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August 1st, 2015

# Libraries and the Apocalyptic Imagination

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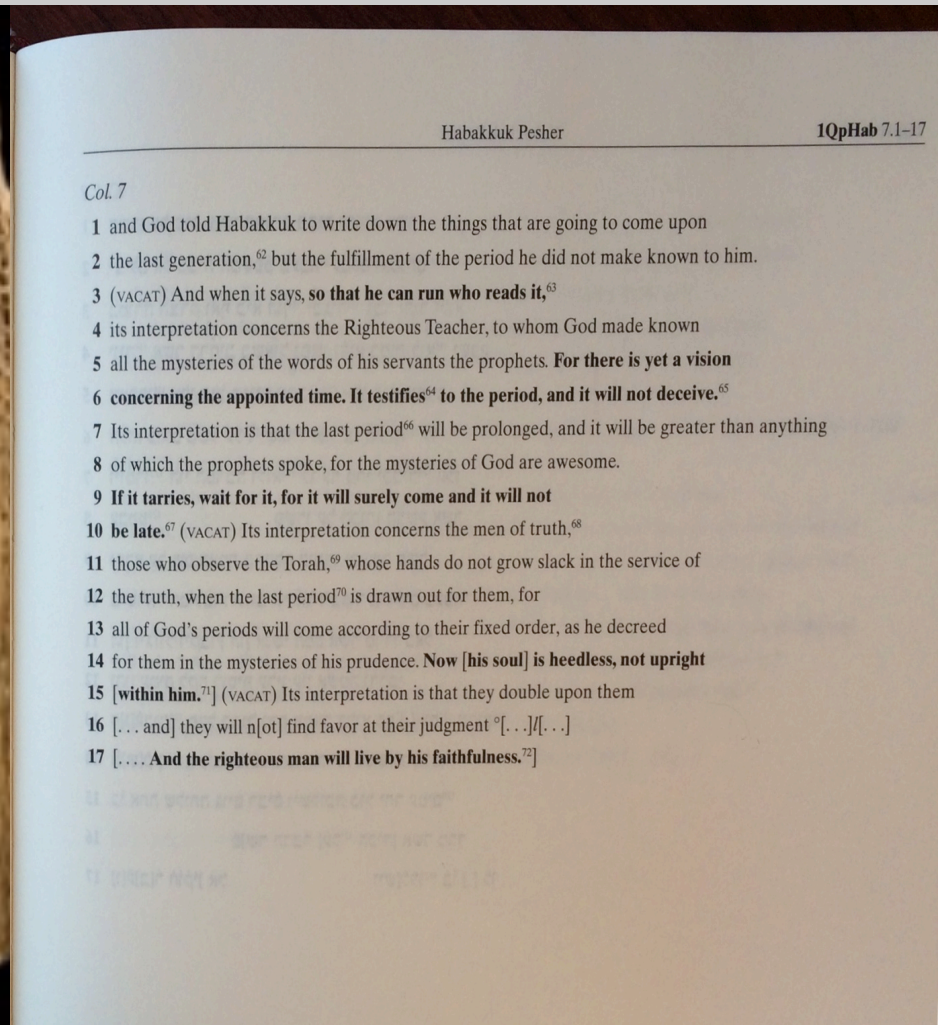
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# Libraries and the Apocalyptic Imagination

Michael J. Paulus, Jr., Seattle Pacific University  
Library History Seminar XIII, Boston, Mass., August 1, 2015



# Pesher Habakkuk, from the Dead Sea Scroll Library



Col. 7

- 1 and God told Habakkuk to write down the things that are going to come upon
- 2 the last generation,<sup>62</sup> 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,**<sup>63</sup>
- 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<sup>64</sup> to the period, and it will not deceive.**<sup>65</sup>
- 7 Its interpretation is that the last period<sup>66</sup> 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.**<sup>67</sup> (VACAT) Its interpretation concerns the men of truth,<sup>68</sup>
- 11 those who observe the Torah,<sup>69</sup> whose hands do not grow slack in the service of
- 12 the truth, when the last period<sup>70</sup> 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.]**<sup>71</sup> (VACAT) Its interpretation is that they double upon them
- 16 [... and] they will n[ot] find favor at their judgment °[. . .][. . .]
- 17 [... **And the righteous man will live by his faithfulness.**<sup>72</sup>]

