



UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DEL ESTADO DE MÉXICO



FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**ANÁLISIS DEL USO DE LA VOZ PASIVA EN LA TRADUCCIÓN AL
ESPAÑOL DEL CUENTO "THE OVAL PORTRAIT" DE EDGAR ALLAN POE**

TESINA

QUE PARA OBTENER EL TÍTULO DE:

LICENCIADA EN LENGUAS

PRESENTA:

IRIS CHANTAL DIMAS BECERRIL

DIRECTORA DE TESINA:

M.L.A. ALMA LETICIA FERADO GARCÍA

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RESUMEN

El objetivo general de este trabajo de investigación es realizar un análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo del uso de la voz pasiva de la versión en inglés del cuento corto *The Oval Portrait* de Edgar Allan Poe, publicado en formato electrónico por *The Project Gutenberg* en 2012, así como en dos traducciones al español, realizadas por la editorial Leyenda, en el año 2010, y la editorial Editores Mexicanos Unidos (E.M.U.), del año 2013.

El capítulo I hace referencia a la voz activa y pasiva en inglés y en español, la diferencia entre ambas voces, los tipos de voces pasivas que existen en cada lengua y su estructura gramatical, así como sus usos.

En el capítulo II se señalan los antecedentes históricos y de la literatura durante la época en que vivió Edgar Allan Poe, autor del cuento que se analiza, los hechos más importantes de su vida, así como su contribución al Periodo Romántico y sus aportaciones como crítico, poeta y cuentista. Al final del capítulo, se hace un análisis general del cuento y se mencionan las fuentes de la versión seleccionada en inglés y las dos traducciones en español.

En el capítulo III se realiza un análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo del cuento. En el análisis cuantitativo se efectúa un conteo exacto de las oraciones que contienen voces pasivas en las versiones en inglés y en español, y se identifica a qué tipo de clasificación corresponde cada una de ellas. Terminado el conteo, se identifica cuántas voces pasivas se conservaron o modificaron en las dos traducciones al español y en qué segmentos de la obra el traductor realizó los cambios.

En el análisis cualitativo se pretende explicar por qué en la traducción se consideró adecuado modificar una voz pasiva por una voz activa o conservarla sin alterar el significado que el autor quiso dar en la obra original.

Al final del trabajo de investigación, se mencionan las conclusiones a las que se llegó después de realizar el análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo. De la misma manera, se hacen algunas sugerencias sobre el uso de la voz pasiva en las traducciones realizadas del inglés, como lengua origen, al español, como lengua de llegada o terminal.

Se anexan la versión electrónica en inglés del cuento corto *The Oval Portrait* y las dos traducciones de las editoriales Leyenda y Editores Mexicanos Unidos (E.M.U.).

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INTRODUCTION

Language allows us to communicate with people who are around us. Language is a form of communication using words spoken or gestured with the hands or body and structured with grammar often with a writing system. Without language, humans would be isolated in a world constructed by them, and they would never learn to communicate their needs or their fears.

What would happen if we lost the ability to articulate words and we could only communicate by typing? Without writing, we would be nothing. The words that emerge from nowhere can be linked up by particles of grammar, which shape more complex structures that grow constantly until they form majestic novels or works that can reach the most remote places in the world.

History is a source of inspiration for many people. Writers have great stories to tell, because history has been marked by important events which have happened since the appearance of the humans on Earth. Writers have invaluable material to create fantastic works. It can be said that the author of the short story analyzed here was inspired by the era in which he lived, as well as his own biographical situation.

Edgar Allan Poe lived during a difficult period in the history of the United States. His country had attained its independence after many years of struggle against England. At the end of this period the internal situation of the new nation was unstable. While the West settled rapidly and regional improvements were demanded, in the Northeast the industrial revolution transformed the territory. The South and North were in constant battles because both had slavery as their main source of income.

Today people who enjoy reading can read a work that one day was written in a different language from their mother tongue thanks to translators. Readers can enjoy the simplicity or complexity of stories, suffer with the characters' heartbreaks or with the enemies' treachery, but most of the time they do not know the history behind the printed sheets that they have in their hands.

This research is aimed at teachers of the basic techniques of translation, as well as translation students. This study has also as a second target reader, English teachers. Its main purpose is to carry out a comparison between the syntax of English and Spanish languages. Although, this area is extensive, this project will only focus on the use of the passive voice, specifically on the field of the literal translation of a short story, *The Oval Portrait* by Edgar Allan Poe, which was published in 2012 in an electronic format by *The Project Gutenberg* with two Spanish translations, accompanied by *Leyenda press* in 2010 and *Editores Mexicanos Unidos press* in 2013.

It is expected that students of translation and teachers of English as a second language are interested in the issue syntax of their mother tongue and the target language in order to know that although we believe that both languages share similarities, there are large gaps between them that could be solved if we knew the basic structure to build a bridge and connect both worlds and enjoy the wonder of things.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Nowadays it is common to find people who speak, read, listen and write in English as if they had English language as their mother tongue. This is a result of living in the era of globalization, where languages are a useful tool to find well-paid jobs and to have opportunities to climb up the professional ladder. However, people with a high level of English language have the false belief that they could be translators. In order to be a translator it is necessary to possess a knowledge of syntax both of the source language and the target language, as well as the translation techniques used in the translation process. It is also important to be acquainted with the area that the text or document belongs to.

In this study a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the passive voice in a short story was carried out, in its original version in English, and in two Spanish translations. The purpose of this study is to know how many times the translator used or omitted the passive voice in the Spanish versions.

Realizing that English syntax is different from Spanish syntax allows us to know that it is not always possible to carry out a literal translation from English to Spanish. Translators have to look for a common and natural use of the structure in Spanish. However, it is important to mention that each translator has their own style of translation, so we may find as many versions as there are translations.

RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The main technique of investigation to carry out this project was based on a study analysis of documents on the subject. All the information collected to support the theoretical framework in the different chapters is printed. In Chapter I, *Active and Passive voice*, books of grammar in English and Spanish were used in order to differentiate the active voice from the passive voice, the passive voice forms in both languages as well as its uses.

For Chapter II, the bibliography consulted was related to historical, political, cultural and social events in the United States during the time that Edgar Allan Poe lived. In this chapter, the short story in English in the electronic version, and the two printed translations in Spanish are also mentioned.

Chapter III is devoted to carrying out the analysis of the translation into Spanish of an English literary work. The selected work was *The Oval Portrait* by Edgar Allan Poe, published by The Project Gutenberg, and two versions printed in Spanish, by *Leyenda* in 2010 and *Editores Mexicanos Unidos* in 2013.

In order to determine how many passive voice sentences each version contained, an analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, was performed. In the three texts, the sentences in passive voice were identified and counted; afterwards, they were classified according to the structure of passive voice in both languages. After doing that, the fragments or parts of the story where the translator had omitted the passive voices were recognized, and the reasons to justify its uses were analyzed.

CHAPTER I

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

The main objective of this chapter is to mention the differences between active and passive voice in English and in Spanish. The different kind of passive voices in both languages as well as its structure and its uses.

Voice, in real life is the sound produced by the air expelled by the lungs, that passes through the larynx and causes that vocal cords vibrate. In grammar, voice is the grammatical accident that expresses whether the subject is the doer or the receiver of the action (Grijelmo, 2006:214).

Traditional grammars of English distinguish between “active voice” and “passive voice”, and sometimes also between “active sentences” and “passive sentences”. The contrast is often described as a difference in which the subject contributes to the interpretation of the sentence (Baker, 2001:255).

Katherine has taken Nicholas to the supermarket (active)

Nicholas has been taken to the supermarket (passive)

The subjects of the active sentences identify the “agents” or “actors”, whereas the subjects of the corresponding passive sentences identify the persons toward whom the actions are directed, the persons who “undergo” the action (Baker, 2001:255).

The main purpose of this chapter is to explain the differences between passive and active voice in English and Spanish, the differences between both voices, as well as the forms of passive voices in both languages and, finally, to contrast the use of these sentences in both languages.

1.1 ENGLISH VOICES

In *English Syntax and Argumentation*, Aarts (2001:149) mentions that the active – passive alternation is quite a common one, and that, in contrast with active

sentences, passive sentences contain the auxiliary *be*, a past participle and an optional subject introduced by **by**.

1.1.1 ENGLISH ACTIVE VOICE

According to Folse (2009:242) in active voice the sentence follows the structure SUBJECT + VERB + DIRECT OBJECT, where the subject is doing something and the direct object is the receiver of the action. In Grijelmo's (2006:215) words: "la acción del verbo nace del sujeto".

Mary wrote a letter for her brother.

Mary is the subject in active voice, because she is the one who did the action.

George bought a car.

In this sentence, George is also the subject in active voice, because he is the one who did the action, too.

In active sentences, the most important topic is the person or thing that is doing the action. In these sentences the subject is the agent of the action.

The people of France **gave** the Statue of Liberty to the United States.

Leonardo da Vinci **Painted** the famous Mona Lisa

The people **reelected** George Washington for a second term in 1972.

Examples of active voice taken from Folse (2009:243)

In these sentences, in active voice, the emphasis is on *the people of France*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, and *the people*, because they are the agents that did the action.

1.1.2 ENGLISH PASSIVE VOICE

Iglesias (1999:97) points out that in passive sentences the person or thing that receives the action of the verb becomes the subject, while the subject of the active voice becomes a «*prepositional object*». There is a change between the

prepositional object and the person or object that does the action. In passive voice it is more important to know what the action is than who the doer is.

Passive phrases in English have a property that distinguishes them from passive constructions in many languages; they allow an optional *by* phrase to identify the agent of the action expressed by the head verb, and its use is possible only in passive phrases (Baker, 2001:257-258).

