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ABSTRACT

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Though Horacio Quiroga is better known for his jungle tales, he was also a prolific film critic. Writing in the early days of silent cinema, Quiroga channeled his love for the new art into a series of four short stories about film: "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa" (1919), "El espectro" (1921), "El puritano" (1926), and "El vampiro" (1927). These stories not only reveal Quiroga's passion for the cinema, but also showcase the power of film to affect the spectator. The theoretical basis of my study comes from the Deleuzian concept of affect, being defined as the invisible force or intensity which exists in bodies and can also be transmitted between bodies that have differing capacities for acting on each other. In the case of the cinema, the film and the spectator are the two bodies that participate in this transmission of intensities. In the first chapter, I discuss how "El puritano" reveals that film's resurrected images can be more powerful than the originals. Then, I analyze "El espectro," which serves as an example of how film's mimetic qualities increase its power to affect spectators and produce in them visceral reactions. Particularly striking in this story is the filmic gaze of an on-screen actor, a gaze which transmits affect to the other characters. In the second chapter, I analyze "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa," particularly how it theorizes the erotic gaze of filmed actresses. Then I discuss "El vampiro," in which I study the relationship of two men with the filmed image of a beautiful Hollywood actress. In the story, an inventor is able to "move" film in such a way as to create a spectral woman who can interact with others. However, by the end of the story it becomes clear that it is the film—personified by this spectral woman—that holds the true power in this relationship of bodies.

Keywords: Horacio Quiroga, affect theory, film, the gaze, the look, the look back

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INTRODUCTION: HORACIO QUIROGA, FILM, AND AFFECT THEORY

Horacio Quiroga's interest in film is no secret. The Uruguayan author was one of the first Latin American intellectuals to develop a passionate interest in the new medium. He became a regular film critic, writing 78 articles for various publications over the course of more than a decade (Dámaso Martínez 14). Although he is better known for his jungle tales, he also wrote several short stories on the subject of film: "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa" (1919), "El espectro" (1921), "El puritano" (1926), and "El vampiro" (1927) (Speratti-Piñero, "Hacia la cronología"). These stories not only showcase Quiroga's fascination with the silent films of his day but also reveal film's potential for provoking affective response in the spectator through its mimetic aspects and emotionally-charged imagery, particularly the gaze of filmed characters. An analysis of these short stories will reveal film's capacity to affect spectators via the gaze, evoking in them deep, visceral responses.

Born at the end of the 19th Century (1878-1937), Quiroga arrived to the Southern Cone intellectual scene at the perfect time for the rise of silent cinema. As Lee Williams writes, "The silent film industry emerged to become an integral aspect of metropolitan life during the Uruguayan's adulthood and coincided with his most formidable years of production" ("Film Criticism" 181). Beginning in 1918, Quiroga put pen to paper, writing about the motion picture industry for the magazine *El Hogar* (Dámaso Martínez 9). Later he went on to publish articles for the magazines *Caras y Caretas* and *Atlántida* as well as *La Nación* newspaper. Though he wrote out of economic necessity (Borge 21), it is clear in his writings that the author was very much a cinephile. Many of his fellow intellectuals, however, did not share his appreciation for the seventh art, something that Quiroga would often criticize in his articles. In an article published in *Atlántida*, for example, Quiroga writes the following: "Los intelectuales son gente que por lo común desprecia el cine. Suelen conocer de memoria, y ya desde enero, el elenco y

programa de las compañías teatrales de primero y séptimo orden. Pero del cine no hablan jamás y, si oyen a un pobre hombre hablar de él, sonríen siempre sin despegar los labios" ("Los intelectuales y el cine" 263). In another article he remarks:

> Cuantas veces hemos solicitado la impresión de los compañeros sobre la capacidad dramática del cine, se nos ha respondido con frialdad ligera. Muchos de ellos ignoran de él todo, menos que se exhiben para goce de sus sirvientas películas de *cow-boys*. Otros han ido varias veces al cine, sin ver otra cosa que tonterías. Los más declaran que tal nuevo arte no pasa de un simple espectáculo populachero, con eficacia exclusiva sobre la gruesa psicología popular. ("Teatro y cine" 170)

This snobbish view was held generally in the intellectual spheres of the time, making Quiroga's early criticism that much more important. As one of the first film critics in Latin America, his unique opinions give us insight into the world of cinema at its inception, insights that will help us theorize film in terms of its affective capacity.

Legend has it that at the first screening of the Lumière brothers' film *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* in the Salon Indien of the Grand Café in Paris, the spectators mistook the filmed train for a real train and ducked for cover as it came barreling toward them (Dixon and Foster 7). According to the traditional narrative, film's visual simulation was so lifelike that it provoked visceral reactions in the spectators, who actually believed that they were in physical danger of being run over by a train. However, the account of their physical response is only half of the story. Tom Gunning describes the event as forming part of what he calls "the cinema of attractions," a side show of sorts, to which the spectators came to be shocked and surprised by the latest technology. The hosts dimmed the lights and projected a still image of a train arriving at a station—the first frame of the famous film. Then the projectionist started cranking the

projector, and the image sprang to life much to the astonishment of the audience. Gunning makes it clear that the naiveté of the audience was not the cause of their reaction. According to Gunning, the shock came because it looked so genuine even though they knew it was false: "the apparent realism of the image makes it a successful illusion, but one understood it as an illusion nonetheless. While such a transformation would be quite capable of causing a physical or verbal reflex in the viewer, one remains aware that the film is merely a projection" (119). Gunning also compares the effect film had on its early spectators to another popular illusion of the time, *trompe l'oeil*, saying that this art form "shares with *The Arrival of a Train* … a pleasurable vacillation between belief and doubt" (117). We get pleasure out of film precisely because it tricks the senses, creating the illusion of movement, the illusion of reality.

Thus the power of film lies in its ability to create a semblance of life, a more engaging visual simulation of reality than prior mediums could produce. Film (unlike photography, for example) appears to capture movement and better mimics presence. As Edgar Morin states in his important essay on cinema, "The photograph was frozen in an eternal moment. *Movement brought the dimension of time: film unfolds, it lasts. At the same time, things in motion produce the space that they measure and traverse, and, above all, become real within space*" (118). Horacio Quiroga commented on film's capacity for capturing movement. Addressing film's pedagogical potential, Quiroga notes that film could be used in the art classroom in place of static models who, as he describes, take a "petrified" and "paralytic" position ("posición de petrificación simulada y de paralítico") ("El cine y las artes plásticas" 42). Film, he continues, "tiene la ventaja, no solamente de mostrar el movimiento de una cosa, sino la de detener una acción en cualquier momento," permitting the student to capture a paused gesture or gaze (42). The theater, while also a contender for convincingly imitating reality, is stuck in a fixed place,

and the spectator always witnesses the movement of the actors on stage from one angle. Film shows us people and objects from many angles, closer mimicking the human eye which, as Edgar Morin puts it, is always in movement, engaged in a "perceptive deciphering of reality" (122). Another product of this freedom of angles is the close up, something also lacking from theatre, in which the face takes up most of the screen. The illusion of realistic movement, captured gestures and emotion, and changes between camera angles make film uniquely able to participate in the exchange of affective energy that occurs between the film and the spectator.

While there are many competing definitions of affect spanning a wide variety of fields, the definition I will use is offered by Eric Shouse, a definition that is, in turn, based on the theories of Deleuze and Guattari. Jon Beasley-Murray's definition of affect in *Posthegemony* will also inform my reading. Shouse defines affect as "a non-conscious experience of intensity… a moment of unformed and unstructured potential" (Par. 5). It is an energy that exists confined in bodies but can also be transmitted between bodies. As Jon Beasley-Murray puts it, affect describes the "constant interactions between bodies and the resultant impacts of such interactions" (127). Shouse further describes that the process by which these intensities are transmitted between bodies is called "affection" (Par. 12). It is the process by which one body (a human body, a thing, or collectivity) transmits affect to another, causing the latter to become something else, a changed body or a different body. I use the term "transmit" carefully. Although transmission can sometimes refer to the transfer of something from one place to another, it should be noted that the transmission of affect does not mean that the net affect of the original body is decreased in any way. Instead, the original body communicates or infects the other body with its affect. Beasley-Murray further describes how each of the bodies that participate in affection exists on a continuum of its ability to "move" or "be moved" (128). Simply stated,

some bodies have a greater capacity to act upon others and other bodies are more receptive, more easily acted upon. It is important to note, however, that this capacity for or receptivity to affect is in constant flux within individual bodies. A human body, then, exists on this continuum, its capacity for affect or receptivity to it always changing. Thus, affect can be defined as the invisible force or intensity which exists in bodies and can also be transmitted between bodies that have differing capacities for acting on each other.

Also imperative to the present study is affect's relationship to emotion. Although affect does provoke deep emotional responses, it must not be confused with emotion. Beasley-Murray offers insight into this significant difference as well. He describes emotion as "captured" affect, the deep-seated responses—whether of joy, sadness, fear, or anger—that affect provokes when it "becomes qualified and confined within (rather than between) particular bodies" (128). This idea of captured affect is very much in line with what Anna Gibbs calls "affect contagion" which she defines as "the bioneurological means by which particular affects are transmitted from body to body" (191). If affect is the invisible intensity that exists in and between bodies, emotion is the qualified expression of that force.

Film's ability to simulate life through the illusion of movement makes it the perfect medium for the telling of compelling stories with great emotional resonance, engaging the spectator in a cathartic experience unique to film. Its larger-than-life close-ups, which capture pure emotional expression, cannot be overlooked as they provide an experience unlike any previous medium. In fact, film's very nature situates it in an advantageous position to affect audiences profoundly. The enclosed space of the theater, enormous screen, and position of the screen relative to the audience demand the attention of the spectators and increase their

vulnerability. Wheeler Winston Dixon explains that this spectator vulnerability is precisely what converts him or her from the subject into the object of the film-going experience:

> Since the very act of seeing a film is an act of submission—and the darkened auditorium, our mostly unidentified companions, the secrecy and individuality of our responses, the enormous size of the screen, the rapidly shifting (for the most part) image sizings all contribute to this willing subservience to 'the gaze that controls'—it seems odd that most reception theory continues to center upon the viewer as giver of the gaze, and the screen as the bearer of the viewer's look. The viewer, it seems to me, is instead the subject/object of the gaze of the cinematic image. (43)

Thus, while Laura Mulvey describes the gaze in terms of the sexual desire of the male spectator, Quiroga's cinema stories will show that the characters in film, too, have a gaze—what Dixon calls "the gaze of the screen" or "the look back" (2). These factors enhance film's capacity to act upon the spectators while simultaneously augmenting their receptiveness to being acted upon. In other words, in many cases film has the power to "move" the spectator, but the average spectator has little power to "move" the film. Thus, when particularly emotionally-charged images appear on screen—the intense gaze of a filmed actor, for example—the body of light that is film provokes the spectator to internalize the affective energy, which manifests itself as emotion or contained affect. This isn't to say that spectators cannot affect the film. In fact, Chapter 2 of my thesis deals with the dialogue of affectivity between spectator and film. However, in Quiroga's stories, film is overwhelmingly more powerful than his characters, whose emotion and subconscious gut reactions reveal film's impressive capacity to affect.

