A Diamond Bigger than the Ritz: F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Gold Standard

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A DIAMOND BIGGER THAN THE RITZ: F. SCOTT FITZGERALD AND THE GOLD STANDARD

BY RICHARD GODDEN

I.

Writing in 1931 for the Saturday Evening Post, in nostalgic vein, Fitzgerald observed that “the Jazz Age . . . raced along under its own power, served by great filling stations full of money,” fuelling, presumably, Dos Passos’s “billion dollar speedup.”1 Whether treating of the opulent, the merely respectable, or the poor, the fiction of the 1920s seems well aware of “The Big Money.” It may be Gatsby’s enormous liquid assets or Clyde Griffiths’s “downpour of small change” in Theodore Dreiser’s An American Tragedy, but its influence is felt across the board.2 On the evidence of a rise in disposable income and an increase in consumer credit, it would be fair to assume that, if not on your street, then on someone else’s, “a whole race [was] going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure.”3 Sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd noted drily of Middletown—their “mid-channel sort of American community”—that “more and more of the activities of living are coming to be strained through the bars of the dollar sign.”4

One of the activities liable to the pecuniary sieve (circa 1925) is Daisy Buchanan’s voice: “Her voice is full of money,” full, that is, for the economists Kiyotaki and Moore, of “strange stuff.”5 Nick Carraway senses as much in his response to Gatsby’s observation:

That was it. I’d never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals’ song of it . . . High in a white palace the king’s daughter, the golden girl . . . (G, 115)

One dash and two ellipses shake the confidence of his embellished reiteration. One might remember that Marx, in an aside during his discussion of “Money, or the Circulation of Commodities,” notes that “the ellipse is a form of motion within which contradiction is both realized and resolved.”6 The rhythm of Nick’s prose—an interrupted
enthusiasm—may be thought to “realize” a particular contradiction, which it then “resolves” by changing the subject. Having heard coin (“jingle”) and cash register (“cymbals’ song”), perhaps too discernibly in Daisy’s speech, Nick’s first ellipse, triggered by “the cymbals’ song,” shifts emphasis from an orchestration of the cash nexus (whose notes and coins are merely symbols/“cymbals”) to that for which those symbols stand, “the golden girl,” or that metallic treasure which validates money’s promise to pay. Perhaps sensing that the promise in the note may not readily be redeemable in gold, Nick’s gloss on Gatsby’s comment breaks off in a second ellipse. Arguably, Nick’s sequencing of pauses carries a preference: although his commentary is incomplete, his concluding pause departs from gold, rather than from the clash of “c/symb[o]lic” cash. Perhaps “the golden girl” prefaces hesitation because Nick “realizes” but cannot “resolve” (or indeed face) a contradiction inherent in money, and, by association, in Daisy’s voice so full of that “strange stuff.”

But before becoming too “strange,” I should perhaps step back. “Her voice is full of money”: often, when confronted with metaphor, or in this instance with a judgment which inclines to metaphor (a monied voice) we paraphrase, as though in response to mere decoration, with the result that Gatsby might be thought to mean that Daisy’s voice promises much, after the manner of money as value (a golden voice for a “golden girl”). Just how much is caught in Nick’s “inexhaustible,” a modifier aptly glossed by John Forrester, writing on *Lies, Money and Psychoanalysis*, who comments, “[T]he promise of money is that one neutral object can give the holder of the banknote or the coin access to an infinitely large number of other objects, corresponding to the indefinite variety of his or her desires,” and all of it underwritten by the breath of “the golden girl,” a metallic guarantee.7 In such a reading, money lends something to voice (the promise met in gold). But in metaphoric comparisons, adequately considered, the interference of the two terms compared (one with another) works both ways. Where money lends something to voice, voice will lend something to money, creating a “semantic impertinence” out of which (as though among the ruins of the literal) the metaphor’s recipient experiences what Paul Ricoeur calls a “conceptual need”: she, to borrow from Aristotle, needs to see the likeness through the difference.8 How then might money be likened to voice? The observation that both are mediums of exchange, while true, misses how far monetary exchange, recast through speech, must resemble agitated air. But on what grounds might money be thought so phenomenologically immaterial?
A theoretical interlude. Marx indicates a threefold function for money: first, a measure of value (money as price); second, a medium of circulation (money as liquidity, whose most typical form is credit); third, the general equivalent (money as treasure, standing for the extractable essence of value). As Suzanne de Brunhoff comments, “hoarding [of treasure is that function] through which money temporarily ceases to be social flux and becomes the object of private possession, which restores it to its first state as a general equivalence.” She adds, following Marx, that “the aspect of hoarding has a special function: it serves to restore the connection between the credit system, overdeveloped by Speculation, and the real supply of money capital,” that is, the connection to treasure, in the form of gold or whatever is taken to be precious.9 Without the potential presence of hoarded “treasure,” the functionality of much credit might become too apparently fictitious.

I dwell on hoard because the “gold” in Daisy’s voice inclines to the hoardable. Indeed, in a further observation, Nick notes a second metallic standard within her tones:

She had caught a cold, and it made her voice huskier and more charming than ever, and Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor. (G, 142)

From voice to “wealth,” a wealth capable of “preserv[ing]” “youth,” exempting it from wear, tear and temporality, as though “youth,” care of money (its “imprison[er]”), became a “body-within-a-body,” sustained, ever “fresh,” by the guarantee of some symbolic authority.10 One does not have to look far for that authority, “silver” (like gold) sets the standard, “safe” as a safe (though how it does so, remains something of a “mystery”). Slavoj Žižek (from whose phrasing I have been borrowing, even as he borrows from Alfred Sohn-Rethel) suggests that we treat money as though it were double-bodied: the notes and coins in our wallets and pockets crumple and tarnish, yet their value remains unmarked, constituting what Žižek terms “an indestructible and immutable body [value] which persists beyond the corruption of the physical body,” a “body within the body of money,” describable for Žižek as money’s “sublime object.”11 Silver and gold as precious and treasured monetary standards might be thought to figure such immaculacy. Yet they, in their materiality, miss the immateriality of value as a general equivalent, present in and yet transcending every
instance of monetary exchange. Fitzgerald reaches for the tone of Daisy’s voice; Žižek for the lexicon of the sublime. I am reminded of Marx, who notes of Value (or the idea of the general equivalent, without which money cannot function), that it

suddenly represents itself as an independent substance, endowed with a motion of its own, passing through a life-process of its own, in which money and commodities are mere forms which it assumes and casts off in turn.12

