So, as already accepted here and there in the world, the second breakfast. However, you may just get the impression that Jakobsons is a supporter of a mysterious literary diet – several months ago another book about breakfast was published – this time it was breakfast at midnight. Combining book titles in a "long breakfast" is, of course, a game – Jakobsons is very fond of such ironic word games (especially in his first collection of stories). (Berelis, 1996)²

Jakobson's first collection of stories was published in 1986 when the Third Awakening movement began (the time of the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia, 1986–1991) and the Soviet censorship decreased, and publishing houses began to publish texts written by people convicted for political reasons during the Soviet era.

At the end of the 1960s, Latvian literature saw authors of short stories as characterised by an ironic view of the world: "[...] the depiction of external events dominates, the world around us is depicted with an ironic smile, so are the situations that reveal contradictions in real life" (Briedis, 2001, 77). Andris Jakubāns (collection *My White Guitar*, 1968) is considered to be the most prominent representative of ironic prose in Latvian literature. In the 1980s and 1990s, with the change of Soviet rule and state order, elements of grotesque and absurdity become more frequent in prose, alongside irony:

Everyday life in "ironic prose" is contrasted with fantasy and imagination, depicting isolation and alienation in the relations between generations and among people.

2 Here and hereafter translated from Latvian by Laimdota Ločmele.

The irony is felt in the seeming inconsistency of the plot and its revelation; longing for illusions (not ideals) reveals the desire to break away from everyday life, but the author's ironic pathos – to stay in it and obey the rules dictated by the environment. The world of satire and grotesque is formed in ironic prose – it enters with a circus atmosphere, with masks that people need to hide their real identities. In this prose, the meaning of fantasy and grotesque elements, hyperbole, become wider and deeper. (Briedis, 2001, 77)

Jakobson's first stories were published in newspapers in the 1970s when he became a writer and a representative of ironic prose.

The collection of stories *Breakfast in the Greens* depicts the relationships and the experience of living in the Soviet era. The narrative is ironic, concentrated, and laconic. The action takes place in Riga and in Pelašķi (a place invented by the author; Latv. *pelašķis*, “yarrow”, a perennial plant, one of the best-known herbs of Latvia).

The epigraph of the story “Breakfast in the Greens” is the line “You can water the horse if you have a horse” by Swedish-American poet Karl Sandburg (1878–1967). The story is told in the third person, following the protagonist, a 33-year-old man Frīdis who lives in Rīga, works as a deputy chief in a small finance department, is unmarried and a virgin, and lives in a communal apartment room in a house with a shared bathroom. As a child, he became limp as a result of a domestic injury. The only time when he tried to get drunk from loneliness, everyone in the house knew it, because he got sick and occupied the common bathroom for the whole evening. The people's condemnation was so harsh that Frīdis does not attempt to get drunk for a second time. Like many other works of Latvian literature (H. Gulbis, J. Mauliņš, V. Lāms, etc. (Kalniņa, 2017, 25)), Jakobson's story creates a feeling of inferiority and undermined self-esteem, created through the depictions of unproductive work and low wages, the protagonist's modest place of residence, his lack of connection with his place of birth. Jakobson captures these feelings in his story, but the third-person narrator also speaks about them ironically, as Frīdis develops his inferiority complex deliberately, without any attempt to change anything in his life and compensates only by looking only at reproductions of beautiful paintings.

In the story, food first describes Frīdis' modest life, mirroring his social situation and attitude towards food when he comes home from work:

Later, in the smoky common kitchen, Frīdis fried two ripe slices of rye bread in an egg, mixed water with ascorbic acid and sugar in a cup and had a meal in a calm spirit, biting from a peeled cucumber. Having had enough, he throws himself on the couch and smokes. (Jakobsons, 1986, 107)

Already in the description of the first meal Jakobsons speaks ironically – such a modest meal characterizes not only the social status, but also the desire to enjoy the situation, and it is a typical male meal – fast, rational and supposedly healthy (rye bread, ascorbic acid, cucumber), as it is described in one sentence. In her article “Konstrastive Betrachtung zur Ironie”, Hannele Kohvakka acknowledges:

In irony, there is always something said opposite or is meant otherwise where something else is implied, criticized, or evaluated. The indirect and implicit nature of irony is crucial here. It is always hidden and should not be signalled too openly. (Kohvakka, 2000, 225)

There are different types of irony in Jakobson’s stories, in the story “Breakfast in the Greens” he uses the irony of situations where the context is important. With the help of irony, the narrator distances himself from a direct assessment of persons and situations.

