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The complexity of translating Hemingway's simplicity: chiastic patterns in *The Sun Also Rises*

(La complejidad de traducir la simplicidad de Hemingway: patrones quiásticos en The Sun Also Rises)

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Resumen: En dos artículos publicados en el *North Dakota Quarterly* en dos años consecutivos, Max Nänny (1997, 1998) analiza lo que él denomina "patrones quiásticos" de repetición y sus funciones narrativas, en una serie de cuentos escritos por Ernest Hemingway. Nänny observa que hay un cierto paralelismo entre el uso de patrones quiásticos en el nivel subnarrativo de la sintaxis y la cohesión, por un lado, y la tendencia a utilizar un esquema similar a nivel narrativo, por otro. Distingue las siguientes funciones, que ilustra con pasajes tomados de los cuentos de Hemingway: 1) movimiento hacia adelante y hacia atrás, 2) oposición, simetría y equilibrio, 3) encuadre, 4) centrado. Existen casos muy obvios de repetición quiástica en *The Sun Also Rises* que, sin duda, tienen una función icónica de centrado. El presente artículo analiza tres casos de patrones quiásticos en esta novela y los compara con los correspondientes pasajes de las traducciones al español de *The Sun Also Rises* que se han publicado hasta la fecha: Guarnido-Hausner (1944), Solá (1979), Adsuar (1983), Martínez-Lage (2002), y Adsuar-Hamad (2003).

Palabras clave: Traducción. Hemingway. Patrones quiásticos. The Sun Also Rises.

Abstract: In two articles published in the North Dakota Quarterly in two consecutive years, Max Nänny (1997, 1998) analyses what he calls "chiastic patterns" of repetition and their narrative functions, in a number of short stories written by Hemingway. Nänny observes that there is some kind of parallelism between the use of chiastic patterning on the sub-narrative level of syntax and cohesion and the tendency to use a similar scheme at the level of the narrative, and he distinguishes the following functions, which he illustrates with passages taken from Ernest Hemingway's short stories: 1) back and forth movement, 2) opposition, symmetry, and balance, 3) framing, 4) centering. There is a number of very obvious instances of chiastic repetition throughout The Sun Also Rises which undoubtedly have an iconic function of centering. The current paper analyses three instances of chiastic patterns in this novel and compares them to the corresponding passages in the Spanish translations of The Sun Also Rises published in Spain to date: Guarnido-Hausner (1944), Solá (1979), Adsuar (1983), Martínez-Lage (2002), and Adsuar-Hamad (2003).

Key words: Translation. Hemingway. Chiastic patterns. The Sun Also Rises.

INTRODUCTION

No matter how simple Hemingway's writing might seem at first sight, the apparent simplicity is supported by a remarkable complexity at different levels. When Hemingway says in *Death in the Afternoon* that "prose is architecture, not interior decoration" (Hemingway, 1932: 191) and that it is the hardest of all things to do, he means that there is a very careful process of selection of lexical items and their accurate syntactic arrangement in the text. Hemingway was a very conscientious writer. In a famous interview, he told George Plimpton of his daily routine when writing: starting early in the morning with the rewriting¹ of what he had done up to the point where he had stopped, stopping only when he knew what would happen next and had something to start writing the following day, and his struggle for "getting the words right" (Plimpton, 1963: 122-124).

Baker (1972: 71-72) summarizes the essence of what "getting the words right" consisted in for the American writer:

Hemingway always wrote slowly and revised carefully, cutting, eliding, substituting, experimenting with syntax to see what a sentence could most economically carry, and then throwing out all words that could be spared.

Economy, simplicity; these words define Hemingway's ideal in his effort to get the words right. Hemingway always tries to avoid superfluous words and, given the choice, he opts for the item that is more common and more easily understandable —architecture, not interior decoration. But, as Terrence Doody says, Hemingway's style is not "simply simple" (Doody 1998: 103); apart from having "worked so well to recover for us (in Merleau-Ponty's phrase) 'a naive contact with the world'" (1998: 105), the different ways in which he uses this simplicity of style are aimed at achieving specific effects upon the reader, at recovering *the way it was*.