The car was bought **by** Leonardo Dicaprio

The Mona Lisa was painted **by** Leonardo da Vinci

According to Jacobs (1995):

Passive voice verbs begin with the copular verb *be*, which is followed by the main verb in its past participle form. In passive voice clauses, it is not necessary to specify the agent. The *by* prepositional phrase containing the agent can be omitted. The passive clause with the *by* phrase has the same prepositional content as its active voice counterpart, but the information is arranged differently. The theme or entity affected by the event occupies the prominent first slot in the sentence, while the agent is placed at the end or even, omitted. (Jacobs, 1995: 159)

Folse (2009:243) mentions that the passive voice consists of the verb *be* and the past participle. The verb *be* should be in the correct tense to indicate the time of the action. It should be also singular or plural according to the subject. In passive voice, the sentence structure is SUBJECT + a form of *be* + PAST PARTICIPLE, where the subject is the receiver of the action.

The Statue of Liberty **was given** to the United States by people of France.

The famous Mona Lisa **was painted** by Leonardo da Vinci.

George Washington **was reelected** for a second term in 1792.

Examples of passive voice taken from Folse (2009:243)

In these sentences, the emphasis is on *the Statue of Liberty*, *the famous Mona Lisa*, and *George Washington*. In the last sentence, it is not necessary to add **by the people**, because this phrase does not provide any new or important information, so it can be omitted.

According to Baker (2001:263), the subject of the passive voice construction has been identified by an ordinary noun phrase. This noun phrase identifies the missing noun phrase inside the passive phrase. Each of these sentences has a clause as its subject, which identifies the missing direct object within the passive voice. Corresponding to each of these sentences is a well-formed sentence in which the same clause serves as the direct object of an active structure rather than as the subject of a passive structure.

In Semantic terms, Direct Objects are said to be constituents that refer to entities that undergo the activity or process tagged by the verb. Direct Objects have a *patient* role. What this means is that the referent of the constituent that is identified as direct object typically undergoes the action or processes indicated by the verb (Aarts, 2001:15-16).

1.1.3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACTIVE AND PASIVE VOICE

According to Jacobs (1995:160) there are three major differences between the active and passive voice. The first difference is in the form of the verb. The verb in the active voice clause is its ordinary past tense form, whereas in the passive voice clause the verb unit is a sequence of a form of the copular verb *be* plus the past participle form. Participles alone cannot serve as finite verbs, they must be introduced by a copular verb, usually a form of *be*.

Newspapers are read by 1 billion people in the world every day.

The printed press was invented by Johann Gutenberg.

The second way in which passive voice clauses differ from active clauses is the possibility of omitting the agent argument when it occurs in a prepositional phrase.

A bomb was thrown into the presidency.

The Mona Lisa picture was stolen from the Louvre museum.

The third major difference is the order of the constituents. In passive clauses, the theme noun phrase comes before the verb since it is the subject, whereas in

active clauses the theme comes after its verb since it is the object (Jacobs, 1995: 160).

Aline **has taken** George to the hospital (active)

George **has been taken** to the hospital (passive)

Examples of active and passive voice adapted from Baker (2001:255)

A common sentence pattern in English is SUBJECT + VERB + DIRECT OBJECT. In active voice sentences, the emphasis is in the person or thing that does the action (the “doer” of the action). In these sentences, the subject is the agent of the action. Sentences in passive voice also begin with a subject and have a verb, but the subject here is not the agent of the action. In passive voice, the subject is the person or thing that “receives” the action of the verb (Folse, 2009:243).

Verb tense	Active voice	Passive voice
Present	I wash my clothes every Saturday	My clothes are washed every Saturday
Past	Garcia Marques wrote one hundred years of solitude	That play was written by Garcia Marques
Present Progressive	They are cooking a meal	A meal is being cooked
Be + going to	They're going to build a house here	A house is going to be built here
Present Perfect	People have celebrated Mexican's independence since 1810	Mexican's independence has been celebrated since 1810
Modals	The government should prohibit the sale of beer	The sale of beer should be prohibited by the government

Chart 1.1 Examples of active and passive voice with the verb *to be* in different tenses

1.1.4 FORMS OF ENGLISH PASSIVE VOICE

Passive voice is used when the focus is on the action. It is not important to know who or what performs the action. Many native speakers and those who speak English as a second or foreign language think that its use in writing is not correct; however, passive voice is common in both written and spoken language as well as in formal and informal language.

In English there are different ways to construct a passive voice, and in the following section two types of passive voice construction are mentioned.

1.1.4.1 PSEUDO-PASSIVES

In accordance with Jacobs (1995:165), the pseudo-passive sentences are sentences that look at first glance somewhat like passives, but actually have predicate adjectives instead of the past participles. In fact, some of these adjectives were participles in earlier stages of English.

Folse (2009:245) mentions that in some instances, it is possible to use a passive verb form as an adjective to describe a condition or state instead of an action. In this case, it uses a past participle after a form of the verb *be*.

The rope had been **rotted** by the damp salty air. The rope has been **rotten** salty air.

Correct

Not possible

Example of pseudo-passives taken from Jacobs (1995:166)

The sentence containing the participle *rotted* specifies both a result, the state of the rope, and a process of rotting caused by the dampness. The adjective *rotten*, however, refers only to state. This is why it cannot occur with the *by* phrase, a phrase used in the first example to specify the entity responsible for the process of rotting (Jacobs, 1995:166).

It is possible to distinguish between the passives and the sentences with adjectives because the participles are at least slightly different from the adjectives forms. Nevertheless, sometimes the past and the adjective are identical. Pseudo-passives have a copular verb followed by a predicate

adjective that looks similar or identical to the past participle. They refer to states without reference to past events bringing about states (Jacobs, 1995:165-166,171).

The door **is closed**. This sentence describes the condition of the door now.

All of the checks **are gone**. This sentence describes the condition of the checks now.

Examples of passive voice and adjective taken and adapted from Folse (2009:245)

1.1.4.2 THE *GET* PASSIVE

According to Jacobs (1995:167) this form of passive voice occurs mainly in informal English. This kind of passive is like the *be* passive in that theme noun phrases end up in the subject slot, having been moved from the position after the verb. As with the *be* passives, the agent can be specified in an optional *by* phrase. *Get* passives in English often have a similar connotation, one of somewhat accidental misfortune.

The passive for the verb *get* consists of a form of the verb *get* followed by a past participle. The *get* passive indicates a sudden change; the *be* passive indicates a result. The use of *get* is considered informal language and it is therefore much more common in spoken language than written language. Formal writing generally avoids the use of *get*. Instead, it uses the verb *become* as a synonym (Folse, 2009:245).

She **got awarded** a Nobel Prize.

They **got praised** by the president in his broadcast last night.

Example of passive voice with *get* taken from Jacobs (1995:167)

The agent phrase is even less common in *get* passives than in passives with *be*. This lack of a *by* phrase makes it easy to confuse *get* passives with uses of *get* before a past participle or an adjective. *Get* can be used in a causative sense, meaning “cause to become” or “cause to happen”. In this use, it functions as a container clause verb which takes as its complement a nonfinite passive clause with a passive participle as its predicate (Jacobs, 1995:167).

Terwilliger got **Josephine arrested by the security police.**

Terwilliger got **himself arrested by the security police.**

Examples of *get* as passive voice and as adjective, taken from Jacobs (1995:167)

1.1.5 USES OF PASSIVE VOICE

The passive voice is used when the person or thing doing the action is not important or is not known or understood.

The program **was** immediately **stopped**

(It is not necessary to say who stopped the program)

Old Beatles records **were played** for the rest of the show.

(We don't know who played them, but it isn't important)

Examples of use of the passive voice taken from Bolton & Goodey (1996:54)

A passive sentence is usually more formal than an active one.

We'll choose a new DJ soon (Active, informal comment)

A new DJ **will be chosen** soon (Passive, formal statement)

Examples of formal passive voice taken from Bolton & Goodey (1996:54)

The passive is very common in English, especially in news, reports, signs, and notices, scientific and technical descriptions. In these contexts, we are more interested in the things that happen rather than in what or who makes them happen. Also in a passive construction, we can mention the person or thing that does the action (the agent) after the word *by* (Bolton & Goodey, 1996:54).

According to Folse (2009:244), the passive voice is used when the agent of the action is not the most important thing. In passive voice sentences, the subject is the receiver of the action, and this subject could be a person or a thing.

1.2 SPANISH VOICES

Grijelmo (2006) mentions:

La voz del verbo describe las dos direcciones que puede tomar la acción en las oraciones. Como en la vida: podemos desencadenar una acción pero también podemos recibirla. Por tanto, lo que sucede puede nacer de nosotros o morir en nosotros. Eso es lo que diferencia a la voz pasiva de la voz activa. (Grijelmo, 2006:215)

1.2.1 SPANISH ACTIVE VOICE

According to Grijelmo (2006:215), the active voice constitutes the natural form to speak Spanish. It is based on the natural verb times. In the active voice, the action of the verb is born in the subject. Beristáin (1984:391), mentions: “en la voz activa la acción emana de sujeto (los sonidos fuertes perturban a Pedro); el sujeto es el agente”.

The active voice is one characteristic of the Spanish language. People use it to talk in this way, because for them it is more important to know who does the action. In written language, however, it is more common to find structures in active than in passive voice, still, there is nothing wrong in using passive voice, but it is important to know when it has to be used.

Tú conduces un automóvil

Ana compra naranjas

1.2.2 SPANISH PASSIVE VOICE

Many authors have different definitions of passive voice in Spanish; some recognized meanings are the following.

Garcia Yebra (1997:217) states that passive voice is used when it is more important to show what the goal of the verbal process is, than its origin, i.e., when it is more appropriate to emphasize who or what thing receives the

expressed action than show who or what thing executes such an action. Often the verb is set in passive voice when the author of the action is unknown.

According to Beristáin (1984):

[...] la voz pasiva emana de un punto ajeno al sujeto (que es pasivo o paciente) que a veces se localiza en el agente (precedido por la preposición *por*, *de* o *con*), y otras veces se desconoce o no se quiere mencionar (con los verbos unipersonales: *¡se cuenta cada chisme!*). (Beristáin, 1984:391)

As it has already been said, the main characteristic of the passive voice is to show what the action is rather than who the doer is. The passive Spanish voice is constructed as in English. According to Iglesias (1999:97), the passive voice is formed with the verbs *ser* or *estar* and the past participle of the conjugated verb.