My thesis is divided into two chapters, each discussing two of Horacio Quiroga's film stories. In the first chapter, I make brief mention of "El puritano," which showcases how the

moving images of actors can be more powerful than the originals. Then, I analyze “El espectro” which serves as an example of how film’s mimetic qualities increase its power to affect spectators and produce in them resonating emotional reflexes. In this text, two bodies participate in a transmission of affect, the spectator (a physical body) and the filmic image of a movie star (a body of light). Particularly striking is the actor’s filmic gaze which is used to transmit affect to the other characters. In the second chapter, I analyze “Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa,” particularly how it theorizes the erotic gaze of filmed actresses. Then, in a more extensive analysis, I discuss “El vampiro”, in which I study the relationship of two men with the filmed image of a beautiful Hollywood actress. This story demonstrates that film really is a body in the sense we are describing here. In other words, it exists on the continuum of capacity/receptivity to affect just as any other body. In the story, an inventor is able to “move” film in such a way as to create a new body in the form of a spectral woman who can interact with others. However, it is clear that it is the film—personified by this spectral woman—that holds the true power in this relationship of bodies, the gaze of the ghostly actress having devastating consequences.

CHAPTER 1: THE GAZE OF THE LIVING DEAD

This chapter is concerned primarily with the mimetic potential of film and how cinema takes advantage of this capability to affect the spectator. The advent of film marked an unprecedented shift in humanity's relationship with the world. Film's ability to capture the moving representation of life astounded audiences and changed, in part, how we view life and death. The technological marvel of film fascinated many, but some were frightened by the significance of such technology, finding film's power to "reanimate" the dead, especially loved ones, disquieting (Speratti-Piñero, "Horacio Quiroga, precursor" 1244). Of particular interest in this chapter will be the importance of the on-screen gaze of actors and how this capture of expression serves to communicate affect from film to spectator. For this analysis, I will look at two of Quiroga's short stories which explain film's capacity to resurrect the dead, "El puritano" and "El espectro." "El puritano" delineates the relationship between actors and their films, showing the superiority of the moving picture. "El espectro" deals more fully with the gaze of filmed characters.

"El puritano"

In "El puritano," a group of deceased film stars find themselves in a sort of purgatory, meeting after dark in the deserted recesses of a film studio. These late-night *tertulias* are frequently interrupted when the actors are called away every time one of their films is showing at a movie theater in Hollywood: "Cuando uno falta a [la tertulia], ya sabemos que algún film en que actuó se pasa en Hollywood" (87). Their frequent resurrections put them in a state of restlessness, like sleepwalkers who cannot cease their daily activities even after they have fallen asleep. As the narrator puts it, "La impresión fotográfica en la cinta, sacudida por la velocidad de las máquinas, excitada por la ardiente luz de los focos, galvanizada por la incesante proyección,

ha privado a nuestros tristes huesos de la paz que debía reinar sobre ellos" (86). When they return from one of the showings, they are fatigued and their silhouettes show signs of wear, a reminder of the rapid deterioration of celluloid after many repeated viewings of a film. However, they are in no other way affected by these frequent trips back to the realm of the living. In these few opening descriptions of their wearied afterlife, Quiroga unveils the intimate connection that he saw between actors and their filmic representations.

Quiroga believed that there was some link between actors and the specters of light that appeared on the silver screen. No more is his opinion on the matter better illustrated than in the following quote in which he expresses the uncanny nature of the filmic resurrections of actors Clarine Seymour and Robert Harron who starred in a film entitled *Puro corazón* before their deaths:

> Como a la luz del día, corren por la eléctrica pantalla, tan vivas, tan del momento, que por poco que extendieran los labios o las manos, alcanzarían a tocarnos. Viven realmente en ese instante. No son ellos fotografías de ropero o de vetusto álbum de familia: se ríen, se desvisten, se abrazan con la intensidad carnal de la vida misma, pues Clarine y Harron se abrazaron de verdad y prosiguen haciéndolo a despecho de la ilusión fotográfica.... A través de la caja, de la tierra, del más allá del tenebroso misterio, los amantes se encuentran noche a noche, vívidos y flagrantes ante la electricidad. … Espectrales como la pantalla misma … persisten en correr, en reír, en abrazarse, tal como lo hicieron una vez–y para siempre–en *Puro corazón*. ("Cine de ultratumba" 286-287)

Here, descriptors such as "vivas," "del momento," "viven realmente," and "intensidad carnal de la vida misma" emphasize Quiroga's association of film with reality. The lifelike recreations of the actors dance across the screen and hold each other in a lively, eternal embrace. This quote

also underscores what Quiroga saw as the big difference between film and photography. Photos are a static thing, trapped in old family albums or in closets. To repeat Edgar Morin, they are "frozen in an eternal moment" (118) from whence they cannot be revived. Quiroga associates film, on the other hand, with life itself. In another article he reiterates film's life-giving potential and its relationship to the art of still photography:

> Cuando un hombre del mundo normal muere, su imagen permanece con el corazón de sus deudos y en algunas fotografías, tan muertas como él. Pero para el resto de la humanidad, la figura del difunto desaparece para siempre jamás.
>
> El cine salva a sus intérpretes de esta oscuridad saludable. Nada importa que [los actores] descansen un día de sus farsas artísticas a algunos metros bajo tierra. Ellos nos quedan, vivos y tangibles en la pantalla. ("Las cintas de ultratumba" 129)

Here Quiroga associates photography with death and film with life, showing us how filmed images present us with an almost tangible representation of this life. In these quotes, as in "El puritano," film becomes a device by which those who have passed on continue to live, albeit as spectral copies of their former selves.

In the text, the day-to-day comings and goings of the apparitions are eventually interrupted by the arrival of a new actress. In life she was successful and wealthy, and, as a rule, beautiful, but one thing had been denied to her. She had fallen in love with a co-star, Dougald Mac Namara, but was rejected by him. Although their attraction was mutual, the actor never acted on his passion for the captivating star so as to not betray the confidence of his wife and young son. His rejection of her is what earns him the derogatory nickname of "el puritano" and also what leads the young actress to commit suicide—her gateway into the late-night *tertulias*. The other ghosts soon realize that her after-death experience is quite different from their own.

Instead of disappearing every time one of her films is played, her image remains with the group. Still, she can see in her mind everything that is happening on the screen, and, more importantly, she can also feel everything that is happening on the screen, including the deep passions of the characters she played. She laments: "Antes yo sabía que al concluir una escena, por fuerte que hubiera sido, podía pensar en otra cosa, y reírme … Ahora, no … Es como si yo misma fuera el personaje!" (89). Importantly, what this information tells us is that not only is her spirit somehow connected with her spectral, filmed copy, but that her filmed copy possesses a reservoir of affective energy. The film is not just an empty shell; it too has stored intensities which it can transmit to other bodies.

Even worse for the actress is the fact that during her visions she can also make out the members of the audience, and there, night after night, she sees the puritan who faithfully attends every showing. It is unclear why he does this, but it seems to be out of dedication to her memory and the regret he feels for what he could have had with the actress. At any rate, his presence there multiplies the anguish she feels with every showing of her film. As the narrator states, "jamás … fué supuesta una tortura igual a la de una enamorada que ve por fin entregarse al hombre por quien ella se mató, y que no puede correr delirante a sus brazos, no puede mirarlo, ni volverse siquiera a él, porque toda ella y su amor no son ya más que un espectro fotográfico" (89-90). Although the narrator describes the actress here as nothing more than an "espectro fotográfico," there is a passionate intensity about her. The affective intensities that her character feels and that she continues to feel after her passing via her projection speak volumes about the power of film. She transmits these intensities through the air in the movie theater and into the body of the puritan. The narrator describes what "el puritano" must be feeling as he is contaminated with the affect that fills the theater: "Tampoco debía ser risueño lo que pasaba por

el corazón del puritano, cuya mujer e hijo dormían en sosiego, pero cuyos ojos abiertos contemplaban viva a la actriz. Hay sentimientos a los que no se puede dar cuerpo verbal" (90). These enigmatic affective energies may not find expression in the verbal body ("cuerpo verbal") of words, but they do find expression in the body of the puritan, who, powerless before the spectacle of film, eventually commits suicide in order to unite himself with his would-be lover. Though a body of light, a mere "espectro fotográfico," the actress—and also film itself—presents a realistic copy of life with enough affective potential to be mortal. Interestingly, although he resisted her advances when she was alive, it is only after her death, when her eternal allure graced the silver screen, that he seeks to leave his wife and join her. This one fact, perhaps more than any detail in the story, reveals film's true power, which exceeds the capacities of the actress herself. As Speratti-Piñero puts it: "la imagen humana captada y retenida por las películas no sólo es el actor sino que es más vital y poderosa que el actor mismo hasta el punto de adquirir una inmortalidad que puede ser realmente maligna" ("Horacio Quiroga, precursor" 1244).

"El espectro"

"El espectro" is also about film's power to resurrect those who have passed on through its realistic imitation of life. However, more so than "El puritano," it highlights how film uses the gaze of its characters to transmit affect and how these intensities manifest themselves in violent, visceral reactions and emotions of guilt and fear. "El espectro" tells the story of a love triangle between the protagonist and narrator, Guillermo Grant; his best friend, a film star named Duncan Wyoming; and Duncan's wife, Enid. Upon meeting Enid, Grant is immediately attracted to her, though he laments having met her when she was already married to Wyoming. He tells us that the impression he received upon seeing her for the first time was so strong that the very memory of other women was erased from his mind (124). Grant is especially attracted to her eyes which

he describes in the following terms: “Sus ojos, sobre todo, fueron únicos; y jamás terciopelo de mirada tuvo un marco de pestañas como los ojos de Enid; terciopelo azul, húmedo y reposado” (124). His obsession with her eyes serves to remind the reader not only of the importance of the expressiveness of the eyes in silent cinema but also as a metaphor for the act of seeing itself, such an act being fundamental for film spectatorship. Thus it should not surprise us that her velvet eyes are framed by her eyelashes very much like the silver screen is framed by velvet curtains. The eyes become the primary mode by which affect is transferred between characters, a motif that we will see over and over in both chapters of this study.

It is in Hollywood where Duncan introduces Grant to Enid, and shortly thereafter, Grant travels to Canada with the couple, where he lives with them for two months. This only serves to intensify the passion he feels for his friend’s wife. Grant hides his feelings for Enid when in the presence of his friend, but his gaze betrays to Enid his feelings for her: “ella leía en mi mirada, por tranquila que fuera, cuán profundamente la deseaba” (125). Again the gaze motif speaks to the potential of the eyes for transmitting affective energy. He continues, “Amor, deseo … Una y otra cosa eran en mí gemelas, agudas y mezcladas; porque si la deseaba con todas las fuerzas de mi alma incorpórea, la adoraba con todo el torrente de mi sangre substancial” (125). Here Quiroga makes verbal play between the spirit and the body—the incorporeal and the corporeal—that stands in as a metaphor for the medium of film itself. Film is both a physical medium (of celluloid) and a spiritual one (the ghostly image projected on the screen). Additionally, film, unlike any technology previous, has the uncanny ability to transmute things (objects and people) seamlessly between these two spheres. The camera is pointed at tangible, corporeal beings which are then turned into the incorporeal, intangible specters that play about on the screen. However, we may also say that those who are filmed never lose their body in the realm of affect theory,

because the body of light that we witness shine onto the screen—though intangible in any real sense—is just as corporeal and tangible as ever, its body not losing any of its potential to affect. Maybe that is why Quiroga states in his previously-mentioned quote that dead actors "nos quedan, vivos y *tangibles* en la pantalla" [emphasis added] ("Las cintas de ultratumba" 129). Perhaps film causes actors to become even more tangible than ever in the sense that they have more power to move us, to touch us.

