LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

An Abridged City:

Santiago, Chile in Micro-Fiction

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Abstract:

In this article I touch on the relations between a micro-fiction literary contest and the production of meanings and urban representations. I concentrate my analysis on the description of how literary entries participating in this micro-fiction contest impart meaning to places within the city and how the contest is able to generate its own particular form of representation – an 'abridged city.' The contest is called 'Santiago in 100 Words' and has been taking place in Santiago, Chile since 2001. Literary works submitted must have a maximum of 100 words and must address city or urban contemporary life. I analyzed a body of 595 micro-stories published between 2001 and 2012, paying special attention to the elements that literary critics have confirmed as fundamental to the genre of micro-fiction (characters, space/time and narrated activities). I complemented this approach with a thematic analysis of each micro-story. Via the analysis I identified two typical channels through which micro-stories generate meaning for the places to which they refer, as well as the way in which the contest creates (through an iterative and systematic manner) a representation of Santiago, Chile. These methods are relevant in understanding the way in which a functioning literary contest participates in the generation of collective references and the establishment of points of view and ways of perceiving the city.

Key words: representations of the city; micro-story; abridged representation; aggregated space; Santiago, Chile

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Introduction

A representation of the city can take various forms and in this article I will concentrate on one case specifically, micro-fiction text, looking in particular at how a literary contest for stories of less than 100 words generates meaning for specific areas of a city, and as a result, the city as a whole. The assumption I commence with is that the activity of representing a city puts in play preexisting social meanings. Throughout the article I argue that the representations the literary contest creates, and in turn diffuses through periodic publications (which circulate through public space), participate in the generation, conservation or transformation of social meanings in the city and its places, as well as the ways in which the city is observed and interpreted.

I will describe two ways in which these micro-stories (considered at the individual level) produce meaning for those places that are explicitly referred to, as well as the way in which the contest as a whole constructs a representation of the city through the systemic reiteration of references. The article is organized in six parts. First, I will describe the context of the case study, the literary contest 'Santiago in 100 Words.' Second, I will describe the analytical method employed and then, third, I will address the primary types of micro-fiction. Fourth, I will propose three ways these micro-stories generate meaning for the places they refer to and fifth, (delving deeper) I will propose a particular type of representation of the city as a whole, known as the "abridged city." Lastly, I will conclude by proposing some ideas with respect to the relevance of the observations made throughout.

Case Study - "Santiago in 100 Words"

'Santiago in 100 Words' is a literary short story contest organized on a yearly basis by *Plagio*, the founders of a now defunct magazine, with the support of the Santiago Metro and the mining company Escondida. Entries must contain no more than 100 words and must refer to the city of Santiago (Campos 2011; Greene 2006; Mujica 2005). The contest has taken place every year since 2001.

From the beginning, the contest has generated great interest, with approximately 400,000 micro-stories having been submitted as of 2012 according to the competition website. This equates to an average of 50,000 micro-stories per year. While the prize structure has changed over time, at present three cash prizes are awarded to the top three finishers and 'honorable mentions' to the following eight, in addition to publication. In recent years other prizes have been added, such as the prize for the 'favorite story' as selected by the public online.

The winning entries are published, year by year, in Santiago Metro subway stations and on public billboards. Since 2006 they have also been disseminated via radio and written media, as well as by conventional mail. Additionally, at first every two years but now annually the contest organizers edit a small pocket-sized book called 'The 100 Best,' comprised of the one-hundred best micro-stories of the previous two years. In this article I have used the pocket-sized books published up to 2012 which include a total of 600 micro-stories. Of these, 595 are exclusively focused on Santiago with an additional five focused on the city of Valparaiso, because in 2005 a similar contest was also held there.

According to the contest organizers, 'Santiago in 100 Words' came about almost accidentally. The founders of a former magazine, *Plagio* (sociology students from the Catholic University of Chile), were seeking financing for student projects, which up until then had been funded from university resources. It was during this time that the students initiated contact with the Santiago Metro. The Metro response was that while support for a magazine did not match their company interests, the development of a unique project, more in line with company interests, could be considered. The authors did not originally have a clear idea of the project concept; their intention was to make the most of the circumstances at the time. It was on that basis that the Plagio founders commenced work on the project entitled 'Santiago in 100 Words.' Since then, the contest has garnered extensive public acknowledgement, not only from those familiar with the project, but also from various organizations, communication channels and companies that have committed their support and spread word of the project. Moreover, *Plagio* members have started competitions in other Chilean cities such as Valparaiso, Antofagasta, and Concepcion.

