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HISTORY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Do not panic: Hawkwind, the Cold War and “the imagination of disaster”

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Abstract: The English rock band, Hawkwind, was amongst the founders of the genre known as “space rock”. From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, their work also included references to Cold War issues. An examination of their concert appearances, musical output and printed matter reveals that relevant material often reflected the “imagination of disaster” made famous in an essay by Susan Sontag. As well, there are correlations between the waxing and waning of Cold War tensions, and the presence and absence of such themes in their work. Thus, their work provides an example of how popular music could serve as a barometer of the impact of the Cold War on popular culture.

Subjects: Arts; Humanities; Arts & Humanities; The Cold War; Popular Culture; Popular Music

Keywords: Cold War; Hawkwind; music; nuclear; disaster; performance; popular culture; science fiction

1. Introduction

In 2002, referring to the band he played bass in some 30 years earlier, the rock musician Lemmy said that Hawkwind “were a black fucking nightmare. A post-apocalypse horror soundtrack. We wanted to make people’s heads and sphincters explode” (Abrahams, 2004, p. 54). This article focuses on that band, Hawkwind, and how they presented that “post-apocalypse horror soundtrack”. Specifically, it discusses the ways that Cold War concerns affected the band’s output from the 1970s to the 1990s. It does not suggest that this was a predominant theme in their work, or that they saw themselves as a major campaigner in anti-Cold War activities. Rather, it argues that the presence of such material is an excellent example of how the Cold War was an ever-present part of life, and of how popular

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Erin Ihde is a lecturer in the University of New England’s School of Humanities. He has a widely recognised research interest in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Australian history. He is the author of *A Manifesto for New South Wales: Edward Smith Hall and the Sydney Monitor, 1826–1840*, published by Australian Scholarly Publishing in December 2004. He has also published articles in the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, the *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, the *Journal of Australian Studies*, the *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture* and *Australian Folklore*. He also has an interest in the history of the Cold War, especially the ways in which popular culture provides a commentary on its politics, fears, excesses and creativity.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This paper allows the reader to see how the material of their everyday lives, in this case music, can be a signifier of the major themes, issues and concerns of their times. Focusing on the English band Hawkwind, it links their science-fiction-themed music to similar examples in literature and film. With the Cold War dominating public discourse for so many years, the paper shows how it became an ingrained theme in much of what western society was exposed to and experienced during that time. In addition, it also demonstrates how there can be correlations between periods of more and less intense concerns, and the production of such material. Readers will therefore gain an appreciation of how we can learn about our past by looking at the popular culture of the time.

music can serve as a conduit for peoples' concerns. As a reference point, Susan Sontag's influential 1965 essay, "The imagination of disaster", is used to provide context (Sontag, 1965). While she dealt with science-fiction films, it will be seen that science-fiction music could raise similar concerns.

Popular culture can both reflect and influence current concerns and attitudes. By examining the popular culture of a particular period, it is possible to gain an insight into the *zeitgeist* of that period (Nachbar & Lause, 1992, pp. 4–5). When studying the Cold War, it is important to acknowledge the difference between the cultural Cold War, which tends to refer to "cultural diplomacy between the blocs", and Cold War culture, referring more to "everyday social existence" (Major & Mitter, 2006, pp. 240–241). An examination of several dominant forms of popular culture, from movies to television to comic books and more, can thus tell us a great deal about that everyday existence. As well, as tensions ebbed and flowed during the Cold War, it should be possible to see whether this is reflected in the popular culture being produced during the different periods: the trajectory of the James Bond films is a good example of this (Major & Mitter, 2003, pp. 16–17, 2006, pp. 250–251). However, as Peter J. Schmelz has observed, it seems to have taken longer for the music of the Cold War to have received serious attention than it has for these other forms of popular culture (Schmelz, 2009, pp. 3–4). The use of jazz as a tool in the "Cultural Cold War", whereby popular American jazz musicians toured Eastern-bloc countries as a form of propaganda, is relatively well known (Crist, 2009, pp. 133, 136). More recently, Matthew Worley has provided an excellent example of music as "Cold War Culture", setting the British punk movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s against the rising Cold War tensions of the first half of the latter decade (Worley, 2011, p. 69). Tracing the career of Hawkwind over both of these decades and beyond similarly highlights the importance of music as forum of popular culture through which the Cold War can be examined.