After passing several months in Canada, Grant and the couple return to Hollywood before the onset of the Canadian winter, but upon arriving there, Wyoming becomes very ill. On his deathbed, he shares his last wishes with his wife and Grant. Perhaps sensing some attraction between the two of them, or maybe out of an innocent preoccupation for his wife's well-being, he gives them the following imperative: "Confíate a Grant, Enid … Mientras lo tengas a él, no temas nada. Y tú, viejo amigo, vela por ella. Sé su hermano" (126). Duncan then passes away. The last command of Wyoming is especially striking when we consider that from the moment he first saw Enid, Grant knew that he could never have a strictly platonic relationship with her: "jamás podría yo ser un hermano para aquella mujer" (125). Wyoming's charge cuts Grant to the core given that he already feels guilty about the adulterous attraction he has for his friend's wife. Elsa Gambarini further observes that by telling Grant to be her brother, Wyoming complicates the adultery taboo even more by adding the insinuation of incest (30). Shortly after the death of his friend, Grant then makes an eloquent confession which plays on the tangible-intangible motif of the affair:

> Debo decirlo: en la muerte de Wyoming yo no vi sino la liberación de la terrible águila enjaulada en nuestro corazón, que es el deseo de una mujer a nuestro lado que no se puede tocar. Yo había sido el mejor amigo de Wyoming, y mientras él vivió, el águila no

> deseó su sangre; se alimentó—la alimenté—con la mía propia. Pero entre él y yo se había levantado algo más consistente que una sombra. Su mujer fue, mientras él vivió—y lo hubiera sido eternamente—, intangible para mí. Pero él había muerto. No podía Wyoming exigirme el sacrificio de la Vida en que él acaba de fracasar. Y Enid era mi vida, mi porvenir, mi aliento y mi ansia de vivir, que nadie, ni Duncan—mi amigo íntimo, pero muerto—, podía negarme. (126)

Here, as on the previous page, Grant mixes metaphors of spirit and body that have powerful ramifications as to the meaning of film. In his internal monologue he describes how an eagle, a being of the air, is trapped inside a physical location which is also, metaphorically, an intangible one: the heart. Likewise, Enid, despite being a corporeal being who lives in close proximity to Grant, is intangible to him. Additionally, the barrier that is erected between Grant and Wyoming is both mental/intangible ("una sombra") and physical/tangible ("más consistente que una sombra"). By analogy, each one of these examples underscores the contradictory nature of film. It is a tangible and intangible medium which is experienced both mentally (in the mind of the spectator) and physically; that is, through the organ of the eye and in the bodily manifestations of affect.

After Wyoming's death, Grant and Enid move back to Canada together, but they do not enter into a sexual relationship despite the fact that Enid does reciprocate Grant's feelings. She rejects Grant's advances several times not wanting to betray the trust of her late husband. Some months pass and the two of the return to Hollywood where again Enid must reject Grant vehemently: "¡Déjame! ¿No ves que también te quiero con toda el alma y que estamos cometiendo un crimen?" (128). Shortly thereafter, they strike up a relationship, but they live in constant guilt at their betrayal of Duncan's memory. Due to ambiguity in the text itself critical

opinions differ as to whether the story suggests a sexual relationship between Grant and Enid. Ana María Hernández articulates that the two live together "sin consumar su amor por miedo a Duncan" (85). Lee Williams, on the other hand, states that "Within months of Wyoming's death, the pretence of brother/sister love dissolves, and Grant and Enid fling themselves into a passionate relationship" ("Film criticism" 191). While Williams's interpretation is equally valid, I will opt for Hernández's take that the fear of Duncan's retaliation impedes the two from having sexual relations. At any rate, it is clear that the two feel guilty for having any relationship at all and live in constant fear that some retribution will occur. For reasons not entirely clear, the two anxiously await the premiere of a film Duncan starred in before he passed away entitled *El páramo*. When they finally attend the premiere, they are shocked by Duncan's filmic reproduction, whose likeness to their friend/late husband creates in them an unsettling feeling: "Sus mismos gestos eran aquéllos. Su misma sonrisa confiada era la de sus labios. Era su misma enérgica figura la que se deslizaba adherida a la pantalla. Y a veinte metros de él, era su misma mujer la que estaba bajo los dedos del amigo íntimo" (128). Like a specter from the past, Duncan's haunting appearance shines in front of the couple, and the two are enraptured by the disconcerting, visual resurrection of the deceased movie star.

In this case, the power of Duncan's film resides in its ability to create a realistic imitation of life. Grant is aware, of course, that the actor on the screen is not really alive, but there remains a certain level of confusion between original and reproduction. For the spectator, the actor becomes the image and the image becomes the actor, a connection that was demonstrated so well in "El puritano" and in Quiroga's own criticism. We might say, as Quiroga did when writing about film, that Duncan's image glows with "la intensidad carnal de la vida misma" ("Cine de ultratumba" 286-87). For Grant and Enid, it as if Wyoming still lives. Though film naturally

creates a confusion between original and reproduction, "El espectro" exaggerates this inherent link in such a way as to make film's affective power that much more apparent. Whereas the average spectator does not know any of their favorite actors personally, Guillermo Grant has an intimate connection with both Duncan Wyoming's filmic representation *and* the actor himself. Through this exaggeration, the story accentuates that film's reality effect is fundamental to its ability to affect us.

Valeria de los Ríos gives a Lacanian analysis of the moment Wyoming first appears on the screen, describing it as the eruption of the real into the symbolic order of their everyday lives. Her remarks are insightful:

> En "El espectro" la aparición fantasmática de Duncan señala la existencia de un núcleo traumático, una fisura en la realidad a través de la cual se estaría colando lo Real, que es justamente aquello que resiste a ser nombrado o simbolizado. La espectralidad funcionaría de este modo como un síntoma de lo Real que irrumpe con toda su extrañeza en la realidad cotidiana. (316)

For Lacan, our reality is a socially-constructed world called the symbolic order, a world that has its roots in language and which is made up of society's conventions and norms. The real represents the inexpressible reality that lies beyond the façade of social construct, and it is constantly trying to break into the symbolic order. As Slavoj Žižek puts it, "This social reality is … nothing but a fragile, symbolic cobweb that can at any moment be torn aside by an intrusion of the real" (17). In order to avoid a frightening confrontation with the Real—the ineffable moment of Duncan's death and impossible resurrection—Grant and Enid instead use the film as an attempt to uphold their symbolic order, a world in which Duncan never died and thus the taboos against adultery/incest are justified. In this way, the mimetic potential of film becomes the

only way to avoid the crisis of Duncan's return because through the reality effect it creates, they can pretend that he never really left. His continued presence becomes the reason that Grant uses to justify the impossibility of having a sexual relationship with Enid. By conflating the image of Wyoming with his real-life friend, he can convince himself that there is a valid reason which prohibits him from being sexually intimate with her: the fact that her husband, in a certain sense, is still alive. Thus in order to avoid the intrusion of the real, Grant willingly accepts Duncan's sustained presence into his symbolic order, and Duncan becomes the seemingly-tangible barrier that separates Grant from Enid. In this way, although Wyoming is dead, Enid does not become any more tangible for him. The would-be lovers submit themselves to the illusion of film by accepting it into their reality, causing *El páramo*'s power to affect them to increase. As a result, Grant and Enid are too weak to resist the tangible effects the film has on them. The body of light transmits its affect into the bodies of the couple, and the captured affect presents itself in reactions of awe, fear, and guilt.

This process of accepting Duncan's resurrection into their symbolic order would not be possible if it were not for film's capacity for realistic imitation of life, and there are many elements which contribute to this reality effect. "El espectro" highlights many of these, including how the verisimilitude of the story, the naturalness of the acting, and the believability of the visual element contribute to the overall realism of the film. Firstly, a movie's plot should be believable. If the story does not have an internal logic, the audience will be less susceptible to the film's affective power. In "El espectro," the content of *El páramo* instructs us that if the spectators can personally relate to the content of a film, its ability to affect them increases as a result. The film involves a love triangle, a familiar subject for Grant and Enid. The film's protagonist, played by Duncan, kills a man only to find out that his victim had been his wife's

lover. The moment of revelation comes when Duncan's character, injured from the fight, a kerchief wrapped around his bleeding head, sits down on a divan, becoming witness to the frantic desperation of his wife crying over the man's lifeless body. A close-up shot shows a look of horror passing over the face of Duncan's character: "Pocas veces la revelación del derrumbe, la desolación y el odio han subido al rostro humano con más violenta claridad que en esa circunstancia a los ojos de Wyoming" (129). The film's story of betrayal serves as a brutal reminder to Grant and Enid of their own feelings of guilt for having been unfaithful to Duncan. Again, we are reminded of Enid's words to Grant: "estamos cometiendo un crimen" (128). By being able to identify with the content of the film itself, film's power to affect them increases. Realistic storytelling lends film part of its affective potential.

Secondly, good acting contributes greatly to the believability of a film. If the actors are not convincing, film may lose some of its ability to affect the spectator. Quiroga had much to say on the subject. He remarks that most theater actors did not do well at making the transition from theater to cinema. The exaggerated body movements and lack of subtlety in their facial expressions simply seemed comical when brought to the screen: "A los mejores de entre ellos podía considerárseles simplemente exagerados, por incomprensión de un arte nuevo y extraño; los demás parecían unos locos, en razón de la movilidad extraordinaria de sus rostros y del énfasis constante de sus expresiones" ("La expresión" 224). He remarks that the ability of actors to make realistic facial expressions is the "base del nuevo arte" ("La poesía" 175). For Quiroga, the ability of an actor to behave naturally on screen (and not in the exaggerated, affected style of theater actors) was of great consequence. In his description of film star George Walsh, he praises how naturally the actor presented himself on screen at the beginning of his career:

> Walsh ha sido—ya no lo es más—el más notable actor que nos haya dado el cinematógrafo, consistiendo todo su arte en no dar la menor impresión de poseer arte alguno. Cuando entraba o salía, cuando se quedaba mirando con una vaga sonrisa, se podía jurar que delante de él había un paisaje, una casa, cualquier cosa; jamás un objetivo delante del cual estaba posando. Y como todos los actores honrados, nunca, en aquella época, fijó los ojos en la máquina. ("Jorge Walsh" 155)

Later on in his career, Walsh signed on with Fox, which, for Quiroga, marked the end of the actor's artistic prominence. As Mariana Amato remarks, the studio converted the actor into a sex symbol, exaggerating his muscles, movements, and gestures until his style went from well-tempered to clownlike, affected, and showy (78). Whereas before he interpreted his roles in a realistic way, after his switch to Fox, his style was unnatural enough for Quiroga to see him as a fallen star.

