Libraries and the Apocalyptic Imagination

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Col. 7
1 and God told Habakkuk to write down the things that are going to come upon
2 the last generation, but the fulfillment of the period he did not make known to him.
3 (vacat) And when it says, so that he can run who reads it,
4 its interpretation concerns the Righteous Teacher, to whom God made known
5 all the mysteries of the words of his servants the prophets. For there is yet a vision
6 concerning the appointed time. It testifies to the period, and it will not deceive,
7 Its interpretation is that the last period will be prolonged, and it will be greater than anything
8 of which the prophets spoke, for the mysteries of God are awesome.
9 If it tarries, wait for it, for it will surely come and it will not
10 be late. (vacat) Its interpretation concerns the men of truth,
11 those who observe the Torah, whose hands do not grow slack in the service of
12 the truth, when the last period is drawn out for them, for
13 all of God’s periods will come according to their fixed order, as he decreed
14 for them in the mysteries of his prudence. Now [his soul] is heedless, not upright
15 (within him.) (vacat) Its interpretation is that they double upon them
16 […] and they will not find favor at their judgment […]
17 […] And the righteous man will live by his faithfulness.}
Apocalypses

Apocalypse ride at Six Flags (2013); scenes from Oblivion (2013) and After the Dark (2013)
The Apocalypse of John, Chapter 10
Seattle’s Coming Apocalypse

“[earthquakes] present us with problems of time. … The brevity of our lives breeds a kind of temporal parochialism…

The Cascadia subduction zone remained hidden from us for so long because we could not see deep enough into the past. It poses a danger to us today because we have not thought deeply enough about the future. That is no longer a problem of information … Nor is it a problem of imagination … we excel at imagining future scenarios, including awful ones. But such apocalyptic visions are a form of escapism, not a moral summons, and still less a plan of action. Where we stumble is in conjuring up grim futures in a way that helps to avert them.”
Seattle’s Suzzallo and Central Libraries
Seattle Public Library Central Library
The Apocalyptic Archive

Trinity College Library circa 18\textsuperscript{th} century; circa 20\textsuperscript{th} century; as the Jedi Archives
The Apocalyptic Library at Qumran

Settlement and Caves at Khirbet Qumran
The Apocalyptic Library at Qumran

Pages from *The Complete World of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Thames & Hudson, 2002)
The Christian Apocalyptic Library
The Modern Apocalyptic Imagination

The New Atlantis (1627):

“The end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible.”
The Last Man (1826) and The Time Machine (1895)

Title page of 1st ed.; Folio Society ed.

Cover of 1st ed.; panel from Classics Illustrated Time Machine (1956)
Brave New World (1931) and Nineteen Eighty-Four (1941)

The Book People and the People of the Book

Novel (1953) and film (1966)

Covers for A Canticle for Leibowitz (1960-2006)
The Foundation Trilogy (1951-53)

1st edition covers
The Anti-Libraries of Babel and Tlön
The MaddAddam Trilogy and *Station Eleven* (2014)
Seveneves (2015)
The End of the Library

- An archive of memory and knowledge
- A sign and site of anticipation
- An infrastructure for attention and action