Hawkwind were (and continue to be) an influential band that never quite made it into the league of such groups as, say, Pink Floyd or Led Zeppelin. Founded in London in the late 1960s, they are most easily, if not particularly accurately, compared to Pink Floyd. Both bands are regarded as founders of the genre known as "Space Rock", involving trippy music as a forum with extended jams, space-related lyrics, elaborate light shows and the consumption of mind-altering substances (Clerk, 2004, p. 83). Hawkwind are most remembered for their 1972 hit, "Silver Machine", which appears on 1970s compilations to this day. The lyrics were suitably "spacey", describing a ride on a Silver Machine that "flies sideways through time" (Hawkwind, 1972). The song was actually about a bicycle. They are also known for their 1973 live album, *Space Ritual*, regarded as a rock milestone (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 55–56; Hawkwind, 1973; *Mojo*, 2005, p. 51; *Mojo Classic*, n.d., p. 137; Tawn & Marinoni, 1991, p. 76).

Over the years, there have been innumerable personnel changes in the band. Members have left, been sacked, rejoined, left again, been sacked again or might make guest appearances at occasional concerts. The band can be described as a loose collective, with one man at the centre. That man, the only constant member since day one, has been Dave Brock, who was born in 1941 and grew up in Middlesex. The sentiments he expresses have also remained constant over the years (Clerk, 2004, pp. xi–xiii). From the beginning, the group reflected an ethos grounded in the counterculture and aimed at voicing concerns about the world around them. Brock commented that Hawkwind was "trying to relate to what's happening. Too many laws against this and that. We can see the world and the way it's run and we're trying to awaken people to the fact that it's wrong" (Abrahams, 2004, p. 67). As Jeremi Suri has noted, scholars should not separate "the social history of the counterculture ... from the political history of the Cold War" (Suri, 2009, p. 67). The international counterculture developed to express criticisms of "basic social assumptions" that were connected to current politics: public spectacle and rock music were just two formats used to do so (Suri, 2009, pp. 46–47). There was a push for more personal freedom, breaking away from old-fashioned restrictions regarding "self-control and public discipline. Dissent", Suri continues, "was ideological, and it was fun" (Suri, 2009, p. 53). Brock's statement, coupled with Hawkwind's activities and output as discussed below, can clearly be placed within the framework of both countercultural social history and Cold War political history.

There are three distinct ways in which Hawkwind's career can be examined to provide insights into the role of popular culture in expressing and reflecting Cold War concerns. Their choice of where and with whom to perform live was often closely related to their desire to promote their lifestyle, ethos and message. The songs and music themselves, and the times in which they more strongly reflect Cold War issues, provide clear examples of how the popular culture of an era can be used to examine the overriding issues of that period. Finally, the visual material produced by Hawkwind often also served as a conduit for their concerns.

2. Festivals and benefits

Hawkwind's performing career during the 1970s and early 1980s was often closely aligned with both the ethos of the band, frequently choosing to put cause before profit and also with their commitment to using their profile to spread their message. The ways in which they did this serve as a useful starting point to gain an insight into the importance of popular culture as a historical source, as Hawkwind's association with groups such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) provide an ideal way of tracking the waxing and waning of Cold War concerns over those years.

One of the band's early live appearances was outside the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival. This set a pattern and imbued the group with a particular notoriety. The festival is partly remembered as an event where the spirit of the "free festival" came head to head with the money-making side of the rock scene, resulting in bitterness and protests. The fences surrounding the site were finally taken down on the last day and the event was declared free to all comers. Until then Hawkwind staged several free concerts outside the gates for those who had been unable to get in. Early member Thomas Crimble (who left the band to become an organiser of the Glastonbury festival) remembers that the band simply wanted to play there, but their actions are recounted in Hawkwind folklore as being a protest against high ticket prices (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 30–32; Clerk, 2004, pp. 38–39).