# 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 REALLY BIG ONE

*An earthquake will destroy a sizable portion of the coastal Northwest. The question is when.*

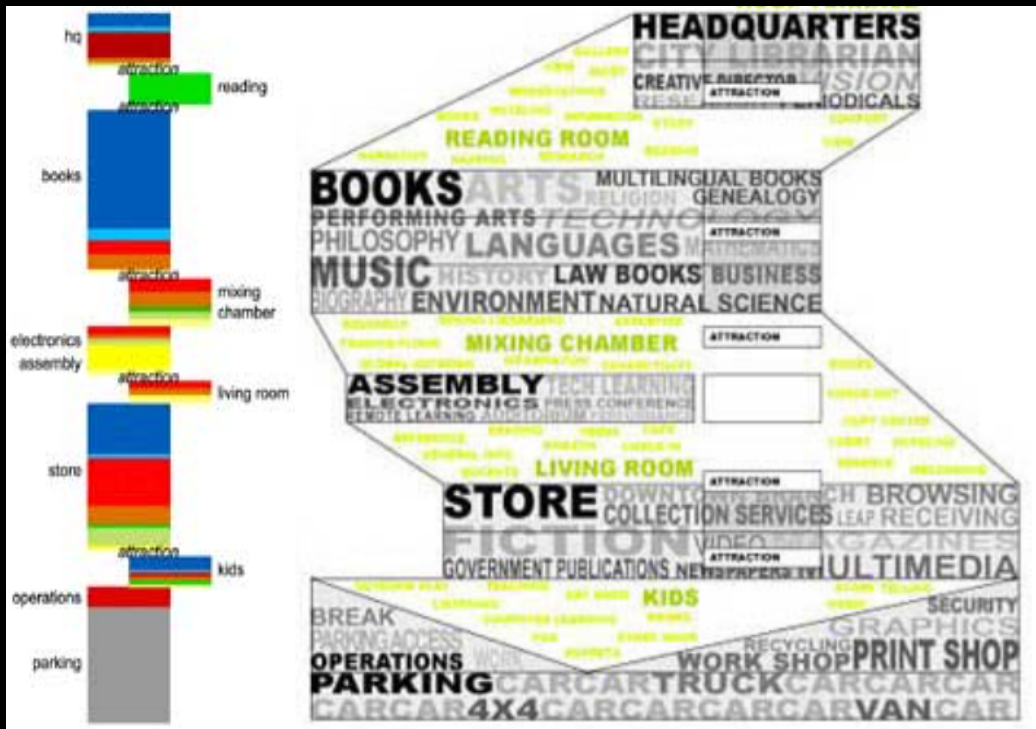
BY KATHRYN SCHULZ

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<sup>th</sup>  
century; circa 20<sup>th</sup>  
century; as the  
Jedi Archives