In "El espectro," Duncan Wyoming, though fictional, is just the sort of actor that Quiroga respected, one who incarnated the qualities he associated with the realistic portrayal of a man. Though different from Walsh in many respects, Wyoming also fits within Quiroga's desire for realistic acting. Grant tells us the following about the star at the beginning of the story:

> Todos recuerdan a Duncan Wyoming, el extraordinario actor que, comenzando su carrera al mismo tiempo que William Hart, tuvo, como éste y a la par de éste, las mismas hondas virtudes de interpretación viril. Hart ha dado al cine todo lo que podíamos esperar de él, y es un astro que cae. De Wyoming, en cambio, no sabemos lo que podíamos haber visto, cuando apenas en el comienzo de su breve y fantástica carrera creó—como contraste con el empalagoso héroe actual—el tipo de varón rudo, áspero, feo, negligente y cuanto se

quiera, pero hombre de la cabeza a los pies, por la sobriedad, el empuje y el carácter distintivos del sexo. (124-25)

Hart, a real actor, is mentioned alongside Wyoming to add an air of realism to the story but also to connect Wyoming to the image of an actor with whom Quiroga's audience would have been familiar. In his early days, Hart was just the sort of brawny hero that Quiroga associated with real men. In fact, the above description is not very much different from Quiroga's description of Hart's praisworthy performance in *El mar de arena*: "[Hart] es un simple símbolo de lo más característico del varón: la energía masculina del carácter … [P]lace ver en la popular pantalla una ruda y fresca historia del Oeste, cuyas pasiones giran alrededor de las simples manos encallecidas de un varón" ("La moralidad" 214-15). It seems that for Quiroga, men acting like men—that is, acting "naturally"—was key to creating a sense of realism.

While a good plot and realistic acting serve to increase a film's realism and affective potential, ultimately it is the visual aspect of the film—the subtle, yet powerful expression captured on Duncan's face—that causes the deepest effect on Enid and Grant. Also at play here is the human brain's ability to recognize human facial expressions, an ability so deeply ingrained that even small children show this capacity (Thomas, et al 309). Carl Plantinga acknowledges that emotions can be transmitted from filmed characters to the spectators: "Moving photographic images, as used in narrative film, display the human body in all its emotional expressiveness and depend fundamentally on the human tendency to respond strongly to others through motor and affective mimicry and various empathic responses" (129). Anna Gibbs further describes that "people are expert readers of faces, and these communications are more often understood than not, even though they often take place outside awareness. So the face plays a central role in the expression and communication of affects, and its importance has only been amplified by the

pervasiveness of media in everyday life" (191). It is clear that facial expressions can be key in transmitting affect, and film is better at this than any previous artistic medium.

The look of desolation and hatred on the projected face of Duncan's character, instantly recognized by the couple, is easily mistaken for Duncan's real reaction to their betrayal. Due to the visual imitation of reality, the blown up image of the man on the screen seems not a copy of Duncan, but Duncan himself, and the expressions they read on his face are as real to the guilty couple as they would be were Wyoming still alive. His gaze pierces them to the core, and they contract the affective contagion as it spreads through the air between their bodies. Their guilt intensifies as the virturally resurrected friend becomes real to them: "la escena filmada vivía flagrante, pero no en la pantalla, sino en un palco, donde nuestro amor sin culpa se transformaba en monstruosa infidelidad ante el marido *vivo*..." (130). Grant and Enid's initial reaction to *El páramo*, then, is not only unsettling, but also very revealing. However, it is through Grant and Enid's subsequent viewings of the film that we see the best example of film's ability to transmit affect: the gaze.

Grant and Enid are compelled to return to the cinema again and again. Miriam Gárate notes the similarities between their frequent return to the theater and Freud's repetition compulsion:

> Freudianamente, cabría afirmar que la repetición se vincula en este caso al intento de 'elaborar'(retrospectivamente) el trauma, de forjar un mecanismo de defensa denominado 'ansiedad'; que se repite y revive la misma escena para domesticar el 'susto', pues, familiarizándose con dicha situación, el factor sorpresa, lo inesperado, lo violento de la experiencia traumática, va mitigándose poco a poco y deja de ser (omni)presente. (111)

However, a close examination of the text reveals that quite the opposite occurs. Though the couple tries to channel Duncan's affective energy into upholding their symbolic order, their repeated viewings provoke an inescapable crisis. Far from mitigating the effects of the trauma, returning to the theater over and over seems to increase film's power over them. Grant becomes more and more erratic, shows an increase in guilt, and seems to go insane. It is in these weeks of repeated viewing that Grant and Enid have a frightening encounter with the affective potential of the gaze of filmed characters. The couple begins to notice that in the close-up shot showing Duncan's character's reaction to his wife's betrayal, the eyes of the movie star begin to turn slowly, over the course of an unspecified number of weeks, until they finally rest upon the guilty lovers: "noche a noche, palco tras palco, la mirada se iba volviendo cada vez más a nosotros" (130). Realizing the reader's likely incredulity, Grant gives an excitable sermon about the scientific impossibility of anything in the film changing from night to night but concludes that "a despecho de las leyes y los principios, Wyoming nos estaba *viendo*" (130). The filmed Duncan's gaze serves as a gateway through which film transmits its affect to the spectators Grant and Enid.

In essence, the gaze of Wyoming's character, while nothing more than a projected image, has similar power to that of a real person in invoking an affective response. In the story, the gaze of Duncan's character creates a moment of crisis similar to that mentioned in Sartre's famous ontological essay *Being and Nothingness*. In the essay, Sartre explains humanity's inclination to use vision to make sense of the world and of ourselves. By looking at an object and studying it, we take it into ourselves, apprehend it, and synthesize it in terms of our own being. However, we do not only do this with inanimate objects; we also use the look to objectify and make sense of others. Nevertheless, this process of objectifying others through our look is, ultimately, much more problematic, because human beings have the power to look back. "By the mere appearance

of the Other," Sartre writes, "I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as on an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other" (222). While most would consider that film more closely resembles an inanimate object (and thus something we are able to apprehend and synthesize without any problem), "El espectro" appears to suggest that film more closely resembles a human being, whose problematic gaze can invoke a moment of crisis in the spectator. This is exactly in line with Dixon's analysis of the "look back" of film. The filmic gaze of Duncan Wyoming's character in the story is a real-enough simulation of reality for it to provoke in them an ontological crisis.

The psychological burden of the repeated viewings along with Duncan's terrifying, piercing gaze put Grant on edge. Duncan's look causes the couple to go insane. At one viewing, Grant thinks that he sees Duncan come to the edge of the screen to attack them: "Con lentitud de fiera y los ojos clavados sobre nosotros, Wyoming se incorporaba del diván. Enid y yo lo vimos levantarse, avanzar hacia nosotros desde el fondo de la escena, llegar al monstruoso primer plano…" (130-31). He then lifts his hands as if to strangle the couple as he continues to walk forward. However, he is interrupted by the film catching on fire: "Un fulgor deslumbrante nos cegó, a tiempo que Enid lanzaba un grito. La cinta acababa de quemarse" (131). The film cannot seem to support the overload of affective energy that is being transmitted from Duncan to Grant. As Valeria de los Ríos mentions, "Pareciera que el celuloide no es un suporte lo suficientemente resistente como para tolerar la intensidad del deseo, la culpa y el horror" (315).

The mind is not the only part of them that the film affects. The affect transmitted through Duncan's gaze also begins to change their bodies physically. When the projection stops, the other filmgoers look back at the couple as Enid lets out a scream. A pair of spectators have the following conversation: "La señora está enferma; parece una muerta," says one. "Más muerto

parece él," adds another (131). Their bodies are altered by the affection process. Before the power of film, the bodies of Grant and Enid begin to wear out and break down. They become different bodies, changed bodies.

At the next showing, Grant brings a revolver, fearing that Duncan's being will somehow attack like the night before. The affect in the room is almost asphyxiating as they await the expected attack. The moment arrives and the nightmarish description is truly frightening:

> Yo lo vi adelantarse, crecer, llegar al borde mismo de la pantalla, sin apartar la mirada de la mía. Lo vi desprenderse, venir hacia nosotros en el haz de luz; venir en el aire por sobre las cabezas de la platea, alzándose, llegar hasta nosotros con la cabeza vendada. Lo vi extender las zarpas de sus dedos … a tiempo que Enid lanzaba un horrible alarido, de esos en que con una cuerda vocal se ha rasgado la razón entera, e hice fuego. (131)

The body of light, already possessing some measure of affective power because of its likeness to reality, takes on a physical form, exiting the screen and rushing at the couple, never letting up its gaze. Importantly, when the film reaches its maximum level of affectivity, it takes on a more physical form, reminding the reader of the realistic quality of film and of the play of bodies between film and spectator. Grant, meaning to point the revolver at this newly-formed corporeal being, accidently shoots and kills himself: "Desde el instante en que Wyoming se había incorporado en el diván, dirigí el cañón del revólver a su cabeza. Lo recuerdo con toda nitidez. Y era yo quien había recibido la bala en la sien. Estoy completamente seguro de que *quise* dirigir el arma contra Duncan" (131). Grant attempts to affect film in some tangible way, to stop it from affecting him so deeply, but film proves to have all the power here. Enid dies a few days later from the intensity of the encounter. This exaggerated manifestation of film's power to simulate

life acts as the ultimate stimulus of affective response, manifesting itself in Grant's visceral reaction that ends in his own death. Grant becomes the object of film's palpable gaze.

Grant's demise reminds us again of the film's play between tangibility and intangibility and how this dynamic relates to film in general. Duncan begins as a live, tangible being and is converted into the intangible being that haunts the screen. But he again becomes tangible through the bodily effects he has on Grant, a transformation shown metaphorically by the creation of his physical body. Grant, too, undergoes a similar process. He goes from a tangible state to one of intangibility when he dies and becomes a spirit. Here we see an interesting connection between spectator and specter (De los Ríos 316), which hints at the dialectical relationship between film and the viewer. For Quiroga, filmed images are specters, but here, they also become spectators. In a similar way, the filmgoers are spectators but they become specters. It is this second transformation that Valeria de los Ríos uses to give a Marxist reading of this process, explaining spectrality in terms of Derrida's *Specters of Marx*. For her, Quiroga's stories "ponen de manifiesto el carácter hegemónico del cine como 'industria cultural', cuyos centros de producción se encuentran alejados de Latinoamérica, que sólo se perfila como lugar de exhibición" (316). In other words, Hollywood cinema colonizes Latin America, whose citizens have little power of their own to resist the hegemonic forces of American cultural colonization. This reading reinforces my own reading, as it hints at the idea of the unidirectional relationship of affectation that can occur between the film and the spectator. As we have seen in "El espectro", the relationship between spectator and film is decidedly unequal, showcasing again how film moves the spectator who is somewhat powerless before it. Like the Latin American public who, in a certain sense, become subject to the intrusion of Hollywood, Grant and Enid

become subject to the power of film. However, filmgoers often succeed where Grant has failed; that is, they too can affect film. This relationship will be further fleshed out in Chapter 2.

