Wyndham Lewis, M. R. James and Intertextuality
Part III: The Haunt of Angels—and the Phoenix

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I

‘You are proposing a Human Age.’¹ Suspiciously knowledgeable about the methods of the modern police state,² the demoralized Pullman is all too ready to collaborate with the lord Sammael’s plan for the angels: ‘the liquefaction, as it were, of those titanic immortal units’. At which point in Malign Fiesta (chapter 13), it is evident we have reached one of the thematic centres of The Human Age, the latest stage in a process of increasing clarification. Echoing as it does the sequence’s title, Pullman’s sycophantic response to the Prince of Darkness’s plan for de-creation suggests that in this guilt-ridden intellectual’s hapless exchanges with the Devil yet another set of keys is offered for the interpretation of a many-layered allegory. Through such clues readers are invited to cast their mind back and retrace their path through the labyrinth.

The first step is to consider exactly how and where this particular discussion between Pullman and Sammael began. After all, in announcing the scheme whereby his fellow angels will change themselves into men, Sammael advises Pullman: ‘the subject is one which will be the better understood if I preface it with a historical note’. (MF 461) No less worthy of scrutiny is the Devil’s ‘private office’ and the contents of its shelves. Gradually we recognize the venue in which their momentous conversation takes place is situated in not just Hell but also a witty version of ‘l’enfer’—as librarians understand that term:

The room was walled with books from floor to ceiling, and at this point Sammael took down a heavy black book and placed it on the table at his side.

‘About my own origin or that of the angels there is no question. Here is what is said about angels by your greatest encyclopaedic authority in matters of divinity. If you will look at this you will see that what I say is correct.’ (MF 462-63)

Sammael thereupon points to the following marked passage:

‘In the writing P. (Priest’s Code) no mention is made of angels. Like the existence of God, the existence of angels is presupposed in O.T., not asserted. They are not said to have been created, rather they are alluded to as existing prior to the creation of the Earth (Job 38; Gen. 69; cf. 322, 117). When they appear, it is in human form: they are called “men” . . . in N.T. they are called spirit . . . When they appear they speak, walk, touch men, take hold of them by the hand and also eat with them.’ (463)

Admittedly in citing Scripture the Devil gets the numbering of chapter and verse slightly wrong—and out of context too. Yet the quotation upon which Sammael bases his claim to be coeval with God is taken word for word from that great Biblical scholar of the early twentieth century, James Hastings. Despite the epithets with which Sammael here honours this authority, however, the citation is not drawn from the work for which Hastings is best remembered today. True, the account of the Persian beliefs in dualism (upon which Sammael subsequently elaborates his declaration of independence from God) is taken in part from Hastings’s The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (1908-26).³ But the Encyclopaedia lacks an entry on Angels as such. The source of Sammael’s quotation is to be found in (what the publishers and editor, Hastings of course, intended as the companion publication) A Dictionary of the Bible (1898-1904).⁴
Among the mysteries of their superhuman nature there examined, the article about Angels in the *Dictionary*—drawn partly from ‘the Apocrypha’ (I, 97a) registers the difficulty in ascertaining the true nature of such spirits that (as Sammael had noted) is often experienced when men encounter them. It is not even so easy to detect their presence: When they appear, it is in human form: ‘they speak, talk, touch men (I K 199), take hold of them by the hand (Gn 1965) and also eat with them.’ (*Dictionary*, I, 94a).\(^3\) It is just because he failed to properly understand such phenomena in Third City that Pullman finds himself the Devil’s reluctant counsellor in Dis:

It had, in the first place, been because of a sparrow, then of a live angel….and then because of a delegation from Hell—whose stench was still in his nostrils—and so on, and so forth, that he had reviewed his earthly scepticism, and here he was, praying on the one hand as if he were back in childhood, and paying court to the devil on the other….So, clearly he should not have accepted the Bailiff’s advances in Third City: and clearly it was now much too late to think of that. (*MF* 458)

As Pullman desperately contemplates his and Satters’ plight, his soul-searchings reflect the symbolism of ‘the Hymn of the Soul’: in the clutches of ‘the evil demons of Labyrinthus’ the two lost children are sought out by a train of Heavenly messengers, avian as well as angelic. However, as I argued in the previous instalment of this investigation of what increasingly appears to be the use of Montague Rhodes James’s Biblical scholarship in *The Human Age*, Lewis characteristically gives that exquisite Christian Gnostic fable a mock-heroic twist. The alazon (‘know-all’) in a highly ironised progress of the soul, Pullman’s knowledge is so perilously shallow he fails to learn from the many works of reference that he (like his author) has evidently consulted.

The two Hastings publications (and, to a lesser degree, the eleventh edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*—which was James’s responsibility)\(^9\) undoubtedly contributed to the genesis of *The Childermass* and its sequels. However, they are neither the sole nor the most important examples of those encyclopaedias of divinity (to adapt a location of Satan’s) that seem to have influenced Lewis’s eschatological vision. In Part II of this study I set out evidence that in its accumulation and quality is strongly indicative of a paradoxical debt. The affinities between Lewis’s fiction and the ghost stories of the Antiquary are too numerous to be accidental, likewise the more scholarly parallels between the two oeuvres suggest this Modernist’s deliberate use of the selection of Early Christian and Medieval writings gathered in M. R. James’s *Apocryphal New Testament* (1924). Pursuing further this examination of the intertextual relationship that appears to exist between Lewis and James, I have here in the third instalment three main aims. The first is to explore the ramifications of the undeniable references in *Monstre Gai* and other works in Lewis’s epic cycle to the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha of the Old Testament. Secondly, I shall adduce firm evidence indicating James played a conspicuous role in the establishment of those non-canonical texts that helped shape not just *Monstre Gai* but both its precursor and sequel; *The Childermass* quite as much as *Malign Fiesta*. Finally, I shall argue that these extra-Biblical traces left in *The Human Age* enable us to locate more precisely at least two more of Lewis’s libraries. Among the encyclopaedias of divinity still housed there we shall find (as did Lewis) apocrypha, angels and other fabulous winged creatures repeatedly entangled.

II

Shaken by the Blitz of Third City in *Monstre Gai* and fearing that he has been ‘rapt into some bursting dream of the Apocalypse of Baruch or of the Secrets of Enoch’, Pullman resolves that he ‘must avoid becoming engulfed, he must secure a foothold, however tenuous’. (157) At first sight James seems to be of little help in the exegesis of these mysterious references; but a couple of clues are to be found in the preface to the *Apocryphal New Testament*, when James explains
the omission of pseudepigrapha from his selection of non-canonical texts. ‘It is, I hope, obvious that I ought not to have included in an apocryphal New Testament the Christian or Christianized books which bear the names of Old Testament worthies; but I shall be right in recording that there are such books’. (xxvi-xxvii) He, then, specifies a dozen such works (among which are, tellingly, ‘two books of Baruch’) before going on to refer readers to his Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament (1920).\(^7\) The latter, (as, of course, is also the case with the entries in Hastings’s two encyclopaedias) offers only brief, albeit insightful, comments on the Baruch and Enoch literature. Far more is to be gained from acting on the recommendation made by Hastings’s contributors—perusal of R. H. Charles’s editorial masterpiece. This is his monumental two volumes of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English [with] introductions and critical and explanatory notes to the several books, edited in conjunction with many scholars, published in 1913.\(^8\) Among the ‘many scholars’ whose help is acknowledged in the subtitle of this authoritative edition it is not long before we discover the name of Dr. M. R. James to be prominent.