While it is possible to find similar initiatives to 'Santiago in 100 Words' internationally, what differentiates 'Santiago in 100 Words' from these other contests is that the entries are prose fiction, and the authors are not well known. Take for example *'Printemps des Poètes,'* a project first implemented in the Paris metro in 1993. In this instance the Parisian metro publishes verses from famous poets on trains, which marks a fundamental difference with 'Santiago in 100 Words.' Another example is the Sao Paulo metro with their program, 'Poesia no metro.' As with the Paris project, the big difference from 'Santiago in 100 Words' is that the published works are from famous authors. Another comparable project in Mexico City is known as 'Poetas en Movimiento.'

Method of Analysis

For my analysis of 'Santiago in 100 Words' I carried out multiple readings of the 595 micro-stories previously mentioned. Next, I selected those texts that alluded specifically to a place within the city of Santiago. This allowed me to identify all of the places mentioned in the various works as well as the number of references for each one. After that, I proceeded to describe the collective meanings assigned to each place. From there I established that in some instances the micro-stories bestowed explicit meaning to places referenced in the city, while in others no direct or explicit meaning was evident. However, this does not mean that these places lacked meaning. Rather, I considered that in these cases meaning emerged from the story's themes and the relations between three elements: spatial descriptions of a place; practices or activities that happen in the place; the characters utilizing the place.

With respect to these themes, I proceeded following a conventional analysis, concentrating more on the 'content of the narrative' or 'what was told' *(*Bernasconi 2011: 22) than on the 'telling' (Riessman 2008: 54). Here I relied on the work of Chalvon-Demersay (1996, 1994) in her study of French television series from the 1990s. Chalvon-Demersay suggests in her study that despite the thematic heterogeneity of the collection of analyzed works it is possible to perceive limited thematic groupings, by placing attention not only on the narrated history but also on the themes that emerge within the work. I based my treatment of the three elements (space, practices and characters) on work dealing with the generic characteristics of the micro-story that has been carried out by

preeminent authors in the realm of 'micro-story literary criticism,' which I will expound upon on in the following section.

My principal inspiration was Perec's *Tentative d'Épuisement d'un Lieu Parisien* (Perec, 2003), particularly the suggestion that in general terms although we do not take note of the small things in life, typically considered irrelevant, in fact these small things are central to what occurs in a place or setting. In my case, I have tried to do this with the micro-stories, especially with those in which the meaning assigned to a place was not conferred in an explicit manner, particularly because (in my analysis of the contest) it was at times difficult to perceive the effect of persistent and systematic repetitions which collectively might well have a profound effect on how one observes and interprets the city.

Elements Surrounding the Genre of Micro-Fiction

It is important to recognize what a micro-story is and what its principal characteristics are, in order to understand how it generates meaning for a physical place through its writing. The micro-story, (also known as the mini-story, brief story, short story, ultra-short story, among other terms) (Zavala, 1998, 2006) embraces brevity as its common characteristic. The organizers of 'Santiago in 100 Words' refer to participant entries as 'short stories,' a definition which they have found to be the most general and all-encompassing.

In this investigation, however, I have used the term 'micro-story' because the rules of the competition state that the stories should include no more than 100 words, thus establishing a condition of extreme brevity in relation to other literary forms. The term 'micro-story' refers to an especially brief account whose structure is variable, a feature which allows for the diversity of literary structures evident in the contest. Brevity is not only a quantitative dimension, but is in fact central to the structure of this type of fiction, its organizational principle. If the short story in general is understood to be a short fictional story, the micro-story is an *ultra-short* fictional story. If, as Edgar Allan Poe suggests, the organizational principle of the story is the 'economization of available resources,' in the case of the 'micro-story' this is an even greater economization (Fernández 2005).