Frīdis’s peaceful life is interrupted by his boss’s invitation to go to his summer house on Saturday morning – there will be a “breakfast in the greens” and he has to take a lady with him. For the first time, Frīdis overcomes his fears and invites his co-worker Silvija, who agrees. At home he starts looking for pictures in his collection – there are Manet, Monet, and Cezanne’s “A Lunch on the Grass”, carefully examining what is seen in the paintings in the context of the upcoming event. Frīdis first examines the reproduction of Cezanne’s painting, assessing what is seen in the painting, thinking about the planned event, but it does not satisfy him:

Everyone is busy with their thoughts, everyone is looking in a different direction. Is there any quarrel or jealousy to blame, but the breakfast looks shabby. Even the little dog, which has come along, is raising his snout against the sky and howling with great sadness. “Oh, my summer,” thinks Frīdis and smokes a cigarette, “if this

is breakfast in the greenery, then there is no point in such a trip, then it is better to stay in the office at the desk. (Jakobsons, 1986, 116)

Also, Monet's "Breakfast in the Greens" does not inspire Frīdis – there are a dozen people tired of the sun and wine, but the women are buttoned up to the chin in warm weather and too finely dressed. The closest to the upcoming event is Manet's "Breakfast in the Greens" – they will also be two couples – he with Silvija and the boss with his wife. Frīdis is especially attracted by one of the women in the painting: "The other, the redhead, seems to have swum already. She is sitting in the sun and drying herself. Completely naked. Pink. Without a single cloth. Without a leaf. Side by side with the two men" (Jakobsons, 1986, 117). Further in the story, we learn that Frīdis is dreaming of seeing his co-worker Silvija in the place of the redhead the next day.

He starts Saturday morning by ironing his light suit and the first cigarette of the day, although it was usually a ritual after breakfast. Lighting the cigarette so early indicates the special meaning of the day. Then "For his breakfast, he fries eggs with bacon, who knows when he gets to eat" (Jakobsons, 1986, 119–120). Here breakfast has both a nutrient and a social function. It is also the point for starting a new day and work: Frīdis has finally decided to meet a woman and spend his holidays with her. The boss's house is located in Frīdis's native parish Pelašķi. It turns out that the boss has invited his employees to clean his house and garden for free. They eat, only dinner is in the evening. The author begins his description with the words: "Breakfast in the greens. Breakfast in the evening" (Jakobsons, 1986, 134); breakfast in the greenery is still there because Frīdis and Silvija are sitting next to each other. They are eating: "Hot potatoes are steaming on the table. Fried meat smells good, his eyes are enchanted by different snacks. Fresh and prepared, salted, peppered and sugared" (Jakobsons, 1986, 134). The boss is speaking alone boasting about his life know-hows. Jakobsons uses verbal irony to depict the boss and his manners. The boss speaks by mixing Latvian and Russian words and military terms.

"We set up these premises last summer. Raz dva – i gotovo," the boss tells Frīdis boastfully. "Men and their ladies ran over, and in five or six ways the attic was built. And who doesn't like to go out in the greenery? Here, however, a completely different air. Priroda. But this spring we made the porch. Shodu" (Jakobsons, 1986, 133). The contrast between the breakfast in the greens seen in

the paintings and the breakfast in the greens organized by the Soviet functionary is striking – it is the difference between culture and the absence of culture. Frīdis gets sick not from drinking and eating, but from the unethical situation he finds himself in: where the boss is proud about using the employees for his gain, he spoils their rest in the greenery, turns the day off into a working day, and praises himself for it. Frīdis goes to use the restroom and sees that the wooden outhouse is built in the middle of his childhood river, manure and paper floating down the river. The location of the cabin is not only ecologically disrespectful to nature as pointed out by the author, but it is also an unacceptable place for a toilet for the traditional Latvian lifestyle. In 1987, Astrīda Aļķe admitted in the review of the collection:

This time, however, life shows that absurdity can also become commonplace, and since there is no world of symbols for the wild man who grew up outside the culture, mermaids and watermen have never lived in Pelašķupīte, the river is in one swoop used to serve his needs, which understood by the ancient Roman would have taken him aback. By using parallelism unobtrusively, Valentīns Jakobsons expresses how catastrophically a person is degraded by rejecting the cultural experience of previous generations, learning nothing from it and not inheriting anything from it. (Aļķe, 1987)

Breakfast in the evening changes Frīdis's life: he informs his boss that he is quitting his job and during the night he overturns the outhouse to float down the river. He also leaves Silvia because she is part of the humiliating situation. Jakobsons shows that the immoral situation first affects Frīdis's physiological functions, and only then consciousness and will. He at least regains his self-respect for a short while.