‘Try stimulating the brain’. When Pullman admonishes Mannock, insisting that the time has come for his host to analyse the perilous supernatural situation in which the friends find themselves, readers may well feel that here is something they themselves ‘ought to think about a little’. (MG 160) So authoritative is the manner Lewis’s anti-hero adopts that it would seem the author is at pains to instruct us too—though with Lewis one ought always on guard against a tease or two. Pullman begins ‘an unrelenting exposition, battering away’, without cease, at Mannock, ‘laying out before him in rapid succession all the details of the complex upon which life in this degraded Purgatory is built. The ‘didactic voice determined to hammer the truth into him, and not to stop until he was completely enlightened’ (160). Since his argument runs over several pages, I can quote only the salient points of a crucial analysis, which (through its biblical references) touches sublimity:

‘Third City is an extremely deceptive place,’ Pullman [emphasizes]. ‘There is first the question of scale…. [The humans] are the size they appear to be. But there are some figures here, less innocent than they look…. The Padishah…is probably an archangel. A martial angel…. Now, the height of an angel is variously computed. In the apocryphal books we find angels described as “tall as a cedar”. In Dante’s Inferno, Lucifer is a very great giant, down whose torso he and Virgil slide…. Lucifer and his rebellious army were all Titans. (160-61)

The comparison of the size of angels in ‘the apocryphal books’ and in ‘Dante’s Inferno’ here recalls an important general observation that James made about these non-canonical books in the preface to his 1924 collection. ‘They have, indeed, exercised an influence…so great and so widespread, that no one who cares about the history of Christian thought and Christian art can possibly afford to neglect them’. (xiii) Later in his anthology, James introduces his translation of the Apocalypse of St Paul with a note: ‘In an early canto of the Inferno (ii. 28) Dante mentions Christ’s visit of the “Chosen Vessel” to Hell—an undoubted allusion to the Apocalypse.’\(^9\)

What really give Pullman’s comments such power, though, are images that turn out to derive from particular pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. Four or so pages back in Monstre Gai (as we have above glimpsed) explicit and fairly precise indications have been signalled as to the origin of the scores of unorthodox biblical allusions that run through The Human Age. The mysterious books to which Pullman refers in expressing his fears lest he be caught up in some exploding vision of ‘the Apocalypse of Baruch or of the Secrets of Enoch’ (157) clearly indicate the area of Lewis’s research. The titles cited point not only to an influential genre but also specific models.
By using Pullman’s urgent analysis to hint at the sources of his inspiration Lewis is able to keep the acknowledgements simple. I shall endeavour to follow his example but some amplification is necessary. To be as brief as possible, the pseudepigrapha in question belong to a couple of visionary narrative cycles, each with a complicated set of variants and expansions. Lewis’s appropriations extend beyond the texts that Pullman cites: The Apocalypse of Baruch (II Baruch) and The Secrets of Enoch (II Enoch). The Human Age also borrows from The Book of Enoch (I Enoch), and The Greek Apocalypse; the latter, it is important to note, exists in two states (III Baruch and IV Baruch). Full texts of the first three of these works are given in Volume II of Charles’s edition; and the essentials of IV Baruch are cited there in the annotation of III Baruch. With their extensive introductions and footnotes, these materials are of a length roughly comparable with that of a scholarly edition of The Divine Comedy. The common features linking these specific examples of non-canonical O.T. scriptures with Dante’s masterpiece constitute a sub-genre of apocalyptic literature. Pre- eminent among the features that The Divine Comedy shares with The Apocalypse of St Paul and the writings attributed to Baruch and Enoch are dream visions. In these supernatural narratives, a living man is swept up in a tour of the Other World; visiting, on this cosmic journey, Heaven, Hell and in one or two cases something like Purgatory. Whereas, though, Dante has Virgil and then Beatrice as his guides, it is a series of angels who conduct Enoch and Baruch. Significantly, Baruch mistakes his psychopomp at first sight for merely a very big man: things are similarly complicated in the case of Pullman and Satters.

‘Seismic shocks’, ‘human hills’ and repeated allusions to the Titans figure prominently in Pullman’s analysis of the landscape. As a means of admiring the superhuman nature of the Padishah, his Divine Master and their Satanic Adversary, these literary devices have affinities with the mixture of Classical learning and topographical imagery active in the descriptions of the rebellious angels given in the Enoch and Baruch literature. It is not just a question of the similes derived from earthquake found in both the Biblical texts and this passage from Monstre Gai; nor is it even that, in the Ancient Hebrew and the Modernist narratives alike, Judeo-Christian material is illuminated by Hellenistic allusions. What the verbal parallels point up is the fact that the selfsame myths are involved. Whereas the Inferno contains no explicit mention of ‘Titani’, ‘the Fall of the Angels’ as described by The Book of Enoch ends with their burial in ‘hills’—a seismic fate glossed, as it is in Monstre Gai, by explicit reference to ‘the Greek myths of the Titans’ (I En 110: 194 and n. 9).10

Pullman recognizes in the governor of Third City a being of celestial powers disguised as a human; likewise in The Secrets of Enoch the Hebrew seer meets ‘two men exceeding big’ who turn out be angels. These carry Enoch up to the Seventh Heaven; there the archangel Gabriel takes charge of him. The imagery too exhibits remarkable similarities. When in the Tenth Heaven the archangel Michael leads Enoch into the Divine Presence, the seer trembles at the sight of ‘the Lord’s face’ which is ‘like iron made to glow in a fire, and brought out, emitting sparks, and it burns....and I fell prone’ (II En 21: 22-4: pp. 442-43, emphasis added). Ten pages on in this non-canonical text the smithy and the sun images are fused when the seer cannot endure the terror of the Lord, ‘just as it is not possible to endure a stove’s fire and the sun’s heat’ (II En 36: p. 453). This Enochian apotheosis is mirrored in the angelic personages, imagery and diction that Pullman employs when venturing his inspired guess that the Padishah ‘is not only (in contrast to us) immortal, but also a winged giant of enormous size....accustomed to fly wing to wing with Michael and Gabriel, through the enormous heavens in the sight of Almighty God; of God whose countenance is simply too hot, to go no farther, to be gazed upon by the puny eyes of man; he could no more face that living cliff of fire than man could maintain himself near any mass
of metal emitting giant sparks; and God’s eyes are described as like two great, insupportable, blazing suns’ (MG 161, emphasis added, but not to hot; see also 153). In The Secrets of Enoch not only do the furnace and solar image recur and in the same phrasing, but tellingly (as in the above passage from Monstre Gai) this comparison is further amplified—God’s eyes being compared to the insupportable blaze of the sun. Enoch declares:

I am one who has seen the Lord’s face, like iron made to glow from fire it sends forth sparks and burns./...I have seen the Lord’s eyes, shining like the sun’s rays and filling the eyes of man with awe. (II En 39: p. 454, emphasis added)

Confronted by increasingly hard evidence of Lewis’s use of Enoch, such borrowings call for further consideration.

The imagery of molten metal and solar fire is re-employed when the prophet admonishes his sons. This episode (in chapter 38) emphasises the fact that throughout The Secrets of Enoch, the prophet himself serves as a surrogate messiah, frequently asserting the divine origin and universality of his knowledge.12 Later, because of his blasphemous self-esteem, Pullman will be mocked as ‘the literary god’ (MG 174, 177); here his imitation of an Old Testament prophet is more subtly questioned, an arboreal clue indicating this anti-hero is putting on airs.

Although Pullman claims that ‘in the apocryphal books we find angels described as “tall as a cedar”’ (MG 160), it is disconcerting, however, that scrutiny of these non-canonical books fails to turn up even one instance where angels are likened to ‘cedars’. What we do find, in the first of the masterpieces of Hebrew literature that Pullman cites, The Apocalypse of Baruch (II Baruch, 36-40: pp. 500-1),13 is a remarkable cluster of enigmatic references to this aboreal species. Nine in all, these cedars occur in a messianic fable, at once memorable and obscure. According to the interpretation subsequently given to Baruch by the angel Ramiel, ‘the Cedar of Lebanon’ signifies a succession of evil empires that are destroyed by cataclysmic floods. Potent symbols of ecological convulsion are the means the allegory uses to depict the successive waves of political turmoil engulfing Jewish society from the Babylonian Captivity to Roman Conquest. The trouble is that the way these magnificent trees survive in the midst of what is otherwise overwhelming catastrophe may easily lead the careless reader into mistaking the cedars for emblems of some transcendent power. Our suspicions of Pullman’s scholarship are strengthened, moreover, when we remember how a little earlier as a guest a party thrown by the Bailiff, Pullman’s claims to be an expert on the early Church and the literature of that age have been impugned.