“Independent,” “of its own,” where does Value reside, if not even in hoardable, banked evidence that money may yield an extractable treasure (or metallic reserve), which would seem to represent its true value (“safe . . . above the hot struggles of the poor”)? Žižek’s answer is intriguingly simple and of ultimate relevance to the expanded consumerism out of which Fitzgerald writes in the twenties. For Žižek, money’s “sublimity” inheres in its use, or in the daily work done with money. Again, I must back up: money is one commodity among very many. Its use renders possible a comparison between itself and all other commodities; that comparison establishes a commensurability of value, not dependent on the particular quality of the things compared. Money necessarily therefore involves a moment of “real abstraction” (Sohn-Rethel’s phrase): on being priced (made commensurable), a commodity is abruptly and immaculately reconceived as disincarnate—insofar as its value seemingly no longer resides in its concrete, empirical, sensual and particular qualities.13

Of course, nothing (though everything) has changed: money’s “real abstraction” is not “real” after the manner of a commodity’s other concrete properties. “Value” does not join texture, taste, smell or colour; rather, it inheres within the priced good (for Žižek) as a “postulate” (a certain “as if”), implied by the effective act of exchange.14 To transfer property by money is to behave as if that property (those commodities) were properly liable to a “double abstraction”: firstly, abstracted from its changeable character (the good, as the deal is dealt, stands unnaturally still, like an object in a shop window, supposedly released from temporal change); secondly, abstracted from its concrete particularity (edged from quality towards the quantity of price).15 Yet those who exchange know very well that this is not the case; nonetheless they behave as though it were. Their behaviour, as money (M) passes through commodity (C) to yield money-plus-some (M1) (M-C-M1), disincarnates the goods in which they deal, infusing them with the
alternative body of money, or a “real abstraction.” As Sohn-Rethel argues, we know that money suffers from the effects of use (wear and tear), but in terms of its social effectivity within the market, we treat money “as if” it consists of “an immutable substance, a substance over which time has no power, and which stands in antithetical contrast to any matter found in nature.”

At a cultural moment in the 1920s, when “more and more of the activities of living are coming to be strained through the bars of the dollar sign,” the body of money will inhere more generally in the body of things, transubstantiating those things into the “strange stuff” of capitalist reality—at once densely material and yet spectrally immaterial.

In a recent study of reification Timothy Bewes describes “life in a consumer society [as] . . . a collective hallucination.” In order to nail the point that the “hallucinination,” or the postulated “as if,” inhere in the social practices of M-C-M1, I will risk extending my already overextended theoretical interlude through a further brief twist. Žižek’s “postulate” (as if) owes much to accounts of the fetish . . . but first, a story (to lighten the load): an Emperor, according to Hans Christian Andersen (you will remember), believing in the repute of trickster tailors, walks naked in the street to exhibit their garments, confident in their reassurance that the splendour of those garments will be visible to the discerning. Yet when a boy on the street, ignorant of that assurance, cries, “He’s naked,” the Emperor does not cover his genitals and run, he continues with the mask, displaying his invisible splendor rendered visible (and quasi-material) through his subjects sharing with him a fetish (or secret as public as money), which fetish hardens into a workaday fact before their eyes—becoming that fictional matter which “makes matter matter.” (My phrasing derives from the ethnographer Michael Taussig’s discussion of the power of the public secret, or of that which we know but know also and equally that we must not know.) The problem with such affective secrets or fetishes, as the Emperor’s new clothes, or indeed money, is not that their fictionality yields no matter (without matter, fictionality would be easily discredited), but that the matter which it yields, often excessive in its realness (the Emperor is both without a stitch and gorgeously attired), includes within that realness a constant anxiety that the secret will explode, the fetish self destruct. Witness Daisy’s voice, freighted with associative densities, yet so difficult to hear. Taussig might claim that the “overwhelming realness” of the fetish stems from “the presence of absence itself.” To translate: fetishes are affective because formed through an intense disavowal of that which they displace; so, absence

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“Disavowal” is a Freudian term, akin to Žižek’s “postulate.” For Freud, the fetish is a technology for translating loss into desire, absence into erotic presence: most famously, a child, at a loss for its mother, throws a cotton reel, only to draw the reel back to itself on a piece of string. What Freud calls the *fort/da* game enables the child to master loss by infusing an object with anxiety over maternal departure and pleasure at maternal return. Of course, the child knows that the reel is not a breast, but its charged activities elide the wooden and the mammorial, producing a curious object that is and is not mother. Such an object is subject to what Freud calls “disavowal”: that is to say, those who experience desire through the fetish know that the fetish is and is not what is desired, but even so know that they desire it. As with the reel, so with money: both are objects of fascination, prompting pleasures inseparable from a disavowal of anxieties over absence or loss.

To backtrack to the departure point for this theoretical interlude, to the question concerning the immaterial materiality of money and its forms (among them, Daisy’s voice): anxiety is the very stuff of this “strange stuff.” Note again that commodities, care of money, their enabler and secret sharer, materialize through a postulated “as if” akin to the hallucination attendant on fetishistic disavowal (the knowledge that knows, and yet knows that it is not so). Note also that money, in its purpose, is at odds with itself—required to do contradictory things (not least to function as measure of value and as lubricant). With such a C.V., the phenomenology of money, even as it draws more and more of the activities of living into itself, remains prey to its own experiential instabilities.

Even gold—a key constituent of the three-fold work of money (price, liquidity, treasure), the constituent that puts the precious into the promise to pay—even gold has its volatilities. Too demonstratively withdrawn from the system that it validates, gold (hoarded) sets that system at risk: a run on gold infers a lack of trust in notes; panic ensues; banks cease to issue loans or guarantee credit; the motility of money falters and dies. Forrester, contemplating Georg Simmel as he in turn contemplates bullion held as specie in vaults, comments, “We stopped building mausoleums because the banks, built in their image, came to serve the function of housing the most essential of our dead.” Gold, “the most essential of our dead,” remains the life of exchange while being itself dead. Keynes, looking back from the 1930s towards the gold standard, elaborates:
It is a recognized characteristic of money as a store of wealth [or hoard] that it is barren; whereas practically every other form of wealth [in land or machinery or credit] yields some interest or profit. Why should anyone outside a lunatic asylum wish to use money as a store of wealth?23

Keynes’s argument, recast through Taussig and Žižek, might run as follows: gold as a material thing does nothing, and so is barren, dead stuff, fit only for display in an economic “lunatic asylum.” Yet gold, as an idea—a “public secret” or “postulate”—put into practice in each and every act of exchange (and informing the materiality of all things exchanged), proved the structural key to the workings of the liberal global market which emerged during the final third of the nineteenth century, and persisted, against considerable odds, until the Crash of 1929, and the ensuing “great transformation” of the 30s.