Grijelmo (2006) mentions:

[...] la voz pasiva se construye con el verbo *ser* en funciones de auxiliar y con el participio del verbo correspondiente. Las palabras que reciben la acción en la voz activa se convierten en el sujeto de la voz pasiva. (Grijelmo, 2006:216)

According to Folse (2009:250), Spanish has a passive voice construction that is very common to the *be* + past participle in English, but there are two differences that may influence speakers of Spanish that are learning English as a second language. In Spanish, there are two verbs for *to be*, so learners may be confused about which one matches the use of passive voice in English. In addition, the past participle in this construction must agree with the subject in number and gender.

1.2.3 FORMS OF SPANISH PASSIVE VOICE

The passive voice is used when it is important to know who or what receives the action expressed by the verb. In Spanish, as in English, there are different ways

to construct a passive voice; these will be explained in the following three subsections.

1.2.3.1 PASSIVE VOICE WITH AUXILIARY “SER”

According to its form, a passive sentence is an attributive sentence. When the speaker is not mentioned, the difference between its meaning and its function depends on whether the attributive is a lexical adjective or a verb. (Gili Gaya, 1994:123).

La edición fue reducida

El agresor fue detenido por la policía

Example of passive voice in Spanish taken from Gili Gaya (1994:123-124)

1.2.3.2 PASSIVE VOICE WITH AUXILIARY “ESTAR”

In accordance with Gili Gaya (1994):

...el resultado de una acción acabada se expresa con *estar* + *participio* y la acción se da como terminada y cumplida antes del tiempo que indica el auxiliar. Cuando se utiliza *estar* con significado local para expresar situación, es un verbo de estado que aun en los tiempos perfectos mantiene clara su diferencia de *ser*. (Gili Gaya, 1994:124-125)

Las casas estaban edificadas con mucho cuidado

El suceso será comentado

Example of passive voice with auxiliary *estar* taken from Gili Gaya, 1994

1.2.3.3 VOZ PASIVA REFLEJA

According to Gili Gaya (1994):

Los pronombres personales (me, te, se, nos, se) sirven para expresar acción refleja cuando el verbo a que acompañan

está en la misma persona que ellos representan. El sujeto es a la vez complemento directo e indirecto, es conjuntamente agente y paciente. Si el verbo está en tercera persona del singular o del plural, el reflexivo latino se cumple en español la función refleja, y las formas átonas del pronombre quedan en su función exclusiva de representar los complementos directo o indirecto sin valor reflexivo. (Gili Gaya, 1994:126)

Grijelmo (2006:217) mentions “se llama refleja porque (como sucede con los verbos reflexivos) la acción se refleja sobre el sujeto. Y para más coincidencia, en este caso se requiere el pronombre *se*”. *Voz pasiva refleja* is suitable to replace a passive voice if the subject of the sentence is the name of a thing.

Esta casa ha sido edificada en el lugar adecuado (passive voice)

Se ha edificado esta casa en el lugar adecuado (pasiva refleja)

Examples of passive and reflective voice taken from Grijelmo (2006:218)

Beristáin (1984:390) mentions that in order to identify a *voz pasiva refleja*, the following characteristics must be taken into consideration:

- Identificar el signo de voz pasiva (me, te, se, nos, se), para comprobar que no es un pronombre reflexivo.
- Verificar que el verbo de la oración sea transitivo.
- Confirmar que el sujeto de la oración sea paciente (si el sujeto es el agente, la voz es activa).
- Observar si el verbo es oblicuo o unipersonal y establecer su relación con el sujeto.

Se tejen canastos

Se compran casas

1.2.4 PASSIVE VOICE USES

In this section some of the uses of passive voice in Spanish will be mentioned, taking Gili Gaya (1994:125-126) as reference.

Se usa estar + participio:

- En los tiempos imperfectos de acciones perfectivas: *está o estaba prohibido, acabado, resuelto.*
- En los tiempos imperfectos de muchos verbos reflexivos con sentido incoativo: *está o estaba sentado, avergonzado, enojado, enfadado.*

Se usa ser + participio:

- En los tiempos perfectos de acciones perfectivas e imperfectivas: *fue abierta, ha sido cerrado; ha sido, fue querido, conocido.*
- En los tiempos de acciones perfectivas: *es querido, era estimado, será solicitado, sea conocido, aunque fuera amado.*

Gili Gaya (1994:126) states that “en el empleo de la voz pasiva, convergen varios factores lingüísticos que la dificultan: el aspecto perfectivo de la acción expresada, el tiempo del verbo auxiliar y las diferencias entre *ser* y *estar*”.

To summarize this chapter, passive constructions give prominence to noun phrases that are not agents placed in the subject position at the beginning of the clause, not inside the verb phrase. The main role of the passive voice is to emphasize the things that happen rather than the doer of the action.

CHAPTER II

THE OVAL PORTRAIT TALE

In this chapter some facts about Edgar Allan Poe's life are presented, as well as some historical events that will help to place the short story in its context.

A general analysis of the short story is also carried out in this chapter and a reference to the translations made of this tale by two well-known Mexican Publishing Houses is mentioned.

2.1 EDGAR ALLAN POE'S BIOGRAPHY

Today, Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be one of the most representative writers of the horror genre. Maybe his style of life contributed to develop his passion for writing mysterious, unnatural and dark stories. He is regarded as forefather of contemporary tale, and is attributed the creation of the detective genre and the horror tale.

The *Anthology of American Poetry* (Gesner, 1983:163) notices that Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston and was orphaned by the time he was two years old. He was soon adopted by a well-to-do merchant named John Allan. In 1815 the Allans moved to England, where the young Poe went to school, excelling in athletics, writing and debate. Several years later, he returned to America and for one year attended the University of Virginia. He went on to enlist in the army and then attended West Point. As Poe became more involved in his writing, he grew restless and he was asked to leave the Academy.

Later he became an editor with the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which has a vehicle for many southern writers, including Poe himself. At the age of twenty-seven, Poe married his 13-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm, and continued working in various editorial capacities. His wife died in 1847 and, just a few days before he was to remarry, Poe himself died (Gesner, 1983:163).

Five days before he was 23 years old, his first tale was published, "Metzgerstein". It is a seasoned tale that shows some of the characteristics that will appear in many of his works: creation of an oppressive atmosphere in order to achieve the effect and the use of mysterious and supernatural elements. With these elements, he wanted to achieve a unique effect in the reader's mood, which should endure after reading (The stories: *Grandes de la Literatura*, 2013:11).

Dávila Sota in *Grandes de la Literatura* (2013:11) states that Poe developed his own theory of the tale. For him, a reading should take between thirty minutes to two hours; during this time, the soul of the reader is under the will of the author. To achieve this goal, the tale has to have a unique effect and the author will invent the incidents, to create a perfect mingle to achieve the desired effect. Short stories do not have to look for the beauty of things that is left to poetry. Passion and horror are not subjects of poetry.

Edgar Allan Poe was not a bestselling author, because his works were not entirely accepted by the American society until after his death. His style of writing was a model or guide for authors who lived after him, because he was the inspiration to continue writing stories based on horror and suspense.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

History is an important key for people who make any contribution to the world of art. Sometimes, it is an inspiration to write wonderful novels or stories about slaves, pirates, kings and queens, and so on. Many of these people had their inspiration in the history of the country which served as a backdrop.

All the nations have a beginning, and in this case, the United States is not an exception. It is important to know some things about the political situation of the country in order to establish the period of time in which Edgar Allan Poe lived while he was still an unknown writer.

The war of 1812 freed the United States from danger of foreign domination, and attention was turned to internal expression. The west was settled rapidly, internal

improvements were demanded, and manifest destiny became obvious to the people. The industrial revolution transformed the Northeast and combined with a reform epoch to set the North and South against each other on the issue of slavery. The Civil War settled the question of secession and started the country on a new path. (Crawford *et al.*, 1972:48)

When a nation ceases to be a colony, most of the times the new country is fraught with poverty and destruction. Some citizens form alliances to create projects and restart the land. Unfortunately, not everybody has the same ideals. Several cities do not progress while others experience important growth. This happened to some American cities: some of them underwent what is called the Industrial Revolution while others embraced slavery.

2.3 GENERAL VIEW OF LITERATURE

In the first half of the XIX century, the United States began their independent literary history. There were important writers as Emerson, Hawthorne and Longfellow, and some little known story tellers such as Washington Irving and James F. Cooper. Literature followed the colonial molds of the XVIII century, some magazines prospered, but most of them were marked by the respect to the established rules that killed the originality they could have (Dávila Sota in *Grandes de la Literatura*, 2013:5).

According to Crawford *et al.* (1972):

The absence of international copyright and the presence of many periodicals, annuals, and gift books affected writing, the former by putting English authors into competition with American, the latter by chaining the writers to the sentimental tastes of the middle class. Evangelical religion in its deprecation of carnal sins, kept moral conduct within strict bounds, and in its distrust of frivolous writing imposed an aggressive didacticism upon literature to demonstrate its utility. (Crawford *et al.*, 1972:49)

2.3.1 THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

There are different views of Romanticism or Romantic Movement. Romanticism was a literary, cultural and artistic movement that started in Europe in countries like Germany, France and England. In North America, the most representative writer and poet was Edgar Allan Poe. Poe, the genius, emerges during this period in an atmosphere of mediocrity. He breaks the established molds and outshines with other writers.

According to VanSpanckeren (1994):

The Romantic vision tended to express itself in the form Hawthorne called the "Romance", a heightened, emotional, and symbolic form of the novel. Romances were not love stories, but serious novels that used special techniques to communicate complex and subtle meanings. The typical protagonists of the American Romance are haunted, alienated individuals. Hawthorne's Arthur Dimmesdale or Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Melville's Ahab in *Moby-Dick* and the many isolated and obsessed characters of Poe's tales are lonely protagonists pitted against unknowable, dark fates that, in some mysterious way, grow out of their deepest unconscious selves. The symbolic plots reveal hidden actions of the anguished spirit. (VanSpanckeren, 1994:36)

Romanticism breaks all stereotypes; it defends imagination and fantasy, and validates intense emotions as a source of aesthetic experience. Sometimes Romanticism praises religion, and patriotism. There is a feeling of individualism.