True, in rebuking unseemly behaviour at the Bailiff’s Palace, Pullman knows enough about the various responses of the Church Fathers to early-Christian canon-formation and the appropriate hermeneutics to invoke the authority of ‘St Augustine and the eunuch Origen’. (126) Particularly apposite to the understanding of this and similarly crucial episodes later in Monstre Gai are Origen’s distinction of levels of meaning in allegory, and Augustine’s use of this kind of typological analysis to recognize such differences as true and false believers or the devil and his followers.14 After all, Pullman had enjoyed this diabolical party until he overheard himself being slandered: ‘That’s Pullman. The man who writes all that pretentious nonsense about the Patristic Age’. (124-25) His reactions to this accusation and the charge of heartless philandering that follows (‘He behaved very badly about Jessie Blackstone...yes. He ought to have married her’ (125)) reminds us that the self-adulating Pullman has little awareness of what the Latin Fathers of the Church valued most in revelation—a sense of that transcendent love through which flows redemption.

As much is evident in Pullman’s map reading of Third City which goes disastrously astray when he fails to penetrate the labyrinth of meanings contained in that townscape. As is to be expected in ‘an outpost of Heaven’ (25, 26), the nomenclature of the various districts and
thoroughfares recall either the books of the Biblical canon and its outliers or else the visionaries and martyrs of the early Christian church (33, 73,78-9,121,171, 182). The neighbourhood in which his host Mannock lives is no exception. So for an expert on the Patristic Age, street names like ‘Maccabees’ and ‘Habakkuk’ should have evoked memories of Scripture: the one of Heaven intervening to defend Zion; the other, of angels transporting that minor prophet into the lion’s den with food for Daniel.\(^{15}\)

While to some degree Pullman does appreciate that the writings of Baruch and Enoch are reports of previous visits to the Afterworld, his understanding is superficial and does not reckon with the possibility these accounts may now be more problematic than they were in the Age of Faith. Not only is Third City being blitzed by Satanic forces, a Fifth Column is also operating there. Consequently these pseudopigrapha are no longer the spiritual Baedekers they might once have been; rather they are Rough Guides to the Supernatural in which, so to speak, the perplexed are liable to discover a recommended tourist facility is under new and dubious management. The writings attributed to Enoch having been finally rejected from both the Christian and Jewish canons, one might well expect the information about the balance of power in the world of the Dead provided by these texts to be far from trustworthy. God is dead—as we all know. Intellectually shaped by the relativism endemic in twentieth century culture and therefore only too ready to be deceived by the Manichean and other heretical elements in Enoch, Pullman is inclined to forget even such traditional wisdom as the need for a long spoon if you sup with the Devil. The meals Pullman enjoys at the Hotel Phanuel in the Latter Days of Third City recall, too, the enlightening comparison that in his 1927 British Academy lectures The Apocalypse in Art James made between The Pilgrim’s Progress and The Revelations of St John, both masterpieces making their way with difficulty into the canon.\(^{16}\)

Neglectful of the warnings of less learned but shrewder men like Mannock, Fr. Ryan and especially Martin Devlin, Pullman ignores the implications of all these scriptural and proverbial references, failing to see that such tales of supernatural intervention indeed foreshadow his soul’s progress.

If Pullman had been a more thorough scholar he would have been quicker to suspect the diabolical honey-trap in which he caught.\(^{17}\) After all, for the student of these quasi-canonical texts, the Bailiff’s hotel bears a most potent name—‘Phanuel’. In The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, ‘the angel of the powers’, who shows the prophet ‘the mysteries of God’, is said to be called Phamael (II Baruch 1, 2,15; p. 534, n.5). R. H. Charles, the editor of the Clarendon Psuedepigrapha explains the true reading is ‘Phanuel’. Reinforcing the evidence that this angel ‘is set over the repentance and hope of those who inherit eternal life’, Charles cites no less an authority than M. R. James, who thinks there is the ‘possibility that [Phanuel] is to be identified with Ramiel’, an angel ‘described in II Baruch 16 as presiding over true visions’. This agrees with the description of Baruch’s angel as: ‘the interpreter of the revelations, to those who pass through life virtuously’, one who know all the evils that men have wrought, and ‘shall from dark gloom then lead...all the souls of men, before the judgement-seat of the great God immortal’.\(^{18}\)

Such a reading describes the trajectory of Pullman and Satters’s supernatural passage from Third City through Matapolis to ‘The Trial of Man’—as it is glimpsed in those fragments of the incomplete conclusion of Lewis’s projected tetralogy.

Despairing of Divine Mercy, Pullman is finally tempted by the Bailiff into the sin against the Holy Ghost—to whom he had appeared to show a particular devotion in The Childermass. (C 115-16) About to be ejected from his satanic bailiwick by the Padishah and his detachment of White Angels, the Bailiff contrives to snatch victory from defeat by reassuring Pullman that ‘Hell is a stupid superstition’. (MG 295) The arguments the Bailiff deploys in overcoming his victim’s faith and the terrible consequences for Pullman exhibit more and more disturbing parallels with
Enoch. ‘If I thought that they would forgive you your association with me, I should not be saying this’, advises the Bailiff. ‘But . . . the best course to take is to continue your association with me, miserable sinner though I am—to go where I go....’ This is the wisest thing to do. Pullman, I will spirit you away’ (291-92, 297; emphasis added). The effect of the Bailiff’s magic potion is hellish: ‘had Pullman been flung into a furnace the reaction would have been immediate and blindly similar...’. Then came utter blackness, as he felt himself hurled through the air (505-6; emphasis added). In ideas, imagery and at times in the exact words, these passages echo the fate of the ‘self-indulgent sinners’ in The Book of Enoch: ‘they shall be wanting in doctrine and wisdom...Their spirits shall be cast into the furnace of fire’ (1 En 98 11: pp. 269-70; emphasis added).

The appalling result of his flight from the White Angels of Third City is that Pullman and Satters end up in a far worse place, their plight being again emphasized by allusions to The Pseudepigrapha. In the apartment of the Bailiff’s terrifying mother Pullman is conscious of ‘the Abyss’ (MF 317), the final prison of the angels according to The Book of Enoch (1 En 21: p. 201 n. 7). Even more telling is the evidence that Lewis’s principal source for the detailed account of the sinful union of angels and women was also The Book of Enoch. Their monstrous progeny—‘the giants begot the Nephilim’—females being numbered among these fearsome demons who ‘devoured mankind’ (I En 7*: p. 192 n. 2).19 Proud of her ancestry, the Bailiff’s mother, the sadistic Madame Heracopulos, tells Pullman ‘We are known as Nephalim’. (MF 335)

III

Further corroboration of these links between The Human Age and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha is to be found in the Wyndham Lewis archives at Cornell. (And here particularly I must record my indebtedness to Paul Edwards for refreshing my memory of their exact location in the files.) Most relevant to the argument being made here is a batch of manuscripts and typed pages in Box 5 of The Childermass file. Numbered 33-49, they are made up as follows:

33-40: typescript pages from Monstre Gai
41-43: manuscript pages from Monstre Gai
44-46: typescript pages from Monstre Gai
46: typescript of various notes, all present elsewhere in Lewis’s hand. Since the blind author could no longer type, this must be the work of Agnes Bedford or Froanna.
47: ‘Names of fallen angels Pēnēmûr a bad angel who instructed mankind in writing in ink and paper. . . akâe [or akaê] the secret oath’
49: ‘Uriel (a holy angel)’ [etc]

While these annotations of Lewis’s reading can hardly be described as ‘the Rosetta Stone’ of Human Age studies, they do seem to provide one set of master keys to The Human Age, unlocking some of its darkest secrets. For, demonstrably, the notes are taken from the Charles edition of The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.

Sheet 49 headed ‘Uriel’ draws attention to itself by reason of being so much more legible than most of Lewis’s manuscripts that it is clearly a transcription in the hand of an amanuensis. This sheet consists of two lists of angels separated by the name of another angel and a genealogy.

The list at the top of the sheet brackets in descending order: ‘Uriel Raphael Raquel Michael’; each is described as ‘(a holy angel)’. Against Michael is a further note containing two additional epithets: a) ‘Israel’s patron angel’; b) ‘leader of the angels’. Next comes ‘Zotfēl’, described as ‘the angel guarding Paradise’; this is followed by another heading—‘Ancestors of Enick’ (sic). The latter brackets, in descending order: ‘Jared Mahalaalel Cainan Enos Seth’, and outside the bracket ‘Adam’.

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The second list brackets in descending order ‘Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Phanuel’, who are described as ‘four principal angels’.