The condition of ultra-brevity carries with it decisive implications. First, in the micro-story it is not possible to describe in detail people and spatial/temporal atmospheres, although it is possible to 'create a universe' through allusion and insinuation (Brasca 2000; Epple 2000; Fernández 2005; Larrea 2007; Noguerol 2000; Zabala 2006), thereby giving life and substance to those people, spaces and times. Ultra-brevity also has formal consequences for how the micro-story is constructed, as it accepts the development of an esthetic narrative closer to that of poetry, one that maximizes the connotative potential of language. A high frequency of word coding, insinuation of meanings, and the extensive use of intertextuality (via known references to popular people, phrases, famous titles, etc) cements the formal structure of the genre (Fernández 2005). Moreover, ultra-brevity also implies the predominance of people-types (people defined through a role and the form in which they exercise) as well as references to spaces which are narratively significant although not described in detail, which is to say, spaces that embody a semantic wealth due to the integration of action, how they participate in the configuration of people, and how they add to the feeling of the overall work (Fernández 2005).[1]

Brevity however is not to be understood as the reduction or lessening of potential meaning. Rather, micro-stories attempt to produce complex levels of meaning with a minimal word-count and it is just that which has resulted in theorists placing more prominence on another important feature of the genre, which is the reader's reaction (Austin 1975) – surprise, for example, affect, a breaking of expectations (Epple n.d.; Koch 2000; Rojo 1996). It is worth emphasizing that the characteristics of the micro-story that have been touched on up to now (apart from its brevity) should not be considered as indispensable conditions for the writing of this type of fiction, but rather, a set of possible tools of composition. The fundamental point of what has been covered so far is how the distinct elements or components of micro-stories are articulated in each independent story in order to produce the greatest extent of meaning possible.

The analysis that has been carried out on this interplay of scant resources places special attention on the working nature of spatial references. The idea is that the 'Santiago in 100 Words' micro-stories are representations of the city to the extent that they maintain an inevitable 'reference relationship' to the city via participation in the contest. This is not to suggest that they are imitations of the city. Rather (and as stated by the contest organizers), they are objects that are situated in a distinct reality of the city which in turn give meaning to the city and the urban experience. In this sense, the entire literary construction that references the city can be understood as a representation of the same (Debarbieux 1998; Goodman 1978; Lanot 2000; Mitterand 1994).[2]

As a cumulative form of city representation, the micro-stories participate in the construction of collective references, the socialization and communication of experiences, and the installation of points of view and ways of perceiving the city (Heinich 2005). This occurs subtly, and at times, in a manner that is nearly imperceptible.

Channels of Meaning of Micro-Story References

The micro-stories of 'Santiago in 100 Words', then, activate and contribute to the construction of collective references, points of view, and ways of perceiving the city, via a connection with the reader's experience. This process can be analytically divided into three parts: first, the perception of something based in reality; second, the attribution of functions and meanings to the city, places or people via the text; and third, the deliberate placement of these meanings as a way of perceiving the city in the manner in which they are spread, read, and recognized socially.

The analysis carried out in reference to the second point, attributing functions and meaning, has made it possible to identify two methods of assigning meaning to places of the city through micro-story texts. In the first, one is not specifically transforming place alluded to, nor assigning a specific function to it: it is not as simple as an adjective being transformed into a proper noun, a place name. The meaning associated with a place emerges from the articulation of distinct components of the text: the theme, mentioned places, practices and people. In the second, the micro-story is centered in a place and does indeed transform an adjective into a place name explicitly. In the next section, I will provide examples of these two methods.

Meaning as a Network of Elements

Considering the limitations associated with the need for extreme brevity (the maximum of 100 words), it becomes clearer that the referencing of places, in the majority of cases, cannot be fully fleshed out. Rather, references need to be linked to the reader's prior knowledge of those places so that they can call on their experience in order to extract meaning and relate it with the text in question.

In this case, spatial references contribute to the production of an experience of immersion into the text for the reader, enabling them to submerge themselves into what has been narrated. The effect of the immersion generated by these spatial references implies that they are defined (located, fleshed out, etc.). At the same time that it denotes the city as something clearly demarcated it also suggests many different aspects not directly mentioned (Franz 2001; Morand 1977). It expects to mobilize the social meanings associated with those places that supposedly are shared within the universe of potential readers. But even more, it brings to mind for the reader a framework to support the story. The spatial references are concise, summarize preexisting social meanings and are placed in a close and meaningful relation with other elements of the story in order to produce a cumulative meaning in those places. This is the case with the micro-story 'Still life in Parque Forestal':

> Still life in Parque Forestal
>
> In a strange circumstance, a pragmatic student from the School of Law and an abstract painter from the Contemporary Art Museum fell in love on a bridge over the Mapocho River. In spite of the fact that they lived together for five years, they never knew each other. The concept had never penetrated that stone, and the stone wasn't intelligent enough to decipher the nature of the concept.
>
> Nicolás Angelcos, 18 years old, Renca

The history communicated in this piece relates to the trajectory of an intimate couple – their beginning and subsequent end due to a persistent disagreement between the two lovers. The places have a special importance in the manner in which they lend meaning to the individuals in the micro-story (a law student and painter). There is a pragmatism (School of Law) and abstraction (Contemporary Art Museum) to the piece that the reader is called on to connote.