Karl Polanyi, historian and theorist of that market, describes “belief in the gold standard” during the twenties as “the faith of the age,” adding that since, in the modern economy,

> currency had become the pivot of national politics . . . nobody could fail to experience the daily shrinking or expanding of the financial yardstick; populations became currency conscious; the effect of inflation on real income was discounted in advance by the masses; men and women everywhere appeared to regard stable money as the supreme need of human society.24

Such “faith” rested on the assumption, Polanyi argues, “that bank notes have value because they represent gold”:

> Whether gold itself has value for the reason that it embodies labour, as the socialists held, or for the reason that it is useful and scarce, as the orthodox doctrine ran, made no difference.25

Faced with immediate postwar inflation, the need to restore a country’s currency via gold, so that that country might trade, repay loans or pay reparations, was shared by Herbert Hoover, Vladimir Lenin, Winston Churchill and Benito Mussolini. Polanyi concludes that the gold standard was “the invisible reality” or “golden thread” to which “the will to live could cling, when mankind braced itself to the task of restoring its crumbling existence.”26

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Yet, in 1922, Fitzgerald’s Braddock Washington (named for the nation’s political capital, in both senses of that phrase), in “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz,” knows (without quite knowing) that gold is no longer good enough. What his actions ultimately entail runs directly counter to America’s economic interests. But first, a context for those actions: the United States emerged from the First World War with a great capital surplus and owning much of the world’s gold. To sell abroad it had to transfer wealth to potential buyers. From 1921, the government encouraged private overseas loans as a way of recycling cash for the purchase of U.S. exports. As a result, between 1924 and 1929, 80% of the capital borrowed by German credit institutions came from American banks. Arguably, central U.S. finance houses tried to function as an international bank in order to engineer an integrated global economy,

granting loans to countries that followed their stabilization procedures, selling and buying foreign exchange to influence gold movements and exchange rates, and trying to co-ordinate the domestic monetary strategies of other countries.27

Between 1925 and 1928, the United States persuaded most European countries to get back on to gold, so that U.S. international investment might benefit from a single measure (“the golden thread”). Giovanni Arrighi, in his The Long Twentieth Century, suggests that U.S. “dollar diplomacy” during the twenties constituted a sustained attempt by the financial community of New York (in alliance with that of London) to return economically “to the world of 1913.” Arrighi summarizes:

Throughout the 1920s most Western governments shared the conviction that only the re-establishment of the pre 1914 world-monetary system, “this time on solid foundations,” could restore peace and prosperity. Whatever their ideological orientation, national governments adapted their fiscal and monetary policies to the safeguarding of the currency, while innumerable international conferences, from Brussels to Spa and Geneva, from London to Locarno and Lausanne, were held to create the political conditions of the restoration of the gold standard.28

And with it, I would add, the restoration of that twenty-year-long “moment” of “great splendor,” running from 1896 to 1913, the belle époque.29 Braddock Washington, poised on his diamond, would not look out of place among the proponents of Edwardian haute finance,
the Rothschilds and the Morgans . . . and yet by his actions, he knows (without quite knowing), that gold (that which each currency must be “as good as”) is not good enough.

The Washingtons’ “long epic in gold” commences in 1866 (as the close of the Civil War integrates the American market) with Fitz-Norman Culpepper Washington’s accidental discovery of a diamond mountain in Montana. Fitz-Norman markets fragments of his find on a global scale, so that by 1868 he computes his fortune at one billion dollars, “deposited to his credit in American banks” (“D,” 108). In the late 1890s, just prior to his death, he converts his cash into “rare minerals,” bought in bulk and deposited in the safety vaults of banks all over the world, marked as “bric-à-brac” (“D,” 108). Since gold is among the rarest of “minerals” (or mined matter), we may assume that Fitz-Norman invests in a global gold standard; a policy perpetuated by his son Braddock, on his inheritance in 1900. From diamond to dollar; from dollar to global gold (Braddock being likened to a “king and priest of the age of gold” [“D,” 133]); from gold, care of Braddock (and for reasons of miniaturization) to “radium,” whereby “the equivalent of a billion dollars in gold could be placed in a receptacle no bigger than a cigar box” (“D,” 108). In 1903 Braddock “sealed up the mine” (“D,” 109) in a final conversion, from production to finance capital, and from diamond through “radium” to “secret”: “His one care must be the protection of his secret, lest in the possible panic attendant on its discovery, he should be reduced with all the property holders in the world to utter poverty” (“D,” 109).

“Panic,” cataclysm and Crash structurally inhere in the Washingtons’ possession of a “secret” rather bigger than the Ritz: a secret known by Fitz-Norman from the first:

There was no valuing it by an regular computation, for it was one solid diamond—and if it were offered for sale not only would the bottom fall out of the market, but also, if the value should vary with its size . . . there would not be enough gold in the world to buy a tenth part of it. . . . It was an amazing predicament. He was, in one sense, the richest man that ever lived—and yet was he worth anything at all? (“D,” 107)

The treasured preciousness of Washington wealth resides in its “secrecy.” Moreover, the changing material form of that immaterial wealth—hidden under “aliases” as ‘odds and ends’ in “one thousand banks” (“D,” 108)—progressively implies not only that gold is no longer good enough, but that its substitutes, in that they are masked

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(secrets beneath misdirections), might absorb the fictionality of their pseudonyms. A diamond standard displaces a gold standard, only for that standard to give way to “radium,” understood primarily through a lexicon of light, and secreted as “bric-à-brac.”