Hemingway's concern about how a minimal alteration might jeopardize the effects sought by the writer is reflected in the letter he wrote to Horace Liveright, the publisher of his collection of short stories *In Our Time*:

[T]he stories are written so tight and so hard that the alteration of a word can throw an entire story out of key (Hemingway 1925: 154)

¹ Rewriting was a fundamental part of the work of Hemingway. In Plimpton's interview he admitted to having rewritten the last page of *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-nine times (Plimpton 1963: 123).

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This might well have been the message that —mutatis mutandis—Hemingway would have liked to communicate to the translators of all his works. In the present article I will analyse some chiastic patterns of repetition in *The Sun Also Rises*² which are, in my opinion, a good illustration of how, in spite of the usage of apparently very simple registers of language, there is in the text an architectural complexity that must be respected by the translator if he wants to produce a faithful rendering of the original³.

1. CHIASTIC PATTERNS IN HEMINGWAY'S WRITING

In two articles published in the *North Dakota Quarterly* in two consecutive years, Max Nänny (1997, 1998) analyses what he calls "chiastic patterns" of repetition and their narrative functions in a number of short stories written by Ernest Hemingway:

Hemingway's multiple repetitions, lexical as well as semantic, do not just follow any random order. On a closer scrutiny, these repetitions surprisingly reveal themselves to fall into a *symmetrical* pattern, a pattern in which the sequence of words or phrases is repeated in an inverted order. To use the appropriate rhetorical term, the textual organization of his prose often follows a *chiastic* arrangement, it is ordered by a lexical and/or semantic *chiasmus* of verbal or narrative elements (which are given numbers here): 1-2-3:3-2-1 (Nänny 1997: 157)

Nänny observes that there is some kind of parallelism between the use of chiastic patterning on the sub-narrative level of syntax and cohesion and the tendency to use a similar scheme at the level of the narrative:

Hemingway's chiastic patterning on the *sub*-narrative level of syntax and cohesion may be considered as a sort of *mise en abyme* of his recurrent symmetrical framing or "embedding" of scenes on the narrative level: 1[2[3:3]2]1 (1997: 158)⁵

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² Hereafter cited as SAR.

³ For an overview of the deficiencies of the Spanish translations of *SAR*, see Rodríguez-Pazos (2004).

 $^{^4}$ The word "chiasmus" comes from the Greek letter *chi* (χ) because a chiasmus is in fact a crosswise arrangement.

⁵ In a note, Nänny mentions that the embedding of scenes in Hemingway's narrative has already been analysed by Grebstein (1973) and Smith (1983, 1989). Grebstein points to the symmetrical form of the journey design in *SAR*: "Hemingway's first novel *The Sun Also Rises* contains a symmetrical form of the journey design, inasmuch as the various phases of the action are organized around the characters' travels: from Paris to Pamplona (including the side trip to Burguete) to San Sebastian to Madrid. The Paris and Burguete trips comprise the "toward" phase, Pamplona and the fiesta the "there," or destination-culmination, San Sebastian

In principle, the way a novel is structured at a narrative level does not affect the work of the translator. Only very rarely, and for very substantial reasons, will the translator have to alter the original course of the narrative. Most of the time, the decisions of the translator are made at the subnarrative level. Accordingly, I will concentrate my analysis on this type of instances, which, in Nänny's opinion, constitute yet another facet of Hemingway's iceberg technique, because they are in fact "quasi *poetic* structurations submerged under the deceptive verbal surface of his seemingly simple, realistic prose" (1997: 158).

Nänny goes then onto the possible narrative functions that can be attributed to the different types of chiastic patterns. Nänny claims that

a chiastic arrangement of verbal elements in a literary text may be put to different *iconic* uses. In other words, always depending on its semantic context a chiasmus may become iconic, that is, its form may mime or enact meaning (1997: 158)

And thus, he distinguishes the following functions which he illustrates with passages taken from Ernest Hemingway's short stories: 1) back and forth movement, 2) opposition, symmetry, and balance, 3) framing, 4) centering. What follows is an instance of a chiastic pattern that I have taken from *SAR*:

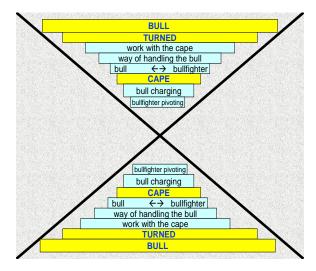
The bull did not insist under the iron. He did not really want to get at the horse. He turned and the group broke apart and Romero was taking him out with his cape. He took him out softly and smoothly, and then stopped and, standing squarely in front of the bull, offered him the cape. The bull's tail went up and he charged, and Romero moved his arms ahead of the bull, wheeling, his feet firmed. The dampened, mudweighted cape swung open and full as a sail fills, and Romero pivoted with it just ahead of the bull. At the end of the pass they were facing each other again. Romero smiled. The bull wanted it again, and Romero's cape filled again, this time on the other side. Each time he let the bull pass so close that the man and the bull and the cape that filled and pivoted ahead of the bull were all one sharply etched mass. It was all so slow and so controlled. It was as though he were rocking the bull to sleep. He made four veronicas like that, and finished with a halfveronica that turned his back on the bull and came away towards the applause, his hand on his hip, his cape on his arm, and the bull watching his back going away (SAR 195)

the "away". The concluding Madrid episode both completes one whole cycle of the journey and begins another, conveying the novel's basic motif of the futile yet repeated and cyclical nature of human experience" (Grebstein, 1973: 29).

This is the reshaping of the passage into a chiasmus scheme⁶:

- 1 The **bull** did not insist under the iron.
- 2 He turned and the group broke apart.
- 3 ... Romero was taking him out with his cape.
- 4 He took him out softly and smoothly...
- 5 ... [Romero] stopped and, standing squarely in front of the bull...
- 6 offered him the cape.
- 7 The bull's tail went up and he charged,
- 8 and *Romero* moved his arms ahead of the bull, *wheeling*, his feet firmed.
- 8 ...Romero pivoted...
- 7 The bull wanted it again ...
- 6 ... Romero's cape filled again...
- 5 Each time he let the bull pass so close that the man and the bull and the cape that filled and pivoted ahead of the bull were all one sharply etched mass.
- 4 It was all so slow and so controlled. It was as though he were rocking the bull to sleep.
- 3 He made four veronicas like that...
- 2 ...and finished with a half veronica that turned his back on the bull...
- 1 ...the **bull** watching his back going away.

⁶ I follow Nänny's notation in the emphasis within the passage: **bold face** for lexical repetitions and **bold italics** for the semantic ones. On the charts I use for the analysis of further instances and their translations into Spanish, plain for lexical repetitions and *italics* for the semantic ones.



The chiastic repetition, through its symmetrical scheme, iconically reflects the symmetry of the bullfighter's movement —first closing in and then moving away from the bull— and the balance and perfection of Pedro Romero's art. After the passage, we read: "It was not brilliant bull-fighting [because the bull couldn't see well]. It was only perfect bull-fighting" (*SAR* 195). The text transmits Pedro Romero's "greatness" (*SAR* 194) through different devices, one of which is the chiastic structuring of certain lexical and semantic elements.

This chiasmus is mainly built on semantic repetitions, but it also shows lexical repetition (1, 2, 6). The *faena* starts with the bull and a turn and ends with a turn and the bull. The scene starts with the bull turning towards Romero and concludes with a half-veronica that turns Romero's back on the bull. The symmetrical semantic pairs that convey a feeling of balance and perfection are clear. It is worth noting pair 5, in which both elements describe the position of bull and bullfighter in relation to each other. In the first half of the chiasmus Romero stands "squarely in front of the bull," whereas the veronica of the second half is described in terms of an intertwining of man and bull which is reflected in the alternative repetition of both terms either directly or indirectly —with a pronoun or metonymically:

Each time **he** let the **bull** pass so close that the **man** and the **bull** and the **cape** that filled and pivoted ahead of the **bull** were all one sharply etched mass (SAR 195)

We have an amalgam of words (he [man]-bull-man-bull-cape [man]-bull) which graphically represents the "mass" that Hemingway is actually etching with words. The ambivalent metonymical value of "cape" is reinforced by a personification when Hemingway makes this term the metaphorical subject of the verb "pivot," whose literal subject had been Romero some lines above; obviously, the cape can only pivot if the bullfighter pivots.