With one exception, all these details derive from The Book of Enoch. The first group of ‘holy angels’, Uriel, Raphael, Raquel and Michael come from chapter 22: ‘Names and Functions of the Seven Archangels’. (201) Three pages on, Michael is described as ‘Israel’s patron angel. (I En 24, p. 204 n. 6) Similarly another three pages later in chapter 32 appears Zophiel, ‘the angel who guarded Paradise’. (207, n. 2) On the following page (208) is to be found the source of the note concerning the ancestry of the prophet whose name Lewis’s amanuensis has mistranscribed as ‘Enick’. (I En 377) The second group of ‘four principal angels’, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Phanuel, do not turn up for another thirty pages; but when they do, within a small space (236-37), their names are listed three times over. (I En 710,11)

As for the second comment on Michael, ‘leader of the angels’, Lewis found this in The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch: ‘Michael, the commander of the angels....And I saw the commander’. (III Bar 2) As one might have expected from the teasing reference to the Cedar noted above, it is evident that, scholar almost as much as creator, Lewis persevered in his reading through the Charles edition.

Although the likeliest people to have acted as amanuensis, Froanna and Agnes Bedford, were both intelligent women as well as devoted companions, neither was ‘a library rat’. Whereas, of course, Coleridge’s phrase exactly describes the sort of writer Lewis is. The fair hand in which these notes are written, therefore, must be the result of the blind novelist’s instructions. Of what kind, though? Two possibilities suggest themselves. One is that there were necessarily elaborate directions on how to use a research library for creative purposes. A daunting task, to say the least. For even if the search were confined to the second volume of the Charles edition, Lewis’s assistant would have had to wade enthusiastically through close on 900 densely packed quarto pages. The job description calls more for a Muse than amanuensis. The altogether more plausible alternative is that already existing notes were given to the assistant to copy up. The inaccurate spelling of Enoch’s name is just the kind of mistake that an uninformed copyist is liable to make. The position of the fair copy in The Childermass file further suggests
that the original notes had been made years before, long before Lewis lost his sight.

This fair copy, together with the contiguous *Monstre Gai* manuscripts and typed sheets clearly indicate Lewis’s concern to link *The Childermass* with its sequel. Proof of this is found on the next item in the Cornell archive, which is MS sheet 47: ‘Names of fallen angels’. What first catches the eye here are such names as ‘Pênémûê the bad angel who instructed mankind in writing in ink and paper…akāē [orakaē] the secret oath’. (I En 69) Prompted by Lewis’s notes, one takes another look at the Charles edition. As from chapter 7 of *The Book of Enoch* came the story of the monstrous Naphilim (192-201), so from chapter 69, merely thirty pages or so later (233-34), there emerge easily recognizable sources for the nomenclature of two fallen angels encountered in *Malign Fiesta*. The sound of these names, ‘Kokabel….Gadrel’ (I En 6926) is almost exactly echoed when Pullman encounters a couple of Sammael’s devoted angel followers, for in the Angel-town bookshop, Shakespeare’s tragic heroes are discussed by ‘Gatiel and Kokabiel’. (MF 445-46) The bookshop (like Satan’s library later on) is a venue so apt to the further temptation of Pullman that we may discern in such a place allusions to ‘Pênémûê’ (his name follows lower down on the same page, 233), the bad angel who taught mankind to write. Further, these parallels point to the inspiration for Lewis’s parodies of *The Secrets of Enoch*. The emphasis there laid on the high esteem in which the Almighty holds Enoch’s books (I En chs. 33, 40, 47, 52) is wickedly reflected in the ways that the Bailiff and the Devil flatter Pullman’s literary reputation. By what would be an equally pleasing irony, among the very sins against God and mankind perpetrated by Gadreel and Pênêmûê, Lewis may well have taken hints for ‘the liquefaction of the angels’ which we have seen Sammael outlining to his reluctant collaborator.

Alerted to the significance that Lewis found in these Pseudepigrapha, the sources of other elements in *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta* are not difficult to locate. The terrifying White Angels who finally succeed in arresting Pullman at the end of *Malign Fiesta* descend from one of the ‘older angels’ whom ‘the Lord calls up’ in chapter 37 verse 1 of *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*:

> terrible and menacing…in appearance white as snow, and his hands like ice…because I could not endure the terror of the Lord, just as it is not possible to endure a stove’s fire and the sun’s heat, and the frost of the air. (453)

This is a passage in which we have already observed Lewis finding inspiration for images of the heat of smithy and sun.

Other affinities are noteworthy: the fact that Lewis’s Devil goes under the same two names as Enoch’s; and that they have the same political ambitions—‘Satan and Sammael [are] not to be distinguished in Rabbinic writings’ and both attempt to found ‘a counter kingdom to God’. (II En 29: p. 447, nn. 4, 5).

**IV**

The parallels in *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta* to the Enoch and Baruch cycles being so plentiful, one is drawn to wonder if there are not similar correspondences between these O.T. Pseudepigrapha and *The Childermass* which earlier readings have missed. Was Lewis, metaphorically speaking, rapt up onto a cosmic tour of the supernatural world by the self-same angels who acted as soul-conductors for Enoch and Baruch? Evidence in *The Childermass* file at Cornell suggests the novelist’s excitement. Two manuscripts amplify the fair copy we have discussed; however, these are in Lewis’s own hand.

The first contains references to Melchisedek. Although foreshadowing Pierpoint’s role in *The Apes of God*, these references date back to the genesis of *Turr*: Edwards, who has not only
transcribed but done much to illuminate very difficult manuscripts, relates these allusions to comparable elements in the work of Mahaffy, Butler, and Joyce. To which list should be added the name of Huysmans. At the turn of the century, there was evidently an increased interest in this mysterious O.T. priest. ‘The typological problem is whether Christ is only a copy of Melchizedek or whether Melchizedek is a type of Christ. The former view, Huysmans notes, has led to the view of one sect that Melchizedek is in fact the Paraclete’. (That is, the Holy Ghost as comforter.) The notion of an especial Mass of the Holy Spirit had also been discussed by J. G. Frazer, whose *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (3rd edn., 1911) exerted such an influence on *The Childermass*. These heterodox, sometimes heretical, cults of the Holy Spirit (or is it the Anti-Christ?) lend themselves to a subtle critique of traditional ideas of the artist as in touch with higher powers, or the Romantic genius as the unacknowledged legislator for society. Although Lewis’s own views were ambivalent, he was provoked by the way these ideas were being distorted by the megalomania of certain Modernists. The creator of *Ulysses* and *Work in Progress* as a god-figure at the centre of his universe is a notion parodied in the Bailiff’s Black Masses that Pullman and Satters attend in *The Childermass*.

Undoubtedly this renewal of interest in Melchizedek had been stimulated, in some degree, by a newly discovered fragment to which reference is made in *The Secrets of Enoch* (469) This mysteriously parentless child is remarkable as the only person apart from Noah and family to be rescued from the Flood, being ‘caught away to Paradise’ by angels. The story of Melchizedek, as epitomised in James’s little book for the SPCK, *Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament* (17-18), exhibits parallels that link Enoch and Baruch literature with that other vital influence on *The Childermass*—‘The Hymn of the Soul’.

The second piece of early manuscript material at Cornell that appears relevant here belongs to *The Childermass*, Box I, sheet 7, ‘hypogymen’. Opposed to a list bracketing ‘Sheol Hades Inferi’, on the left hand side is a much longer note dealing with Ancient Roman beliefs concerning ghosts.

With its repeated references to fears that the dead return to haunt the living as ‘Lemures’, the larger note seems to be assembled from W. Warde Fowler’s *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic: an introduction to the study of the religion of the Romans*, published in 1899. To this authority Lewis would have been directed by Hastings’s entries on Hebrew and Greco-Roman beliefs concerning ‘the State of the Dead’, and the related topic of ‘Eschatology’ in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (1920). The ‘Eschatology’ article, in particular, repeatedly mentions R. H. Charles’s Jowett Lectures, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life, in Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity or Hebrew, Jewish and Christian Eschatology from pre-Prophetic Times till the close of the New Testament Canon*, published by Black in 1899. Turning back to the text of *The Childermass* one finds clear references to these two articles in the use of such terms as ‘lemures’ and ‘eschatology’.