John T. Unger, Percy Washington’s companion and implied viewpoint of the narrative, confesses himself an acolyte of gold: he attends St. Midas Preparatory School, announces his love for Kismine Washington with the gift of a “little gold football” inscribed “Pro deo et patria et St. Midas,” and, reaching for terms commensurate with the Washingtons’ diamond mountain, finds only “golden mystery,” though he sets his metallic adjective within a question, and compounds his interrogative with an ensuing ellipsis “What terrible and golden mystery? . . .” (“D,” 100). Nonetheless, and despite his preference, John’s lexicon, founded on gold, shifts through diamond towards luminescence:

Afterwards John remembered that first night as a daze of many colours, of quick sensory impressions, of music soft as a voice in love, and of the beauty of things, lights and shadows, and motions and faces. There was a white haired man who stood drinking a many-hued cordial from a crystal thimble set on a golden stem. There was a girl with a flowery face, dressed like Titania with braided sapphires in her hair. There was a room where the solid soft gold of the walls yielded to the pressure of his hand, and a room that was like a platonic conception of the ultimate prison—ceiling, floor, and all, it was lined with an unbroken mass of diamonds, diamonds of every size and shape, until, lit with tall violet lamps in the corners, it dazzled the eyes with a whiteness that could be compared only with itself, beyond human wish or dream (“D,” 101).

“[S]olid . . . gold” “soft[ens],” even as “things” assume no forms prior to immediate translation into “light,” whose source, in diamonds, yields a whiteness which trounces the golden mean by being comparable “only with itself.”

Implicitly, John passes at the touch of a hand from a golden room to a diamond room, where the second room seems curiously interior to the first (a secret chamber, reached as though through a “soft gold . . . wall”). Diamond takes precedence over gold, not least because the diamond room (itself a metonym for the mountain) embodies, with an impacted Platonism, the ideal form or essence of that from which it derives. I am reminded of Žižek’s notion of Value as money’s “sublime object,” established through the social practices of exchange as “a body within the body of money” (my emphasis). John notes briefly in passing
that the room’s ur-form is that of a “prison,” though the proximity of diamonds and light allows the word ‘prism’ an antonymic and dispersive presence within the term “prison”—dispersive particularly since the “whiteness” of the diamond-light “dazzles” the eye, in a manner that presages the diamond’s subsequent and finally “concuss[ive]” (“D,” 130) translation into the “iridescence” of radium (“D,” 133):

John put up his hands to shield his sight. Before their eyes the whole surface of the mountain had changed suddenly to a dazzling burning yellow, which showed up through the jacket of turf as light shows through a human hand. For a moment the intolerable glow continued, and then like an extinguished filament it disappeared, revealing a black waste from which blue smoke arose slowly[.]

Braddock Washington explodes his wired mountain to protect its secret by immolating that secret, along with all but three of those who know of the diamond’s contradictory existence. The manner of the explosion might be described, on several counts, as a trick of the light, or more exactly of a particular kind of light. In 1904 Clarence Dally, glassblower and laboratory employee in Edison’s Menlo Park laboratory, died as a result of long-term exposure to radiation poisoning. In 1903, his left arm, irradiated by his habitual and experimental placing of his left hand between a fluoroscope and an x-ray tube, had been infamously amputated. In 1904, Edison discontinued experiments on the commercial potential of radium as a source of light. In 1906 Jay Gatsby (then Jimmy Gatz) writes on the final fly-leaf of Hopalong Cassidy, “Study electricity, etc . . . 7.15–8.15 a.m.,” adding, “Study needed inventions . . . 7.00–9.00 p.m.” (G, 164). An inventory of the inventions, and perhaps applications, studied during that three hour daily period would surely include reference to the very many works of Edison’s lieutenant, William J. Hammer, author of the first book-length study of radium, Radium and Other Radioactive Substances, in 1903; producer of the first radium-based luminous paint in 1904; who, as a Major serving on the General Staff of the Army War College in Washington first suggested the military applicability of radium-luminous materials (most notably on the instruments of planes and the watches of soldiers). By 1922, the women who painted the dials—speeding up the work by holding brushes between their lips (at the Radium Luminous Material Factory, in Orange County, New Jersey) were dying as the result of ingested radioactive fluid. My list in plainly partial, speculative and orientated to what Fitzgerald might have known in 1922, as he refines gold into radium, to form the absolute specie, the ultimate

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bullion, the staple of “the golden thread,” placed by Washington in one thousand banks, worldwide.

Just prior to the explosion, Kismine sobs, “The mountain is wired!”: in the explosion’s immediate aftermath, the wire is identified as resembling “an extinguished filament,” a simile which sheds the “jacket of turf” to realize the diamond as a light bulb, burned out. The image is tacit and mundane: yet when, in 1879, Edison located carbonized cotton thread as a filament usable in an incandescent lamp, and as the prototype for a bulb that could be produced cheaply and sold in large quantities, he effectively laid the basis for his subsequent engineering of J. P. Morgan’s dollar into a corporate empire (care of the Edison General Electric Company [1894])—a corporate empire which drove America’s second industrial revolution via the supply of electricity and light, two of its essential energy inputs. But Washington’s diamond bulb emits a modified light: like Clarence Dally, projecting the bones of his hand by means of a fluoroscope and an x-ray tube, John Unger sees the diamond through a double filter—first, through the “turf”; second, and skeletally, through his own hands as they shield his sight. “Radium,” “radiance,” irradiation are copresent within electricity as the concluding expression of the diamond’s essence, itself the motive-source of the Washingtons’ “long epic in gold.” The semantic splitting intimated by the word “filament” (its illumination and extinction), sets volatility at the core of a standard, and sees a mean explode: effectively, Fitzgerald identifies the snapping of the golden thread, even as that snap renders worthless Washington’s radium deposits in the vaults of the global banking system. (During the story’s coda, John T. Unger points out that Kismine’s father’s “bank books were consumed with him” [“D,” 137], though it might have been surmised, even in 1922, that catastrophe inheres in the initial conversion of gold into radium, for all its accompanying benefits of storage and motility.) Washington, the epitome of haute finance, extinguishes the revolutionary dynamo and turns off his glittering revival of the belle époque. That he does so by way of the very materials that defined that revival—radium and electricity—lodges his action within absolute contradiction.