The Mapocho River in this micro-story sets the stage for the history of the two lovers, and its meaning emerges both practically (the bridge where they physically met) as well as its inclusion in a network of association of places that make up an area of the city that has thus been converted into the scene of where this is occurring – Parque Forestal.[3] This is accentuated through the pictorial association of the title, in the sense that the Parque Forestal embraces an inanimate practice, an activity that has lost its dynamism and life.

Figure 1: Winter afternoon in Parque Forestal (photo by author)

Meaning as Functionality or Dysfunctionality

A second route in the generation of meaning is where micro-stories assign or attribute predicates in a more direct and developed manner to those places that are referred to. Here, the micro-stories produce descriptions, adjectives and classifications for the places in question through the use of a specific word or a longer phrase that offers a perspective to understand and give meaning to the place. The micro-stories can contribute to codify the attributed meaning to a specific place.

This manner of assigning meaning to a place comes about through the assignment of functions or dysfunctions in relation to the dynamics of the city and/or in relation to a system of implicit values within the story. The micro-story that best illustrates this manner of creating meaning is 'The River':

> The River
>
> I travel around the city of my childhood along with my foreign wife, back from years of absence. She considers the river picturesque. It isn't the Seine or the Thames or the Arno. Compared to them it is hardly a ditch in the ground, a wound that divides the city with its irritable current that carries human and animal waste. Once, when I was a kid, I saw human bodies floating by face down. My wife says no, that I must have imagined it, because those things don't happen in the world anymore.
>
> Patricio Jerez, 38 years old, Ñuñoa

In this micro-story it is possible to observe a multitude of aspects in the consideration of the river: the comparison with other rivers around the world, its dividing function, its function as a garbage dump, and from a historical perspective, its function as a place of death, decades prior. The

Mapocho River is the object around which history is constructed here, it is the focus of the story, and the use of the definite article singularizes it and lends strength to its condition as the only river in the city. Its meaning emerges from an evaluation that establishes its actual condition as 'dysfunctional' in the urban record (city landscape), the social record (the division with the city), the ecological record (full of garbage) and the historic/moral record (murdered bodies floating).

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the Mapocho River appears, not only as a place that is evoked biographically, but rather as one that is also historically evoked (Bedard 2002a, 2002b), in connection with the recent history of Chile.

Meaning through aggregation and reoccurrence: the contest's effect

What has not been taken into account up to now is the point that the micro-stories I have analyzed are not conventional literary pieces, but rather texts that have come about and been diffused in the framework of a large contest that has been in existence for more than fifteen years. Above all, considering the presentation methods of the chosen micro-stories by contest organizers, readers of these micro-stories are precisely that, readers of many micro-stories, which implies that they have established a relationship with a series of stories and not just one story in isolation. This relationship, if not physical or material, through an object such as a book, is at least referential, given that the strategy of diffusion is used so that readers get to know of other story winners and are encouraged to read their stories. This means that one can start to think of the story competition in terms of what Agamben has called a 'device' (Agamben 2011; Foucault 1994). Device (*dispositif* in its original French) can be understood in simple words, as a network of elements (discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements) whose purpose is to face a pressing need to obtain a more or less immediate effect over someone.

In effect, it makes sense to think in terms of a device, because first off, every year micro-story winners are publically presented in the areas and space that the metro utilizes for publicity (in the metro stations as well as the actual metro trains themselves) over a period of approximately three months.[4] According to the company JCDecaux, tasked with Santiago Metro publicity (JCDecaux, 2013), the effectiveness of contest publicity in the network is high: 80 percent of metro users pay attention, while 65 percent consider it useful information and 76 percent think that it fits well in the Metro space. Moreover, 73 percent of users feel that the contest content contributes to making their trips more interesting.[5] These figures clearly show that the micro-story content is quite relevant.