At the end of the story, Grand and Enid, now disembodied spirits, attend the premiere of every newly-released film, awaiting the promised premiere of Duncan's last film *Más allá de lo que se ve*—a fitting title. They do this, hoping that somehow they will be able to come to life, taking on a physical form, as Duncan did previously. For the couple, film becomes the means by which they seek readmittance to the real world once more, further highlighting the confusion between fiction and reality that film causes and also continuing the tangible/intangible motif. At the end of the text, Grant relates his plan:

> Enid y yo ocupamos ahora, en la niebla invisible de lo incorpóreo, el sitio privilegiado de acecho que fue toda la fuerza de Wyoming en el drama anterior. Si sus celos persisten todavía, si se equivoca al vernos y hace en la tumba el menor movimiento hacia afuera, nosotros nos aprovecharemos. La cortina que separa la vida de la muerte no se ha descorrido únicamente en su favor, y el camino está entreabierto. Entre la Nada que ha disuelto lo que fue Wyoming, y su eléctrica resurrección, queda un espacio vacío. Al más leve movimiento que efectúe el actor, apenas se desprenda de la pantalla, Enid y yo nos deslizaremos como por una fisura en el tenebroso corredor. Pero no seguiremos el camino hacia el sepulcro de Wyoming; iremos hacia la Vida, entraremos en ella de nuevo. Y es el mundo cálido del que estamos expulsados, el amor tangible y vibrante de cada sentido humano, lo que nos espera entonces a Enid y a mí. (132)

Here film is the mediator between life and death, between reality and fiction, a mediator that is described as a tangible medium. In order to pass from the afterlife into the real world, Duncan must create a fissure in the screen through which the guilty couple can travel. The text indicates

that Grant and Enid do not possess this power. Although they no longer feel afraid of Duncan now that they are dead, he still stands in as a tangible barrier between the would-be lovers. Film's power to affect follows them even after death. Metaphorically speaking, Duncan's reign over them—film's reign over them—has not ended.

Both "El puritano" and "El espectro" speak to the idea that filmed characters share a reality with the actors who play them. The actors in "El puritano" are stuck in a sort of limbo between death and life, their spirits being called back to the real world to live for an instant on the screen. The main actress of the story even feels the emotions of her characters and sees the members of the audience. In "El espectro" Duncan Wyoming's filmed character stands in for the actor himself, creating an almost palpable barrier between Grant and Enid. In both stories, the filmed bodies of the actors have lost none of their potency to affect. The puritan is entranced by the filmed specter of the actress he loved and her filmic representation—more powerful than she ever was—transmits to him indescribable intensities that lead him to suicide. Similarly, the filmed Wyoming astonishes Grant and Enid. His piercing, objectifying gaze transmits to them all of the energies of a jealous husband, and they, like the puritan, fall prey to this supreme power. Film's body of light is full with affective power, and the bodies of the spectators are almost powerless to resist it. In Chapter 2, I will further discuss this play of bodies, theorizing the gaze in terms of its erotic potential.

CHAPTER 2: GAZING INTO THE VAMPIRIC EYES OF FILM

Film and Spectator: A Dialogue of Affectivity

The relationship between spectator and film is anything but straightforward. In Chapter 1, I highlighted how Quiroga shows film's effects on the spectator in two short stories. In this current chapter I will further develop this idea while also looking at how the spectator and film influence each other, for the spectator's schema of experiences, prior knowledge, and personal preferences limit or expand film's power to move. The film critic is especially privileged in this regard. He or she is an active agent who uses the power of criticism to interpret, build up, or tear down a film—effectively scrutinizing the film as an object. In the relationship of affective exchange hitherto mentioned, the critic diminishes film's power to affect through detailed examination of its constitutive parts. Quiroga was not stranger to this sort of criticism. In his first film article published in the Argentine magazine *Caras y Caretas*, for example, Quiroga mentions how the extraordinary acting talent of silent film star William Hart was not enough to save the film *El jugador convertido* from its unbelievable premise: the sudden conversion of an antireligious gambling man to Christianity after his "primer tropiezo con un pastor protestante" ("*El jugador*" 38). The affective potential of *El jugador* was lost on Quiroga who was not able to suspend his disbelief, the suspension of disbelief being an indispensible antecedent for film to affect the spectator.

Nevertheless, in the very same article, Quiroga discusses film's ability to mesmerize filmgoers through sustained shots of captivating women. He posits the following question: "¿A qué se debe el particular encanto que despiertan y ejercen las estrellas del cine?" ("Variedades" 39). Although he sees himself surrounded by beautiful women in real life, he indicates that film stars cast a particular spell on the male audience that everyday women cannot—an influence that

the puritan felt firsthand. Quiroga ascribes this to the sustained duration that a film permits men to contemplate the female form, something impossible in the fleeting moments of real-life contact with attractive women:

> La estrella de cine nos entrega sostenidamente su encanto, nos tiende sin tasa de tiempo cuanto en ella es turbador: ojos, boca, frescura, sensibilidad arrobada y arranque pasional. Es nuestra, podemos admirarla, absorberla cuarenta y cinco minutos continuos … Vive para nosotros, nos adelanta un entero poema de amor (las cintas de las actrices preferidas siempre son de amor), a la distancia que media entre nuestras pestañas y las extremidades de las de ella. ("Variedades" 39-40)

At first glance, this quote seems to speak to the objectification of the filmic image. It fits exactly within what Laura Mulvey would later describe as "the male gaze," the gaze of men that is used to convert filmed actresses into objects of visual pleasure. "The determining male gaze," she says "projects its fantasy on to the female figure … In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *looked-at-ness*" (19). Quiroga's musings certainly fit within Mulvey's description of the male gaze. Through their gaze, men can and do convert Hollywood actresses into objects of enjoyment and sexual fantasy. However, the transmission of affective energy is, in fact, flowing in the opposite direction: the body of light provokes an affective, erotic response in the male spectator's body. The male spectator becomes the object of the gaze of the filmed actress and by the same token becomes the object of the gaze of film itself. In a certain sense, the spectator then becomes trapped in a feedback loop of gazing, becoming aroused, and gazing again. Thus, returning to Jon Beasley-Murray's description of affect, it is

clear that in these contexts, film and spectator display the "constant interactions between bodies and the resultant impacts of such interactions" (127) which he describes.

As we saw in Chapter 1, Quiroga's describes how the enchanting potential of the filmed image can elicit strong, violent responses in the spectator. Film can also elicit sexual responses, provoking desire and obsession. The erotic potential of stunning female figures is the subject of two of Quiroga's stories about film, "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa" and "El vampiro." While the majority of this chapter will be dedicated to the second, the first is also of note because it highlights the importance of the filmic gaze of actresses.

"Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa"

Lee Williams explains that "silent film's popularity relied greatly on the enduring gaze, and the new movie houses of the 1910s and '20s provided the perfect peeping redoubt for spectators to contemplate erotic images with anonymity and impunity. The camera lens took the moviegoer to private places and held images in tantalizing close-ups and freeze shots" ("Hollywood" 48). These "tantalizing close-ups" often depicted women gazing passionately into the camera. Sylvia Saítta further adds that "el cine configura un nuevo erotismo cuyo centro, como en las narraciones sentimentales, está en la mirada. El *close-up* reactualiza el código de la mirada de las narraciones sentimentales donde los ojos marcan el comienzo del 'amor a primera vista' y son el centro de la expresividad" (114). What concerns us in "Miss Dorothy Phillips" is the concept of obsession with the eyes of filmed women and what this obsession reveals about the power of film. In the story, the gaze of Phillips and therefore, of film itself, manifests itself as a captivating, invisible force which affects the protagonist on a deep psychological level.

Quiroga himself had a particular predilection for the eyes. One critic notes that curiously, Quiroga, a writer, often "privileges the visual over the verbal" in his criticism and that he shared

with the avant-garde artists his penchant for eye imagery (Williams, "Film Criticism" 186). Quiroga was also personally enraptured by the eyes of movie actresses. Emir Rodríguez Monegal describes this fascination in the following way: "Es una fascinación casi hipnótica que produce la mirada de unos ojos femeninos proyectada de tal modo sobre la pantalla blanca que esa mirada penetra en los centros afectivos más profundamente que ninguna mirada real. Quiroga está hechizado por esos ojos" (197). As silent film is an almost-entirely visual medium in which eyes dominated the screen in close-ups, this obsession is unsurprising. Directors specifically looked for women who could express deep emotions with their eyes, something that Quiroga relates in the following anecdote about director David Griffith's discovery of an actress:

> Cuéntase que en uno de sus viajes a París, Griffith tropezó en la Plaza de la Ópera con una joven cuya mirada dio de pleno en los ojos del director. Griffith sufrió una sacudida y quedó tan deslumbrado por la intensidad de expresión de aquella mirada, que corrió atrás de la joven.
>
> –¡Por favor, Mr. Griffith! –lo contuvieron sus acompañantes franceses– ¿qué pretende?
>
> –¿Lo que pretendo? – respondió el director. Pues contratarla en seguida. La expresión de sus ojos vale cien mil dólares en el primer filme. ("Griffith y las miradas expresivas" 59-60)

Note how Griffith's instinctive reaction to the eyes of the actress is an example of the power of the gaze to affect.

The protagonist of "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa," Guillermo Grant, shares this eye obsession with Quiroga and the film industry, which underscores the emphasis of eyes in the early days of the medium. It is unclear if Quiroga meant this Grant to be the same as the protagonist of "El espectro," as their life stories do not seem to match up entirely. Here, I will

consider him a separate character so as to not enter into the complications that differing timelines would provoke. Quiroga seems to have repeated the name for his male protagonists in these cinema stories with little regard for continuity. From the outset, it is clear that the Grant in "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa" is a cinephile. The first line acknowledges his obsession: "Yo pertenezco al grupo de los pobres diablos que salen noche a noche del cinematógrafo enamorados de una estrella" (198). Grant is obsessed with Hollywood actresses and spends his time dissecting their physical appearance, objectifying the parts of their body, especially their eyes. The following definition of the objectification of women accurately describes his process: "Sexual objectification refers to the fragmentation of a woman into a collection of sexual parts and/or sexual functions, essentially stripping her of a unique personality and subjectivity so that she exists as merely a body" (Calogero 574). Mimicking the process of film editing, he fragments filmed women and examines their individual parts, scrutinizing their bodies as objects with no regard for their personal subjectivity. Similarly, Ana María Hernández explains that "Grant percibe a su amada de una manera fragmentada, como a través de fotos o escenas, ensambladas en una especie de montaje, y su interés se centra desmesuradamente en los ojos de la misma" (82).

Grant considers the eyes a fundamental necessity for beauty: "Es una verdad clásica que no hay hermosura completa si los ojos no son el primer rasgo bello del semblante" (198). At the beginning of the story, Grant stresses the life-changing nature of a pair of alluring eyes: "Si una pulgada de más o menos en la nariz de Cleopatra–según el filósofo–hubiera cambiado el mundo, no quiero pensar en lo que podía haber pasado si aquella señora llega a tener los ojos más hermosos de lo que los tuvo: el Occidente desplazado hacia el Oriente trescientos años antes–y el resto" (199). Here Grant makes reference, of course, to Blaise Pascal's famous line from his

Pensées: “Le nez de Cléopâtre: s'il eût été plus court toute la face de la terre aurait changé” (50). The phrase is commonly rendered into English as: “Cleopatra's nose—had it been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have changed” (Pascal 51). G. Lively remarks that the quote can easily be construed as an anticipation to chaos theory, as it speaks to the powerful ramifications that the change in a single variable can bring about (27). Even if Grant’s reference to Pascal is simply the whimsical expression of a lovesick filmgoer, by inciting this quote, he acknowledges the great weight he places on eyes in the world of film. Beyond a mere fetish, Grant’s eye obsession reveals a clear relationship between beauty, power, and the act of seeing requisite for viewing film.