According to VanSpanckeren (1994):

American novelists were faced with a history of strife and revolution, geography of vast wilderness, and a fluid and relatively classless democratic society. American novels frequently reveal a revolutionary absence of tradition. The American novelist had to depend on his or her own devices. American was, in part, an undefined, constantly moving frontier populated by immigrants speaking foreign languages and following strange and crude ways of life. Thus the main character in American literature might find himself alone among cannibal tribes, as in Melville's *Typee*, or exploring a wilderness like James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking*, or witnessing lonely visions from the grave, like Poe's solitary

individuals. Americans tend to invent new creative techniques (VanSpanckeren, 1994:36).

The book *Outline of American Literature* (VanSpanckeren, 1994:37), notes that “Romance form is dark and forbidding, indicating how difficult it is to create an identity without a stable society”. In the Romantic novels, where tragedy is dominant, heroes die in the end.

2.4 EDGAR ALLAN POE’S WORKS

Edgar Allan Poe, a Southern poet representative of this Romantic Movement, had a darkly metaphysical vision mixed with elements of realism, parody, and burlesque. He refined the short story genre and invented detective fiction (VanSpanckeren, 1994: 70-71). Poe contributed to the genres of science fiction, horror, and fantasy.

According to VanSpanckeren (1994):

Poe believed that strangeness was an essential ingredient of beauty, and his writing is often exotic. His stories and poems are populated with doomed, introspective aristocrats. These gloomy characters never seem to work or socialize; instead they bury themselves in dark, moldering castles symbolically decorated with bizarre rugs and draperies that hide the real world of sun, windows, walls and floors. The hidden rooms reveal ancient libraries, strange art works, and eclectic oriental jobs (VanSpanckeren, 1994:70-71).

Terror was the effect that Edgar Allan Poe wanted to create, and the results were remarkable, because no American writer could write something similar, grotesque and unforgettable. Poe worked in a narrow margin, and frequently he confused the sublime with the theatrical excess (Conn, 1998:81-82).

Within the forces that mark the mature production of Poe, it must be included his fascination with the abnormal and pathological states that could have their origins in his own illness as result of the use of opium as a medicine. The abuse of alcohol to mitigate Poe’s hunger and misery, with unsatisfactory effects,

could explain the hallucinations in his works (Dávila Sota in *Grandes de la Literatura*, 2013:13).

2.4.1 CRITICISM

The literary fame that Edgar Allan Poe won during his lifetime was for his Gothic tales and critique. Poe could be rash and dishonest with his judgments, however, he could make an intelligent evaluation of contemporary literature. Poe regarded literature as a vocation or a religious calling (Conn, 1998:79-80).

American Literature notes that “Poe’s criticism has been highly regarded because he judged by a coherent set of aesthetic and technical standards. He was not limited by American nationalism to patriotic praise of American authors. Poe’s criticism neither was often unduly censorious, nor was his taste unerring” (Crawford *et al.*, 1972:63).

Poe’s work is renowned because it had a unique style different from the rest of the writers in the Romantic Period. Poe is considered to be one of the most important writers in his nation. He used his own imagination to create a special kind of story. His contributions were so important that they usher in a new literary genre with unique characteristics.

2.4.2 POETRY

Poetry is another genre to which Edgar Allan Poe made contributions. His most important poems were *Israfel* and *Annabel Lee*, and also *Al Aaraaf*. He used a number of poetic devices to create an emotional state in his poems. Poe achieved poems of haunting melody done with a wonderful sense of art.

Crawford *et al.* (1972:61) mention: “Poe was a skillful metrist, and a careful reviser who achieved the effects he aimed at. His subjects show a similarity, and at times he is too much interested in sound alone. He has had special influence on Baudelaire”.

According to Crawford et al., (1972):

Poe is a master creator of moods through skillful use of internal and external rhyme, regular rhythm, carefully chosen sound, onomatopoeia, and suggestively vague description. His influence through the French symbolists is still felt on American poetry. To many, Poe's metrical effects seem crude, his vocabulary meager and repetitive, and his rhymes obvious. These critics feel he subordinated sense to sound, and that his intentional vagueness is often less successful than sharp, clear imagery. A poem should not be didactic, should be short, should be a rhythmical creation of beauty, should make the ideal beautiful, and elevate the soul, should be melancholic in its beauty, and should have a beautiful woman as its best subject. (Crawford et al., 1972:63)

A poem has to involve the reader in order to take part in the magic world that the writer creates. The reader has to enjoy the rhythms and the beauty of the poem, to be happy or sad according to what he reads and feels.

2.4.3 SHORT STORIES

Sometimes it is difficult to make a difference between a short story and a short novel. As Julio Torri (1999:IX) mentions in *Grandes Cuentistas*, the short novel is a narration of possible facts in which the psychology of one or more characters is involved, as well as physical or ideal conflicts between them, and the attractive scenery where the story is developed.

A short story is a brief work of literature that could involve science fiction. In short stories, characters, sometimes, suffer a conflict or a tragedy. The writer plays with their emotions and their mind. Dávila Sota (2013: 11) remarks that Poe knew how to differentiate a novel from a short story; he eliminated the superfluous dialogues, and the comments on the action, as well as the author's judgments and the moral. Using these characteristics, Poe transformed the short story into a highly specialized genre, almost analytic, that demands a refined technique and perfectionism that excludes an imprecise language. Poe's stories are intense, economic and functional; action is focused on an unexpected ending, the tone is controlled from the beginning to the end.

American Literature mentions that “Poe conceived the short story as a unit, where every portion of it contributed to the final effect. He improved technically as he wrote more. He always lavished care on his work even when it did not thereby become more saleable” (Crawford *et al.*, 1972:62).

Crawford *et al.* (1972) remark:

Poe’s short stories are praised for their concision, unity of effect, and tension. They generally evoke gripping excitement through brilliantly imagined events and carefully wrought style. Detractors point out Poe’s forte is not human but abnormal psychology, that he does not understand normal people, that his range is consequently narrow, and that his style is labored and artificial. (Crawford *et al.*, 1972:62)

Poe used his imagination to create authentic horror stories; one of his surprising short stories was *The black cat*, in which a woman is buried by hatred. It is a tale that plays with the human mind; it involves horror to create a perfect story of mystery and terror.

Sometimes humans can believe things that are unreal or fantastic. This is possible because the mind is powerful. The main objective of Poe was to create stories that could manipulate the psyche of people. All the stories have bright and careful descriptions of the events that unfold in the story, and never lose control in order to make the believable more incredible. According to Dávila Sota (2013:12) Poe’s contributions are essential to the technique of the contemporary story whose principles were announced or practiced by Poe himself.

According to VanSpanckeren (1994):

Poe’s stories have been described as tales of horror. Stories like “The Gold Bug” and “The Purloined Letter” are more tales of ratiocination, or reasoning. All of these stories reveal Poe’s fascination with the mind and unsettling scientific knowledge that was radically secularizing the 19th century world view. In every genre, Poe explores the psyche. To explore the exotic and strange aspects of psychological processes, Poe delved into accounts of madness and extreme emotion. The painfully deliberate

style and elaborate explanation in the stories intensify the sense of the horrible by making the events seem vivid and plausible. (VanSpanckeren, 1994:71-72)

It is important to highlight that Poe's works had a significant impact on writers of novels who lived after him. His unique style of writing shook up the literature in his country. Some of the moments in his life were used as inspiration to write his famous works. He was also a guide for other authors of different literary genres, from horror to science fiction novels, not only in his own country, but in other parts of the world.

In the following section, a selected short story is analyzed. Some of the main characteristics are mentioned in order to have a general knowledge at its plot. The source of the short story in English and the selected translations in Spanish are also included.

2.5 THE OVAL PORTRAIT TALE

The *Oval Portrait* is a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe. This story involves strange circumstances that surround a portrait in an antique chateau that had been temporarily abandoned. The story explains how the portrait was painted, and who the painter and the woman were. The central idea of this story resides in the relationship between art and life. The painter had an addiction to art; he was responsible for the young bride's death. In this context, art is a synonym of death. *The Oval Portrait* suggests that the woman's beauty condemns her to death. While the man painted her, she was losing her health. Finally, when the artist finishes his work, he realizes his beloved had stopped breathing.

The story is written in the first person. The narrator is a semi delirious man who is recovering from his wounds and takes an interest in the paintings that hung from the wall. He is lying down in a bed and in this position he can look at the paintings while reading a book he has found on the pillow. The book provides information about the paintings. Instead of going to sleep, the narrator reads and observes the pictures until around midnight. When he decides to move the candelabrum to see better, the light of the candles provokes an unexpected

effect: they reveal a portrait that had been hidden in the dark near one of the bedposts.

The main characters are a painter who loves more his art than his wife, who is a beautiful woman in love with her husband. Despite all her hatred for painting, brushes, palette, and everything related with her husband's work, she accepts to be painted.

A room in the castle is the only setting of this story. In this place, the narrator watches the paintings and describes what happened with the rays of the candelabrum that illuminated one of the bedposts. When he makes this movement, he can see the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood, he glances at the painting hurriedly and then he closes his eyes thinking that the woman is alive.

Dávila Sota (2013) mentions:

El *retrato oval* tiene relaciones con William Wilson no sólo por el tratamiento (en cierto sentido el retrato es un doble) y por la atmósfera, sino porque desarrolla otro tema del romanticismo: el vampirismo, que en este caso es espiritual y no carnal. El pintor es una especie de vampiro, ya que roba la vida de su amada para hacer su obra maestra. (Dávila Sota in *Grandes de la Literatura*, 2013:15)

It could be said that many of the Poe's works have a relation among them, because they share characteristics, as the atmospheres and also the settings where the stories are developed. An example of these settings is ruined castles.

2.5.1 PLOT SUMMARY

The story takes place in what appears to be an abandoned chateau located in the Apennines, where a wounded man and his valet spend the night. Both men stayed in one of the smallest apartments of a remote turret of the building. The room is decorated with modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque. One of the paintings attracts the wounded man's attention while he is in incipient delirium. The room is illuminated by a candelabrum which is on a

bedside table. He finds a volume with the descriptions and critics of the paintings, and he starts to read it. However, the light projected by the candelabrum displeased him, so he stretches his hand in order to change the position of the candelabrum, but this movement has an unanticipated result: he discovers a portrait that he had never seen before.