The story shows that Frīdis did not end up in the work of the coveted Manet, but in the work of Cezanne. In this story, breakfast marks a seemingly new beginning in a person for whom the Soviet system envisages only the role of an unimportant worker and who violates this role at last; however, the narrator's irony becomes even more bitter – Frīdis will indulge in looking at pictures even more. In this story, breakfast introduces a supposedly new beginning in a person for whom the Soviet system intends only the role of a working screw; Frīdis now transcends this role.

At the end of the story “Breakfast in the Greens”, the world of illusions becomes even more important than the uncultured real world. This is a characteristic feature of Latvian ironic prose – there is a desire to break out of empty life; however, the rebellion is short-lived and leads back to commonness. Breakfast in the evening gives strength only for a short time at night; morning brings the person back to reality.

In the 1990s, when the Republic of Latvia was restored, memoiristic literature became more prominent. For the first time, victims of the Soviet repression were able to share their experiences of deportations, prisons, and work camps. Mārtiņš Kaprāns admits that

During the Awakening and the early 1990s, the Soviet experience in people’s life stories obtained a strongly politicized mood including the characteristic traumatic themes. However, as the political and ethnic mobilizing role of life stories diminished and post-Soviet new conditions and frustration emerged, the narratives of suffering lost their ideological power. It is true that their dominance in the biographical discourse of the 1990s was still maintained, and it was likely that people deliberately avoided memories that could potentially soften their condemnation of the Soviet era. (Kaprāns, 2016, 134–135)

Valentīns Jakobsons is an active creator of memory culture with the collections of stories *Breakfast in the North* and *Breakfast at Midnight* and translations of Russian writer Varlam Shalamov’s *Kolyma Stories*. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, people’s life stories, memoirs, and memories aroused more interest among readers, but interest in fiction had waned, while Jakobson’s stories were more followed by select literary critics than a wide readership.

Compared to Shalamov’s stories, Jakobsons talks of the period from 1941 to 1955. Shalamov, on the other hand, has spent more time in prisons and camps – he sees the Soviet repressive system develop and become more and more atrocious, turning a person into a beast who fights for food and warmth. Shalamov documents his experience, attempting to leave behind testimonies about the people he met and document the manifestations of repression. The prisoners for him are residents of their own country; however, Jakobson’s persons are strangers who look back on Latvia and its traditions.

In the story “Breakfast in the North”, the daily lives of people are depicted in a correctional camp around 1950, in the north of the USSR, on Christmas. The camp is inhabited by people from different nations. The main protagonist, Latvian Dāvis Tīrums, is the narrator in third person; in some episodes, he ironically addresses himself as Brecītis, while in other passages he remains a neutral narrator: “Sixty-five creatures lodge in a section, in a barrack – one hundred and thirty. There are thirty-two barracks in the camp. Now, Brecīt, count – how many men, how many smokers?” (Jakobsons, 1992, 48). The story tells how constant checks are made at night in the camp, people are raised every night three times, they are made to undress, their belongings are searched to find out if any are hiding weapons or food. It is a way to terrorize and humiliate the prisoners. After a hard night, hard work follows, where the prisoners are treated like objects or the equipment, but not as people. All are constantly thinking about food and smoking. Tīrums has been sent to another brigade, but he wants to return to his own for this reason he must talk to the foreman at some idle moment, but the conversation is postponed. One night, Tīrums is called out and sent somewhere else, he has been betrayed by another dishonest prisoner – the foreman. In this episode, Jakobsons ironically shows that a person (Tīrums) wants to find a better job in the camp, but the coincidence of circumstances plays an evil joke – he is sent to an even stricter camp. In the camp, a person can only decide how to divide a small piece of bread into several parts, but making bigger plans is an illusion.

The story also features breakfast. Bread is distributed first; if there is a small piece of wood left with which the bread is divided, it is considered a good thing, as the wood may also be consumed:

Give us this day our daily bread! The prisoner receives his piece of bread with light fingers. He caresses it with eyes and with his fingertips. He keeps admiring it, smelling, stabbing his tongue in a dark, tempting crust. Over and over again, he takes a deep breath of the most wonderful scent in the world. (Jakobsons, 1992, 68)

Jakobsons uses the motif of the Lord’s Prayer “Give us this day our daily bread” (Mt 6:11) – for the prisoner, the bread is the most important part of the meal, it determines whether he will survive. Not in vain the word “daily bread” is used repeatedly in the story, the bread that protects the life of the prisoner,

which Christ can help to protect. Shalamov's story "Silence" also emphasizes the importance of bread, as the camp system was unified, the distribution of bread to prisoners and then the distribution of breakfast bread for the whole day is in the work of both authors. But for Shalamov it has only a direct nutritive meaning, he does not form allusions to different cultures.