Immanuel Wallerstein, historian of capital, catches the intensifying quality of the contradictory in his observation that “contradictions not only provide the dynamic force of historical systems, they also reveal their essential features.” Arguably, the “dynamic force” of the belle époque, and of the liberal vision of the self-regulating market (of which the belle époque was simply the most splendid realization), lay in interlocking contradictions, themselves lodged within gold and the
gold standard. Generically, as part of a threefold monetary structure, gold represents that treasure which guarantees the notion of universal equivalence, and so enables the circuits of exchange. Yet, like the logical illogic of Washington’s gold to radium conversion, that treasure, extracted as the hoard, threatens the very system that it validates. David Harvey, in his study *The Limits to Capital*, identifies the problem:

[Capitalists in] their use of money as a medium of circulation through the agency of the credit system undermine . . . the utility of money as a measure and store of value. . . . To the degree to which [the] monetary basis is riddled with contradiction, so the world of finance is erected upon shaky foundations.35

So described, gold splits on its own crossed purpose: “store of value,” immobile reserve and site of “general equivalence,” yet circulating within each exchange as a “sublime object,” or “body [lodged] within the body of money,” by the very practice of exchange itself. The flaw in gold finds historically particular expression via the working of the gold standard as guarantor of the supposedly self-regulating liberal market during the last third of the nineteenth century, and, in “impaired” form, during the first third of the twentieth.36

Exponents of the liberal market needed a device whereby people of different nations might freely trade with one another, confident that monies so earned (whatever their currency) would be “as good as gold.” The International Gold Standard, widely adopted by the 1870s, and rendering currencies commensurate via a golden mean, was that device—for Polanyi, “an extraordinary intellectual achievement.”37 Confidence, on the back of gold, ensured that labor and land (or all things manufactured and grown), might increasingly be viewed not (in the case of labor) as an activity inseparable from life, or (in the case of land) as a gift of geography and history, but as prices-in-waiting, or profits to be made in the global marketplace. Gold, a “sublime object,” the enormity of whose sublimity increased with each sale, was, however, subject to what Polanyi describes as “double movement”:

While the organization of world commodity markets, world capital markets and world currency markets under the aegis of the gold standard gave an unparalleled momentum to the mechanisms of markets, a deep-seated movement sprang into being to resist the pernicious effects of a market controlled economy.38

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Frequently, gold proved a harsh “metallic taskmaster”: to run a society as an adjunct of the self regulating market meant effectively to ignore the needs of that society’s citizens in the cause of the best price. Unemployment, hunger, business failure, bank collapse might simply be what the price required; though, equally, the price required might prove too high for the politics of the society in question. In which case, although


Ergo: the global free trade imperative (made possible by gold) works against itself by generating protectionist impulses at national levels. Hence Polanyi’s “double movement” and, I would suggest, the deeply historical logic of Fitzgerald’s diamond.

“The Diamond as Big as the Ritz” is a diamond (rather than gold) in order to catch in its immateriality (so much matter made from light) the sublimity of “the body within the body of money,” set there by the work of the gold standard as it validates the expanded practice of the liberal market. The diamond is “as big as the Ritz” because its dimension offers a measure of gold’s reach as it goes global. The diamond’s “radiance” yields “radium” and eventually “irradiation,” to reflect that “double movement” caused by the golden rule as it contradicts itself, forcing intensifying and dynamic anxieties from the body politic of nations and citizens.

Even the gem’s minor facets mime the features of that regime of accumulation from whose deep structures it emerges. I have space only for a brief list of hinted comparisons. As Fitzgerald refines the gold standard, so the symptoms associated with the contradictory mean itself intensify, exposing the standard’s “dynamic force” and its “essential features.” That force and those features, occurring within Fitzgerald’s story, may be summarized under three headings: fictiveness, death, and empire. The diamond’s dimensions declare its fictiveness. Even as the gold standard required the commodification of everything (so that, for example, land, en route to price, might cease to function as nature, geography or history), so the gem possesses the merest substrate of soil (“fifty feet of sod and gravel” [“D,” 103] beneath “a jacket of turf” [“D,” 136]) and is approachable only nominally by way of Montana—Washington having had his diamond removed from any cartographic record of natural features, in order, perhaps, that it might
better manifest itself as a fictive (though secret) spectacle. Appropriately, the Washington château was designed by “a moving-picture fella” (“D,” 120), primarily, it seems, from facets of light, accompanied by complementary sound:

The many towers, the slender tracery of the sloping parapets, the chiselled wonder of a thousand yellow windows with their oblongs and hexagons and triangles of golden light, the shattered softness of the intersecting planes of star-shine and blue shade, all trembled on John’s spirit like a chord of music. (“D,” 100)

Guy Debord’s notion of the “spectacular” as “capital accumulated to the point where it becomes an image” might provide an apt theoretical setting for such a gem. Here, I would simply point out that for Debord (as, by implication, for Fitzgerald) the spectacle presaged “a new form of, or stage in, the accumulation of capital,” whereby “more and more facets of human sociability” were submitted to “the deadly solicitations (the lifeless bright sameness) of the market.”

“Death,” my second heading, results directly from “fictiveness” as an imperative of a globalizing liberal economy. Polanyi argues that the requirements of the golden mean “smashed up social structures in order to establish and extract their price” in a systematic manner amounting to “the demolition of society.” He adds that “the origins of the cataclysm,” he they War or Crash, “lay in the utopian endeavour of economic liberalism to set up a self regulating market system,” policed by gold. Life, around and on Fitzgerald’s revision of that regulatory mean, accordingly takes deathly forms. To approach the diamond one must pass through “the village of Fish,” a depot on the transcontinental railway line, “thinly populated [by] . . . twelve men . . . who sucked a lean milk from the almost literally bare rock” (“D,” 95). Those who take succor from rock are presumably miners rather than farmers, yet they know nothing of the diamond. They know only that “[s]ix times or so a year” the express, emerging from “the blue-black bruise in the distance,” halts to disembark figures who “drive off towards the bruised sunset” (“D,” 96). The markedly apostolic status of the men of Fish, coupled with their inclination to “congregate” in “silent concourse . . . each night at seven by the shanty depot,” in order that they may “lift . . . up a prayer of dim anaemic wonder” (“D,” 96), seemingly locates them as religious celebrants. Yet Fitzgerald, with contradictory emphasis, insists, “the men of Fish were beyond all religion . . . there was no altar, no priest, no sacrifice.” What then does a cult that is not