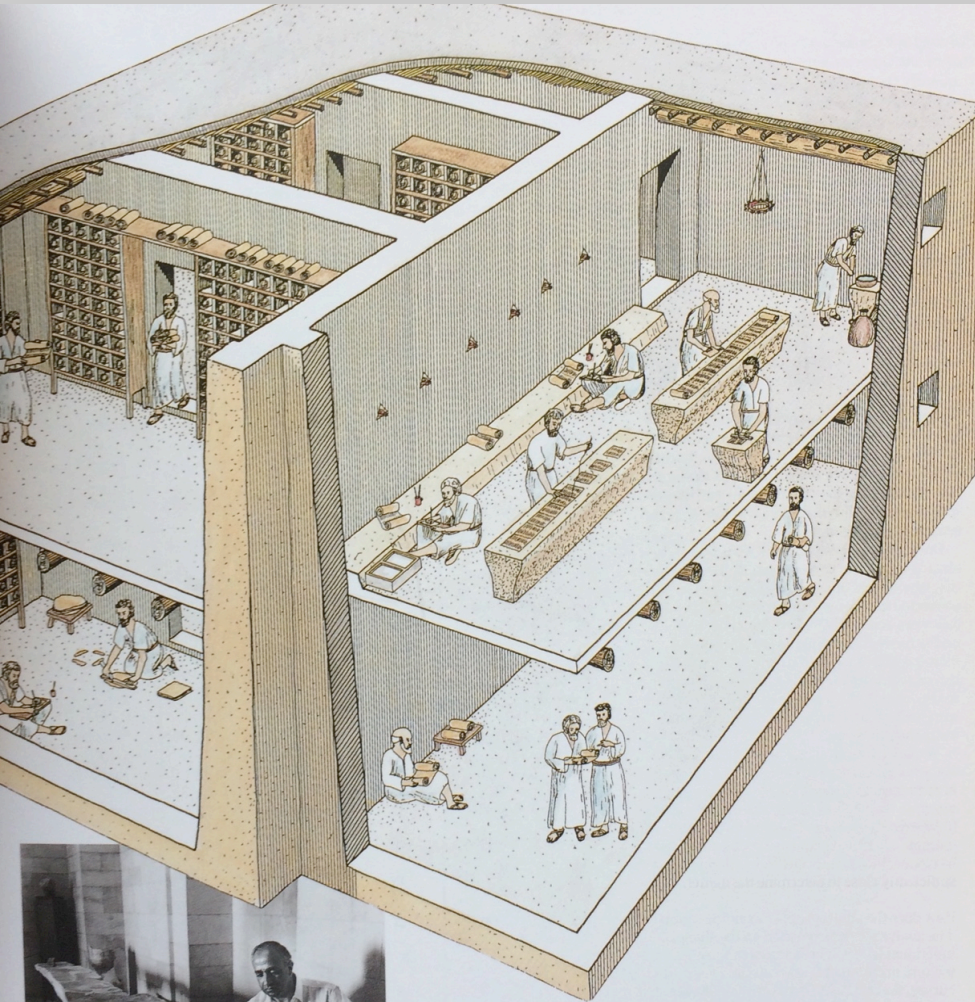


# The Apocalyptic Library at Qumran



Settlement and Caves at Khirbet Qumran

# The Apocalyptic Library at Qumran



(Above) A reconstruction of the manuscript production process that may have occurred at Qumran.

(Left) Joseph Saad sits at a reconstructed plaster table in the Palestine Archaeological Museum.

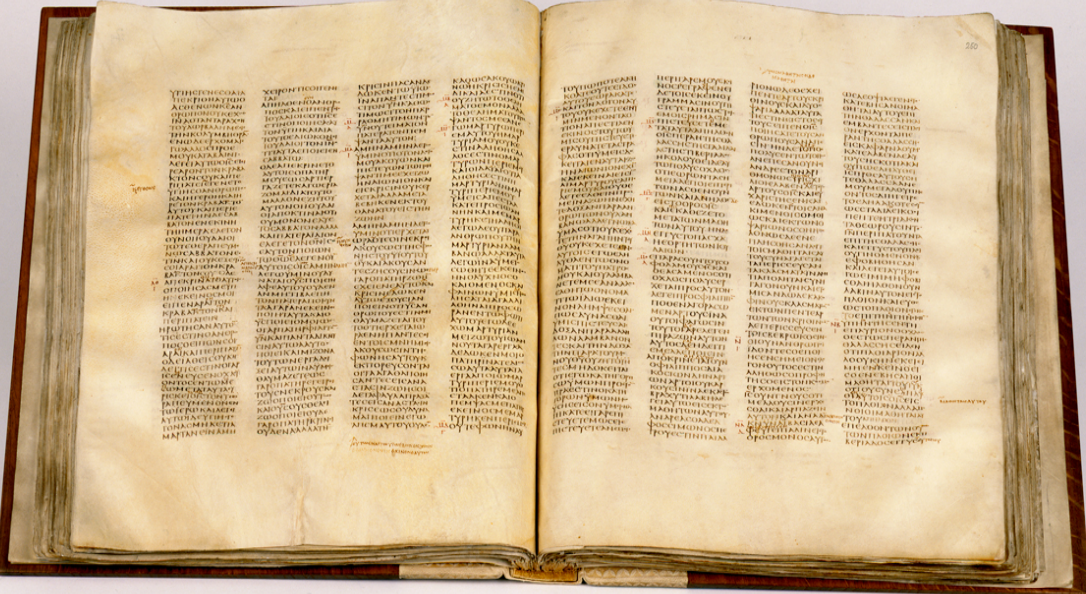


Pages from *The Complete World of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Thames & Hudson, 2002)



(Main picture) Looking up from the floor of the Wadi Qumran at Cave 4. (Inset) The interior of the cave, showing holes for shelving.