If we analyse further, we can distinguish other chiastic structures that overlap with the central chiasmus of the passage. The symmetrical arrangement of the words reinforces once again the meaning of balance and power in Romero's way of handling his bull:

He took him out softly and smoothly, and then stopped and, standing squarely in front of the bull, offered him the cape. The bull's tail went up and he charged, and Romero moved his arms ahead of the bull, wheeling, his feet firmed. The dampened, mud-weighted cape swung open and full as a sail fills, and Romero pivoted with it just ahead of the bull. At the end of the pass they were facing each other again (*SAR* 195)

1 standing squarely in front of the bull
2 offered him the cape ... [the bull] charged
3 ahead of the bull
4 wheeling
4 pivoted
3 ahead of the bull
2 end of the pass
1 facing each other

This is just an example of how undetectable and complex the architecture of Hemingway's writing can be and the effects it can achieve. A translator who is not aware of the existence and importance of chiastic patterns such as this one will very probably fail to reproduce them to the extent allowed by the target language. He will in all likelihood try to avoid repetitions that for him may seem redundant.

Apart from the one I have just analysed, there is a number of very obvious instances of repetition throughout *SAR* which undoubtedly have an iconic function of centering and framing that must be preserved in the target language rendering. I will go now into the analysis of three shorter —but very significant— instances of chiastic patterns in *SAR* and their corresponding Spanish renderings. Previous to that, I will give some information on the Spanish translations of *SAR* published in Spain to date.

2. THE SPANISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE SUN ALSO RISES

SAR was published as Fiesta in Barcelona by José Janés in July 1948. Although this is the first time SAR was published in Spain, the translation is one by José Mora Guarnido and John E. Hausner, originally published in Buenos Aires by Santiago Rueda in 1944. There were several subsequent editions of this translation. In 1979, a "new" translation by Maya Ramos Smith was published by Promexa in Mexico D.F. The title belonged to an Argentinian edition of Guarnido-Hauner's translation that had appeared in 1958: Ahora brilla el sol⁸ (LaPrade 1991: 148). This translation is actually a plagiarism of Guarnido-Hausner's text. The only significant contribution of this "translation" is the inclusion of a Spanish version of the epigraph quoting Ecclesiastes⁹. Curiously enough, the expression "ahora brilla el sol" does not appear in the quotation; instead, "the sun also ariseth" is translated as "levántase el sol" —both translations miss the idea of relentless natural cycles present in the original adverb "also." Volumes of selected works by Hemingway started to be published in Spain in 1969 and a new Spanish translation —by M. Solá— was included in one of those volumes in 1979. In 1983 Joaquín Adsuar's translation was published in Barcelona by Bruguera and, subsequently, by Planeta in 1984, 1988, 1990, and 1993. A new edition of this translation, revised by José Hamad, was published by Editorial Debate in April 2003. Hamad adds little to Adsuar's text; many of the passages where there were clear problems of decoding remain untouched, and the revision has not addressed stylistic deficiencies. The last Spanish translation of SAR was brought out in Pamplona by local newspaper Diario de Navarra just before the Sanfermines of 2002. The book —a limited edition— is part of a collection called "Biblioteca básica navarra," which Fundación Diario de Navarra launched on the occasion of the newspaper's centennial. The translation, by Miguel Martínez-Lage, was entitled Fiesta [También sale el sol], and, for the first time, Gertrude Stein's remark was included as an epigraph, along with the quotation from Ecclesiastes.

3. CHIASTIC PATTERNS IN *THE SUN ALSO RISES* AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO SPANISH

The following passage, essential for the overall interpretation of the novel, shows —leaving the consideration of its lyricism aside— an evident

⁷ Spanish translations of *SAR* have taken this title from the first English edition of the novel. *Fiesta* was one of the titles that Hemingway considered for his novel but he eventually discarded it because it "was misleading unless you had been to Pamplona" (Reynolds 1988: 326).

⁸ The translation of the title (literally, "now the sun shines") shows how far from the intention of the text was the interpretation of whoever devised that title for the Spanish version of *SAR*.

⁹ However, the remark by Gertrude Stein "You are all a lost generation", which precedes the text from Ecclesiastes in the original, is not included.

chiastic pattern that helps to center and emphasize the importance of the ideas included in the paragraph, the essence of the fiesta:

The fiesta was really started. It kept up day and night for seven days. The dancing kept up, the drinking kept up, the noise went on. The things that happened could only have happened during a fiesta. Everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences. It seemed out of place to think of consequences during the fiesta. All during the fiesta you had the feeling, even when it was quiet, that you had to shout any remark to make it heard. It was the same feeling about any action. It was a fiesta and it went on for seven days (*SAR* 142)

- 1 The fiesta was really started. It kept up day and night for seven days.
- 2 The dancing kept up, the drinking kept up,
- 3 the *noise* went on.
- **4** The things that happened could only have happened **during** a **fiesta**.
- 5 Everything became quite unreal finally and it **seemed** as though **nothing could have any consequences**.
- 5 It seemed out of place to think of consequences
- **4 during** the **fiesta**. All **during** the **fiesta** you had the feeling, even when it was quiet,
- 3 that you had to **shout** any remark to make it heard.
- 2 It was the same feeling about any action.
- 1 It was a fiesta and it went on for seven days.