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a cult but “a sort of cult” ("D," 96) with regularity anticipate, in a manner that would seem to enervate them unto death? I would stress that although the twelve are impoverished workers, whose labor Fitzgerald reproduces figuratively as ‘suckling,’ their enervation stems not from mining but from anticipation. To pursue the logic of Fitzgerald’s dense metaphoric field (and to exaggerate only slightly), the twelve workers (a “species” or “race apart” [“D,” 95]), might be cast as worshipful victims of a vampiric force; their consequent “anaemia” ensuring that “there remained in them none of the vital quality of illusion which would make them wonder or speculate” ("D," 96). Whatever has sapped their “vitality” has liberally redistributed that essence, as blood, through the surrounding skyscape: “The Montana sunset lay between two mountains like a gigantic bruise from which dark arteries spread themselves” (“D,” 95). Under a thrice “bruised” sky, “[t]wilight” unsurprisingly “coagulates” (“D,” 96). Given that their draining labor of expectancy turns on the arrival of visitors to a diamond of which they remain ignorant, one might argue that their wounds (and the wounding of their environs) stem from their tenuous relation to the Washington gem—a stone that I have read as emblematic of “the golden thread” at the contradictory core of the immediate postwar economy.

Fitzgerald’s diamond, in its size and centrality, stands as a materialization of the precious, beside which labor, as a source of value, might be thought to pale into anaemia. Arguably, in the early twenties, U.S. industrial production, redefined via war-prompted technological revolution and intensified by Ford’s line and Taylor’s timely motions, existed only to yield surplus value: in effect, industrial labor became a means to a means (value) rather than to a particular end.45 As Moishe Postone puts it in his study of Marx, “the process of creating value transforms the elements of the very labor process in which it is expressed.”46 Marx draws a useful distinction between “material wealth” and “value,” a distinction directly applicable to the relation between Washington’s diamond and the labor of the men of Fish. “Material wealth,” for Marx, expresses, “the general state of science and its application to production”; “value” refers to surplus value as extracted from labor-time, to constitute the essence of capital itself.47 Among the elements of “material wealth” in the early twenties, the gold standard (a form of financial engineering) achieved a prominence that might be thought effectively to have displaced labor from its structural centrality as capital’s source of value. If so, labor becomes “anachronistic,” “a watchman,” “a miserable foundation” set “to the side” of wealth, perceived as its own source.48 I cull terms and phrases from Marx’s
Grundrisse, yet they apply directly to the condition of labor in Fish, and to the relation of Fish to the diamond. For Marx, whatever the appearance, the case remains that “value” extracted from labor determines wealth within capitalism, “even though material wealth becomes less [apparently] dependent on the expenditure of direct human labor.”

Since the Diamond appears to generate wealth without labor (the mine being closed), any link between gem as “material wealth” and Fish as locus of attenuated work (or “value”) might seem broken. Yet the link remains, care of Fitzgerald’s strained metaphoric network as it yields an overdetermined but mysterious insistence that the workers who wait, only to be all but killed by their waiting, do so in submission to a stone they cannot see.

Plain sight of the gem ensures death in more absolute forms. Braddock Washington’s work force are (literally) slaves, their parents (care of Fitz-Norman’s contrivance) “never [having] realized that slavery was abolished” (“D,” 107). Historians of the peculiar institution commonly refer to slaves as the “socially dead.” John T. Unger hails from Hades, presumably because, as a citizen of that nation possessed of more gold than most in 1920, he, with his “earnest worship of and respect for riches” (“D,” 98), resembles the adulatory men of Fish whom he passes “gathered like ghosts” (“D,” 96) on the diamond’s periphery to witness his arrival, deposited there by the seven o’clock Transcontinental Express from Chicago, as its “human (or inhuman) cargo” (“D,” 96). “([I]nhuman)” seeps from its parentheses because, in effect, Unger amounts to little more than Kismine’s first foray into her sister Jasmine’s chaste pursuit of serial necrophilia: on ascertaining his eventual fate, John complains to Jasmine that effectively she has been kissing a corpse. Logically, therefore, when the mountain explodes, no one dies (though very many do), since a populace committed to the sublimity of “the body within the body of money” (or to the diamond’s “real [and radiant] abstraction”) is necessarily and already thinned beyond social texture and abstracted to death’s door.

Historically, in 1920, such a population might be thought to exemplify a world turning again to gold. Politically, such returns promoted “empire” (the third of my headings). Arrighi argues that, in order to revive the world of 1913, “everybody [in 1920] agreed that stable currencies ultimately depended on the freeing of trade.” Yet, free trade was ghosted, in accordance with Polanyi’s “double movement,” by various forms of protectionism from tariff barriers to empire. A colony might serve to counter an outflow of gold with an influx of raw material; resources from the periphery (including a relentlessly exploited

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colonial population) might defer or deflect tense class relations at the core, themselves exacerbated by gold-driven deflationary contractions. When Braddock Washington ascends his diamond mountain, under air attack, to bribe God, he adopts the lexicon of the liberal free marketeer: “God had His price, of course. God was made in man’s image. . . He must have His price. And the price would be rare” (“D,” 133). Braddock wishes “only that matters should be as they were yesterday at this hour” (“D,” 133). To obtain as much, he proposes a contractually engineered and divinely sanctioned temporal reversal. Whatever the degree of his confidence in the commensurability—through verbal contract—of a divine word and “an immense and exquisitely chiselled diamond” (“D,” 131), his bribe is more likely to succeed if this instance of free trade flows, resting on convertibility between stable currencies, is backed by the contradictory presence of imperial resources. Braddock’s free trade diamond is carried by two slaves, of Virginian extraction (“D,” 105), emblematic of the plantation South’s continuing status (in the 1920s) as America’s internal colony. The slaves, “their rippling muscles . . . hardened under the wet shine of the skins” (“D,” 131), their “jewelled head-dresses [catching] the sun” (“D,” 135), might have stepped from the pages of Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (1886) or *She* (1887); that is, from the literature of empire. The bribe fails. The slaves—imperious, fictive, socially dead—are immolated in an explosion exactly expressive of contradictions at the core of the gold standard.