The eyes are one of the primary ways though which we take the outside world into our bodies. As Vivian Sobchack states in *The Address of the Eye*, “In existence, the body and the eyes are not separate … The eyes are part of the whole body, and what the eyes take in, the body does also” (271). So when we view a film, the effect it has on us does not stop at our eyes. Our visual reception of film has repercussions that travel throughout the entire body by means of the process of affection. Films that showcase the eyes in close-ups further serve as a reminder of the very act that we participate in when experiencing a film. The eyes become a metaphor for the camera and for film itself which reinforces the effect it has on us because what it presents us is a visual representation of something that we process visually. As Vivian Sobchack puts it, “More than any other medium of human communication, the moving picture makes itself sensuously and sensibly manifest as the expression of experience by experience. A film is an act of seeing that makes itself seen …” (3). Films showing the eyes of women in extreme close-up, like the ones Grant watches in the story, add a third layer to this statement: film becomes an act of seeing *that which sees* that makes itself seen. It serves as a constant metafictional reminder of the

medium that we are experiencing as we experience it. Thus, by mentioning the eyes of Cleopatra—one of history's most powerful women—in the context of film, Grant reminds us that it is through our eyes that we experience the power of film. And it is through the eyes of beautiful actresses that film acts upon or experiences Grant, who succumbs to the power of the gaze of film, allowing it to change his body by infecting him with the unstructured intensity of affect.

In "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa," Grant's obsession with eyes is the impetus for the actions that the character takes throughout the story. He has never married, though he was engaged for a time, because he is waiting for something. That something, he tells us with an air of uncertainty, is perhaps:

> El bendito país en que las mujeres consideran cosa muy ligera mirar largamente en los ojos a un hombre a quien ven por primera vez. Porque no hay suspensión de aliento, absorción más paralizante que la que ejercen dos ojos extraordinariamente bellos. Es tal, que ni aun se requiere que los ojos nos miren con amor. Ellos son en sí mismos el abismo, el vértigo en que el varón pierde la cabeza, sobre todo cuando no puede caer en él. (199)

He does find a certain release in the movie theatre where he can gaze freely and deeply into the eyes of ravishing silent film stars such as Mildrid Harris, Miriam Cooper, and Dorothy Phillips. However, watching a woman on the screen is not enough for him. From the outset, he admits that he is looking for "un matrimonio por los ojos" (203), and so he fixes his sights on the eyes of Dorothy Phillips with whom he seeks to have a serious relationship, effectively projecting his "fantasy onto the female figure" (Mulvey 19). It is interesting to note that the fact that Quiroga writes about Grant's fixation on Dorothy Phillips is semi-autobiographical as the writer was also

fascinated by the actress, even signing many of his film articles under the pseudonym of "El esposo de d. Ph." (Benavídez 69).

The remainder of the story is a lengthy description of how Grant implements his plan to fly to Hollywood, meet, and marry Dorothy Phillips. He pretends to be a wealthy magazine editor from South America in order to work his way into the star's inner circle. Once he becomes her confidant, he begins to court her, and finally makes plans to marry her. However, feeling guilty about his deception, he decides to return to Buenos Aires but not before confessing his duplicity to Dorothy. This final scene is just the sort of sappy romance that one would expect in what might be considered an early case of fan fiction. After his confession, she admits that she knew all along that he is not the rich man he pretended to be but that she still loves him. It is not until the end of the story that we discover that the entire trip and romance was all a dream: "esto es un sueño. Punto por punto, como acabo de contarlo, lo he soñado" (228). Although, it is important to note, as does Myriam Lefort, that Quiroga offers the reader many ambiguous textual clues that could foreshadow the ending (28-29).

In "Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa," what started out as an obsession with filmed beauties, becomes an all-consuming fantasy in the mind of Grant. The illusion of film completely bewitches him, projecting an image that seems to move and unfold before his eyes. The filmed eyes of Dorothy Phillips, so expressive and mysterious, affect him profoundly and lead him to imagine a series of fictional events. The gaze of the actress on film, a body of light mimicking a body of flesh, affects Grant at a deeply psychological level. The intensity of her gaze transmits affect into his body, and all that he imagines has its roots in the erotic, affective response that he experiences from gazing into the eyes of film.

“El vampiro”

The passionate or erotic response in “Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa” is also characterized in “El vampiro,” although this other text better displays not only the affective response that film generates but also the concept of “the look back.” The story of “El vampiro” is recounted by a man named Guillermo Grant who finds himself in an insane asylum at the end of his life. Again, it is unclear if Quiroga meant this Grant to be the same as the protagonist of “El espectro” and “Miss Dorothy Phillips, mi esposa,” and so I will consider him a different character. Before his admittance to the asylum, Grant was leading a normal life up until the moment he receives a letter from a stranger, one Guillén de Orzúa y Rosales, inquiring of him information regarding his research on N^1 rays—a ray that exists outside the visible spectrum. N_1 rays were first discovered by René Blondlot in 1903, whose experimentation led to him to publish ten papers on the subject (Dewdney 21). According to Blondlot, N^1 rays increased the brightness of incandescent bodies and the phosphorescence of certain chemicals that were exposed to light. According to him, many materials, principally metals, could store and emit these rays. The human eye could also store and emit them (Boule 363). Though scientists debunked the existence of these rays shortly after their discovery, Quiroga uses them to lend a scientific air to “El vampiro” (Reid par. 6).

In the story, Grant gives Rosales all the information he can remember about his studies of the cryptic rays, but Rosales wants more information, and the two of them set up a meeting. Rosales is a rich and eccentric man with enough means to afford a mansion with a large laboratory. He is interested in a theory Grant proposed in his research, one based on the pseudo-science of thoughtography in which thoughts are used “to make photographic images by

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1 Quiroga makes no distinction between N rays and N^1 rays though Annie Boule notes that N1 rays would actually decrease the brightness of incandescent bodies (363).

mentally influencing photographic film" (Netzley). Interestingly, Quiroga also wrote another story involving this phenomenon, "El retrato," published in 1910, which some see as the precursor to the present story (Boule 362). Apparently, Grant had proposed that if a light sensitive plate could create a copy of an image stored in the retina—thoughtography at its best—it is possible that N^1 rays combined with deep concentration and prolonged gazing could create a visible and tangible copy of life from a filmed image—a body in a more literal sense. Let us note, as Wong-Russell does, that Quiroga glosses over any information about what role the N^1 rays have in the outcome of the experiment, preferring to keep the scientific details enigmatic and thus "reflective of the unstable status [the rays] held in scientific circles of his day" (128).

Grant is very skeptical of Rosales, but he accepts an invitation to meet with him again at a later date. However, it is a chance encounter at the movie theater that brings the two together again. Upon leaving the theater, they enter a nearby café to discuss film, and a quite revealing conversation occurs between the two of them. Rosales inquires of Grant whether he thinks that there is more to film than just a simple photographic illusion, suggesting that on-screen actresses possess a certain life to them. If this were not the case, he suggests, filmed actresses would not have such a profound effect on the male spectator: "¿Cree usted que solo puede haber un galvánico remedo de vida en el semblante de la mujer que despierta, levanta e incendia la sala entera? ¿Cree usted que una simple ilusión fotográfica es capaz de engañar de ese modo el profundo sentido que de la realidad femenina posee un hombre?" (380-381). These questions strike at the heart of this entire study, because I am arguing here that this is indeed the case. That is, in Quiroga's stories film's recreation of life—its body—can indeed affect the spectator just as profoundly as the real thing by imitating that reality. This goes hand in hand with Quiroga's description of film's mimetic potential, as we saw in the previous chapter. Quiroga, like his

character Rosales, sees more than just an illusion of light in the body that is film. As we will see, this body of "luz galvánica" has an overwhelming potential to transmit its intensity in the play of affect between spectator and film.

Following their conversation after the movies, Grant accepts an invitation to Rosales's house on the following Tuesday. When Grant arrives at Rosales's mansion, he let in by the servants and then asked to wait, but he is eventually turned away under the pretense that Rosales is feeling ill. The next day, he receives an apology from Rosales and an invitation to return the following Tuesday. By this time, Grant thinks the man is completely insane but decides to go anyway. When Grant arrives for the second time at the mansion, Rosales conducts him to the dining room where there awaits a translucent, spectral copy of a beautiful actress: "No era una mujer, era un fantasma; el espectro sonriente, escotado y traslúcido de una mujer" (383). Grant is shocked by the apparition of the ghostly woman, whose sudden appearance may remind us of the famous scene in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* in which Judy becomes Madeleine, stepping out into the green light of the hotel room. Her beauty, gaze, otherworldliness, and likeness to the real actress all serve to increase her affective potential. As a metaphor for film, the actress demands his attention and affects him to such an extent that he seems to barely have any control over himself. He stops dead in his tracks, but noticing Rosales's nonchalant attitude toward the situation, he moves further into the dining room. Still, he becomes pallid and tense ("pálido y crispado" 383) and can barely utter a few words before the impressive image of the woman, explaining in his narration of the moment: "En cualquier otra circunstancia distinta de aquella, la fina lluvia del espanto me hubiera erizado y calado hasta los huesos. Pero ante el parti pris de vida normal ya anotado, me deslicé en el vago estupor que parecía flotar sobre todo" (383).

Rosales introduces the two of them, but it seems they already know each other. Grant recognizes the actress from her movies, having attended them quite frequently. Curiously, however, the actress also recognizes Grant, having watched him attend her movies from the privileged place of the screen—similar to the experience of the actress described in "El puritano." The following transcription of this scene between Rosales, Grant, and the spectral woman offers us particular insight:

> –¿Siempre va usted al cinematógrafo, señor Grant? –me preguntó Rosales.
>
> –Muy a menudo –respondí.
>
> –Yo lo hubiera reconocido a usted en seguida –se volvió a mí la dama–. Lo he visto muchas veces...
>
> –Muy pocas películas suyas han llegado hasta nosotros –observé.
>
> –Pero usted las ha visto todas, señor Grant –sonrió el dueño de casa–. Esto explica el que la señora lo haya hallado a usted más de una vez en las salas.
>
> –En efecto –asentí; y tras una pausa sumamente larga–: ¿Se distinguen bien los rostros desde la pantalla?
>
> –Perfectamente –repuso ella; y agregó un poco extrañada–: ¿Por qué no?
>
> –En efecto –torné a repetir, pero esta vez en mi interior. (384)

This peculiar exchange reinforces the concept of film as an embodied entity, one that participates as more than just an object of visual contemplation but as a subjective body with its own gaze. While she has been given a more physical body through Rosales's experiment, her knowledge of Grant predates her tangible, 3-D form. Vivian Sobchack discusses this exchange between film and spectator as a transitive exchange between two "body-subjects" not a unidirectional relationship between the spectator-as-subject and the film-as-object. She explains

the act of seeing in terms of the expression "address of the eye" in which address is used as both a noun and a verb: "*address*, as noun and verb, both denotes a location where one resides and the activity of transcending the body's location, originating from it to exceed beyond it as a projection bent on spanning the worldly space between one body-subject and another" (25). In other words, vision has an *address*, an origin in the form of an embodied entity's physical location, and it *addresses* something else (an addressee, a destination) through projection. As a film has both a body (an address, an origin) and it addresses the audience visually (a destination), in a certain sense, film too sees. Thus, what Quiroga gives us in this first exchange between Grant and the movie star is a clear example of Dixon's "look back" in which the spectator becomes the object of the filmic gaze. He becomes the object of Sartre's look of the Other, and in this case, that Other is film itself. Grant is being watched just as much as he is doing the watching.