At the beginning, he believes that the woman in the portrait is alive; the effect probably is provoked by the gold frame. In the volume he finds a review of the oval portrait, the painter portrays his wife and she poses for him. The painter is so absorbed by his work that he does not notice that he is painting the life of his wife on the canvas. When he finishes his masterpiece, he discovers that his wife is dead.

2.6 ENGLISH VERSION AND SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

In this section, the versions of the short story in English and in Spanish are analyzed.

The original version in English of this story is taken from the electronic e-book Project Gutenberg's The works of Edgar Allan Poe, by Edgar Allan Poe. The title of the book is *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, volume 1 (of 5) of the Raven Edition, release date on May 19, 2008 (eBook #2147), and updated on November 5, 2012.

The first translation in Spanish belongs to *Leyenda press*. It was published in two books, *Narraciones Extraordinarias* (2011), and *Cuentos de Suspense* (2010). These books are a collection of the most important works of Poe. To carry out the analysis, *Cuentos de Suspense* (2010) was the version selected.

Editores Mexicanos Unidos (EMU), S.A., Narraciones Extraordinarias is the second Spanish translation. It was published on March 2013. This collection also contains the most famous works of Poe. This edition was selected because it is a recent publication.

It is important to remember the most important aspects of the life and works of Edgar Allan Poe in order to place him in a specific stage of literature. He

belongs to the Romantic Movement and he is important for his contribution to the science-fiction genre. He is remembered for writing horror tales, his main aim was to provoke terror in people who read his works. He also wanted to play with the human psyche.

CHAPTER III

THE OVAL PORTRAIT TALE ANALYSIS

The main objective of this chapter is to carry out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the passive voice in the English version selected from the short story *The Oval Portrait* taken from the eBook Gutenberg Project: The works of Edgar Allan Poe (2012), as well as in the Spanish translations made by *Leyenda* (2010) and *Editores Mexicanos Unidos E.M.U.* (2013) Publishing Houses.

On the one hand, in the quantitative analysis, the sentences with passive voice in English and Spanish are counted and classified according to their structure. Afterwards, the number of passive voices kept or changed in both translations into Spanish is identified as well as the segments of the work where the translator implemented the modifications.

As we have seen, passive voice in English has the verb *to be* plus a verb in *past participle* or the verb *get* plus a verb in *past participle* as a basic structure. Sentences with passive voice in Spanish have the verb *ser* or *estar* or the *reflective passive voice* formed by the particle *se* plus a verb that reflects the action carried out by the agent.

On the other hand, in the qualitative analysis I explain why the translator could have considered appropriate to modify a passive voice by an active voice. As it was mentioned in chapter I, it is more common in Spanish to know who the doer of the action is than knowing what the action is. Otherwise, if it is not possible to change the passive voice, the translator has to conserve it without altering what the author of the original story was trying to get across to his readers.

Finally, at the end of the analysis, a comparison of the English and Spanish versions is carried out in order to identify how many sentences in passive voice were changed to active and give the reasons or explanations that allow its use or its change.

The following chart shows the sentences in passive voice contained in the selected version in English.

PASSIVE VOICE IN ENGLISH

1. To all appearance it **had been** temporarily and very lately **abandoned**.
2. Its walls **were hung** with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque.
3. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which **had been found** upon the pillow, and which purported to criticise and describe them.
4. The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche of the room which **had** hitherto **been thrown** into deep shade by one of the bed-posts.
5. But it **could have been** neither the execution of the work, nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me.
6. Least of all, **could it have been** that my fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a living person.
7. But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, there **were admitted** none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work, and turned his eyes from canvas merely, even to regard the countenance of his wife.
8. And he would not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas **were drawn** from the cheeks of her who sate beside him.
9. And then the brush **was given**, and then the tint **was placed**; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought.
10. [...] but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed Life itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved:—She **was dead!**"

Chart 3.1 Sentences with passive voice in English (eBook Project Gutenberg's The works of Edgar Allan Poe)

In the short story in English it was possible to identify eleven passive voices, but it was not possible to find a passive voice with the verb *get*. Most of the sentences with passive voice have the basic structure, a form of the verb *to be* plus a verb in *past participle*. The tenses of the verb *to be* are in past, because the narrator is telling a story that he has read from a book and he is reminiscing now. Three of these passive voices have the structure of past perfect (***had been abandoned, had been found, had been thrown***), six of them have the structure of past simple (***were hung, were admitted, were drawn, was given, was placed, was dead***). Finally, two of them are constructed by a modal verb plus a verb in past participle (***could have been***).

In the following section the comparison of both translations is carried out in order to determinate if there is a similar number of passive voices in the versions selected, and if they are placed in parallel extracts of the short story.

LEYENDA (2010)	EDITORES MEXICANOS UNIDOS (2013)
Según su apariencia, el Castillo había sido últimamente abandonado , aunque de manera temporal.	Según parecía, había sido temporal y recientemente abandonado .
[...] Estaba ubicada en una torre aislada del resto del edificio.	Dicha habitación estaba situada en una torre aislada del edificio...
Las paredes estaban recubiertas de tapicerías y adornados con numerosos trofeos heráldicos de varias clases...	NO PASSIVE VOICE IN THIS EXTRACT
NO PASSIVE VOICE IN THIS EXTRACT	[...] experimenté un interés profundo hacia aquellas pinturas que estaban colgadas no solamente en las superficies principales de los muros [...]

<p>NO PASSIVE VOICE IN THIS EXTRACT</p>	<p>[...] mientras mis párpados estaban cerrados analicé rápidamente la razón que me hacía cerrarlos.</p>
<p>NO PASSIVE VOICE IN THIS EXTRACT</p>	<p>[...] el primer reflejo de la luz de las velas sobre este cuadro había disipado el estupor onírico de que estaban poseídos mis sentidos [...]</p>
<p>[...] no se permitió la entrada de nadie a la torre; porque el artista había enloquecido por la vehemencia con que tomaba su trabajo...</p>	<p>[...] nadie fue admitido a visitar la torre; porque el pintor se había vuelto loco a causa del ardor de su trabajo [...]</p>
<p>[...] y no podía ver que los colores que extendía sobre el lienzo se borraban de las mejillas de la que tenía sentada a su lado.</p>	<p>No quería ver que los colores que extendía sobre el lienzo eran arrancados de las mejillas de la que estaba sentada junto a él.</p>
<p>NO PASSIVE VOICE IN THIS EXTRACT</p>	<p>Y entonces se dio el toque en la boca y la pincelada en el ojo; y durante un momento el pintor quedó en éxtasis delante del trabajo que había realizado...</p>
<p>[...] y gritando con voz terrible: ‘En verdad esta es la Vida misma’, se volvió bruscamente para mirar a su bien amada, quien ¡estaba muerta!</p>	<p>[...] gritando con voz fuerte y vibrante: -¡En verdad es la vida misma! Se volvió bruscamente para mirar a su amada: ¡estaba muerta!</p>
<p>TOTAL: 6 passive voices Past simple: 3 Voz pasiva refleja: 2 Past perfect: 1</p>	<p>TOTAL: 10 passive voices Past simple: 8 Voz pasiva refleja: 1 Past perfect: 1</p>

Chart 3.2 Sentences with passive voice in Spanish translations

The translation published by *Leyenda* has six passive voices; one is formed by the verb *to be* in present perfect plus a verb in past participle (**había sido**

abandonado). It has three passive voices in past simple (**estaba ubicada, estaban recubiertas**) and two reflective passive voices (**no se permitió, se borraban**). *E.M.U.* translation has ten passive voices, one formed by the verb *to be* in past perfect plus the verb in past participle (**había sido abandonado**), eight passive voices with the verb *to be* in past simple (**estaba situada, estaban colgadas, estaban cerrados, estaban poseídos, fue admitido, eran arrancados, estaba sentada, estaba muerta**) and one reflective passive voice (**se dio**). This analysis allows us to see that the version translated in 2013 by *Editores Mexicanos Unidos*, has four more passive voices than *Leyenda* press.

The following charts contain the English passive voices and their equivalents in Spanish as well as the qualitative analysis carried out to support the translator's election.

Sentence 1.

English version (Paragraph 1)

To all appearance it **had been** temporarily and very lately **abandoned**.

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 2, page 86)

Según su apariencia, el castillo **había sido** últimamente **abandonado**, aunque de manera temporal.

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 1, page 187)

Según parecía, **había sido** temporal y recientemente **abandonado**.

Analysis

In both, the English and the Spanish versions, the passive voice is conserved in order to emphasize the appearance of the castle when travelers came. The passive voice has the structure of the verb *to be* in past perfect plus a verb in *past participle*.

The adverbs *últimamente* and *recientemente* indicate that it had not been long since the abandonment of the castle when people occupied it again.

In this part of the short story it is not possible to modify a passive voice, so the translator has made the right choice.

Sentence 2.**English version (Paragraph 1)**

Its walls **were hung** with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque.

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 2, page 86)

Las paredes **estaban recubiertas** de tapicerías y adornados con numerosos trofeos heráldicos de varias clases y de ellos colgaban un número verdaderamente prodigioso de pinturas modernas, ricas de estilo, encerradas en sendos marcos dorados, de gusto arabesco.

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 2, page 187)

Cubrían los muros tapices, los adornaban numerosos trofeos heráldicos de todas formas, así como también una cantidad verdaderamente prodigiosa de pinturas modernas, llenas de estilo, en ostentosos marcos de oro de un gesto arabesco.

Analysis

Leyenda press conserves the passive voice. In *E.M.U.*, the translator makes a change in the point of view of the message without altering the meaning. The translator uses a technique of translation called *modulation* which consists of using a phrase that is different in the source and the target languages, but both convey the same idea.

The main idea is understood, but it is a bit difficult to read.

In this extract, the election made in *Leyenda press* is correct.

