

Six Moments in Blog Balti Jaam

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„Hi dears!

(Woke up today at 8 (to the annoying alarm clock's ringing). Slipped into my slippers (which are red – I really love red, especially purple tones) and (smoothly, almost like a feather (let's be frank, more like a sack) drifted under the shower). Shower at 8.15 (water temperature mild, using typically tar shampoo or moisturizing shower gel (simple joys of life). (Isn't it funny how you could forget things so easily and thoroughly! I guess was it the shower or what, but) there I suddenly remembered, that we had settled for a lunch with June. For today(! Ahh you can imagine how this cracked my time schedule (there goes trip to shoestore ~~and Carl~~)). Breakfast at 8.35 (the hose broke splashing water all around and I had to clean the bathroom floor (2x3 m² in size, finished with beige ceramic plates à 10x40cm)) (this left me absolutely no time to enjoy (toasted) white bread with (norwegian) salmon (this is my favourite fish (absolutely adorable, culinary weakness (~~from back then in Norway, on fishing trip with Carl (June's ex) (We had so much fun! (Quite a lot of tequila you know. Fish and tequila! Crazy! :D)))))) Nothing special in it)).~~

At 3.13 p.m got off the tram (nr 2, Kopli-Ülemiste, (you know that red one, it has things written in German, I always thought they'd be Czech or something) (haven't used public transport since... high school (:D). What an experience! (What a mistake it was to it this time.) It seemed to be logical as it is absolutely impossible to find a parking spot in the center of the city) (the stop thats typically filled with approximately 3 persons aged 23 – 54, of appearance like alcohol users (ewww!!)).

Met June (The terminal building there looks disturbing. Absolutely hate its dirtyness, and it has no style whatsoever. (In childhood I had to wait for the train here, when me and mom visited aunt. She lived so far (somewhere in Paldiski (haven't been there since)) and during the winter time the train would have cold (prrrr...chilly) wooden seats (~~and actually it was quite depressing to go there, for they would always end up having some argument with my mother and then we would leave. I always cried, I can remember. Bitter memories~~). But those seats (that were in trains), (oh, I what a nostalgia) you cannot see those anywhere). Had lunch (in that new hotel nearby the station (I hadn't been there before (what a contrast. Strange to be in Jaam eating more than oily meatpie)) and had a chance to catch up (actually she invited me to go to London. You know, typical shop'n' style kinda trip! FUN FUN FUN! YAYY!! Of course I agreed to go!)) Had a quite usual day today.“¹

Time table at Kullerkupu trolley bus stop: „7 Väike-Õismäe – Balti Jaam. Stop: Kullerkupu“. Font: Arial, size: 12px. Black. Moisture defect marks on the schedule paper: there's a large round area being affected of it – print ink has faded and text blurred, changed its color at some point to something green-like. It is just in the center, fuzzifying workday schedule at 12 a.m and saturday's 11, 12 a.m and 1, 2, 3 p.m. A mark of torn sticker is in the right bottom corner of the sign.“²

I've seated at a table in the middle of the night. It's some low style fast food joint. I've been told its one o'clock. A smell of frying oil and a group of drunken persons appear. But when I try to see their face, only a reflection of myself is displayed, it being of low quality and distorted, blurry. Time is ambiguous here, it owns only few anchor points in the stream of words. Like a bellows fold it lengthens at one part of the story and is compressed to nothingness at another. Balti Jaam, poured into words leaps from my conciousness as storyteller, obviously drunk, collapses. I can reconstruct this event over and over again, but go no further. Place fades every time the guy falls down.

This is a double game. It appears to be black box, where I've been taken. He's really just

a histrion, trying to interpret the passed reality. He has picked styles, being more dramatic, expressive, giving focal points to certain parts that in his mind needs to be emphasized. There are many moments, where he stops and looks at the audience, looking for emotional contact with them. This play is written leaving many strings open. A lot of room for interpreting is left for the viewer, as it is hoped, that common knowledge fills in blanks and words would only be guiding signs. ³

„Can you feel my emotions?“ I've been embraced by a fragile girl. „Yes, I can feel your liveliness, your warmth. Its overwhelming. You are dangerous, vital – you're so passionate, able to bite, even to stab brutally, kill. Your flow of emotions fill me like people rushing from morning trains at platforms to tunnels, at certain moments being coherent river, then bumping into another stream, turbulentering in my heart. I feel you are constantly going away, but each time returning again. Each time Your train leaves from different terminal so I can never actually understand You. But in the end, there are more arrivals than departures. I'm sure. These trips change You constantly, but You still remain the same Yourself. It is wonderful, I don't mind what others say.“ „Can't you see I'm cabbage, I stink like vomit, like rotten meat sold in the market. Walls of my soul are full of graffiti by some junkie. Last thursday I became schizophrenic, shouted at everybody like crazy. It was in the middle of the station. I'm so embaraced. I hate myself!“ „No, You are wonderful. How could I convince you in that. Don't compare yourself to others. They might be beautiful outside. They might have calm middle class neighbourhoods, couples walking their Labradore dogs and echo of the children playing hide and seek, but they still lack personality. They aren't You. You are unique. Just don't compare yourself to others! Right?“ She lowers her head, looking at her pink stone feet covered with dirt. Then she looks at me: „This is not me. I'm it.“ ⁴