During an exchange between the odd couple as they pick they disconsolate way through the opening phantasmagoria Lewis acknowledges some of his sources. Recalling the way the Bailiff’s refers to them as ‘lemures’, Pullman concedes that he does ‘find his eschatology very difficult to get hold of?’ Satters responds: ‘I don’t know what that is what is it?’ (C72) In the hilarious chain of associations that runs through Pullman’s mind when responding to Satters’s query, Lewis places a couple of jocular allusion to the author of *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*:

‘All the last things—the Last Judgment, the last days, le dernier cri, the Last Post, the last rose of summer, Charles the Last Man and with him the Son of the Last Man, Charles too—begin to assemble idly in the ex-schoolmaster’s brain in *encyclopaedic* response capitulated under last’ (72, emphasis added).
This conjunction of manuscript notes represents, it appears, a shift in Lewis's thoughts away from the literary genre of the Dialogue of the Dead he had employed in experiments such as 'Joint', to those ancient beliefs about what it is like to be dead. In this he may well have been prompted by the comparisons with Lucian and Aristophanes drawn in Hastings's Encyclopaedia which are linked with by cross-reference to Charles's edition.

The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha provides a mixture of ideas about the State of the Dead so disconcerting as to appeal to a generation disillusioned by the Great War. There in the Enoch and Baruch cycles one finds the particular equations of Jewish, Hellenistic and Roman ideas about the afterlife concisely itemised by Lewis as 'Sheol Hades Inferri' (sic). On page 456 of Secrets of Enoch, the editorial commentary on 403 and 411 records ever more troubling uncertainties about the Other World:

an intermediate place of punishment, i.e. Sheol or Hades....Enoch's forefathers, including Adam and Eve, appear to be in the place of punishment. Contrast I En [chapters 60, 61, 70] where Paradise is already peopled with the righteous, though in [chapters 89 and 93] Enoch and Elijah seem to be its only inhabitants. In I En [chapter 92], however, Abel seems to remain in Hades till the judgement on Cain and his seed is consummated. Cf. the early Christian belief e.g. in Descesus ad Inferos (emphasis added).27

A horrible unease about the exact nature of the limbo in which the Dead find themselves pervades The Childermass. A sense of dread mounts from the friends' first disquieting view of the enigmatic metropolis on the other shore—'it is without human life, like a city after a tragic exodus' (C 3)—to the terrifying recognition when Hyperides's voice is heard from 'a sepulchre at the mouth of Sheol'. (263) Finally, the latter's angry questioning ('What are we and what are you, what is that place over there?') elicit from the jeering Bailiff identification of the sacred literary genre in which they are caught: 'Up the Apocalypse'. (293-94)

V

Although there are some differences, such is the degree of filiation between the Enoch cycle and The Apocalypse of Baruch that for the purpose of further analysis of their impact on The Childermass, these books of pseudepigrapha can be considered together. Comparison of the sublime ecstasies of the Ancient Hebrews with Lewis's ironic vision continues to reveal important features of the Afterworld that they have in common. For the most part, these affinities may be roughly grouped under three headings: landscape, inhabitants and themes.

The enigmatic New Jerusalem seen by both the Hebrew prophets and Lewis is situated in a desert-oasis watered by a sacred river and surrounded by mountains. ‘Our lives staged in some sort of wilderness (C 72); ‘a suburb of the wilderness, enclosed plots of the desert (C 79): Lewis’s repetition of the word ‘wilderness’ draws attention to other echoes of Charles’s head-note on chapter 28 of The Book of Enoch: ‘The wilderness between Jerusalem and the Jordan’ (206)—which may be a ‘special division of Sheol’ (207, note on 33'). It was in the immediately preceding note on this page 207 that Lewis discovered ‘Zotiel’ (and on sheet 47 of the Cornell notes records this), the name of the angel guarding Paradise. Again, as in ‘the dug-outs’ of The Childermass (22), so in ‘the hollow places’ of The Book of Enoch (202–30) the Dead await ‘the day of their Judgement’, ‘all the souls of the children of men’ assemble (202-3; ‘children’ are mentioned also at 210, 246, 277). Other topographical features of Lewis’s Camp set in the ‘Plain of Death’ (C 291) seem to come from The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch. On the very page where James introduced him to the angel Phanuel (MF 534) Lewis found ‘a river which no one can cross’, and a vast ‘plain’ inhabited by dehumanised men. Other creatures of this ‘monotonous
plain’, such as the ‘multitude of birds’ (539), could easily be assimilated to ‘The Hymn of the Soul’, which is the Christian Gnostic fable that Lewis here deploys to compensate for the narrative deficiencies of both Hebrew seers.

As the Dead wait judgement in both the ancient and modernist visions, they are totally subject to the terrible guardians of Sheol. The Bailiff’s summary of the appellants’ legal standing—‘entirely without rights [save that they] can petition’ (C 207-9), echoes the many pleas sent up in of The Book of Enoch (ch. 22: pp. 202-3). Although ‘foreign to modern thought’ because repudiated by later Jewish and Christian thinkers, ‘the idea of evil in heaven’ is repeatedly articulated in the Enoch literature (I En 7 and II En 10, 42: pp. 198, 433, 435, 456). Similarly, throughout The Human Age it becomes increasingly obvious that demons are licensed to do evil until Judgement Day.

Further alerted we begin to discern in the Bailiff and his executioner, Mannaei, two of what Enoch calls ‘the key-holders...[G]uards of the gates of hell’ (II En ch. 42: p. 456); again near the Sheol sequence the editor notes ‘each division of [the Hebrew] hell is under the control of a certain angel’. (456) Similarly, the Bailiff presides at ‘this celestial gateway’ (C 221), placed here ‘on the threshold of [a] terrible heaven to mock the wretched creatures passing into it’ (C 231), and as he boasts ‘my position as gate-beak takes with it the privilege of hanging you on the gatepost without trial if I don’t like your face’. (321)

Our tardy recognition of such intertextuality arises, in part, from the fact that The Secrets of Enoch is a Midrash or rabbinic gloss upon The Book of Enoch—a situation further complicated by the commentaries of modern scholarship (the case also with The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch). The result is what one might call thematic embarras de richesses. In like fashion matters are yet more confused in The Childermass when (provoked by Joyce) Lewis is drawn deeper into extending his anatomy of twentieth century culture.

One of the central thematic preoccupations of The Book of Enoch focuses on the punishment of those economic and political exploiters among the sinners. For, while Enoch here broadens our understanding of inter-Testamental Jewish and early Christian theology, it also helps us to understand the revolutionary mood of the Jews and their opposition, not only to foreign oppressors, but also to their own aristocracy. The parallels between Enoch’s condemnation of his society and Lewis’s critique of his reinforce the growing sense which comes to the student of The Childermass that the Enemy found in Enoch a kindred spirit. Witness the ‘child-corruption after the sodomistic fashion’, one of the specific charges the Hebrew prophet levels at the ruling class who steal the ‘souls of the poor’ (II En ch. 10: p. 435); this is an accusation that readily lends itself to Lewis’s attack on certain modern fashions. (C 207)

There are, however, more than just social concerns behind the computation of time in the Enoch literature. As the Bailiff’s dismantling of the ‘gregorian’ reforms (C 133) strikes a deeply ominous note, so the calendrical discussions in the Enoch cycle are tied to spiritual fears. In the Last Days the sun, moon, stars, and earth will be disrupted in cosmic chaos, there are similar cosmological preoccupations in The Apocalypse of Baruch. Like the repeated references in The Book of Enoch to ‘the Head of Days’, that is, ‘the Everlasting’ (or as Charlesworth has it ‘the Antecedent of Time’—I En chs. 47, 48, 55): such chronological themes are easily accommodated in Lewis’s attack on the Time cults.