Secondly, in addition to being displayed in public mediums, the micro-stories are illustrated by professional designers, who design a poster for each piece of text, a personalized graphic for the entry winners, each year. This is done to visually capture the metro user's attention. But even more importantly, the visual presentation is intended to differentiate the text from everyday publicity or metro-related text, which in turn initiates a different attitude towards the text (Marin 1990, 1993; Noguerol 2009). Consequently, it is possible to argue that the micro-story program requires illustrations to capture metro user attention and also remind them of the other published micro-stories.

In fact, the contest posters move away from the norms that govern publicized urban writings, typically characterized by their brevity, repetition and simplicity (Fraenkel 2002: 21). This is, first of

all, because (despite their brevity) these texts are more extensive than the publicity and the signage throughout the metro. Second, they are not repetitive, because each micro-story is unique and original. Third, the micro-stories are different from other urban writings because their narrative structure is more complex than that of a slogan or metro signage. The types of illustrated images in the contest posters are also distinct and unique from the commonly seen publicity images. The images function to help readers of the text capture (in an unconscious fashion) a fictional feeling as opposed to one that is 'real.'

Figure 2: Poster in the Baquedano metro station (photo by author)

The contest has been running for fifteen years in the city's metro using posters. Roughly ten years ago the organizers began distributing freely in predefined areas the pocket-sized book with the 100 best micro-stories from previous years. The diffusion of the text via multiple mediums in order to promote the contest constitutes a powerful exposure mechanism which thanks to the aggregating nature of the contest produces a permanent reiteration of the common references that appear throughout the stories.

Accompanying Chirimbombo in the Mapocho

Alongside Chirimbombo, my imaginary friend, we stroll the shores of the Mapocho. Sometimes the pigeons peck about, but they don't bother him. We eat a churro and tell invisible secrets of invisible lives. We walk until one of us tires and then we sit in Forestal Park to pass the time. He tells me his life is not easy. Nobody is able to see him, nobody takes the time to imagine him. It makes me sad that he is depressed and I hug him. "Conjure up a girlfriend for me," he asks. I ponder that if I conjure one up, Chirimbombo would leave with her and I would return to being imaginary.

Carolina Samper, 32 years old, Providencia (2009)

The Mapocho Rive

Summer. Oliver visited me, the German. One day, he returned complaining of the embarrassingly meager Mapocho River. I knew it was an "important" river, he said teasing me. It was true. I would get embarrassed every fall when a miserable muddy trickle would run through. It's not as if I was defending the Mapocho, but that winter it grew and overflowed (reaching Alameda perhaps). In the spring I sent Oliver photos of the Mapocho dragging houses and cars. What did he think, that our river was weak? The following summer I visited Oliver to get a look at his rivers. But I arrived to Germany in the middle of winter. He made a fool out of me, obviously.

Man, 33 years old, Quilicura (2001)

To capture this synergistic or 'aggregation' effect in the analysis demands creating a relational reading of the collection of micro-stories, not clinging to the limits of a specific piece of text but rather making a reading intent on understanding the diversity of references, pointing out that the meanings that the micro-stories create, recreate and lay down are produced in the form of repeated iterations that eventually come to model the city. This produces a sedimentation of meanings, linking up attitudes and experiences between readers.

This relational reading would permit the execution of two things. First, the systemization of the descriptions of each place that are mentioned based on the interconnection of practices, themes and characters. This is what allows one to pose the first two channels of meaning. Second, it is possible to identify if there are places that are mentioned in a recurrent fashion and if there exists a relationship of meaning between them. It is specifically this second point that we will explore further in the article.

Places Referenced: A City Summarized in Places

Upon reviewing the collection of the 595 micro-stories, the expectation of finding an extensive list of referenced places was confirmed – more than 200. However, what was most striking was the large concentration and repetition of references. In effect, there are various places that are mentioned twice, but there exists a clear group of places with more than eight references, which is particularly notable. From there one notes a group of four places with four to five mentions. Establishing a cutoff point is arbitrary, but this arbitrariness lessens when there is a clear difference in the references of the places, which the following table demonstrates.

Table 1 illustrates that 101 place references within the collection of micro-stories are made to only eight places on the list. After that there is a grouping of four places with four to five references each. This concentration of references can be interpreted as a concentration of the available spatial categories utilized by the contestants to write about Santiago.

Table 1: Places referenced in micro-stories between 2001 and 2012.