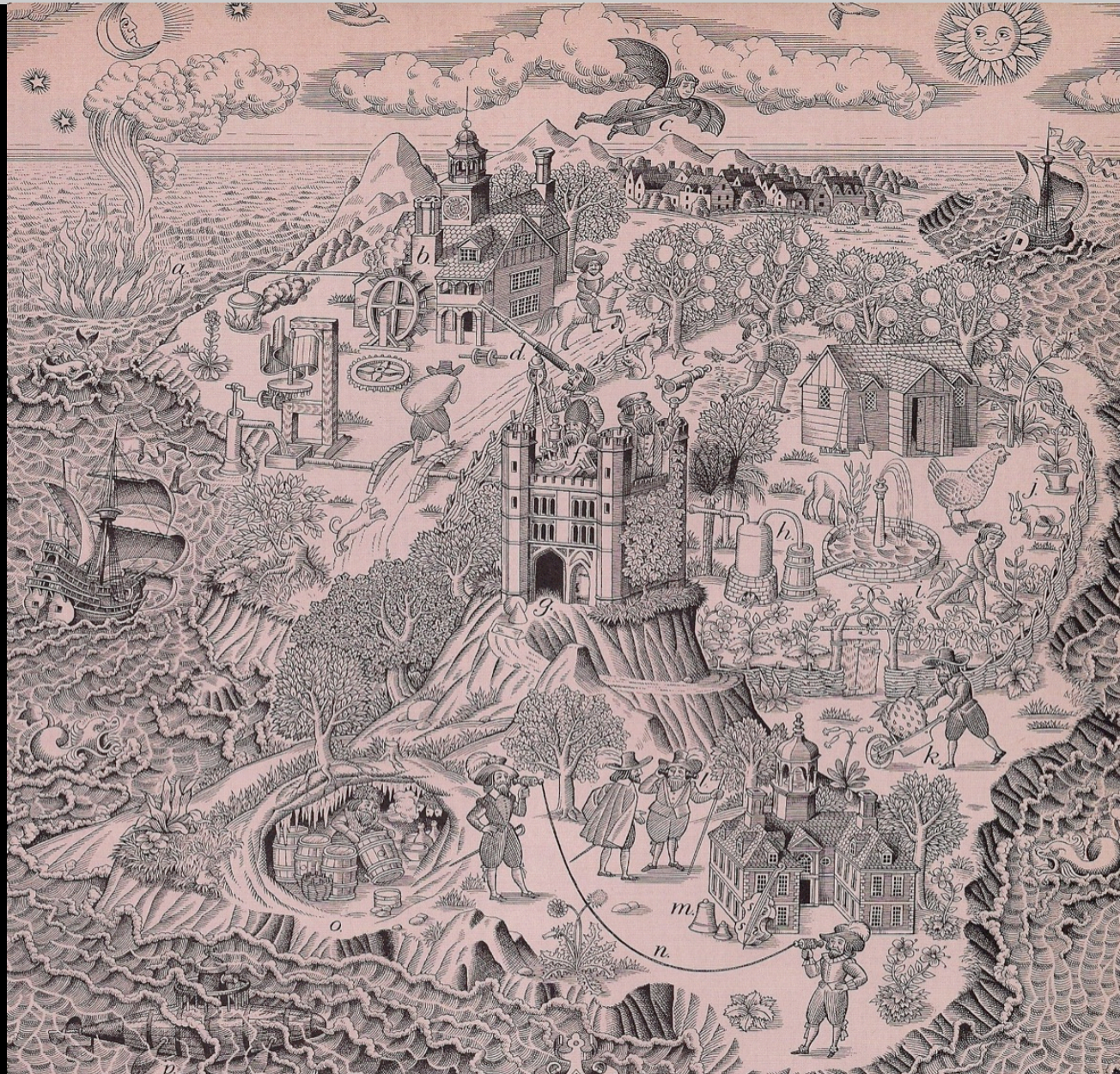
# The Christian Apocalyptic Library



# 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)

THE LAST MAN.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF FRANKENSTEIN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Let no man seek  
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall  
Him or his children.

MILTON.