Admittedly the manner in which The Secrets of Enoch elaborates upon its precursor can be seen as having an adverse influence on The Childermass—where a similarly spare plot tends to get lost. Nevertheless many of the memorable features of the first part of Lewis’s masterpiece derive from these pseudepigrapha. Pre-eminent among these is that calendar-beast the Phoenix.
VI

The story about the phoenix bird, known in Classical, Jewish, and Christian antiquity, appears in *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* (III Baruch), but with a significant difference. In the Third Heaven the prophet beholds

a bird circling before the sun, about nine cubits away. And I said to the angel, What is this bird? And he said to me, This is the guardian of the earth....This bird flies alongside of the sun, and expanding his wings receives its fiery rays. For if he were not receiving them, the human race would not be preserved....But God appointed this bird. [And his name is] Phoenix....Wait and thou shalt see the glory of God. And while he was conversing with me, there was as a thunder-clap, and the place was shaken on which we were standing. And I asked the angel, My Lord, what is this sound? And the angel said to me, Even now the angels are opening the three hundred and sixty-five gates of heaven (III Bar 536-37).

The angel guiding the Hebrew seer emphasizes that, in addition to its ability to act as a living heat shield, the Phoenix is a highly complex time-keeper for Salvation, combining the functions of clock as well as calendar:

[W]hen I heard the noise of the bird...I said, what is this noise? And he said, This is the bird who awakens from slumber the cocks upon earth....But when I beheld such great glory, I was brought low with great fear, and I fled and hid in the wings of the angel. And the angel said to me, Fear not, Baruch, but wait and thou shalt also see their setting....But thou askst concerning the bird, how it is exhausted. Because by restraining the rays of the sun through the fire and burning heat of the whole day, it is exhausted thereby. For, as we said before, unless his wings were screening the rays of the sun, no living creature would be preserved. (III Bar 537)

Many of the details in this Judaeo-Christian text correspond to the classical and medieval traditions. Early Christianity interpreted the story of the reborn Phoenix as a re-enactment of the resurrection of Jesus, hence as a symbol of Hope and Justice: the new phoenix rising out of the ashes of its predecessor. Uniquely, though, in III Baruch the phoenix is the protector of the world, guarding humankind with its wings from the fierce, pure solar rays that would destroy the people as well as their foul deeds. The defensive role assumed by this avian mediator in *III Baruch* is without precedent; tellingly, though, a potent instance of its influence on later literature is to be found in *The Childermass*.

When the Phoenix interrupts the Bailiff’s tedious prevarication over his court’s abandonment of vital calendrical reforms, a cluster of parallels with *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch* grows detectable. In both works, when the Phoenix is first glimpsed flying across the sky (III Bar 356-7; C 136-37), its ‘size’ varies (III Bar 358; C 136). Gradually it becomes apparent that the sacred bird acts as a shield against the burning rays of the sun (C 140). Except when Pullman and Satters find themselves wandering through what appears to be an English landscape in the Time panorama, the weather surrounding the Bailiff’s ‘concentration camp’ is hellishly hot, the sunlight palpable. (28-29) Responding to ‘the Bailiff’s Paper’, Satters would ‘like to change this bloody heat’ (44, 48); this is not surprising since at one point in the wilderness, there is even a multiplicity of suns (79) and references to the high temperature run through *The Childermass* (58, 64, 75, 80, 107, 294). Lewis depicts the Phoenix’s intervention in terms of more than just dramatic spectacle. There are also reminiscences of the process of occultation in a solar eclipse, as well as one of the traditional devices for safely observing celestial phenomena of such chronological significance: a necessary protective device, and the sudden occurrence of intense darkness that leaves a profound impression on eyewitnesses:
It has suddenly become dark and there is a new pale sun.... The crowd hushes its voice like a theatre audience at the turning down of the lights. ‘They’ve put the lights out!’ [Protests follow against] the dazzling yellow obscurity...against the insidious yellow glare. (C 137)

Like the Hebrew seer (III Bar 7: pp 536-78), the crowd cannot bear the brilliance:

‘You can’t look at it for long can you?’ says the foremost, waving his head as though it were a watch that had just stopped.

‘It’s the yellow light.’

Then someone in the crowd remembers how when alive one protected the eyes in such a situation:

‘I know, it’s like smoked glass. I can’t see anything now.’...Pullman removes his glasses and wipes his eyes with his handkerchief. [Similar reactions extend over two pages of The Childermass: 137-41.]

In coming between the viewers and the glaring sun, the phoenix’s powers are momentarily spent: in The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch the bird stands ‘exhausted’ (on p. 538, there are three references to exhaustion). In The Childermass the phoenix is an elderly creature, untidy and awkward, ‘it seems to be resting’. (C 142)

Yet the sacred bird has immense presence: a fact suggested by more than merely the aromatic perfume that hangs around it in both texts (III Bar 537; C 142). Lewis enhances its sanctity by fusing the Phoenix with other memorable winged creatures that the Hebrew prophet encounters in his apocalypse. As in The Greek Apocalypse, thunder accompanies both the entrance of the Phoenix into heaven and the baskets of prayers there presented by the archangel Michael and his attendants (III Bar 540-41), so in The Childermass the Phoenix takes on a comparably sonorous (though more ironised) role as sacerdotal mediator:

As though talking to itself, or reciting some formula of worship, its beak works with a chattering movement. In its eyes is an aloof recognition of the presence of the watching crowd and its entire person is full of the important concentration of a ritualistic act. In its mouth is what looks like a round dishevelled basket as large as itself... circumspectly raising it the bird moves forward towards the basalt slab with a human deliberation. (142)

In The Childermass the thunder that greets the Phoenix echoes also ‘the tumultuous name of the first giant metropolis. (136-37) The Bailiff’s magic continually attempts to distort this vision of the Ancient Mesopotamian civilisation, the images and sounds of Babylon sliding immediately into bathos. The mocking allusion to the ‘infant-food of Babel’ has the effect of evoking the references in The Greek Apocalypse to those ‘who built the tower of strife against God’ (III Bar 2: pp. 534-35 and n. 7). So, too, Herodotus: ‘the sightseeing Greek’ (C 137), eyewitness of both the fabled city and bird recalls the mention of the Greek traveller in III Baruch 6. (537 n. 4)

‘Shades of Strabo and Heliodorus’ is Pullman’s response—characteristically knowledgeable and wrong. (C 137) ‘This then is the City of the Sun’ (143), others in the crowd suggest rather more appositely; for as the editor of The Greek Apocalypse notes, there is in Heliopolis an altar on which the Phoenix is reborn (again 537, n. 4).

At the opening of The Greek Apocalypse, the Hebrew prophet weeps over the destruction of Jerusalem (III Bar 1: p. 533). Similarly in The Childermass the epiphany of the Phoenix is framed by references to the Diaspora mourning for the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. The glimpse we get of ‘the Wailing Wall of the Jews’ (C 128) is later corroborated: ‘The Jews of the lamentation should be somewhere within upon the plain of the
eclipse, gazing with passionate envy from their latifundia upon this splendour...stirred up by their prophets.’ (137) In dismissing ‘that tiresome bird’ as only of interest to ‘the dynasty of Noah’ (144), the Bailiff” draws on the allusions to the Flood in The Greek Apocalypse (III Bar 4th: p. 536, nn. 9-15).

In both Baruch and Lewis’s apocalypse, through its association with another sacred bird (the Cock), the Phoenix is opposed to an evil spirit. While from the text itself one learns that ‘at the transgression of the first Adam [the Phoenix ] was near to Sammael when he took the serpent as a garment’, from the notes below emerges ‘Bushyasta, the long-handed demon of procrastination’ (III Bar 7: pp. 357-58, nn. 4-15). When the Bailiff claims hypocritically that all his endeavours to speed up proceedings in ‘this ante-chamber of salvation’ (C 149-52) are frustrated by Hyperides, it is this ‘living Punch’, this dangerous glove-puppet, who is exposed as the time-waster. (155) Later, of course, we encounter the Bailiff’s master, lord Sammael.

