Aimee Hinds, "Entry on: Atlantis to Interzone by Klaxons ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1325. Entry version as of November 19, 2026.

Klaxons

Atlantis to Interzone

United Kingdom (2006)

TAGS: Atlantis Pegasus Plato

We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Atlantis to Interzone
Title of the Album(s)	Myths of the Near Future
Studio/Production Company	Polydor / James Ford
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	Europe
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2006
First Edition Details	Klaxons, *Atlantis to Interzone*. Released 12th June 2006. Album *Myths of the Near Future* (2007), Polydor / James Ford.
Running time	3:26
Format	CD / MP3 / Vinyl / streaming platforms
Awards	2007 – Mercury Prize
Genre	Indie rock*, Narrative song*
Target Audience	Young adults
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Creators

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Klaxons (Music Band)

Klaxons were a British indie-rock band who formed in London in 2005, originally of members singer and bassist Jamie Reynolds (b. 1980), guitarist Simon Taylor-Davis (b. 1982) and singer and keyboardist James Righton (b. 1983). In 2007 they were joined by drummer Steffan Halperin (b. 1985). Reynolds and Taylor-Davis were the songwriters for the band.

Reynolds grew up in Bournemouth and Southampton, and studied Philosophy at Greenwich University. After dropping out of university and then being made redundant from his job, Reynolds purchased a studio kit, allowing the group to perform and record under their original name of 'Klaxons (Not Centaurs)'. Taylor-Davis and Righton grew up together in Stratford-Upon-Avon, during which time Righton taught Taylor-Davis to play the guitar. Taylor-Davis went on to study Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University, while Righton studied History and became a teacher. The three eventually met in London, with Halperin joining later in 2006, replacing their original live drummer Finnigan Kidd.

They produced three albums: *Myths of the Near Future* in 2007, *Surfing the Void* in 2010 and *Love Frequency* in 2014. They split in 2015. Their music draws extensively on a large variety of texts and ephemera, including the work of J. G. Ballard (after whose novel the album *Myths of the Near Future* is named), Alfred Jarry (whose work is referenced in *Isle of Her*) and Thomas Pynchon (whose novel *Gravity's Rainbow* is the name of another song on *Myths of the Near Future*).

Sources:

Profile at Discogs (accessed: August 4, 2020);

Profile at The Independent (accessed: August 4, 2020);

Profile at Wikipedia (accessed: August 4, 2020).

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Additional information

Summary

The title of the song is inspired by both the mythical city of Atlantis as described by Plato in the dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias* and William S. Burroughs' short story collection *Interzone*. The title of Burroughs' collection itself was taken from one of the stories within, *International Zone*, referring to the Tangier International Zone that made up part of Tangier, Morocco, between 1924 and 1956 and in which Burroughs lived for a while. Burroughs explored the idea of the Interzone more fully in *Naked Lunch* (1959) which was originally titled *Interzone*, and his time in Tangiers was expressed in his wider oeuvre.

The lyrics initially appear nonsensical, but upon closer inspection refer loosely to the destruction of Atlantis (first verse) and to a passage in *Naked Lunch* (second verse). There are also vague allusions to mythical creatures such as Pegasus. The chorus explicitly mentions both Atlantis and the "Interzone" as per the title, providing a comparison of the two as idealised cities.

Analysis

The lyrics of the song are ambiguous, typical for Klaxons, although they draw on the idea of the ideal city through the lens of the Tangier International Zone and Atlantis. Atlantis is a myth known only via the dialogues by Plato and used as a philosophical exercise to demonstrate the superiority of the ideal state, as defined by Plato in *The Republic*; while the existence of Atlantis has been erroneously considered historical in the intervening centuries, here, Klaxons seem to be in dialogue directly with Plato.

The first verse of this short song loosely describes the destruction of a city; although there are modern references, for example, to cars, the place can easily be read as Atlantis, due to the references to rising waters and degeneration:

Good thieves of burning cars encircle

Poisoned rivers, minds and hearts

Horses wanna dance

But find their wings are damaged, water damaged

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Gold is selling fast so hurry