Sentence 3.**English version (Paragraph 1)**

I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which **had been found** upon the pillow, and which purported to criticise and describe them.

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 2, page 86)

Quise así, al menos, si no conciliar el sueño, distraerme alternativamente entre la contemplación de estas pinturas y la lectura de un pequeño volumen que había encontrado en la almohada y que trataba de su crítica y su análisis.

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 5, page 187)

Deseaba yo que se hiciera así para que, si no podía dormir, pudiese al menos consolarme con la contemplación de estas pinturas y con la lectura de un pequeño volumen que había encontrado sobre la almohada y que contenía el juicio crítico y análisis de las mismas.

Analysis

In both translations in Spanish the active voice is used. There is no change in the meaning or sense in the extract. The action mentioned has a protagonist and the reader can understand where the man found the book with the description of the pictures, and what he did instead of sleeping.

In English, the passive voice has the structure of the verb *to be* in past perfect plus a verb in past participle.

Sentence 4.**English version (Paragraph 3)**

The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche of the room which **had** hitherto **been thrown** into deep shade by one of the bed-posts.

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 5, page 87)

La luz de sus numerosas bujías se centró en un nicho del salón que una de las columnas del lecho había hasta entonces cubierto con una sombra profunda.

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 5, page 188)

Los rayos de las numerosas velas (porque había muchas) cayeron entonces sobre un nicho de la habitación oculto hasta entonces por la profunda sombra que proyectaba una de las columnas del lecho.

Analysis

The active voice is used in the translations made by *Leyenda* and *E.M.U. press*. The verb in active gives the same meaning and emphasizes the description of the room before and after the candles illuminated it.

The passive voice in English has the structure of the verb *to be* in past perfect plus a verb in past participle.

Sentence 5.**English version (Paragraph 4)**

But it **could have been** neither the execution of the work, nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me.

***Leyenda press* version (Paragraph 8, page 88)**

Tal vez no fuese ni la ejecución de la obra, ni la excepcional belleza de su fisionomía lo que me impresionó tan repentina y profundamente.

***Editores Mexicanos Unidos* version (Paragraph 12, page 188)**

Pero puede ser muy bien que no fuese ni la ejecución de la obra, ni la inmortal belleza del semblante lo que me impresionó tan súbita y fuertemente.

Analysis

Leyenda and *E.M.U. press* uses modulation. The translator changes the point of view of the message without altering the meaning, and also changes from passive to active voice.

The translator uses active voice to emphasize that something captured the man's attention.

Sentence 6.**English version (Paragraph 4)**

Least of all, **could it have been** that my fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a living person.

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 8, page 88)

No podía creer que mi imaginación, al salir de su delirio, hubiese tomado la cabeza por la de una persona viva.

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 12, page 188)

Menos aun debía creer que mi imaginación, al salir de aquel estado de ensoñación, hubiese tomado la cabeza por la de una persona viva.

Analysis

In this fragment the passive voice is modified. It is possible to use an active voice.

The main objective is to emphasize the attitude of the person who was in the room and the impression he had when he observed the picture.

In the version in English, the passive voice has the structure of a modal verb followed by a verb in present perfect.

Sentence 7.**English version (Paragraph 5)**

But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, **there were admitted** none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work, and turned his eyes from canvas merely, even to regard the countenance of his wife.

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 15, page 89)

Sin embargo, cuando el pintor casi terminaba su obra, no **se permitió** la entrada de nadie a la torre; porque el artista había enloquecido por la vehemencia con que tomaba su trabajo, y rara vez despegaba los ojos del lienzo, ni aun para mirar el bello semblante de su esposa.

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 16, page 190)

Pero a la larga, como la tarea se acercaba a su término, nadie **fue admitido** a visitar la torre, porque el pintor se había vuelto loco a causa del ardor de su trabajo, y rara vez apartaba sus ojos del lienzo, ni aun para mirar el rostro de su mujer.

Analysis

In the translation made by *Leyenda press*, a *voz pasiva refleja* is used: **no se permitió**. Mention who denied the access to the turret is not really important. *E.M.U.* employs a passive voice constructed by the verb to *be* and a past participle in singular. Both make reference to an unknown character that forbade access to the turret. However, it is possible that it was the painter himself or maybe his servers.

Sentence 8.**English version (Paragraph 5)**

And he would not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas **were drawn** from the cheeks of her who sate beside him.

***Leyenda press* version (Paragraph 15, page 89)**

Y no podía ver que los colores que extendía sobre el lienzo **se borraban** de las mejillas de la que tenía sentada a su lado.

***Editores Mexicanos Unidos* version (Paragraph 17, page 190)**

No quería ver que los colores que extendía sobre el lienzo **eran arrancados** de las mejillas de la que estaba sentada junto a él.

Analysis

In the translation made by *Leyenda press* a *voz pasiva refleja* in plural is used: **se borraban**. *E.M.U.* employs a passive voice constructed by verb to be and a past participle in masculine genre and in plural, **eran arrancados**. Both *voz pasiva refleja* and passive voice note that the life of the painter's wife was stolen with each brushstroke.

Sentence 9.**English version (Paragraph 5)**

And then the brush **was given**, and then the tint **was placed**; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought [...]

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 16, page 89)

Entonces el artista dio los toques, y durante un instante quedó en éxtasis ante el trabajo que había ejecutado [...]

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 19, page 190)

Y entonces **se dio** el toque en la boca y la pincelada en el ojo; y durante un momento el pintor quedó en éxtasis delante del trabajo que había realizado [...]

Analysis

Leyenda press uses an active voice to indicate that it had been the painter who finished the masterpiece. *E.M.U.* uses a *voz pasiva refleja*, **se dio**, to emphasize that the work was finished. In this sentence there is not a subject. However, the reader could deduce who the protagonist is, because the writer mentions that the painter admired the work he had realized.

The passive voices in English are formed by the verb to be in past simple and in singular form followed by a verb in past participle.

Sentence 10.**English version (Paragraph 5)**

[...] but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed Life itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved:—She **was dead!**"

Leyenda press version (Paragraph 16, page 89)

[...] pero un instante después, estremeciéndose, palideció intensamente herido por el terror, y gritando con voz terrible: 'En verdad esta es la Vida misma', se volvió bruscamente para mirar a su bien amada, quien **¡estaba muerta!**

Editores Mexicanos Unidos version (Paragraph 19, page 190)

[...] pero un minuto después, como la contemplase aún, tembló, se puso pálido y se llenó de terror, gritando con voz fuerte y vibrante:

¡En verdad es la vida misma!

Se volvió bruscamente para mirar a su amada: **¡estaba muerta!**

Analysis

In both translations made in Spanish it is not possible to change the passive voice to active because it is necessary to emphasize that the woman died at the end, when her husband finished portraying her. In the English and the Spanish versions, the passive voice is formed by verb to be in past simple, and in the singular, plus the verb in past participle.

In the English version of the short story eleven passive voices were found. Most of them have the construction of the verb *to be* in past simple and past perfect tenses and a verb in *past participle*. Three of these passive voices have a structure in present perfect, six of them have a structure in past simple and two of them are constructed by a modal verb plus a verb in past participle.

Of these passive voices, *Leyenda* press conserves three passive voices with the structure of the verb *to be* in past simple plus a verb in *past participle*, two reflexive passive voices with the structure *se*, and one with the verb *to be* in past perfect. *E.M.U.* has ten sentences in passive voice; eight of them have the verb *to be* in past simple, one is a *voz pasiva refleja* and one has the verb *to be* in past perfect.

As mentioned in chapter I, the active voice is more common in Spanish than in English. With the quantitative and qualitative analysis carried out, I can say that *Leyenda* used a small number of passive voices and the structure of the sentences is more faithful to the Spanish grammar. *E.M.U.* employed almost the same number of passive voices. It could be said that the translator respected the syntax of the original version in English, and tried to do a literal translation.

It is important to mention that one reason of using a passive voice is to avoid saying who is performing the action. In Spanish, it is possible to construct sentences without a subject while in English an active voice needs a subject.

In the Spanish translations, some sentences could be understandably translated in the passive form. However, Spanish speakers do not normally speak that way, so the translator has to look for translations that sound more

natural to the readers. If the writer wanted to highlight one aspect of the sentence, the passive voice must be used.

The use of translation techniques could help to achieve a translation with a natural language to Spanish speakers. Transposition is a change of grammatical category where the translator can replace a word category (noun, verb, and adjective) in the target language without altering the meaning of the source text.

Modulation is a technique that uses a phrase that is different in the source and the target languages the same idea. With this method the translator generates a change in the point of view of the message without altering the meaning and without generating sense of hardness in the reader of the target text.

CONCLUSIONS

The quantitative and qualitative analysis carried out of the sentences in passive voice of the short story *The Oval Portrait* in English and Spanish versions show that there is not a significant variation between their number of passive voices contained in them. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the use of passive voices is related to the translator's judgment.

In printed or electronic versions, the source language must be the same, but in translations into other languages there could be variations in syntax. A translator needs linguistic information of the source language and the target language that include lexical and grammatical elements, as well as stylistic and genre features.

In a language like Spanish, where the use of passive voice is less common, the translator could make the subject of the passive sentence the object of the verb. He could reformulate the sentence in active voice or use a reflexive pronoun. The Spanish language allows a construction of an active sentence without specifying the name of the person or the thing that is performing the action.

As regards the Spanish translations, both are excellent, because they connect the reader with the story, the main objective of the writer. It should be mentioned that it does not matter that *E.M.U.* has more passive voices in its sentences than *Leyenda*. Although one translation has a different style of writing that does not mean that one is better than the other. Both are printed so, arguably, both must have been submitted to careful proofreading.

Finally, I would like to say that studying English does not turn you into a translator. Studying translation is something special that requires practice and perseverance. If I want to be a good translator, I have to keep abreast of new theories and developments in the field because language is constantly changing.

SUGGESTIONS

In translations from English to Spanish with sentences in passive voice, I recommend to avoid its use as much as we can. We could make the subject in passive sentence the object of the verb. We could reformulate the sentence in active voice.