Whatever the reason, the concerts raised the group's profile. Jimi Hendrix noticed them and the press reported their activities, helping to cement their reputation as a "people's band", a group willing to put principle before profit (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 30–32). This was something the band had been doing from the very beginning. Another founder member, saxophonist Nik Turner, who was born in Oxford in 1940 and grew up in Buckinghamshire and Kent, had watched a band called Virgin play a series of free concerts. Seeing this "gave [him] the idea that it was good to be involved and do some good and help people. I realised the value of free music" (Clerk, 2004, p. 11). Turner brought this attitude with him to Hawkwind. He became the driving force behind the band playing as many free concerts and benefits as possible. The band was perfectly agreeable but Brock, while also supporting these ideals, recognised that there had to be a balance between free and paying shows if the band was to survive, and this did lead to some tension (Abrahams, 2004, p. 24; Clerk, 2004, pp. 40–41, 50–51).

Nevertheless, the group has been linked for much of its existence with such activities. Soon they were busy, said Turner, doing "free gigs and benefits and supporting lame ducks and anything else that was going on" (Clerk, 2004, pp. 28–29). They did so many that the band was indeed losing money. They played concerts both inside and outside prisons, including Wormwood Scrubs. They appeared for a diverse range of organisations including Release (a drug-rescue organisation), legalise cannabis groups, the White Panthers, the Hell's Angels, Greenpeace and the CND (Clerk, 2004, pp. 28–29; Tait, 1984; Wall, 1999, p. 46). Hawkwind's lifestyle, often living in an almost stereotypical countercultural manner in squats and on floors, and their welcoming of fans into their dressing rooms post-concert, always happy to talk to them even after they had become famous, also gave them "street cred": people accepted and listened to them (Clerk, 2004, pp. 83, 99).

The CND connection is most significant here. Formed in 1958, its original members included Bertrand Russell, Michael Foot and the historian A.J.P. Taylor. Another prominent historian who was an early member was E.P. Thompson. CND enjoyed great success in the late 1950s and early 1960s,

making its name with the Easter 1958 Aldermaston March, when several thousand people marched from Trafalgar Square to the Aldermaston Weapons Research Establishment in Berkshire, a distance of some 45 miles. The March became a regular event, although the direction was later reversed (DeGroot, 2004, pp. 219, 230–232, 322; Hudson, 2005, pp. 55–57; Minnion & Bolsover, 1983, pp. 9–45; Thompson, 1982, p. xi).

Support for CND waned from the mid-1960s until the late 1970s, as other issues such as Vietnam dominated. This was also a time of *détente*, when tension between east and west eased, and the threat of nuclear destruction appeared to recede. Following the very real threat of nuclear disaster posed by the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, a series of treaties and agreements between the superpowers reflected a realisation that both sides simply had to accept the others' capabilities (Gaddis, 2005, pp. 81–82). However, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw a dramatic reversal in CND's fortunes. The advent of Margaret Thatcher's government in Britain, and the election of Ronald Reagan in the USA were major catalysts in the revival of a fear of nuclear war. Both leaders were firm believers in nuclear weapons, and the arrival of the neutron bomb, Trident and Cruise missiles and Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, otherwise known as "Star Wars", saw people flock to CND (Worley, 2011, pp. 67, 73–74). In response to a leaked British government pamphlet, "Protect and Survive", which outlined what to do in case of a nuclear attack but whose simplistic instructions caused much derision and helped CND recruitment instead, E.P. Thompson published "Protest and Survive", a hugely influential piece which was also adopted as a CND slogan. In addition, CND expanded its programme to include ecological issues, including opposition to nuclear power, further broadening its support base (DeGroot, 2004, pp. 232, 305–321; Hudson, 2005, pp. 86–131; Minnion & Bolsover, 1983, pp. 27–41; Mueller, 1989, pp. 156–162).