However, an experienced prisoner knows that he should save breakfast bread: "The daily bread ration should be divided so that one piece is for lunch, another piece remains for the evening" (Jakobsons, 1992, 68). But the supervisor likes to play, especially at Christmas, that is why bread has to be kept for another day. The story has repeatedly emphasized that in order to survive, it takes willpower, thought, good health, and even then all this can be destroyed by the supervisor in a clear mind or while drunk. After distributing the bread, the men go to the canteen; it is cold outside - 25 degrees below zero, to get to the canteen the prisoners must wait outside. There is a fish soup for breakfast:

One cook loads some liquid porridge at the bottom of the bowl, the other one pours soup on top of it. "Fish soup, fish soup. Three hundred times a year, three times a day fish soup, fish soup... Watery, stinky, half-rotten, salted cod soup." (Jakobsons, 1992, 71)

The fish is one of the early symbols of Christianity, it is a symbol of faith, a sign of Christian communion. Stinky fish soup is a sign of the community of inmates.

At breakfast, Tīrums eats with a spoon, but not everyone has one: "He who has not got a spoon gulps the soup over the edge of the bowl, but the thicket and porridge are pulled into his mouth with his finger" (Jakobsons, 2005, 146) Shalamov's story "Silence" also talks of spoons: "Why do we need spoons? It's a long time since we got used to gulping soup over the edge of the bowl. What's the use of spoons? What lies on the bottom of the bowl can be pinched to the edge, closer to the lips, with your finger" (Shalamov, 1994, 5).. Depriving a person of tableware is a way to bring a person closer to an animal and to lower a person's self-esteem. Both Jakobsons and Shalamov discuss the presence and absence of a spoon.

Dāvis Tīrums, addressing himself as Brencītis, for a moment is ironic about himself or the Soviet system, but the biggest irony lies in that he is trying to

figure out how to return to his barracks, but in the end, he is transported to another camp. The reviews of Jakobson's collection of stories emphasize its novelty in Latvian literature:

In the story, the author is able to both realistically land and rise above what is happening, in order to reveal not only the impunity and sophisticated arbitrariness of the violent system, but also its absurdity and weakness. And this is achieved mainly by means of parody, irony and satire, which have not been practised in the literature of our deportation camps so far. The official truth of the system is confronted with the real truth, revealing cruel lies. As a counterweight to the philosophy of fear and the official lies and violence there emerges ironical condemnation, the language of paradoxes and the voice of resisting reason, which qualifies absurd orders as absurd. (Tabūns, 1992)

Breakfast in the text marks the beginning of a difficult day, the traditional boundaries of breakfast are physically set, but the breakfast dish – bread – also becomes a lunch and dinner dish. Fish soup for breakfast is not a typical breakfast dish, but it is the only hot dish three times a day. The main cutlery item spoon is not provided, it can only be inherited from a deceased prisoner. Prisoners' breakfast loses any sign of individuality. The breakfast depicted in the story is also the beginning of a change in the status of the prisoner (Tirums) – he is transferred to another camp. Breakfast in the story describes the historical situation, it vividly reveals the repressive system of the Soviet order. Allusions to Christianity point to a new community of people – the brotherhood of political prisoners.

The collection of stories *Breakfast at Midnight* contains two stories where the word breakfast is mentioned in the title – “Utterance before Breakfast” and “Breakfast at Midnight”. The collection was published in 1995, when there was a change of codes in Latvian literature. The first story “Utterance before Breakfast” is an ironic view of a young boy at the historical events of the 1930s and 1940s. The view is not authentic, the narrator knows what historical assessments to give to the events, the text no longer has artistic meaning. Breakfast has a metaphorical meaning, the beginning of new history – Germany enters Czechoslovakia, concludes an agreement with the USSR, the Soviet occupation begins. But in Riga, a young German man kills a taxi driver without reason early in the morning, and he has a breakfast pack in his car: “There are

four double-sandwiches in the pack – two with smoked ham and two with liver sausage” (Jakobsons, 1995, 7). Of course, this is an indication that Latvians are wealthy and that their luxurious lives will soon be destroyed. The protagonist of the story learns in the morning that his friend has killed the taxi driver; he reflects on historical events and the first year of the Soviet rule; on June 14, 1941, he is deported.