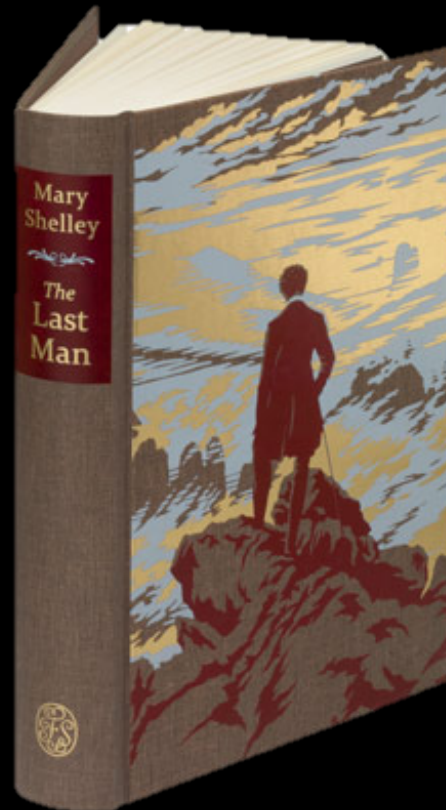
VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1826.

Title page of  
1<sup>st</sup> ed.;  
Folio Society  
ed.

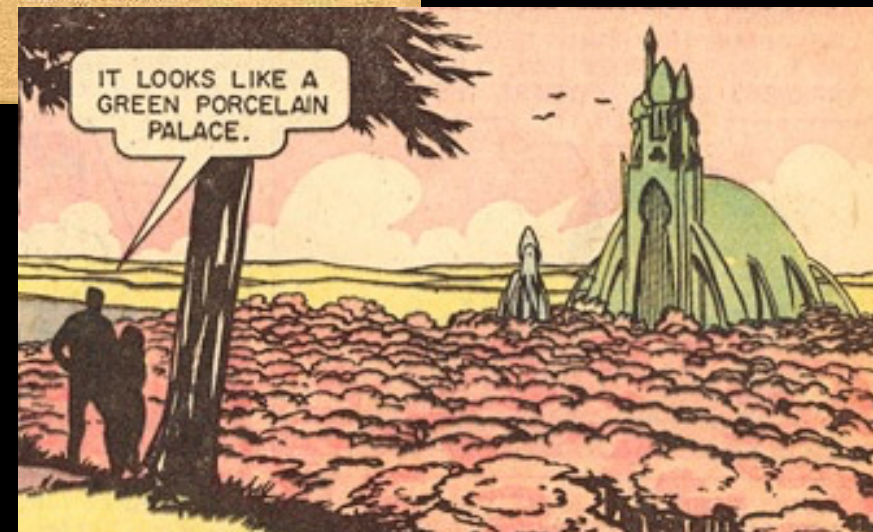


The Time Machine



H. G. Wells

Cover of 1<sup>st</sup>  
ed.; panel  
from Classics  
Illustrated  
*Time Machine*  
(1956)