The chart below contains the elements that constitute the chiasmus:



The following are the parallel charts for the rendering of the above passage in the target texts:

Adsuar (180)¹⁰ Guarnido-Hausner (129-30) Solá (144) Martínez-Lage (177)

	ADSUAR	GUARNIDO- HAUSNER	SOLÁ	MARTÍNEZ- LAGE
1	fiesta una semana	fiesta siete días	fiesta siete días	fiesta siete días
2	bebiendo, bailando	baile, beber	bailar, beber	bailes
3	ruido	ruido	barullo	ruido
4	durante fiesta	durante fiesta	durante fiesta	durante fiesta
5	[no] consecuencias	[no] consecuencias	[no] consecuencias	[no] consecuencia
5			[no] consecuencias	[no] consecuencias
4	durante Sanfermines		durante fiesta	a lo largo fiesta
3	gritar	gritar	gritar	decir a voz en cuello
2	Realizar cosa[s]	otros actos	[hacer] cosas	propios actos
1	fiesta siete	fiesta siete	fiesta siete	fiesta siete

The question whether the chiastic structure here serves the purpose of centering and emphasizing certain key ideas is subject to debate. What is a fact is that there is a very clear chiastic structure which in some cases has not been perceived by the translators, or, if perceived, has not been considered relevant and, consequently, not reproduced in the target text. There is, therefore, a mismatch between the sensitivity or design awareness of the source text writer and the sensitivity of the translator. It is clear that the impression conveyed by the text would not be the same if this pattern of repetition was not present. A different question is the diverse explanations given by different critics as to what the intended poetic effects may consist of.

Both Adsuar and Guarnido-Hausner miss the central element of the chiasmus, probably because it is repeated in the vicinity of two consecutive sentences, and the translators might have considered that eliminating the second part of the repetition simplifies and enhances the text: "...it seemed

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¹⁰ Adsuar-Hamad (184) introduces some changes in this passage but the structure of Adsuar's text, as shown on the chart, remains almost unaltered.

as though nothing could have any consequences. It seemed out of place to think of consequences during the fiesta" (SAR 142).

<u>Adsuar</u>	<u>Guarnido-Hausner</u>
parecía que nada de lo que pasara en esos días pudiera tener consecuencias ¹¹ (180)	pareció como si nada pudiese tener consecuencias durante la fiesta (130)

Besides this zero translation or simplification of the passage, there are a few lexical repetitions in the source text that are not preserved in the target texts. Only Solá keeps the chiastic structure of the original intact.

The next example is a clear instance of framing and centering of a passage of paramount importance in the development of the narrative, by means of a chiastic arrangement of lexical items. Apart from the chiastic framing, the recourse to repetition is constant on account of the climactic quality of the scene, which precedes the moment when Jake introduces Brett to the young bullfighter Pedro Romero and, thus, betrays his aficionado principles and loses the friendship of Montoya. Jake and Brett hold a very significant private conversation in which the truth of Brett's life is put across. It is a very sincere account of how lost she sees herself. An interchange of such confessional kind requires, as a necessary condition, intimacy and a quiet atmosphere and, consequently, the two characters get away from the frenzy of the fiesta and leave the company of the others. The place where they go is quiet and "dark;" the adjective "dark" is repeated six times and "black" twice. The conversation starts after a spell of silence imposed by Brett —"Don't let's talk" (SAR 166)—. The text depicts graphically with lexical items the sequence of action followed in the entrance into (trees-dark-park) and exit from (park-dark-trees) the park, which mark the beginning and end of the conversation and the beginning and end of a walk in the park. This chiastic pattern of repetition centers a pivotal moment in the novel where repetition is the factor that amounts the most to the climax of the passage:

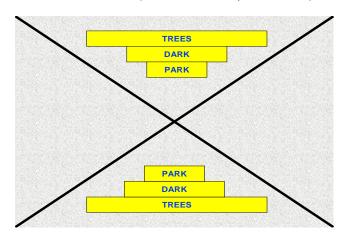
Trees were **dark** along the banks. We sat and looked out. Brett stared straight ahead. Suddenly she shivered.