Not the least of those contradictions concerns subaltern service. Visitors to the Diamond are granted a leisured lethargy akin to sedated deliquescence, founded on the barely visible work of Washington’s slaves. For example, offered an early morning bath by a “black Gargantua” (“D,” 103), Unger is stripped and rolled (rather than “lifted like a child”) into a sunken chamber containing “water [of] the same temperature as his body” (“D,” 103). At the press of a button “a warm rain began to fall,” which, encountering “jets of liquid soap,” turns the bath a “pale rose color”: “a radiant rainbow of pink foam . . . enveloped him softly with its delicious lightness, and burst into shining, rosy bubbles here and there about him” (“D,” 104). Unger merely softens, he does not dissolve: neither infancy nor feminization ensues, though both options appear imminent and inseparable from recessive black hands. Instead, “rubbed with oil, alcohol and spice,” shaved, barbered and dressed, “John walked out into the brisk sunshine of his living room” (“D,” 105). “Brisk,” an epithet generally associated with ambulation, deserts the walker as though tacitly to indicate that those
who allow servants to do their living for them risk disembodiment. In contradistinction, Unger's name grants him a particular and ramifying physicality: John T. Unger is a “t[o]ng[u]er” (perhaps even a “j[aunt] t[y] t[o]ng[u]er”) who meets and courts a Kismine. The name of this paramour elides her mouth with the possessive pronoun, even as a pronominal pun interanimates her body with that of the mine at the source of the Washington wealth. Alternative orifices emerge from Fitzgerald's name plays: a euphonious transposition between Kismine's name and that of her eldest sister (Jasmine) ensures that a double imperative attend those who court the junior sibling. “To jazz,” in African American slang since the late 1880s, has been “to fuck.” It would seem that a tonguer must kiss both deeply and variously if he is maritally to “mine” (in the now several senses of that term) the Washington patronym. Innuendo, as it extends Unger's tongue, drawing it towards sight, does so primarily through an instance of black speech (“to jazz” as the trigger for a compound insinuation). Appropriately, therefore, Fitzgerald names Unger's body servant “Gygsum,” pronounced, under pressure from “Jas/zz,” “jism.” The degree to which Unger’s unlikely embodiment depends upon the language and inflection of the subaltern is the degree to which that body must remain anxious.

Anxiety extends from “Gygsum” and “jazz” to inflect additional bodies caught within its connotative register. Kismine and Jasmine, though preternaturally white, are orientalized. They who recall She double as dusky maidens care of imperial fear, under pressure from which Unger's bath evokes a pot where the young master's body is “pink[ed]” and “plumped” (“D,” 103), prior perhaps to cannibalistic consumption. Since the punning route to such translations is both oral and aural, it is perhaps apt that the strangest among them should return to the tongued mouth. Braddock Washington shoots down pilots whose over-flights put the secret of his hoard at risk. He subsequently imprisons survivors in a “hollow in the earth shaped like the interior of a [glass] bowl” (“D,” 115), from which “large cavity” predictably and variously ascend “wild clamour[s]” (“D,” 114), a “chorus of execration,” an “uprush of animal spirits” and “pandemonium” (“D,” 117): that which prompts the final “series of ejaculations” from “two dozen throats” (“D,” 117) is the news that one of the prisoners, removed from “the cage” (“D,” 114) to teach Italian to Jasmine, has escaped (though only, it seems, to be shot). The remaining airmen volunteer to teach Braddock's daughter “Chinese,” “wop,” “N’Yawk,” and “a lot of things better than Italian” (“D,” 117). From a “polished” hole in the diamond, resembling a mouth and emitting barely disguised sexual
sounds, rises an anxious intimation that the core, if mined, might yield an alternate hoard—a hoard of captured middle-class adventurers (“D,” 115) whose class struggle enacts a revolutionary deluge that looks to bring the system down through language (the escaped Italian teacher), a language that with each “ejaculation” darkens towards Ethiopian (“D,” 129). For a moment, at the mouth of the “cage,” and care of connotative inflection, Montana becomes an African heart of darkness, and Braddock Washington grows Kurtz-like: “Mr Washington reached forward suddenly with his cane and pushed the button in the grass so that the picture below went out instantly, and there remained only that great dark mouth covered dismally with the black teeth of the grating” (“D,” 118).

III.

My elaborated claim leaves me with at least one potentially debilitating question: if I am even partially correct, how could Fitzgerald have known so much? Given that constitutive features of a capitalist economy, during the liberal free market phase of accumulation (like the contradictory function of gold within the tripartite structure of money), “are not immediately perceptible by human sense-experience and so cannot be directly represented,” how might Fitzgerald (in Wallerstein’s terms) recognize the “dynamic force” and “essential features” of the economic system within which he lived?

My answer is mundane . . . as mundane as Fitzgerald’s account of the explosion (itself a structural prefiguration of the Crash of ’29):

For a moment the intolerable glow continued, and then like an extinguished filament it disappeared, revealing a black waste from which blue smoke arose slowly. (“D,” 136)

We are left, as I have argued, with the mundanity of the mountain, vanished into a burned out light bulb.

A toddler, who, all unknowing, plays Freud’s *fort/da* game, conjures flesh from wood. A seller, in ignorance, substantiates Marx’s M-C-M¹, and, care of Žižek’s “postulate,” ratifies the presence of gold in paper (or, more accurately, of a general equivalent within all monies and things that monies move). The departure and return of mother, the exchange of goods for money (circa 1880–1929), are mundane. Yet both are sites of magic quite as unremarkable as the Emperor’s new clothes.

I am sorry to return at the end to theory, and to a plethora of names, but I struggle to fix the dailiness of an economic mystery. Perhaps the
mundanity of that mystery may best be caught by a recursive summary that runs Polanyi through Žižek to find Fitzgerald. During the period of the liberal self-regulating market (and care of its gold standard), people behaved not only as though “bank notes had value because they represented gold” (Polanyi), but as though, via the social practice of their use, they contained a “sublime object” or “a body within the body of money,” for which money was the merest approximate (Žižek). Such behaviour remained necessarily magical, anxious and everyday. Such behaviour, lodged between the economic and the social, is, I would suggest, the daily stuff of a regime of accumulation’s social reproduction. Mundane stuff sufficiently stuffed with fracture points, disavowals and poorly enunciated structures of feeling to provide a daily base for Fitzgerald’s exploration of those contradictions within gold and its standard; contradictions which go, I would argue, to the very centre of “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz.”