I arrive at an empty, what seems to be living room of a typical flat. Identical to thousands of others. Still you feel here deserted, alone, isolated. A photograph of some already situation in some bar, is laying on the table. I pick it up, and on the back side of it there's a stick-it message: „Found this picture this morning under the mattress. Remember, that night in Balti Jaam? Guy in the left was drunk, had funny tattoo covering his left chin. Shied away and went to his buddies when we were curious of this piece of body art.“ The photo falls again on its original position on the table. Only now I understand that I've intruded into somebody's home.

Next time, while re-visiting this part of Balti Jaam, I notice a computer screen at the place of the photo. As I approach, an instant messenger's window starts to blink. „Haa, saw somebody coming into my room for this photo specifically!“ I reply: „Yes, I'm interested in Balti Jaam“ Computer screen suddenly transforms, it fossilizes, becoming trash bin, just like those at the train station. ⁵

Trolley bus stop „Kullerkupu“. Mass of clouds rush over the tops of soviet time storey houses. Rain droplets hit the glass of kiosk next to passenger shelter where couple of persons with diggy hands, dirty clothes and swollen faces sit. They aren't waiting for the next bus. There's no rush, and black-coloured station's bench is convenient place to sit on and observe, how life passes. Or enters and leaves momentarily. There's a conversation, but its been kept between the two. Station shelter and kiosk, where among some cheap plastic toys, newspapers and *troynoy* is sold, are both worn out. Covered with scrawl, rusty at some places, dented and deformed at anothers. People rushing to work are standing actually few feet away from this complex. ⁶

This essay is about the emergence of Balti Jaam in blogs. Keyword „Balti Jaam“, used in search engine blog.google.com, guide me through the fragments of a place created by blogger or narrators. I try to decode the nature of this entity. Can it be seen as a coherent and enclosable whole? How is it related to „actual“ Balti Jaam? How is keyword „Balti Jaam“ used in blogs?

The results of search engine query are mixed chronologically and contextually, therefore throwing me randomly to different times and environments. My guide leads me to sites active, but I also end up behind doors that are locked – private diaries -, and meet ghosts - empty shells of entries, that are deleted, but remain buffered in search engine system.

[1] Words are the most basic constructing blocks of blog Balti Jaam. They are piled into sentences, paragraphs, which form separate entry or part of it. Process of gathering these blocks forms a structure of place. Threshold of including new bits of information to the phenomenon is low. There are few external predescribed laws or molds to format semantic building material. Creating place can therefore be an act of moment. At the same time, there are entries that are planned ahead, having a well tailored architecture. Still, internal structure of entry is largely improvisation, one, that's main ambition is to relate with the reader.

In this process there is a more or less daunting question of which parts of the „actual“ to weave into the story. Based on writers personality or emotional state, or some rather practical reason, information transferred or mutated from space outside the blog to computer screen holds ideology, metadata of subjectivity. Story could be told in detail on some parts and muted on others. Which part to include, how to contextualize is highly individual. Two timelines are created. One of readers, other of the constructed narrative. The story has its beginning and the end. ([3]).

[2] When looking for traces of Balti Jaam in blogspace, you find mass of texts, that each include the term in its own way. The variety of blog texts is overwhelming and on some level the narratives are too different to compare, it seems. After all, on certain level the attempt to categorize distorts reality so much, that it loses the touch with the original data. Still, some general trends can be attempted to draw.

First the context in which term „Balti Jaam“ is used, is not referencing the location or phenomenon itself, but rather using only its semantic body – the name itself. Public transport timetables are good example of this. In this category, keyword references phenomenon other than Balti Jaam itself. The name is used in new context, weakening its functional relation to its original site or object.

Secondly there is a metaphorical use ([6]), Balti Jaam seen as an adjective – balti jaam. There has been the formation of the common knowledge of Balti Jaam as a location with certain features. Such myth is based on concrete space, but also on indirect (tilted) information, of for example gossiping or media. While creating metaphor, touch with the actual situation of the site is lost. The image of the place has become unified in such an extent, that referencing it gives the spectator belonging to the group of common knowledge stimuli wanted. For example: „Paid in foreign balti jaam by credit card. Luckily I didn't think while taking out the card, which kind of to take and chose wrong one. ...“ (<http://muda.neetud.com/2007/02/ra-maksa-kaardiga-cash-is-king.html>). Metaphor parts of blog Balti Jaam are active until their real reference vanishes – when Balti Jaam loses

features needed to feed the myth.