Referenced places in micro-stories published between 2001 and 2012	
Places	**Number of References**
Alameda	17
Paseo Ahumada	17
Parque Forestal	14
Río Mapocho	14
Plaza de Armas	12
Cerro San Cristóbal	11
Cerro Santa Lucía	8
Plaza Italia	8
Estación Baquedano	5
Estación los Héroes	4
La Catedral	4
La Moneda	4
Calle Bandera	3
Estación Central	3
Avenida Matta	2
Barrio República	2
Bellavista	2
Calle Catedral	2
Centro de Santiago	2
El Hipódromo	2
Estación Cal y Canto	2
Franklin	2
Parque Bustamante	2

The concentration of references adds the 'possibility of being imagined' to the city of Santiago (Lynch 1960). These places appear to produce strong images no matter who is observing the city, and as a result appear to generate an agreement (tacit) amongst contest participants with respect to the places that can best be utilized to express their visions and ideas about Santiago. We can gather then that written references made to these places are capable of transmitting the same meanings (based on the opinions of the city's inhabitants) as the places themselves.

On the other hand, this concentration is also territorially grouped. Using a map, we can see that the places referred to are located in an extremely small area compared to the overall size of Santiago (in the context of a partial analysis of the Mapocho Rio and Alameda street, which due to the specific characteristics of the river and street respectively, the places lie on the perimeter).

Map 1: Territorial Concentration of the Most Frequently Referenced Places in Santiago.[6]

The proximity and concentration is also historic in nature, as all of these places are situated in an area that corresponds directly to the historic center of the city. In fact, within the twelve most referenced places, six have been of great importance dating back to colonial times. In effect, Santa Lucia Hill is where the city was founded, while Plaza de Armas, la Catedral and Paseo Ahumada (then a more conventional street) are part of the original design of the city and its initial buildings. The Mapocho River and Alameda Street are the original borders of Santiago (Alameda Street is the dry arm of the river).

La Moneda and Plaza Italia did not exist then, but the places where they would be years later mark the boundaries of influence within the city in that time period. Cerro San Cristóbal was a place considered to be on the outskirts of the city but always part of the general landscape. In fact, the city's conquerors bestowed that name (native inhabitants had called it "Tupahue" which translates to "place of God" in Mapudungun).

Finally, with the Parque Forestal, created in the 20th century along the southern edge of the Mapocho River (running east/west), as with Baquedano metro station, created more recently (1975) and situated underground in Plaza Italia, the perimeter of the historic city was formed. Consequently, of the group of 13 places the only one that lies outside the historic part of the city is Los Heroes metro station.

The repetition of references suggests that a handful of places possess the greatest amount of 'imageability' in the city (Lynch 1960). If we recall how the repetition of places comes through in the micro-story contest entries, it is plausible to assume that this is a powerful and unequivocal representation of the city within the process of modeling collective references that bring to light spaces within the city. We have a collection of places constructed by 'privileged association' that evoke meaning in Santiago (Genette 1991: 120). If art directs the way in which we identify objects in our environment (Berque 1993; Musset 2007, 2005; Roger 2001), then in this contest we find a clear example of this.

Seen in this manner, the representation of Santiago that comes about as an effect of the reference and repetition of a collection of places can be thought of as a type of 'aggregated space' (Bourdieu, 1992). It is worth pointing out that it is configured as a work in progress, constructed around the heterogeneous nature of each micro-story, that grows and expands via the addition of a new element (a new micro-story), but that in practice maintains a certain persistence over time.

After fifteen years of the contest's presence in the city's metro trains and a notable level of popularity (thousands of participants each year), it is safe to conclude that the meaning generated via aggregation and repetition contributes to creating an abbreviated representation of the city. Better stated, the contest produces a grouping of places that possess a privileged reference due to their repetition and aggregation, operating in the form of a synecdoche. The abbreviated representation of the city of Santiago generated by the contest emerges then as an aggregated space of the places that are repeated most frequently in the published micro-stories.

If we continue to flesh out the reasoning put forth by U. Eco (1994), the recurrent reiteration of a grouping of places not only establishes belief in the real existence of those places, but also suggests that the city is composed of those places and that they are the most appropriate places to write about. Additionally, if all the places referenced contribute to form an abbreviated representation, then those that appear the most often are as a result those that resonate most. It is the version of the city that produces the contest, a version that does not call into question its habitual or official representation, but is instead a version of the city that reinforces a particular hierarchy of places, concentrating in those that make up the *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1997) of the urban experience.