In the story “Breakfast at Midnight”, the action takes place in deportation, where a young man, who tells his story in the first person, lives in the same house with a collective farmer – a mother and her two daughters. It is winter, they go to work but are not paid their wages, the deportees are selling their belongings or trying to earn money with crafts. One day there is nothing to eat. They boil water, but it does not help the starving family. Jakobsons depicts the starving people talking about the food they have eaten back at home, which is delicious and smells good, while in reality: “Yesterday I ate two potatoes, the day before yesterday two, two days before yesterday three [...] Can one live on that little? Today we haven’t eaten at all” (Jakobsons, 1995, 133).

The irony of the story is that the food is available, it just has to be stolen. Their landlady has stored the potatoes in the cellar and gone to her father’s house until spring. However, the prisoners are brought up in ethical and cultural traditions, they do not want to steal until at night they break into the cellar, where there are about 100 buckets of potatoes. After a dispute over how much it would be acceptable to steal, four buckets are taken. The first meal of the day begins – breakfast at midnight. Potatoes will save people from starvation. In his Siberian stories, the author’s voice deviates but does not disappear, showing that breakfast is the beginning of life.

In his review of the collection of stories *Breakfast at Midnight*, G. Berelis writes:

Rather, he [Jakobsons – I.K.] reminds more of a modern-day intellectual – a bit sceptical, a bit resonant, a bit fatalistic, who wanders around the Jolly Village and describes the events in the intonations of “everyday scenes”. His attitude to many tragedies is neutral or, in terms of his own experience, self-ironic. And it is precisely this contrast between the mundaneness of writing and the terrible reality (the terrible reality that has become everyday life) that is the factor that gives the impression of the futility of the situation. “Death accounting” is beyond the bounds of tragedy. (Berelis, 1996)

Jakobson shows that ethical norms deviate in the face of hunger, but they do not disappear, and the protagonists of Jakobson's stories remember them and follow them even in very limited and harsh conditions. This is how Jakobson's prose is different from Shalamov's, whose narrator does not believe in ethical norms (there are no ethics in prison). Also, Shalamov narrates in the first person, while Jakobson's stories are written from the third person perspective. Shalamov's stories are separate dramatic episodes – in many stories everything is determined by hunger, and hunger overpowers morality. Jakobson's narrative is made up of current events and personal memories, the stories are ironic. Since both authors were imprisoned at the same time in the USSR work camps with a centralized system, both authors depict breakfast in a similar way in terms of food – the prisoners are given very little bread for breakfast for the whole day, while the survival of the prisoner depends on their ability to ration bread. In the stories of both authors, the breakfast dish is bread and soup, Jakobson specifies – fish soup. It is important for the protagonist of Jakobson's story that he has his own spoon, it helps him maintain self-confidence and dignity; for Shalamov's narrator, the way he eats is no longer important, his main objective being survival. Shalamov's stories are a testimony to his time in the Soviet system of repression, while Jakobson's stories fit into the literature of memory, which shows the unjust regime of the Soviet occupation.

In Jakobson's stories, the use of breakfast is diverse – in the titles of collections and stories, the names of paintings are used, the breakfast time and dishes are described.

Breakfast times are both traditional (in the morning) and non-traditional (in the evening). The name of the painting "Breakfast on the Greens" and the situation depicted in it mean leisure, but in Jakobson's story "Breakfast on the Greens", breakfast in the evening is not related to leisure, but spiritual humiliation of a person, when even the shamelessly imposed private physical labor duties of the boss are easier than his speech. For the deported, breakfast at midnight is the first meal of the day. In normal daily life, Jakobson's person eats breakfast alone in the morning, while in imprisonment or deportation it is impossible for one to stay alone; breakfast thus becomes a collective act. In the story "Breakfast at Midnight", bread and fish indicate that Christian congregations have been replaced by prison communities, but daily bread has been replaced by the protection of Jesus Christ. Jakobson's breakfast, with the

exception of the Soviet functionary's breakfast, is simple and modest, and in prison, it keeps the prisoner alive. Jakobson describes breakfast dishes in detail.

In the article "Grunzüge einer Literaturwissenschaft des Frühstückes" Dücker emphasizes that breakfast in literature is related to the code of the beginning. Similarly, Jakobson's stories show that hopes for love, the restoration of self-esteem, deportation, the beginning of a new life, start with breakfast.

In literature, breakfast has a very clear semantic meaning: it suggests the beginning, but it is also an easy meaning that simplifies the literary text when the author uses irony, various allusions, precise details, etc. In the second half of the 20th century, certain breakfast traditions were established, and literary texts depict whether breakfast conforms to the tradition of time and place, food and tableware, and shows deviations from the imagined generalized tradition for social, psychological or political reasons.

In the literary research of breakfast, broader conclusions could be drawn by using a larger corpus of authors and works, both by comparing stories of deportations and works that describe Soviet everyday life and texts from different times.

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