Thirdly, Balti Jaam is involved in texts only as a stage, where particular event takes place. Writers have experienced some event that is binded to the subject area, yet they don't relate explicitly this to the Balti Jaam phenomenon. Balti Jaam in this context is set to background, only as the scenery. This could of course be illusion as there is a chance that the keyword or paragraph (context) act as metaphors that only reader with proper background knowledge could decipher.

Fourthly, certain features are given to the station, still keeping emotions at bay. These entries are like scientific research reports, that dully represents the facts – situations or events – without the care of involving one's personal appraisal.

In final category ([5]) of blogs an emotional attachment is being created by describing certain phenomenons relating to overall concept of the station. Event or object is seen directly to be caused or be a part of the phenomenon of Balti Jaam. The deeper and personal blog entries get, the more meanings are there hidden in the words. Narrator not only describes the situation and location, but shows empathy, relates emotionally. By giving opinion, writer reveals own's values. Words that are describing the phenomenon, are loaded with personality of the writer. These become inseparable. Personality merges with the place. In this way, the story is multidimensional texture, where each word and sentence has double or more meanings.

Some of the observers of such kind construct blog Balti Jaam based on the physical features of the area of terminal, others notice particular behaviour or happening between persons, which they connect to the phenomenon. While environmental conditions, such as dirt or smell, or events, such as yelling of a drunk or mentaly unstable person on the street, seem to fuel such posts, there are also positive-attitude structures of texts, that celebrate the overwhelming heterogeneity of the social and cultural setting of „actual“ terminal, relating persons themselves into it. In the criticizing posts mentioned, authors set their personality in opposition with Balti Jaam, distancing themselves. But as their emotions are through words merged with place, they still are part of blog Balti Jaam.

There are two levels on which this categorization operates. First, these categories are ways of which writers try to reflect some events or objects in „actual“ Balti Jaam. Secondly, entries structured according to the categories are bodies of text themselves, the ingredients of blog Balti Jaam.

[5] Blogs usually don't possess much information of the writer. Those who create the place, hint their personal background only through website design and writing style. Blog Balti Jaam's one feature is its fragmentation. Like in the „real“ space, where you see passer-by just at a glimpse, there is no connection – no tagging, communities, blogs dedicated to Balti Jaam, so forth. This leaves blog Balti Jaam to be consisted of isolated parts that doesn't relate, are spontaneous in their nature. There are few writers, that have written more than one post about the „actual“ area. This means that information transformation from „real“ setting to blogosphere is random. Still, during the preparation of this paper, I ended up creating blog Balti Jaam myself by going website, which fixed my visit and traced also the method by which I had entered the blog (namely using keyword in search engine). During my revisit I saw a new post that wondered, how people ended up on that certain blog. In that entry, using method mentioned was also brought out, by that creating another bit of Blog Balti Jaam.

[6] We've suspected Balti Jaam being implicitly written into some parts of posts in blogs,

therefore extending the area. But where does Balti Jaam's borders lie? I began writing this text with conviction, that Balti Jaam in cyberspace is most definitely entity on its own. It would be discrete, totally different, selfsufficient system, independent from the real world train terminal's area.

Asking, from where to where could blog Balti Jaam reach, should first address such question on the case of „real“ Balti Jaam. Traditionally name Balti Jaam is formed to address railway station. Still, its borders reach further. They extend to a park nearby and multipurpose market next to transport node is aswell felt to be insperable part of the complex, thereby bearing the additional name of Balti Jaam. The phenomenon of Balti Jaam has its border extention to time dimension, aswell as social and cultural sphere. Blog Balti Jaam can also be seen as a part of the phenomenon of the „actual“ Balti Jaam.

So far we've seen, that the (re)creation of blog Balti Jaam is directly bonded via writers to the actual setting. Texts rely heavily on actual happenings at the station. Emotions, metaphors are created on a same basis. Without fresh information from „actual“ place, blog entries on the topic become infrequent resulting subject to fade into archives of blogs.

Balti Jaam in blogs is a structure of semantic devices and the nature of information flows. There can be made a distinction of five technologies of writing. Only first category, that shifts Balti Jaam's semantical structure from its original location, could be non-emotional. In others, blog Balti Jaam has narrator's personality written in. Therefore blog Balti Jaam is rather more personal, human faced. Rather than architectural overview of the physical Balti Jaam, blogosphere construct the place on human-related events taken place in the surroundings of Balti Jaam.

Place construction follows here different paths and for the reader is truly incomplete – there is no blog community for Balti Jaam, every piece of information is separate and reachable only by artificial methodology of using certain keyword in search engine (guide). Therefore, blog Balti Jaam is heavily fragmented area. Because the information is exclusively received from the „actual“ Balti Jaam, then it can be said, that blog Balti Jaam is directly related to it and isn't entity of its own, being rather a subjective reflection.