Conclusion - Considering the Effects of Abbreviation

In the preceding pages I have set out to describe the ways in which 'Santiago in 100 Words' micro-story texts mobilize and assign meaning to places in the city, producing an abbreviated representation of the city of Santiago, constructed in the style of an aggregated space.

I have analyzed elements relative to the generic condition of the micro-story and the characteristics through which it gives meaning to a place, placing special attention in its ultra-brevity. I have proposed that micro-stories lend visibility to the city, contributing to the construction of collective references, points of view, and ways of perceiving the city through a connection with the experience of the reader. At the same time, I have indicated that the attribution of functions and meanings to the city is brought about in three ways, two of which refer to the considered texts individually, while the third depends on the overall effect of the contest.

Based on this, I conclude by proposing that the contest affects the type of literary writing utilized to represent the city, given that the call to write can be understood as an invitation to create meanings surrounding the city in a specific way that limits the variability of the written function (Fraenkel 2007). However, the contest also generates affect in relation to the content, and most notably, to the spatial references utilized to allude to the city of Santiago. In this sense, the micro-stories create fictional geographic spaces (Genette 2003) that lend meaning to the city and its places. They show us real and potential forms in these places and the city as a whole, and can be named and valued. Moreover, the contest contributes in confirming that those places are those that are the most suitable and popular for the representation of Santiago. Stated another way, the contest intervenes into the relationship between the geo-space and the fictional space due to the referencing condition of the text and the exposition which acts as a socializing device (between readers and potential writers) in relation to the plausible spatial references being used in the texts.

Every 'Santiago in 100 Words' micro-story, therefore, creates spatial divisions and at the same time creates combinations and establishes connections (Goodman 1978). Taken as a whole, the abbreviated representation of the city of Santiago implies the establishment of grades of belonging and hierarchies. Employing the language of Goodman, this is a particular manner of arranging the places of the city, according to the aims and circumstances of a massive literary contest, but one that passes the limits of the contest and evolves into reference points placed at the disposal of the readers enabling them to perceive and conceive of the city in order to 'construct a world.' That is the importance of the diffusion device of the contest.

In effect, the recurring diffusion of the 'abbreviated representation' of the city of Santiago constitutes an intervention into the existing visible forms of the city. This intervention implies, in the language of Rancière, placing at the disposal of the reader new tools of action over the shared city, given that modifying the forms of interpreting the world is a modification of the forms of intervening in it (Rancière 2007: 15). To abbreviate implies in this sense reducing the legitimate spectrum of places with literary value of the city of Santiago and reducing the portion of territory that merits being called a city.

Notes

[1] This point constitutes a regularity commonly observed within the genre but one that some of the micro-stories analyzed here do not share. This is the case as one can imagine where the theme and focus of attention is in a particular place.

[2] In this sense it is necessary to remember that our perception of the world, in addition to being 'aspectual' (it is possible to retain only a 'determined' aspect of reality) is 'non-intrinsic' given that it comes to be via filters, and more specifically, through functional evaluation criteria. That is, the attribution of functions and meanings is a fundamental fact in that it is not possible to conceive of objects of our environment in a direct manner. Rather, it is necessary to give them a function so they can be perceived (Searle 1995). That is the function of representation.

[3] The Parque Forestal was created in 1905 in the south bay of Mapocho river. It has an elongated shape from east to west. It has always been a place to visit and, from the end of XX century

onwards it has been a place for the encounters of young couples. The Parque Forestal is seen as a place for encounters and walks of young lovers under the current dominant social connotation.

[4] The characteristics of the specific supports that hold these posters are two-fold: "giant" panels measuring 3.320 x 1.820 meters with a visual surface of 3.150 x 1.650 meters; and, a platinum surface measuring 1.185 x 1.750 meters with a visual surface of 1.160 x 1.710 meters. In the case of the posters within the metro trains, the panel utilized is known as a "mixed window treatment" with a total surface area of 74 x 29 cm.

[5] The Santiago Metro is the largest metro in South America composed of five lines, 108 stations and stretching roughly 103 kilometers. It is second in size to Mexico in all of Latin America. The Santiago Metro serves 2.3 million passengers per day and 53% of users are men (www.metrosantiago.cl).

[6] The maps were made by Romina Álvarez.

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