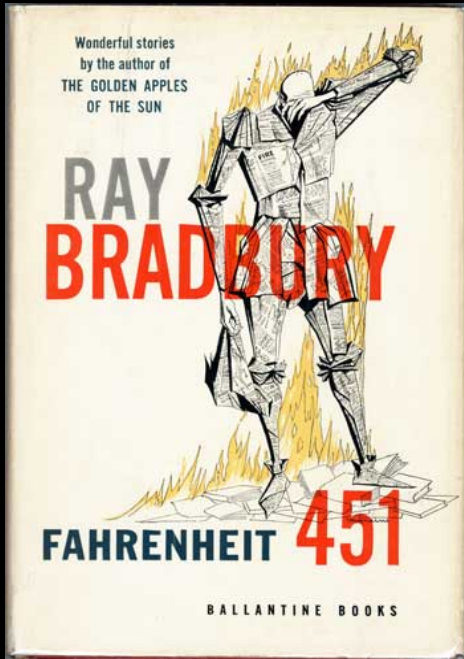


# *Brave New World (1931) and Nineteen Eighty-Four (1941)*

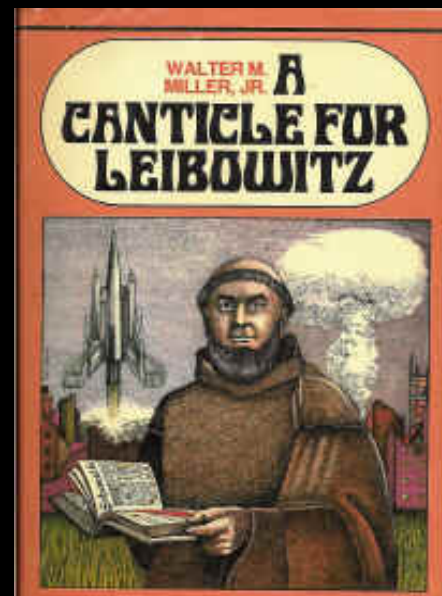
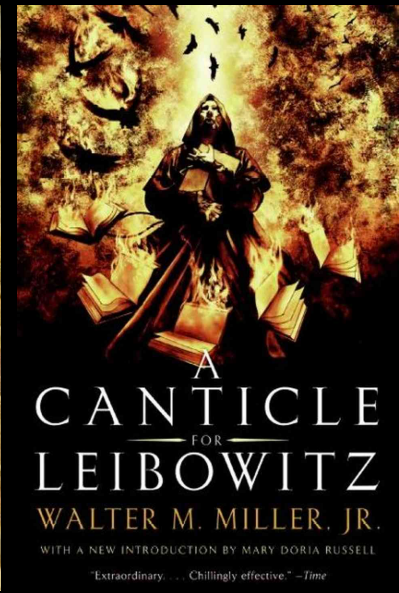
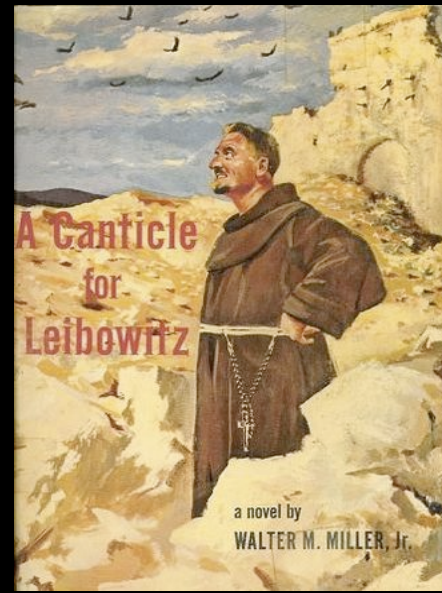


1<sup>st</sup> edition covers and scenes  
from the film *Nineteen Eighty  
Four* (1984)

# The Book People and the People of the Book



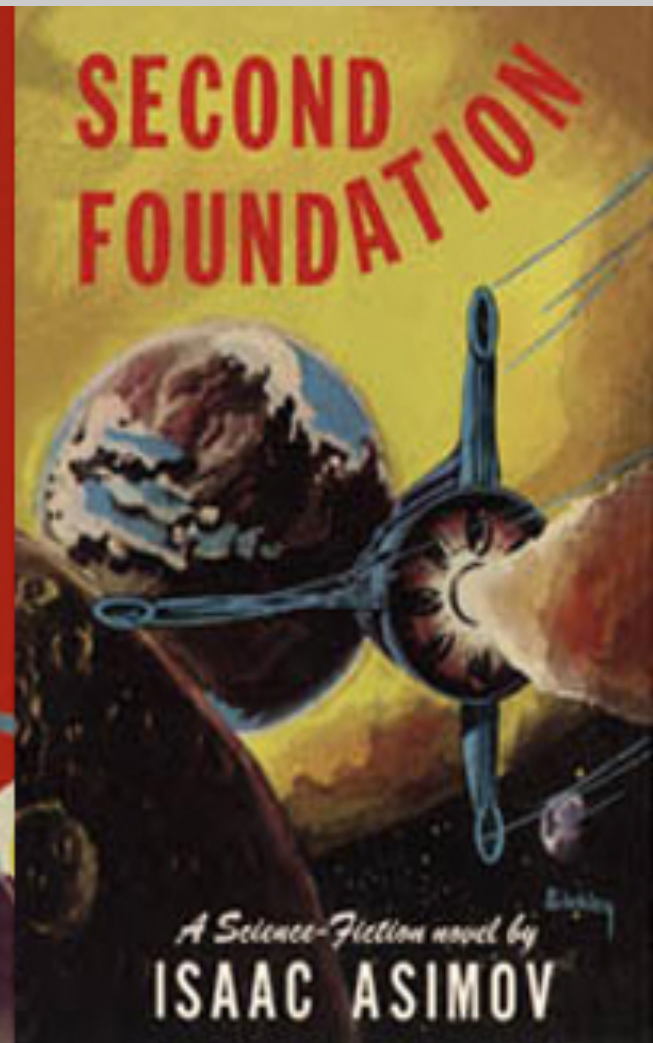
Novel (1953)  
and film (1966)