Returning to Sobchack's earlier description of the medium, "El vampiro," much like "El espectro" adds a fourth layer to film: it is an act of seeing that which sees *us* that makes itself seen. It is the realization of this fourth element that reveals film's particular power. Instead of us apprehending the image, it is apprehending us, causing a shift in affective power which results in the visceral emotional reactions of captured affect. Curiously, although Grant was quite stunned at the initial appearance of the movie star, he seems less shocked about her recognizing him in the audience, accepting it without much objection. This indifference might be explained by the state of shock that he is in, but even still, one would expect it to provoke more of a reaction. Instead, it seems almost natural to him, as if he takes it for granted that film, far from being just an object of visual pleasure, is also an active participant, an embodied subject that also sees and apprehends the world around it much like we do with our vision. At any rate, it is clear that in the

text film is more than just an object. On the continuum of its capacity to "move" or "be moved," it has a great capacity for moving, something that will become even more clear by the end of the story.

Although still somewhat uncomfortable with the situation, Grant chats with Rosales and the woman for a while until the spectral actress gets tired and must rest. While she sleeps, Rosales explains to Grant the process of her creation and the reason he had turned Grant away the previous week. In order to create this ghostly woman, Rosales projected a part of her film under the excitation of light, voltage, N^1 rays, and a combination of intense willpower and fervent imagination. His gaze seems to have transmitted something of the affective intensity needed for a change in the state of film's body from its flat form into a 3-D image, yet we later find out that this is not enough. Beyond that, the specifics remain unexplained. The week previous, he had performed a similar experiment, but due to a moment's lull in concentration in which a mad idea had interrupted his thoughts, Rosales brings to life a creature from the other side of the grave: "Por un desvío de la imaginación, posiblemente corporicé algo sin nombre … De esas cosas que deben quedar para siempre del otro lado de la tumba" (385). The use of the word "corporizar" is noteworthy as it reminds us again of the play between bodies that is occurring here as a 2-D body puts on a 3-D form.

Grant starts spending all of his nights in the company of Rosales and the spectral actress. He describes his existence in terms of a double life in which his days seem like a dream and his nights almost surreal:

> En las horas diurnas estoy seguro de que un individuo llamado Guillermo Grant ha proseguido activamente el curso habitual de su vida, con sus quehaceres y contratiempos de siempre. Desde las 21, y noche a noche, me he hallado en el palacete de Rosales …

> Como el soñador de Armageddon, mi vida a los rayos del sol ha sido una alucinación, y yo he sido un fantasma creado para desempeñar ese papel. Mi existencia real se ha deslizado, ha estado contenida como en una cripta, bajo la alcoba morosa y el dosel de plafonniers lívidos, donde en compañía de otro hombre hemos rendido culto a los dibujos en losange del muro, que ostentaban por todo corazón el espectro de una mujer. (387)

Anna Reid compares Grant's experience here with Gautier's famous priest in *La morte amoureuse* who also lived a double life, adding that Grant's life "ya no le pertenece y ya no se sabe dónde están los límites entre la realidad y los sueños, entre lo fantasmal y lo humano, entre lo diurno y lo nocturno, entre la locura y la cordura" (Par. 8). Grant's lack of control may be symptomatic of him losing his ability to affect in the presence of the power of film.

Here Quiroga creates a nexus between all elements of the story which serves as an analogy for film and the fantastic genre within which he is writing. At the level of the story, his time with the actress advances the plot, creating with it the growing obsession Grant and Rosales feel for the actress. However, it also serves as a metaphor for film itself and the sleepless nights that men spend in perceived intimacy with gorgeous movie stars—a voluntary fantasy that profoundly affects their sense of reality. Grant and Rosales, just like any filmgoer, willingly suspend their disbelief that the relationship can ever truly be something more than spectral. Similarly, if film shows us a realistic representation of reality, it is only because we allow ourselves to be sucked into the reality it creates, something that Quiroga well understands. As M. Gallo explains, "El cine, observado desde una nueva codificación artística, presenta para Quiroga el ideal de mímesis pretendido por toda representación realista, en un movimiento desorbitado que lo lleva a confundir *voluntariamente* realidad y ficción" (88-89 [emphasis added]). If we recall Tom Gunning's article on early film, he also suggests that we find pleasure in the illusion

even though we are "aware that the film is merely a projection" (119). In fact, it is this voluntary belief in the fantasy, portrayed so well here by Grant and Rosales's reaction to the movie star, which bestows upon film, in part, its ability to affect us so profoundly.

Furthermore, this scene highlight's the central facet of the fantastic genre, which also serves as a metaphor for film. Tzvetan Todorov states that works pertaining to the fantastic genre occur "In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires" and that in that world "there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world" (25). He further states that a text of the fantastic genre must create a sense of vacillation in the reader as he or she "hesitate[s] between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described" (33). Fantastic literature, like film itself, increases its affective potential when we start to entertain the possibility of the fantasy—the supernatural explanation—as reality. The surreal quality of the moments in which Grant spends in the company of the actress reinforces the reader's doubts as to the veracity of the account and provokes strong sensations of hesitation. However, the possibility that she is indeed created through scientific experimentation increases the effect the story can have on the reader. Fantastic literature's ability to affect the reader is very well studied. Todorov states that "the fantastic produces a particular effect on the reader—fear, or horror, or simply curiosity—which the other genres or literary forms cannot provoke" (92). H. P. Lovecraft mentions the "certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces" (105) that characterizes many fantastic stories. By crafting a fantastic story about the effects of film on the spectator, Quiroga masterfully describes film in terms of this fantastic effect. Film, like fantastic literature, causes what Gunning calls "a pleasurable vacillation between belief and doubt" (117). It is by entertaining the possibility of the fantasy's reality that we concede to the story—or to fantastic

literature, or to film—the power each has to affect us. It is this concession of power that eventually leads to Rosales's demise.

Rosales becomes obsessed with the spectral creation, but he will not be satisfied until he can give her a soul. He tells Grant: "No sería sincero si me mostrara con usted ampliamente satisfecho con mi obra. He corrido graves riesgos para unir a mi destino esta pura y fiel compañera; y daría lo que me resta de años por proporcionarle un solo instante de vida" (387). In order to truly bring her to life, Rosales decides to travel to Hollywood in order to kill the real actress, hoping that in some way her soul will end up in the phantasmagoric body he has created: "Solo un golpecito del destino puede concederle la vida a que toda creación tiene derecho," he says, later explaining that that "golpecito" he intends to instigate is the death of the actress "allá en Hollywood" (388). Grant tries to convince him not to do it, but Rosales leaves anyway, although he has no proof that such a plan will even work. Mariana Amato posits that the reason behind this decision is that Rosales believes his creation to be superior to humanity and therefore "digna del sacrificio de cualquier ser vivo corriente" (89). Rosales fuels the fantasy of creating a superior life form, leading him to commit murder.

While he is away, Grant agrees to come to Rosales's house to spend his time with the apparition of a woman, but any spark that once existed between the two of them is gone: "La joven y yo, en la mesa, solíamos hablar animadamente, sobre temas variados; pero en el salón apenas cambiábamos una que otra palabra y callábamos en seguida, ganados por el estupor que fluía de las cornisas luminosas, y que hallando las puertas abiertas o filtrándose por los ojos de llave, impregnaba el palacete de moroso mutismo" (389). It seems that Grant, who now is preoccupied with Rosales's Machiavellian plan, has put up a wall between himself and the actress, lessening his ability to be affected by her. They resort to making monotonous

observations about how close Rosales is to killing the actress in Hollywood. Grant uses the qualifier "debe" to express where he thinks Rosales might be on any given day: "Ya debe estar en Guayaquil" (389). The spectral woman, on the other hand, uses unqualified affirmations: "Ha salido ya de San Diego," then "Está en Santa Mónica," and finally "Está en casa" (389). This last observation is especially striking as it further cements the relationship between the specter and the real actress. For Quiroga, as we saw in "El espectro" and "El puritano," there is not much separation between filmed actors and their physical counterparts. The specter of the filmed image is inseparably connected with the reality it represents. The body of light stands in for the physical body but is no less powerful in its ability to transmit affect.

Finally, the fateful moment arrives, and Grant imagines the demise of the actress in Hollywood: "Cerré los ojos y vi entonces, en una visión brusca como una llamarada, un hombre que levantaba un puñal sobre una mujer dormida" (389). Grant then blacks out, and we are left to wonder if what he imagined really happened or not. He spends several days bedridden and does not go back to the mansion while Rosales is still away. When his eccentric friend comes back, Grant is shocked to see that the beautiful actress is now just a pile of translucent bones. Though the actress is dead and the creation is just a pile of bones, the residual effects of the woman's presence haunt the two of them. The affect in the air is almost palpable. As Grant recounts: "Sabemos que ella vaga por allí, atónita e invisible, dolorosa e incierta. Cuando en las altas horas Rosales y yo vamos a tomar café, acaso ella está ya ocupando su asiento desde horas atrás, fija en nosotros su mirada invisible" (391). The woman continues to stalk them with her invisible, film-like gaze.

Finally, one day Rosales tells Grant about what he believes went wrong: "¿Sabe usted, señor Grant, qué ha faltado a mi obra?" he asks (392). Grant replies: "Una finalidad … que usted creyó divina" (392). To which Rosales responds:

> Usted lo ha dicho. Yo partí del entusiasmo de una sala a oscuras por una alucinación en movimiento. Yo vi algo más que un engaño en el hondo latido de pasión que agita a los hombres ante una amplia y helada fotografía. El varón no se equivoca hasta ese punto, advertí a usted. Debe de haber allí más vida que la que simulan un haz de luces y una cortina metalizada. Que la había, ya lo ha visto usted. Pero yo creé estérilmente, y este es el error que cometí. Lo que hubiera hecho la felicidad del más pesado espectador, no ha hallado bastante calor en mis manos frías, y se ha desvanecido … El amor no hace falta en la vida; pero es indispensable para golpear ante las puertas de la muerte. Si por amor yo hubiera matado, mi criatura palpitaría hoy de vida en el diván. Maté para crear, sin amor; y obtuve la vida en su raíz brutal: un esqueleto. Señor Grant: ¿Quiere usted abandonarme por tres días y volver el próximo martes a cenar con nosotros? (392)

This quote is important for various reasons. Firstly, Rosales reiterates the idea that there is more to film than a simple illusion. Secondly, he states the reason he perceives as his downfall: having created the woman out of the cold desire to create and not out of love and having killed the real actress for the same reason. He decides that passion is the missing ingredient in his creation. He will create her again, this time attempting a more powerful transmission of affect through his amorous glance.