As I have mentioned before, it is more common to use active voice in Spanish than in English. In the Spanish language, the actions need a protagonist. If we translate a text with too many passive sentences, at the end of the process, we will have a text which does not sound Spanish at all.

However, if the structure of the text does not allow the change, we must keep the passive voices in such a way that the text in the target language is still easy to read and maintains the original message of the author.

Even though the main objective of this project was to carry out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the use of passive voice in the translation, from English to Spanish, of a short story. This study focused only on one aspect of syntax. However, I must emphasize that there are more grammatical categories which can be analyzed.

A study of the passive voice would be also centered on different areas, like science or medicine, to name a few, in order to know if the translations conserve the same number of sentences in passive voice as the original text.

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ANNEXES

Annex A - Short story English version by *Project Gutenberg*

THE OVAL PORTRAIT

THE chateau into which my valet had ventured to make forcible entrance, rather than permit me, in my desperately wounded condition, to pass a night in the open air, was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Appennines, not less in fact than in the fancy of Mrs. Radcliffe. To all appearance it had been temporarily and very lately abandoned. We established ourselves in one of the smallest and least sumptuously furnished apartments. It lay in a remote turret of the building. Its decorations were rich, yet tattered and antique. Its walls were hung with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque. In these paintings, which depended from the walls not only in their main surfaces, but in very many nooks which the bizarre architecture of the chateau rendered necessary—in these paintings my incipient delirium, perhaps, had caused me to take deep interest; so that I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room—since it was already night—to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of my bed—and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtains of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which had been found upon the pillow, and which purported to criticise and describe them.

Long—long I read—and devoutly, devotedly I gazed. Rapidly and gloriously the hours flew by and the deep midnight came. The position of the candelabrum displeased me, and outreaching my hand with difficulty, rather than disturb my slumbering valet; I placed it so as to throw its rays more fully upon the book.

But the action produced an effect altogether unanticipated. The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche of the room which had hitherto been thrown into deep shade by one of the bed-posts. I thus saw in vivid light a picture all unnoticed before. It was the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood. I glanced at the painting hurriedly, and then closed my eyes. Why I did this was not at first apparent even to my own perception. But while my lids remained thus shut, I ran over in my mind my reason for so shutting them. It was an impulsive movement to gain time for thought—to make sure that my vision had not deceived me—to calm and subdue my fancy for a more sober and more certain gaze. In a very few moments I again looked fixedly at the painting. That I now saw aright I could not and would not doubt; for the first flashing of the candles upon that canvas had seemed to dissipate the dreamy stupor which was stealing over my senses, and to startle me at once into waking life.

The portrait, I have already said, was that of a young girl. It was a mere head and shoulders, done in what is technically termed a vignette manner; much in the style of the favorite heads of Sully. The arms, the bosom, and even the ends of the radiant hair melted imperceptibly into the vague yet deep shadow which formed the back-ground of the whole. The frame was oval, richly gilded and filigreed in Moresque. As a thing of art

nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself. But it could have been neither the execution of the work, nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me. Least of all, could it have been that my fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a living person. I saw at once that the peculiarities of the design, of the vignetting, and of the frame, must have instantly dispelled such idea—must have prevented even its momentary entertainment. Thinking earnestly upon these points, I remained, for an hour perhaps, half sitting, half reclining, with my vision riveted upon the portrait. At length, satisfied with the true secret of its effect, I fell back within the bed. I had found the spell of the picture in an absolute life-likeness of expression, which, at first startling, finally confounded, subdued, and appalled me. With deep and reverent awe I replaced the candelabrum in its former position. The cause of my deep agitation being thus shut from view, I sought eagerly the volume which discussed the paintings and their histories. Turning to the number which designated the oval portrait, I there read the vague and quaint words which follow:

"She was a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee. And evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wedded the painter. He, passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his Art; she a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee; all light and smiles, and frolicsome as the young fawn; loving and cherishing all things; hating only the Art which was her rival; dreading only the pallet and brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover. It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire to portray even his young bride. But she was humble and obedient, and sat meekly for many weeks in the dark, high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead. But he, the painter, took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour, and from day to day. And he was a passionate, and wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he would not see that the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him. Yet she smiled on and still on, uncomplainingly, because she saw that the painter (who had high renown) took a fervid and burning pleasure in his task, and wrought day and night to depict her who so loved him, yet who grew daily more dispirited and weak. And in sooth some who beheld the portrait spoke of its resemblance in low words, as of a mighty marvel, and a proof not less of the power of the painter than of his deep love for her whom he depicted so surpassingly well. But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, there were admitted none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work, and turned his eyes from canvas merely, even to regard the countenance of his wife. And he would not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sate beside him. And when many weeks had passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth and one tint upon the eye, the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp. And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed Life itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved:—She was dead!"

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Annex B - Spanish translation by *Leyenda press* (2010)

EL RETRATO OVAL

El Castillo, donde mi sirviente había entrado violentamente en lugar de permitirme, herido como me encontraba, pasar una noche al ras, era una de esas construcciones mezcla de majestuosidad y pesadumbre que durante mucho tiempo levantaron sus altivas frentes en medio de los Apeninos, tanto en la realidad como en la imaginación de Mistress Radcliffe.

Según su apariencia, el castillo había sido últimamente abandonado, aunque de manera temporal. Nos instalamos en una de las estancias más pequeñas y ostentosamente menos amuebladas. Estaba ubicada en una torre asilada del resto del edificio. Su decorado era rico, pero antiguo y muy maltratado. Las paredes estaban recubiertas de tapicerías y adornados con numerosos trofeos heráldicos de varias clases, y de ellos colgaban un número verdaderamente prodigioso de pinturas modernas, ricas de estilo, encerradas en sendos marcos dorados, de gusto arabesco.

Me produjeron una gran atención, y tal vez mi incipiente delirio fue la razón, aquellos cuadros pendientes no sólo de los muros principales, sino también en una porción de rincones que la arquitectura caprichosa del castillo hacía inevitable; pedí a Pedro que cerrara los pesados postigos del salón – pues ya era muy noche-, que encendiera un candelabro de muchos brazos colocada al lado de mi cabecera, y corriera totalmente las cortinas de negro terciopelo, guarnecidas de festones, que rodeaban el lecho. Quise así, al menos, si no conciliar el sueño, distraerme alternativamente entre la contemplación de estas pinturas y la lectura de un pequeño volumen que había encontrado sobre la almohada y que trataba de su crítica y su análisis.

Leí durante mucho tiempo y examiné con mucha devoción las pinturas religiosas; las horas transcurrieron, rápidas y silenciosas, y el reloj marcó la media noche. La posición del candelabro me incomodaba, y estirando la mano con dificultad para no turbar el sueño de mi criado, lo coloqué de modo que arrojase la luz de lleno sobre el libro.

Sin embargo este movimiento generó un efecto totalmente inopinado. La luz de sus numerosas bujías se centró en un nicho del salón que una de las columnas del lecho había hasta entonces cubierto con una sombra profunda. Vi envuelto en viva luz un cuadro que hasta entonces no advirtiera.

Se trataba del retrato de una muchacha ya formada, casi mujer. Lo miré velozmente y cerré los ojos. ¿Por qué razón? No encontré explicaciones al principio; sin embargo, mientras mis ojos permanecieron cerrados, analicé rápidamente la razón que me los hacía cerrar. Era un movimiento involuntario para ganar tiempo y recapacitar, para asegurarme de que mi vista no me había engañado, para clamar y preparar mi espíritu a una contemplación más fría y serena. Luego de unos minutos, observé otra vez el lienzo atentamente.

No había duda, aun cuando lo hubiera querido, debido a que el primer rayo de luz al posarse sobre el lienzo, difuminó la sensibilidad delirante en que mis sentidos se hallaban poseídos, haciéndome volver repentinamente a la realidad de la vida.

Esa pintura representaba, como ya he comentado, a una muchacha. Era una imagen de medio cuerpo, todo en este estilo, que en el lenguaje técnico se le nombra, estilo de viñeta; había en él mucho de la manera de pintar de Sully en sus cabezas favoritas. Los brazos, el seno y las puntas de sus radiantes cabellos se perdían en la sombra imprecisa, pero profunda, que servía de fondo a la imagen. El marco era oval, magníficamente dorado, y de un bello estilo morisco. Tal vez no fuese ni la ejecución de la obra, ni la excepcional belleza de su fisonomía lo que me impresionó tan repentina y profundamente. No podía creer que mi imaginación, al salir de su delirio, hubiese tomado la cabeza por la de una persona viva.

Sin embargo, las particularidades del dibujo, el estilo de la viñeta y la apariencia del marco, no me permitieron dudar ni un solo momento. Ensimismado en estas observaciones, durante una hora fijé mi mirada en el retrato. Aquella inexplicable expresión de realidad y vida que al principio me hiciera estremecer, acabó por subyugarme.

Lleno de pavor y consideración, coloqué el candelabro en su primera posición, y luego de haber alejado de mi vista la causa de mi insondable inquietud, me apoderé ávidamente del volumen que contenía la historia y descripción de los cuadros.

Busqué rápidamente el número correspondiente al que marcaba el cuadro oval, y leí esta rara y particular historia: “Era una muchacha de singular hermosura, tan encantadora como cordial, que en mala hora amó al pintor y se desposó de él.

“El pintor era muy apasionado, y austero; además estudiaba mucho. Había puesto en el arte sus amores; ella joven, de una extraña hermosura, toda luz y risas, con la alegría de un venado, amándolo todo, no odiando más que el arte, que era su rival, no temiendo más que la paleta, los pinceles y demás instrumentos importunos que le arrebatában el amor de su adorado. Terrible impresión causó a la dama oír que al pintor hablar del deseo de retratarla. Mas era humilde y sumisa, y se sentó pacientemente, durante varias semanas, en la sombra y alta habitación de la torre, donde la luz se filtraba sobre el pálido lienzo solamente por el cielo raso.

“El pintor cifraba su fama en su recreación y perfeccionaba su obra de hora en hora y de día en día; era un ser vehemente, raro, meditabundo y se perdía en mil fantasías; tanto que no veía que la luz que penetraba tan lúgubrementé en esta torre aislada secaba la salud y los encantos de su mujer, que se consumía para todos excepto para él.