Covers for  
*A Canticle  
for  
Leibowitz*  
(1960-  
2006)



# *The Foundation Trilogy (1951-53)*

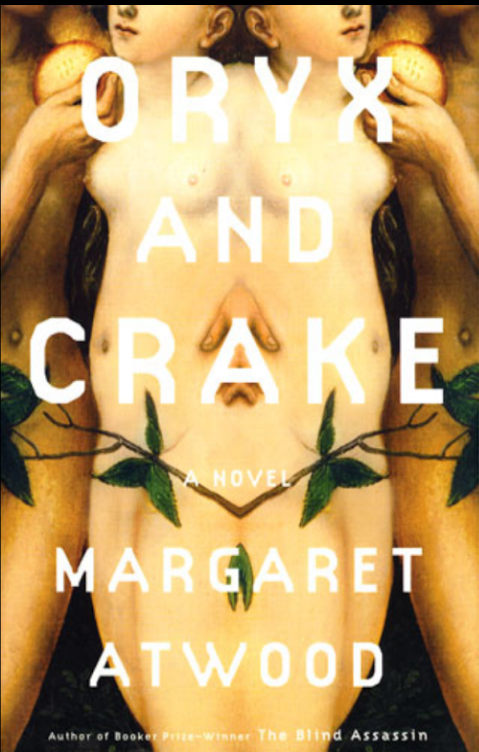


1<sup>st</sup> edition covers

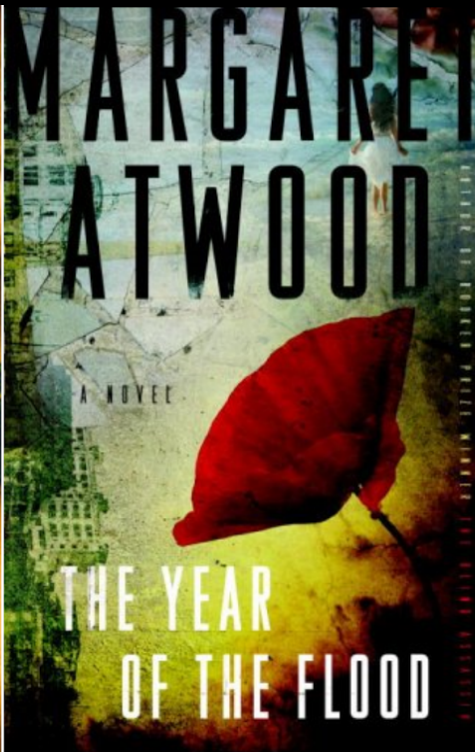
# The Anti-Libraries of Babel and Tlön



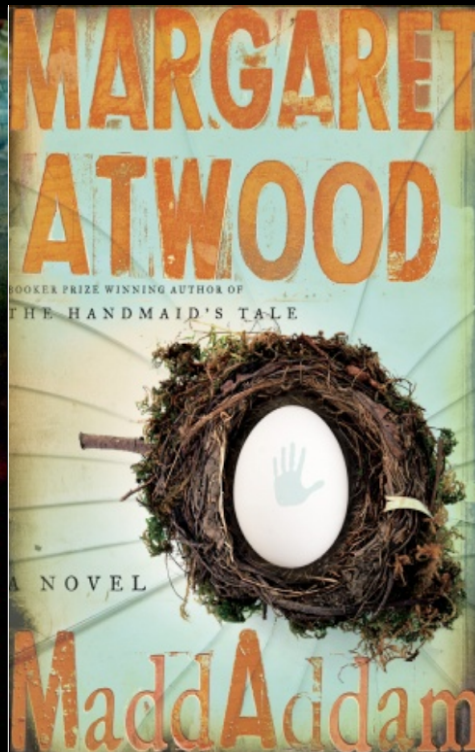
# The MaddAddam Trilogy and *Station Eleven* (2014)