The following week, Grant returns to the mansion only to find that Rosales has succeeded in creating a livelier, more passionate version of the actress. She now looks at Rosales with the piercing gaze of desire, becoming the titular vampire of the story. Grant writes about the

passionate glance twice. When he first enters Rosales's house, he notes the ardent power of her gaze: "Vi entonces pasar por sus ojos fijos en él la más insensata llama de pasión que por hombre alguno haya sentido una mujer" (393). Later, when they are eating, he notices that when "sus miradas se encontraron … vi relampaguear en los ojos de ella … el calor inconfundible del deseo" (393). Grant warns Rosales that her intense gaze will be too powerful for him to resist and that she will be his undoing: "La pasión de ese … fantasma, no la resiste hombre alguno…Su vida ha resistido a muchas pruebas, pero arderá como una pluma, por poco que siga usted excitando a esa criatura … Es un vampiro" (393).

Vampirism is the perfect metaphor for affect as it speaks to the idea of affect contagion mentioned by Gibbs. The vampire, perhaps especially the female vampire, has a high potential to affect. The female vampire as seductress has its roots as early as the 18th Century, though the 19th Century was host to many more vampiric *femme fatales* who became "more and more sensual and voluptuous" ("plus en plus sensuelles et voluptueuses") throughout the century (Marigny 21). She is beautiful and captivating, her gaze alluring and her every movement enticing. When she enters a room, her presence is felt immediately as the room is impregnated with affect, intensities that spread throughout the space between her body and those of her victims, bringing out the emotions of fear and lustful desire. Her bite is a metaphor for the process of affectation in itself. While their penchant for sucking human blood is the most common trait associated with vampirism, Laurence A. Rickels notes that "by the eighteenth century vampirism had become synonymous with contagious disease" (18). This association continues into the present day, vampirism being seen as a sort of communicable infirmity. In Bethesda Softwork's 2006 video game *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*, for example, one's character becomes a vampire by contracting the vampire disease "porphyric hemophilia" after coming into contact with one of the

beings. The vampire's bite, then, is associated with infection. She transmits her vampirism like a disease, inciting violent changes in the bodies of her victims.

Film, too, has often been discussed in its relation to vampirism. As Jeffrey Weinstock puts it, "the vampire, present at the birth of cinema, has shaped our thinking about the cinema. The same cinematic apparatus that raises the dead drains life from the living and all vampire cinematic texts to varying extents circle back upon themselves, underlining the cinema itself as a vampiric medium" (58). Gómez López-Quiñones explains how film vampirizes culture and history by capturing images: "El cine es y ha sido una máquina capaz de captar todos los cambios culturales, vitales e históricos para después devolverlos en forma de imágenes" (474). Describing film in terms of vampirism, what Loreto Gómez López Quiñones explains is part of the blood-sucking metaphor of film. However, the metaphor of blood-sucking can also be applied to the relationship between the filmgoer and the film, for film also feeds on the spectator's energy. The more the spectators let film affect them, the more it will. The more they suspend their disbelief, the more they engage with the story, the characters, the pacing, and the special effects, the higher film sits along the continuum of affectivity. Nevertheless, film also possesses the vampiric ability of infection, an ability that it uses in tandem with the blood-sucking capacity already described. Film feeds on the spectators' energy and engagement, and uses that energy to further infect them with affective intensities which manifest themselves in reactions of fright, laughter, sadness, anger, etc. This sets up a feedback loop of affective transfer in which spectators fuel film's potential to further affect them. This feedback loop of affection is perfectly demonstrated by Rosales's final creation of the woman, which is laid out in the next paragraph.

Rosales explains to Grant how he was able to succeed in creating a more lifelike version of the woman. He had continually projected clips from her movies in which she was expressing an extreme passion onto an N^1 ray sensitive screen. The sensual power of these scenes transmitted to him an intensity that fueled his own passionate response. He then returned his own gaze on the filmic representation, projecting his amorous glance back onto the woman. It is through this process that she eventually stepped off of the screen. Here we witness the feedback loop of affective transmission. The film affects Rosales so that he can affect the film. By gazing at the filmed actress, he attempts to move the film into existence, acting on the image of the woman and the film itself as objects of his sexualized male gaze. However, when the woman steps off of the screen, the balances are again switched. Suddenly Rosales has become the object of film's gaze, the address of the woman's eye. Valeria de los Ríos describes this shift in power in the following terms:

> [E]sta proyección del mundo de sombras que es el cine necesita del espectador para materializarse, de modo que Ella dirige su deseo hacia Rosales y extrae de él toda su energía. El cine funcionaría así no sólo como una máquina ciega sobre la que proyectamos nuestros deseos, sino que nos devolvería la mirada, una mirada espectral, ni muerta ni viva, que absorbe la energía de quienes la contemplan. (313)

As de los Ríos points out, the film needs the spectator to survive and the spectator cannot exist without the spectacle. The battle of affectation between film and spectator is certainly a bidirectional process, but the ending of the story seems to suggest the preeminence of film in this interchange of intensities.

Rosales ultimately does not heed Grant's warnings and soon becomes prey to the unmediated affective potential of film. When Grant returns again the next day, he finds Rosales

dead. The servants think it was due to a heart attack provoked by a house fire. Grant, however, is sure that there is not a drop of blood left in his friend's lifeless body: "Mi impresión es otra," he writes, "La calma expression de su rostro no había variado, y aún su muerto semblante conservaba el tono cálido habitual. Pero estoy seguro de que en lo más hondo de las venas no le quedaba una gota de sangre" (395). The actress is nowhere to be found, but if we believe the fantastic explanation we can be sure that it was through her ardent gaze that the actress finally causes the visceral reactions that end in the scientist's death. Whether from a heart attack or a lack of blood, Rosales body underwent a change caused by the intense passionate energies being captured by his body. Film's gaze was too powerful.

Some read the story as a cautionary tale about the power of technology and unbridled curiosity. Anna Reid points out that Rosales has become another Dr. Frankenstein, the victim of his own creation: "Quiroga demuestra una inquietud profunda acerca de los deseos perversos del ser humano de experimentar con la pseudo-ciencia y jugar con los límites entre lo racional y lo irracional, entre la vida y la muerte" (par. 9). Similarly, Cynthia Duncan points out that "The equation of scientific experimentation with divine creation is at the heart of the story and calls into question modern man's absolute faith in logic and reason" (70). These readings are valid and insightful. Quiroga was writing in a time of rapid change and technological marvels—both ingenious and frightful—that changed the world. However, perhaps more importantly, these stories highlight the overwhelming potential of film to affect filmgoers who let themselves become enchanted by the power of its sublime gaze. Though the spectator has much power to affect film, film's staggering capacity for preying on the spectator's affect and its infectious bite remind us of film's supremacy.

Conclusion

In today's world, the spectacle of film is more or less taken for granted. Moving images permeate our daily existence. Film and television are commonplace. New technologies—computers, cell phones, the internet, and social media—have made it possible for the average person to create and share videos with ease. Billboards now move and unfold before us as we drive to school and work. Video games are becoming ever more realistic, and virtual reality is entering a renaissance of unprecedented proportions. Video chatting, too, has become ubiquitous. However, the prevalence of videos and movies does not make them any less powerful. Though the average person may be somewhat blind to its effects, the omnipresence of the moving image has radically changed how the world communicates, entertains itself, does business, and thinks.

While Horacio Quiroga never could have imagined the world in which we now live, he was no stranger to the power of the moving image. Perhaps by returning to the roots of cinema through Quiroga's stories and criticism, we can garner a better appreciation for film's impressive faculties. By becoming witnesses to the effects the nascent medium had on the early movie-going public, we can begin to understand how it continues to affect us into the present.

One might say that Quiroga's thoughts on film anticipated the film theory and film philosophy that would dominate the latter half of the twentieth century. He theorized the affective turn of film *avant la lettre*. In Quiroga's cinema stories, the author teases out the contradictory nature of film. It is both frightening and exhilarating, tangible and intangible, subject and object, target of our gaze and giver of the look back. We move it, and it moves us. These contradictions all point to the relationship between moving image and spectator, one which seems inherently unequal. Quiroga's criticism and stories suggest that the spectators have the power to affect film by criticizing it, objectifying its images, or refusing to suspend their

disbelief. However, in every one of his cinema stories, the film has the final say, and his characters are helpless before its incomparable power. The focus or center of that power is in the gaze.

Near the end of Quiroga's period as a film critic, cinema experienced a critical change with the introduction of sound films. Quiroga did not see film as a verbal medium, but as one in which the pure expression of the soul was manifested through the subtle expression, gestures, and gaze of the actors. In fact, he considered the ever-increasing use of dialogue intertitles to be a dilution of the very essence of cinema. In an article he wrote for *La Nación*, entitled "Espectros que hablan," he expresses his opinion on the matter:

> Pues bien: cuando por virtud de la elocuencia cada vez más sobria y sutil de la expresión, esperábamos que las leyendas o títulos de las cintas quedaran, si no excluidas, por lo menos reducidas a las diez o quince palabras en que el alma deja fluir su pasión, he aquí que damos un vuelco atrás, forzamos la llave a la izquierda, y la literatura excesiva torna a diluir, empañar y falsear la neta y clara elocuencia de una mirada, un gesto, una intención apenas perceptible en la extremidad de los dedos. ("Espectros que hablan" 337)

For Quiroga, it seems, the addition of more titles tarnished the simple eloquence of unadulterated visual expression.

Sound films, on the other hand, were for him a more serious sign of crisis for a film industry devoid of original ideas. He thought of it as a novelty that frustrated filmmakers used in an attempt to save the film industry. He writes: "Ya están agotados los ambientes del *Far-West*, del Canadá, de las finanzas, del *sport*, del *dancing*, de todos los extraños países que el cine inventa para gozo de la geografía. Es necesaria una novedad salvadora, y se vuelve entonces a un teatro fotográfico, acústico y espectral, como es el cine parlante" ("Espectros que hablan" 337).

Quiroga further indicates that de Forest's invention of synchronized sound may be good for scientific studies, but that it was no real artistic solution ("Espectros que hablan" 338).

His rejection of talkies seems to have been somewhat rooted in the poor sound quality of these early films which grated on the ears as they were played over the loudspeaker. He notes: "La conciencia de la realidad no alcanza a sincronizar, como lo hace el aparato del señor De Forrest [*sic*], la voz más o menos artificial y ruidosa de un altoparlante, con la vida también artificial del espectro que se desliza de un lado a otro por la superficie de la pantalla" ("Espectros que hablan 338). In other words, the poor sound quality of early sound films broke the illusion that film had once created so flawlessly. However, Quiroga's key argument against sound films was one of definitions. In his way of thinking, cinema was an art that should not rely on complex verbal messages. He states: "El mutismo forma parte de su esencia misma, y en estas condiciones su ilusión de vida puede llegar a ser perfecta" ("Espectros que hablan" 338). For Quiroga, film was a visual medium, and that definition separated it, in part, from the theater. If too many intertitles tarnished the simple elegance of a gaze, surely the addition of sound did the same in the mind of Quiroga.

Thus even in his rejection of silent film, Quiroga places emphasis on the gaze. For Quiroga, it seems, a striking gaze expresses much more than words—especially when these are produced with the artificial-sounding loudspeaker. In his stories, the gaze of filmed characters penetrates the spectators and impregnates the theater with affect. The gaze of a beautiful actress beckons the puritan to join her in the afterlife. Duncan Wyoming's gaze fills Grant with guilt and fear. The gaze of Dorothy Phillips creates desire and obsession. The vampiric gaze of the spectral actress destroys her creator. In every case, film gazes upon the spectator, reversing the

traditional roles of filmgoer as subject and film as object. For Quiroga, film is always looking back.

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