The Bailiff perverts divine justice and mercy in other ways too, as the Phoenix epiphany suggests. While the Bailiff insists his is no Court of Star Chamber, he does concede it has some relation to ‘Equity’, impudently claiming ‘it is by the principle of grace that I proceed’. (211) References to The Egyptian Book of the Dead in III Baruch (537, n. 4),32 on the other hand, indicate that underlying the concept of the Phoenix is the ancient Eastern and Classical view of the Sun as the god of law and justice ‘who sees and hears all things’. Basically, though, The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch is

a Jewish book and this means that it is not the sun but God who has the final word.
He stands above the sun and shows himself to be not only the Holy One but also the Merciful One. He has given the Phoenix its protective task; for the author of this apocalypse the bird is a sign of God’s grace. James was the first to point, in this connection, to a related passage in the Christian Apocalypse of Paul: [there] God tolerates sinners in his forbearance until they repent.33

The Jewish author of the original implies that God shows himself more merciful than Nature; further, in the Phoenix as a Christian sign of Divine Grace, Lewis himself may have recognised one of the keys to the problem posed by Marcion.34

III

It will have been remarked how often one comes across the name of M.R. James in the pseudepigrapha (not to mention the various Hastings compilations) that Lewis uses. But nowhere is his role so prominent as it is in the case of The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch. There are nearly a score of references to James in the introduction and footnotes to III Baruch in Charles’s edition: half-a-dozen in the lengthy introduction, and a further thirteen in the ample footnotes-commentaries on the text. Naturally (as is the case with the smaller number of his annotations of the Enoch books), these references to James’s scholarship illuminate vital issues of theology and politics; image, structure or theme. Indeed, James’s part in the discovery and editing of III Baruch is so important that this brilliant piece of scholarship could almost be claimed as his achievement. Until the end of the Victorian age this Judaeo-Christian apocalypse of the second century AD was practically unknown. ‘its existence [as Charles notes] had been surmised from a passage in Origen’). Then around 1896 the great Benedictine scholar E.C. Butler ‘drew the attention of Dr M.R. James to a manuscript in the British Museum of a Greek apocalypse that answered in part Origen’s description’. This text was edited and published by James in 1897 (Pseudepigrapha 527).

In tracking Lewis’s ‘debts’ to the Enoch and Baruch cycles, one can almost see him turning the pages of the Charles edition and selecting what is useful for his creation. In crucial scenes of Monstre Gai and Malign Fiesta much emphasis is laid upon the apocrypha and specific works
of pseudoepigrapha there cited. Significantly, too, there are introductions to Patristic studies and related matters listed among Lewis’s books at Austin. Paradoxically, though, among the records of his libraries there is scarcely a sign of the titles for whose influence I have been arguing. A possible exception is St Augustine. As Walter Michel notes, Book V of *The Confessions* ‘is the most annotated. Lewis [being] interested in Augustine’s discussion of Faustus, the Manichean bishop’ (whose sect was prolific of heretical literature). *The City of God* (among other important works), however, does not appear on any list.\(^{35}\)

At first, confronted by these puzzling discrepancies (more and more textual correspondence between Lewis and James accompanied by what appeared to be the lack of external evidence that the Enemy had ever held in his hands a book by the great Antiquary), it was tempting to turn to the theories of Julia Kristeva. These challenge radically notions of ‘tradition’ and ‘influence’. The alternative she proposes is ‘intertextuality’, a concept which is defined ‘as the transposition of sign-systems, not in the “banal” sense of the “study of sources” but as part of the semiotic process which goes beyond the sort of rational control involved in “making an allusion”’. The attraction of such ideas is that they seem to acknowledge what is common experience: the recognition that we are all shaped by forces of which we are scarcely conscious. The trouble with Kristeva’s theories, strictly understood, is ‘that they throw into question the unity and substantiality of the subject who is the site of this play of systems’.\(^{36}\) The author of *Time and Western Man* (who later was inspired by the subtle investigation of Coleridge’s sources conducted in Livingston Lowes’s *The Road to Xanadu*) would not at all approve. Happily, in the case of the affinities between Lewis and James, the need for such a desperate expedient can be avoided if one looks a little harder at, not just the manuscripts, but also the question of Lewis’s books and more generally his working methods. For, as Walter Michel reports Mrs Lewis remarking, her husband had ‘several libraries, lost in moves wars etc’.\(^{37}\)

Froanna’s ‘etc’ is a formula that invites us to include under the heading of ‘lost’, the books sold and sometimes ‘rented back’, or lent and never seen again. Not to be neglected, either, are those temporary visitors to our shelves, loans that have to be returned to private or public collections—a category leading us to redefine terms. The books on our shelves can be important indicators of our reading; but so too the contents of those libraries we frequent. Found there are those authorities one must consult; yet even were these multi-volumed series affordable, never would there be room enough for them at home. The housing of such massive tomes is one of the functions of the research collections where often scholars and writers spend most of their time.

Lewis could well have owned a copy of *Apocryphal New Testament*. Since the publication of Part II of this essay with its examination of what appear to be traces of James’s 1924 anthology in *The Childermass*, two members of the Wyndham Lewis Society have informed me that they possess a copy of *The Apocryphal New Testament*. Widespread ownership was the point of the Oxford University Press’s low pricing, compact format, and large print run; the multiple re-prints and eventual revisions indicate that the Press’s policy was effective. But then those very features that helped ensure wide ownership could also lead to the book’s disappearance from a collection. Given Froanna’s growing interest in religious matters after Lewis’s death, she is likely to have hung onto such an intriguing book as James’s anthology. On her decease, so small an item might easily have gone astray, thus eluding the American libraries.

From *Self Condemned* (1954) we get an idea of the reference books that at one time Wyndham Lewis did own and which later poverty drove him to sell—*The Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the like.\(^{38}\) Yet even Rotter, that comfortably-off man of letters in his book-lined study, finds it necessary to have a subscription to the London Library. (*SC* 76, 77) Others have to make do with the borough collections. In Kensington Public Library at the bottom of Notting
Hill, Lewis would have found both the *Apocryphal New Testament* and Hastings’s *Encyclopaedia*, possibly also *A Dictionary of the Bible*. Riches—if insufficient for the scholar. In *Self Condemned*, Lewis’s own longing for a research collection like the Parliamentary Library in Ottawa finds expression. These yearnings were satisfied in the British Museum on Lewis’s return to the United Kingdom (*SC* variant ending). Here in the Round Reading Room (a memorable space because beautifully oriented to the points of the compass) on the open shelves at NNE he would have found all he needed: the Hastings’s compilations alongside James’ anthology and Charles’s *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*.

Corroboration that he did make use of the BM in the 1920s comes from Robert McAlmon. The fact that the editor of *This Quarter* (smarting from Lewis’s attack on him in *The Apes of the God*) was pleased to be satirical, does not invalidate the evidence:

I gathered that Mr. Lewis had been spending a great deal of time at the British Museum, doing research work….Lewis these days was being very much a man of many ideas, but most of them were other men’s. [The target of McAlmon’s irony then shifts from *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man to The Childermass*]

In the end Lewis flowered into tremendous fantasy and simultaneously Tommy Earp and I accused him of being a frustrated writer of tales for children. It did not haunt him. This was one of the nights when he forgot his idea of himself as a ruthless intellect.

In spite of McAlmon’s disclaimer, though, ‘haunted’ is exactly the term that one feels driven to employ in describing the evidence that Lewis himself provides of his use of research libraries during his attempt to complete *The Human Age*.

In *Rotting Hill* (1951)—whether just figuratively speaking is left disturbingly obscure—Lewis finds himself haunted by ‘the action of a Poltergeist’ through ‘the accident that [the Reverend Samuel Rhymer] had the next place to me in the Reading Room of the British Museum’. (18-19) By 1949 *The Ghost Stories of M. R. James*, first published by Arnold in 1931, had reached its eighth reprinting. Indeed, as one ponders the way Lewis’s tragicomic account of the restless spirit of the politically naïve Anglican clergyman illuminates that entire semi-autobiographical anatomy of post-World War II culture, the more one senses the amused gaze of the Antiquary. There he lurks in the shadows of *Rotting Hill*, along with two of his most memorable ghosts; the telltale number of parallels compels our attention. As in ‘The Bishop’s Fool’, likewise in James’s stories ‘The Tractate Middoth’ and ‘Casting the Runes’ a great library (and in ‘Casting the Runes’ it is that of the BM) proves to be haunted, research being interrupted by an unwelcome encounter, which is effected through an incriminating piece of paper. The supernatural manifestations, which extend their threat into the surrounding countryside, have as their epicentre a troublesome priest (parson or ‘abbot’), objectionable to the local community by reason of his dangerous heterodoxy. These heresies, ancient and modern, emanate from commentaries on questionable, quasi-religious texts: ‘Fabian tracts’ in ‘The Bishop’s Fool’, ‘*A History of Witchcraft*’ in ‘Casting the Runes’, ‘*Tractatus Middoth cum com*’ in ‘Tractatus Middoth’. The last title sounds very like a Rabbinic gloss upon the Jewish canon; and when taken together with the idea of justice being meted out from beyond the grave by a Talmudic scholar, such details suggest that James might well have been remembering the ambiguous figure of Enoch himself. For James and Lewis had enemies in common. The great Christian archaeologist ‘did not like a certain kind of question, especially from a certain kind of person (e.g. a Bloomsburyite asking mockingly about religion)’. All of which brings the problem of ‘intertextuality’ home to the completion of a project that Lewis regarded as his masterwork. More than a dozen parallels between ‘The Bishop’s Fool’ and features characteristic of the Jamesian supernatural matches the degree of affinity
between Lewis’s 1956 story ‘Pish-Tush’ and James’s ‘The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral’. This, of course, is where I began this inquiry: and yet as the investigation has proceeded through three instalments, I have become increasingly conscious of the saying ‘Once is an instance. Twice is a coincidence. But three times for the student of comparative literature becomes grounds for comparison’.46