“Ella, sin embargo, sonreía cada vez más, debido a que veía que el pintor, que gozaba de gran reconocimiento, experimentaba un vivo y fervoroso deleite en su tarea, y trabajaba noche y día para trasladar al lienzo la imagen de la que tanto amaba, la cual de día en día, se tronaba más débil y desanimada, y, en verdad, los que observaban el retrato, comentaban en voz baja su semejanza maravillosa, prueba palpable del genio del pintor, y del profundo amor que su modelo le inspiraba.

“Sin embargo, cuando el pintor casi terminaba su obra, no se permitió la entrada de nadie a la torre; porque el artista había enloquecido por la vehemencia con que tomaba su trabajo, y rara vez despegaba los ojos del lienzo, ni aun para mirar el bello semblante de su esposa. Y no podía ver que los colores que extendía sobre el lienzo se borraban de las mejillas de la que tenía sentada a su lado.

“Luego de muchas semanas transcurridas, y cuando sólo faltaba dar un toque sobre la boca y otro en los ojos, el alma de la muchacha palpitó aún, como la flama de una lámpara que está a punto de extinguirse. Entonces el artista dio los toques, y durante un instante quedó en éxtasis ante el trabajo que había ejecutado; pero un instante después, estremeciéndose, palideció intensamente herido por el horror, y gritando con voz terrible: ‘En verdad esta es la Vida misma’, se volvió bruscamente para mirar a su bien amada, quien ¡estaba muerta!”

EL RETRATO OVAL

El Castillo en que mi criado tuvo a bien entrar por la fuerza, antes de permitirme pasar la noche al aire libre, en el estado en que me encontraba a causa de mis graves heridas, era uno de esos edificios mezcla de grandeza y melancolía que por largos siglos alzaron su rugosa frente en medio de los Apeninos; lo mismo en la realidad que en la imaginación de la señora Radcliffe. Según parecía, había sido temporal y recientemente abandonado. Nos instalamos en uno de los salones más pequeños y menos suntuosamente amueblados.

Dicha habitación estaba situada en una torre aislada del edificio, y su decoración era rica pero antigua y deteriorada. Cubrían los muros tapices, los adornaban numerosos trofeos heráldicos de todas formas, así también como una cantidad verdaderamente prodigiosa de pinturas modernas, llenas de estilo, en ostentosos marcos de oro de un gusto arabesco.

A causa, sin duda alguna, del delirio que empezaba a apoderarse de mi cabeza, experimenté un interés profundo hacia aquellas pinturas que estaban colgadas no solamente en las superficies principales de los muros, sino también en multitud de recodos que hacía inevitables la caprichosa arquitectura del castillo.

Fue tal el interés, que ordené a Pedro que cerrara los pesados postigos de madera de la habitación –puesto que ya era de noche–, que encendiese un candelabro de muchos brazos, colocado al lado de mi cabecera, y que abriese por completo las orladas cortinas de terciopelo negro, que rodeaban el lecho mismo.

Deseaba y que se hiciese así para que, si no podía dormir, pudiese al menos consolarme con la contemplación de estas pinturas y con la lectura de un pequeño volumen que había encontrado sobre la almohada y que contenía el juicio crítico y análisis de las mismas.

Largo, muy largo tiempo, leí y contemplé devota y religiosamente. Pasaron rápidas y gloriosas las horas y llegó la media noche. La posición del candelabro me desagradaba, y extendiendo la mano con dificultad –para no molestar a mi criado que se había quedado dormido–, coloqué el objeto de tal manera que sus rayos iluminasen de lleno el libro.

Pero la acción produjo un efecto absolutamente inesperado. Los rayos de las numerosas velas (porque había muchas) cayeron entonces sobre un nicho de la habitación oculto hasta entonces por la profunda sombra que proyectaba una de las columnas del lecho. En el fondo del mismo se dejó ver, en medio de la luz viva, una pintura que hasta entonces había escapado a mi observación. Era el retrato de una joven ya próxima a ser mujer. Eché sobre la pintura una ojeada rápida, y cerré los ojos. Al principio no me di cuenta de por qué los cerraba, pero mientras mis párpados estaban cerrados analicé rápidamente la razón que me hacía cerrarlos.

Era un movimiento impulsivo para ganar tiempo para pensar –para asegurarme de que mi vista no me había engañado–, para calmar y preparar mi espíritu a una

contemplación más sobria y más certera. Al cabo de algunos instantes de nuevo miré fijamente la pintura.

Aunque lo hubiese querido, no podía dudar que veía con toda la claridad posible, porque el primer reflejo de la luz de las velas sobre ese cuadro había disipado el estupor onírico de que estaban poseídos mis sentidos y me había instalado de lleno en la vigilia.

Ya he dicho que el retrato era el de una joven. Consistía en una simple cabeza y los hombros, todo en ese estilo que se llama, en lenguaje técnico, viñeta; muy al estilo de las cabezas favoritas de Sully.

Los brazos, el seno y hasta las puntas de los resplandecientes cabellos se fundían de una manera impalpable en la sombra vaga pero intensa que servía de fondo al conjunto.

El marco era ovalado, magníficamente dorado y filigranado según el gusto morisco. Como obra de arte, no podía hallarse nada más admirable en la pintura en sí. Pero puede ser muy bien que no fuese ni la ejecución de la obra, ni la inmortal belleza del semblante lo que me impresionó tan súbita y fuertemente. Menos aún debía creer que mi imaginación, al salir de aquel estado de ensoñación, hubiese tomado la cabeza por la de una persona viva. Pero de pronto vi que los detalles del dibujo, estilo de la viñeta y el aspecto del cuadro hubieran disipado inmediatamente semejante idea y me hubieran preservado de toda ilusión, siquiera fuese momentánea.

Mientras hacía estas reflexiones con mucha sinceridad, permanecí medio tendido medio sentado una hora al menos, con los ojos clavados en el retrato. A la larga habiendo descubierto el verdadero secreto de su efecto, me dejé caer en la cama. Había adivinado que el encanto de la pintura radicaba en una expresión absolutamente semejante a la vida misma, que primeramente me había hecho conmover y por último me había confundido, subyugado y espantado.

Con un terror profundo y respetuoso volví a colocar el candelabro en la primera posición. Habiendo así ocultado a la vista la causa de mi profunda agitación, busqué ansiosamente el volumen que contenía el análisis de los cuadros y su historia. Yendo derecho al número que designaba el retrato oval, leí la vaga y singular relación siguiente:

Era una doncella de extraordinaria belleza y tan amable como llena de alegría. Y fue maldita la hora en que vio, amó y se casó con el pintor. Él, apasionado, estudioso, austero, había ya encontrado esposa en su *arte*; ella, una joven de rarísima belleza y no menos amable que llena de alegría; era todo ella luz y sonrisas y juguetona como un joven fauno; le gustaban todas las cosas; no odiaba más que el arte que era su rival; no temía más que a la paleta y los pinceles y demás instrumentos enfadosos que la privaban de la vista de su adorado.

Fue por eso una cosa terrible para esta dama oír al pintor hablar del deseo de retratar a su joven esposa. Pero era humilde y obediente, y se sentó sumisa durante largas semanas en la sombría y elevada habitación de la torre, en donde la luz se filtraba sobre el pálido lienzo, solamente desde el techo. Entretanto él, el pintor, ponía su gloria en su obra que adelantaba de día en día y de hora en hora. Y era éste un hombre apasionado y extraño y pensativo, que se perdía en sus divagaciones, hasta tal punto que no quería ver que la luz que caía tan lúgubrementemente en esta torres aislada acababa la salud y los espíritus vitales de su mujer, que languidecía visiblemente para todo el mundo, excepto para él. Sin embargo ella sonreía siempre, y siempre sin lanzar una queja, porque veía que el pintor (que tenía gran renombre) experimentaba un vivo y ardiente fervor en su tarea y trabajaba día y noche para pintar a la que tanto amaba, pero que cada día se ponía más lánguida y débil. Y en verdad, los que contemplaban el retrato hablaban en voz baja de su parecido, como de una sorprendente maravilla y como de una prueba no menos grande de la potencia del profundo amor del pintor hacia la que estaba retratando tan milagrosamente bien, pero a la larga, como la tarea se acercaba a su término, nadie fue admitido a visitar la torre, porque el pintor se había vuelto loco a causa del ardor de su trabajo, y rara vez apartaba sus ojos del lienzo, ni aun para mirar al rostro de su mujer.

No quería ver que los colores que extendía sobre el lienzo eran arrancados de las mejillas de la que estaba sentada junto a él.

Y cuando hubieron pasado muchas semanas y no quedaba casi nada que hacer, a no ser in ligero toque en la boca y una pincelada en un ojo, el espíritu de la dama palpitó aún, como el cabo de una vela que va a apagarse.

Y entonces se dio el toque en la boca y la pincelada en el ojo; y durante un momento el pintor quedó en éxtasis delante del trabajo que había realizado; pero un minuto después, como la contemplase aún, tembló, se pudo pálido y se llenó de terror, gritando con voz fuerte y vibrante:

– ¡En verdad es la vida misma!

Se volvió bruscamente para mirar a su amada: ¡estaba muerta!



**ACTA DE AUTORIZACIÓN PARA REALIZAR TRÁMITES DE CONSTANCIAS PARA TITULACIÓN POR
MODALIDAD TESINA**

En la Facultad de Lenguas de la Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, siendo las 12:30 horas del día 29 de mayo del año dos mil catorce, se reunieron en esta Subdirección Académica los integrantes de la Comisión Responsable para aprobar la impresión de la **TESINA** titulada: **"Análisis del uso de la voz pasiva en la traducción al español del cuento "The oval portrait" de Edgar Allan Poe"**, para obtener el título de Licenciada en Lenguas, que presenta la **P.L.Le. Iris Chantal Dimas Becerril**, con número de cuenta **0822229**. Por lo que una vez revisada y analizada con todo cuidado se dio por aprobada y se autoriza la impresión de la misma y firman para dar fe.....

ATENTAMENTE

PATRIA, CIENCIA Y TRABAJO

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