Mighty ocean rising fast

A big man with a plan has got a storm a coming, monster coming

The "poisoned rivers" recalls the three rings or moats which Critias (in Plato's *Critias*) asserts surround Atlantis, while the rising ocean references the sinking of Atlantis; the "big man with a plan" suggests Zeus, who according to Critias is the god who destroyed Atlantis. The reference to gold implies the decadent and degenerate nature of the city, while the horses with their water damaged wings tie the lyrics directly into the classical through the mythical Pegasus, as well as demonstrating that the city exists firmly in the fantastic. The "monster" of the last line of the verse suggests the mixing of myths, bringing to mind Cetus from the Perseus myth. This nod to the mythic nature of Atlantis is also underscored by the chorus and the mention of "fiction":

From Atlantis to Interzone

You start at the end and you end on your own

From Atlantis to Interzone

You start at the end and you end on the throne

With fragments of fiction

The song is typical of the work of Klaxons, drawing from intertextual sources; several contain passing classical references and the track *Isle of Her* (also surveyed on this database) is closely associated with *The Odyssey* through another text. The second verse ends the song with:

The children's faces glow

The wasteland guides them, wasteland guides them

This is a probable reference to T.S. Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land*, which is itself full of intertextuality and classical allusion, and was often quoted by Burroughs. Burroughs' concept of the Interzone, while not classical, works alongside the veiled references to Atlantis as an idealised city. The second verse seems to refer to the work of Burroughs and includes a reference to a work by Thomas Pynchon

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(*Gravity's Rainbow*), also the title of another song on the album:

Yer dead man half alive

Who hangs from helping numbers 1, 2, 5

His ears pricked with a knife

Hears that the east are coming, west are coming

Gravity's rainbow, the axis here is still unknown

The verse recalls scenes from the chapter "Benway" and its outtake (included in the restored text) from *Naked Lunch*, which demonstrate some of Burroughs ambivalence about Tangiers.* Like many other writers during the 1950s, Burroughs found himself in Tangiers partly due to its lax laws as the result of the city being administered by several different European countries, which made it a haven in particular for gay Americans (homosexuality was outlawed in both Britain and the US at the time); it also attracted sex and drug tourists, gaining it a reputation for degeneracy among some.** The song thus makes the connection between Atlantis and Tangiers International Zone as places of moral debauchery and eventual destruction, but echoing Burroughs' own feelings about the Interzone (as he called it) which began with disappointment and came to embrace the "chaos" of Moroccan struggles against colonialism*** through the line 'you start at the end and you end on the throne'.

Burrough's work is not suitable for young people (it is famous for the inclusion of deliberate obscenities, and includes frequent drug and sex references), but knowledge of these texts are not necessary for the listener to recognise the layered references to engage with the song, as is the case with other intertextual songs by Klaxons. Musically, the song features a loud repeated klaxon which marks the song as part of its genre (nu-rave/electro-pop). Taylor-Davis and Reynolds have discussed their lyrics, speaking in an interview for JamBase about the role of fantasy in their music, with Taylor-Davis noting that "we wanted to make a record about somewhere that you couldn't see or touch or have heard of or know about or have an understanding about". Paired with their distinctive soundscape, it is clear that the lyrics are secondary for the band. For younger listeners who may not pick up or understand the intertextual references, the song provides a piece of classical reception of Atlantis that is fully understandable

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without any knowledge of the context of Burroughs through which it is filtered.

* Suver, Stacey Andrew, "Interzone's a Riot: William S. Burroughs and Writing the Moroccan Revolution", *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 8.1 (2017): 7 (accessed: June 10, 2021).

** Hamilton, Richard, "How Morocco became a haven for gay Westerners in the 1950s", BBC World Service, October 12, 2014, (accessed: June 12, 2021).

*** Suver, Stacey Andrew, "Interzone's a Riot: William S. Burroughs and Writing the Moroccan Revolution", op. it., 4–5.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Atlantis Pegasus Plato
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Future Intertextuality Nation Tale vs reality Utopia and dystopia

Further Reading

Burroughs, William, *Naked Lunch: The Restored Text*, (ed. James Grauerholz & Barry Miles), 2005.

Eliot, T. S., *The Waste Land*, 1922 (accessed: June 10, 2021).

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Pacifico, Chris, "Get Lifted with London's Klaxons", *JamBase*, 7th Aug 2007, (accessed: July 20, 2020).

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Suver, Stacey Andrew, "Interzone's a Riot: William S. Burroughs and Writing the Moroccan Revolution", *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 8.1 (2017) (accessed: June 10, 2021).

Reviews:

- In NME by Alex Miller (accessed: June 16, 2020).
- In Pitchfork by Marc Hogan (accessed: June 16, 2020).

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