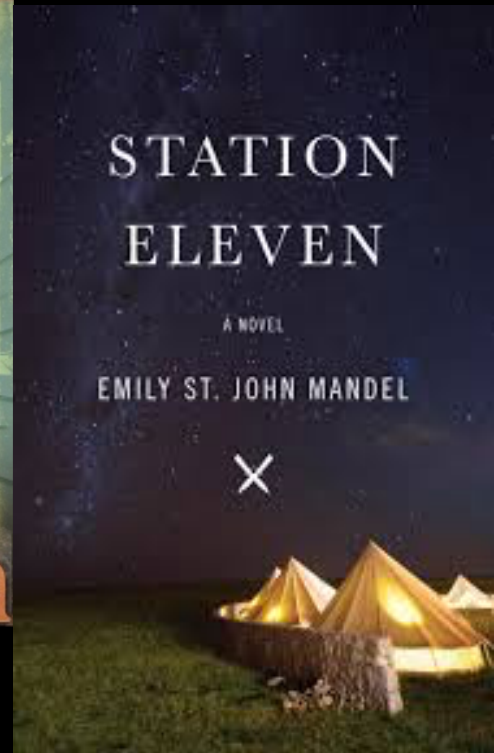
(2003)



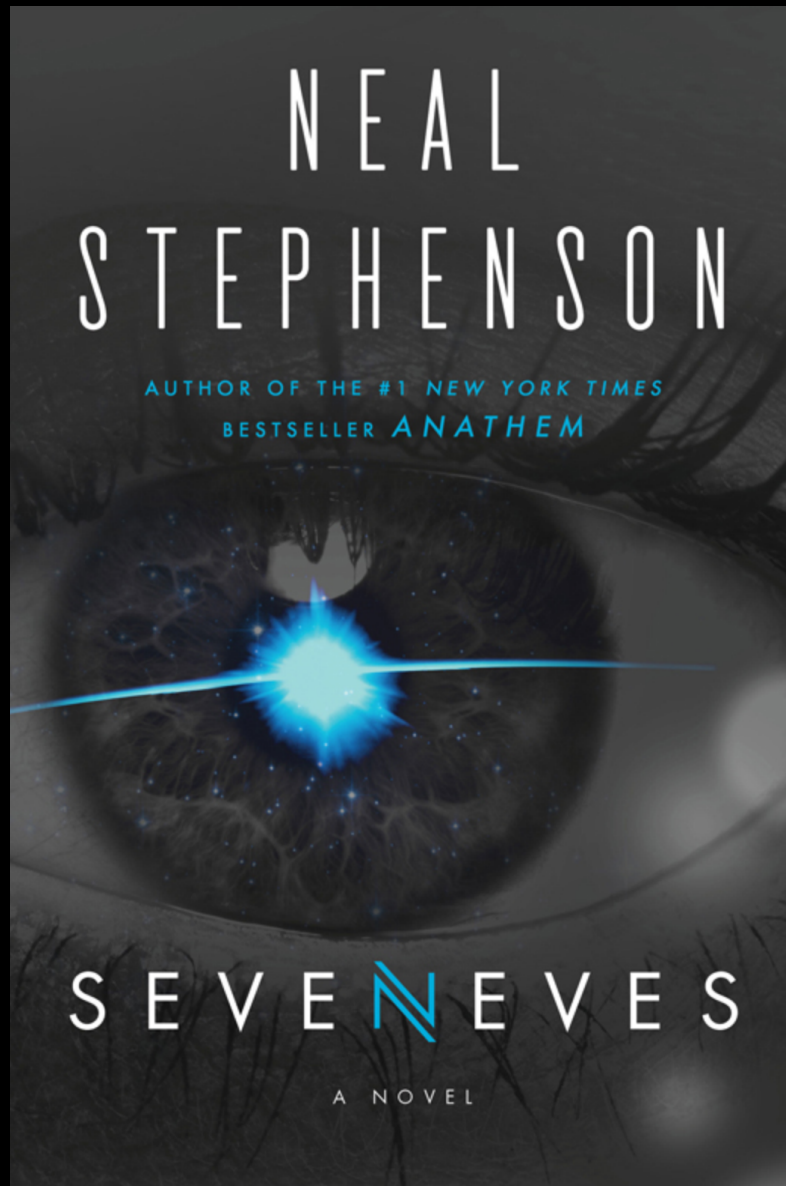
(2009)



(2013)



# 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