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NOTES

11 Žižek, 19.
12 Marx, 256.
14 Žižek, 18.
15 Žižek, 17.
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16 Sohn-Rethel, 59.
17 Timothy Bewes, Reficication, or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism (London: Verso, 2002), 259.
19 Taussig, 161.
22 Forrester, 162.
23 John Maynard Keynes, quoted by Allan H. Meltzer in his Keynes’ Monetary Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 26
25 Polanyi, 26.
26 Polanyi, 27.
29 Arrighi, 269.
30 Fitzgerald, “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz,” in “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz” and Other Stories (London: Penguin, 1967), 108. Hereafter abbreviated “D” and cited parenthetically by page number. Fitzgerald’s litany of chosen names commits the family to foundational status, both pre- and post-colonial, but grounds their founding wealth in slavery and imperial appropriation. The Diamond’s discoverer, the Virginian Fitz-Norman Culpepper Washington, descends from George Washington (founder and slave holder) and Lord Baltimore (signatory to the first Charter of Maryland, and, via his membership of the London Company, a colonizer of Virginia). The subriet Fitz (son of) Norman links the initiator of the “long epic in gold” to proto-imperial invasion, a point that the name Culpepper accentuates. Thomas Culpepper (1635–1689), friend of Charles II and largely absentee Governor General of Virginia (1677–1683), regarded the colony as a resource for profit, accumulated through rapacious speculation in tobacco (a slave-made crop). The naming of the son—Braddock Tarleton Washington—refines Fitzgerald’s ambivalence towards the glory of such origins by introducing elements of failure. Edward Braddock led an unsuccessful assault on the French fort Duquesne (1755), in which campaign he was killed at the Battle of Monongahela. His defeat allowed French colonial ambition brief ascendency in Ohio County, though the same battle translated Washington (serving among Braddock’s officers) into a Virginian military hero. “Tarleton” tarnishes the ascendency by setting Washington’s fame within the global context of his and the colony’s wealth: Banastre Tarleton served with the British forces during the American War of Independence, and as such might be deemed (with “Braddock”) to signal the instability of imperial ambitions. More notably, as the son of
Richard Godden a Liverpool merchant, ship owner and slave trader (with two brothers in the business), during his tenure as M.P. for Liverpool (1790–1812) he gained a reputation for his advocacy of the slave trade and for his mockery of abolitionists.

32 The first illnesses linked to industrial radium poisoning came to light in Orange, New Jersey, beginning in 1922, though as early as 1906 literature on the medical use of radium had begun to detail its dangers. See Claudia Clark, Radium Girls: Women and Industrial Health Reform, 1910–1935 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1997), 34, 125.
37 Block, “Introduction” to Polanyi, xxx.
38 Polanyi, 79.
39 Arrighi, 272.
40 Block, “Introduction” to Polanyi, xxxii–xxxiii.
43 Polanyi, 172, 76.
44 Polanyi, 39.
45 One measure of such abstraction might be the speed with which work place innovation, in various forms (“time and motion,” “job segmentation,” “speed-up,” “flow,” and the increasingly visible hand of management silk-gloved in “science”), effectively obliterated a class—the craft worker. Iron moulders, rollers and heaters, glass blowers, bricklayers, machinists, jigger-men in potteries, lasters in shoe factories, mill spinners. . . the roll is as long as the replacement list is short: for the most part by the mid-twenties “machine-minders” were supervised by “managers” in the cause of increased surplus value. See David Montgomery, Workers’ Control in America (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 113–17.
47 Postone, 232.
Postone, 232.

I have argued that the apostolic apostasy of Fish concisely mimes Marx’s point: a mine whereby labor (value), neither quite worshipping nor quite refusing to worship, remains bound without “illusion” (“D,” 96) to the visiting epiphenomena of an “inconceivable jurisdiction” (“D,” 96) (material wealth). It might, however, be equally accurate to argue that the exacting distance between Fish and the Diamond reflects a division within Fitzgerald’s own Midwestern and semiperipheral response to wealth; drawn to its fictions, yet seeking to register how those fictions remain residually and recessively connected to the labor that founds them. At the story’s close, with the Diamond gone, Unger proposes that the three escapees should dream of “love . . . for a year or so,” while they retain their “youth,” since dreams ensure that “[t]here are only diamonds in the whole world” (“D,” 138). He adds that such dreaming must negotiate “the shabby gift of disillusion” from which “nothing” can be made (“D,” 138). The men of Fish, we have been assured, retain “none of the vital quality of illusion,” in the absence of which they can neither “wonder [n]or speculate” (“D,” 96). Presumably, their “illusion,” along with their “youth” has been worked out of them. That the conclusion to the story proposes an alternative source of value, in “youth” rather than in labor, via terms that allude (care of “illusion”) so specifically to the story’s only remnant of a collective laboring body, replicates Fitzgerald’s awkward sense that whatever his inclination, value as labor time neither should nor can finally be separated from material wealth.


Puns exemplify the power of “unknowing” by, in this instance, making the sexual visible “only as a structure of occultation,” which is to say (for example in “Jasmine”) that a second term slips by way of a shared sound from the first, releasing the mistaken from the chosen, the unknown or the unexpected from the known, while maintaining a motive, as tenuous as sound, for their implausible connection (D. A. Miller, “Anal Rope,” Representations 32 [1990]: 74). We may cut the sonic excess, even as it inclines towards a semantic residue, but the cut (or “occultation”) remains to mark our decision not to see and know or show and tell. Miller, addressing homosexual connotations in the visual medium of Alfred Hitchcock’s Rope (1948), makes a useful general case for the manner in which connotative evidence works:

Connotation . . . excites the desire for proof, a desire that, for as long as it develops within the connotative register, tends to draft every signifier into what remains a hopeless task. Hence the desire assumes another, complimentary form in the dream (impossible to realize, but impossible not to entertain) that connotation would quit its dusky existence for fluorescent literality, would become denotation. Every discourse that speaks . . . by connotative means alone will thus be implicitly haunted by the thing itself, not just by the form of the name, but also, more basically, as what the name conjures up. . . . This will-to-see—never fails to make itself felt. (74)

I posit the existence of a “will-to-see” within the “Kismine,” “Jasmine,” “Gysum” co-location, a will that brings to inappropriate sight a black prosthesis, oral, aural, and anxious.
From an unpublished manuscript by Stephen Shapiro, who, in addition, offered an illuminating response to an earlier draft of this essay. His comments, generous and specific, inform several points in the revised version, particularly as they relate to issues of empire. See Shapiro, “Transvaal, Transylvania: Dracula’s World-system and Gothic Periodicity,” Gothic Studies 10.1 (2008): 29–47.