As the similarities between James and Lewis have multiplied, it is not Theodore Ziolkowski (elegant scholar though he is) who comes to mind. We have found ourselves dealing not with threes, or scores, but with hundreds of parallels. Parallels of image, idea, and often of diction. Parallels in the sources that these scholar-creators used, parallels sometimes in the very genres employed, so that as these parallels accumulate one is driven to recall that enigmatic presence, T. S. Eliot:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead.47

Canon-formation (though ‘certainly not the canons of dead critics’) is one of the concerns of ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’ (1919), as it is with both James and Lewis:

What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervision of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted.

Eliot’s insistence that we ‘must set [the writer] for contrast and comparison, among the dead’ has a somewhat different ‘value’ for the non-combatant than it does for the survivor of the Western Front. Understandably, the attitudes of James and Lewis to Christian tradition also differed. The son of a clergyman, James was a committed Anglican and theologian whose many years spent collating the Apocryphal Gospels, were, perhaps, inspired by ‘the hope that they might provide some independent evidence of Jesus’s supernatural powers with which to refute the “Higher Criticism”’.48

Lewis trains a beadier eye upon the Almighty—and with good reason. To the shocking evidence of Europe’s internecine conflicts, two world wars, the genocidal consequences of centuries-old institutional racism and more recent totalitarian politics, was added a growing dismay at the terrible price that had been paid to secure a signal victory over Japan. A signal, or sign, concerning the End of the World that the Soviets were intended to understand. It is clear from his second autobiography Rude Assignment (1950) that Lewis was appalled by the Allies’ use of the atomic bomb; though in The Writer and the Absolute (1952) he concludes that Auschwitz and Belsen transcend ‘everything in the record of contemporary criminal violence’.49 Yet might not a share of responsibility for such evils extend higher than the corrupt human soul in its faltering progress; could, perhaps, the creator Himself be implicated? So obviously moved by the latest horrors of a terrible age is Lewis that his recourse to the literary genre appropriate for such eschatological concerns goes well beyond the canonical Revelation of St John. Even so he is wary of the heretical teachings of the Gnostics (who believed the world itself the creation of an evil Demiurge). Inspired rather by James’s ‘Christian archaeology’ (both his Biblical scholarship and storytelling gifts), Lewis deploys other Apocalypses from the Apocryphal traditions of Holy Scripture. As did the ancient Jews in their grief over the destruction of the two Temples at Jerusalem, so Lewis uses the ancient mysteries (Classical, Hebrew, and Medieval) to raise difficult theological as well as political questions about the history of his own times.
NOTES

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3. Lewis is demonstrably fusing comments in James Hastings, ed., Enyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics 13 vols. (Edinburgh: Clark, 1908-26); hereafter Encylopaedia. On how (unlike ‘the canonical literature’) the Enoch books were influenced by ‘Persian dualism’; on ‘Ahura Mazda’, and on the Zoroastrian equivalent of archangels, see under ‘Demons and Spirits’ for articles on Hebrew and Persian beliefs, respectively IV, 600b, and 619a-620b.
5. In Malign Fiesta Sammael objects to the way he is portrayed by Heaven, for example, as Asmodeus (463); likewise in ‘the angelology of the Apocrypha’ Hastings goes on to name the self-same demon (Dictionary, I, 97a).
10. In the Inferno, though Dante does allude to the legends of the giants who rebel against Zeus, he never actually names them.
11. Note the references to Michael and Gabriel in I En 9-11: p.194.
13. Although his comments on medieval Jewry are marred by anti-Semitism, Charles singles out for praise the ‘noble utterance of Judaism, [the] immemorial gifts of song and eloquence,
[the] breathing thought and burning word [evident in] this beautiful Apocalypse' 
(Pseudepigrapha 470).
14. On Origen’s and Augustine’s role in the development of biblical interpretation see the 
article on ‘Allegory’ in *Encyclopaedia*, I, 315b-316a, also 329b-331a.
15. Although the Hastings article on ‘Demons and Spirits (Hebrew)’ has much to say about 
apocrypha, it does not neglect the angels of ‘canonical literature’; whence comes the story of 
Habbakuk. For tales of angels defending Zion, see II Mac 11, 15, and III Mac 6 are cited, 
*Encyclopaedia* IV, 600.
a few references to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and *The Revelations of St John in The Human Age*.
17. The hints dropped can be pretty broad, as in the room of the obscene Venus (*MG* 280).
19. The Nephilim are absent from the account of the union of angels and women found both 
in II Enoch (440), and in the *Apocryphon of John* examined by Michael Nath in his admirable 
study, ‘Monstrous Starlight’ in *Volcanic Heaven: Essays on Wyndham Lewis’s Painting and 
Hereafter *Painter and Writer*.
Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 192 n. 36. 22. See James 
24.
citations here are to this text.
25. *Encyclopaedia*, respectively XI, 842a , n.3 and V, 379-80.
26. Suggestive of the defects in physiology and clothing of the dead in *The Childermass* are 
27. This sequence of notes frames James’s important comment on the ancient Jewish idea of 
Enoch as scribe both of God’s works and of men’s deeds (*Pseudepigrapha*, 456, n.3). Paul 
Edwards points out that SHEOL is to be found on another MS sheet, apparently ‘very early...just 
on its own as a memo...at the bottom of the page’ (private communication).
28. The first question of ‘The Bailiff’s Paper’ (C 44-45) relates to the central concerns of II 
Enoch as glossed in the footnotes: ‘the particular and general judgements’ (*Pseudepigrapha*, 
467-68).
29. See James Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature 
30. Of the relevant chapters in I En, chs.10, 54, 62-63, 67, 96, 97, 98, several have already 
been identified above as being otherwise influential in the composition of *The Human Age*.
31. See I En, chs. 43, 72, 73, 78, 79.
32. ‘James mentions a parallel in Indian literature’ (in the same note: *Pseudepigrapha* 537, n. 4).
34. For Lewis’s reading of Marcion, see Edwards, Painter and Writer, 545-47.
35. Listed among Lewis’s books at Austen are: John J. Blunt The Christian Church in the First Three Centuries (1888) and D. C. Somervell, A Short History of Our Religion (1922): especially relevant in the latter are 60-63, 113-16, 152. Edwards notes, as indicative of Lewis’s interest in such matters, that in a section of Man of the World he quotes from the introduction to Warde Fowler’s The Religious Experiences of the Roman People.
38. See the Carcanet edition (Manchester, 1983), 350, 357.
42. The supernatural, in one form or another, haunts the pages of all those works immediately surrounding The Human Age, i.e., Rotting Hill, The Writer and the Absolute, Self Condemned and The Red Priest. On the latter two, see C. J. Fox’s astute essay ‘Wyndham Lewis and the Schoolmaster of Manslaughter: The Machiavellian Presence’, in Wyndham Lewis: Letteratura/Pittura, ed. Giovanni Cianci (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 1982), at 199.
43. See note 27 above.
45. ‘Biographically the work Wyndham Lewis set most store by [was] The Human Age’, C. J. Fox, ‘A Summa and its Title’, in Lewisletter 7 (Summer 1996), 1.
47. ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’ was first published in The Egoist, September and December 1919; my citations here are to T.S. Eliot: Selected Prose, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1977), 38.