"It's cold."
"Want to walk back?"
"Through the **park**."

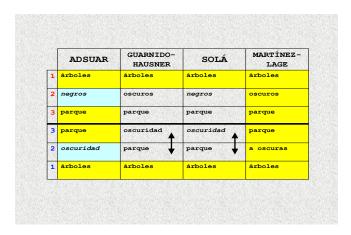
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¹¹ Unchanged in Adsuar-Hamad (184).

Together we walked down the gravel path in the **park** in the **dark**, under the **trees** and then out from under the trees and past the gate into the street that led into town (*SAR* 166-167; emphasis added)



Adsuar (214-15)¹² Guarnido-Hausner (153-54) Solá (171-72) Martínez-Lage (205-06)



The arrow indicates that the order in the elements has been reversed and thus the chiastic scheme altered, which is the case with Guarnido-

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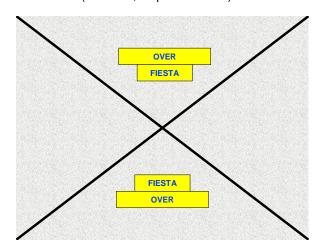
¹² Unchanged in Adsuar-Hamad (216-17).

Hausner and Solá. Similarly to the previous instance, some of the lexicosemantic repetitions have been reduced to semantic ones, as a consequence of not having maintained the repetition of the lexical items of the original. There is a limit, though, to the extent that this chiastic pattern can be preserved in Spanish because the first "dark" in the source text is an adjective, whereas the second one is a noun. Nevertheless, only Guarnido-Hausner and Martínez-Lage preserve the parallelism by using elements with the same root ("oscuros"/"oscuridad," "a oscuras").

The last instance I want to examine is the chiastic framing of the two paragraphs that open book three of *SAR*. The scene describes the day after, the return to the daily routine —children picking up rocket sticks, waiters in no hurry, the sweeping and sprinkling of the streets— after the parenthesis of the fiesta. The sharp contrast between the frenzy of the fiesta and the tranquillity of the day after is reinforced by the chiastic reference to the end of the Sanfermines:

In the morning it was all over. The fiesta was finished.

The **fiesta** was **over** (SAR 205; emphasis added)



Adsuar (265)¹³ Guarnido-Hausner (191) Solá (212) Martínez-Lage (249)

	ADSUAR	GUARNIDO- HAUSNER	SOLÁ	MARTÍNEZ LAGE
1	pasado	terminado	terminado	terminado
2	fiesta	fiesta	fiesta	fiesta
2	fiesta	fiesta	fiesta	fiesta
1	concluido	terminado	terminado	terminado

Only Adsuar introduces a variation in the original chiastic scheme and transforms the lexical repetition into a semantic one. The rest of the translators have reproduced an equivalent chiastic pattern in Spanish. The question now is whether the preservation of the chiastic pattern of the source text has been intended or not. If we judge from the earlier cases, the answer is no; it does not seem very probable that the translators have realized the relevance of maintaining the chiasmus.

CONCLUSION

In bringing these chiastic patterns to the current discussion I aim to show that there are often complex regularities behind the apparent simplicity of Hemingway's style, and that it is only by way of understanding the interpretive impact of his style and by sticking to its simplicity of design that these patterns —and the poetic effects associated to them— can be preserved in the target text. It could be said that these are mere stylistic details that do not affect the overall meaning of the text or the impression that the reader gets from it. However, I am convinced that the power of

Hikma 10 (2011), 123-138

¹³ The only change introduced by Adsuar-Hamad (263) in the passage is, again, the rendering of the original "fiesta" into the plural "fiestas" and the consequent change in the number of the corresponding verbs.

Hemingway's style —for which he is deemed one of the greatest innovators of 20th century writing— lies precisely on the careful design of the effects of apparently unimportant elements (lexical repetition, polysyndeton, chiastic patterns, etc.), which in turn contribute also to the rhythm and nuanced meanings of his prose, to its poeticality. Managing poetry into prose is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable characteristics of Hemingway's texts and the one that is most significantly missing in the Spanish translations of *SAR*.

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