Hawkwind's activities and outlook fit neatly against this background. Environmental concerns also feature in the band's work, with some lyrics combining these and Cold War themes, and nuclear energy formed a part of these concerns. "We were very anti-atomic power", observed bass and keyboard player Harvey Bainbridge (born in Dorset in 1949), "when the power stations were being built around the country" (Clerk, 2004, p. 317). Thomas Crimble wore a Second World War gas mask on stage, doing so "as a protest about pollution, car fumes and all that, and it was also an anti-war statement". He soon desisted, though, as "it was totally impractical ... they steam up and you can't see fuck all" (Clerk, 2004, pp. 52, 190).

CND and Hawkwind coalesced in their recognition and use of music as a form of protest and a means to impart Cold War messages. Examples of the popularity and strength of Cold War music are easy to come by, from Bob Dylan's "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" from the 1960s, through to Sting's "Russians" and Frankie Goes to Hollywood's "Two Tribes" of the 1980s. Groups like Van Halen, Iron Maiden and the Sex Pistols also reflected themes of nuclear fear in their songs (Beckman, Crumlish, Dobkowski, & Lee, 2000, p. 292; DeGroot, 2004, p. 318). CND tapped into this world of protest and music. The Aldermaston marches nearly always featured music, and the 1972 March concluded with a festival held in Falcon Field, opposite the Research Establishment. It was a fitting finale, as "the affirmation of life and opposition to nuclear weapons at the gates of an establishment devoted to universal death was moving and effective" (Minnion & Bolsover, 1983, p. 32). Hawkwind played at the festival (Clerk, 2004, p. 55; Minnion & Bolsover, 1983, p. 32).

Music, festivals and protest were a potent mix, and CND became associated with one of the most well-known English music festivals, Glastonbury. The first festival, held in 1970, was organised by farmer Michael Eavis on his property, and was a relatively small affair that featured T-Rex and Al Stewart. It attracted about two thousand people. 1971's festival was called Glastonbury Fayre and its manifesto carried a strong environmental message. "Man is fast ruining his environment", it said. Glastonbury's aims were, "therefore: the conservation of our natural resources; a respect for nature and life; and a spiritual awakening". It saw 12,000 people attend to see acts including David Bowie, Traffic, and Hawkwind (Aubrey & Shearlaw, 2004, pp. 7, 15, 21–22).

The Hawkwind/Glastonbury connection is quite strong. With the 1971 event being a free festival, it is hardly surprising that they attended. As mentioned above, early bass player Thomas Crimble was heavily involved with Glastonbury for many years, and he ended up rejoining the band for their performance that year. Nik Turner is credited with having “probably played at Glastonbury more times and with more different bands than anyone else” (Abrahams, 2004, p. 47; Aubrey & Shearlaw, 2004, pp. 7–9, 33–36; Clerk, 2004, pp. 56–67).

In the early 80s, Glastonbury took on a whole new life when Eavis decided to link it with a movement that was now definitely appealing to young people—CND. Worried about the presence of cruise missiles near his home, he helped establish a local chapter of the group. He and his family attended CND marches and rallies, listening to E.P. Thompson at a rally in Trafalgar Square in 1980. Eavis then approached the CND management to see if they were interested in becoming involved with the festival, which they were. So, from 1981 Glastonbury was for several years held as a fundraiser for the organisation. At the 1981 festival, performers included Ginger Baker (who had just spent some time as Hawkwind’s drummer), New Order and, once again, Hawkwind, headlining on the Saturday night (Abrahams, 2004, p. 131; Aubrey & Shearlaw, 2004, pp. 56–60; Clerk, 2004, pp. 239–241; Minnion & Bolsover, 1983, pp. 36–37). There were speeches as well, with CND chairman Bruce Kent declaring that “we are the ones here today who will stop the nuclear arms race!” (Aubrey & Shearlaw, 2004, p. 60). Eavis must have been impressed by E.P. Thompson at Trafalgar Square, for Thompson also addressed the Glastonbury crowd (Aubrey & Shearlaw, 2004, p. 57).

Ironically, Hawkwind’s commitment to playing free festivals made it difficult for them to reconcile with the fact that Glastonbury was now a paying one, so while they did appear in later years, they did so unofficially, playing for free in the “travellers’ field” (Clerk, 2004, p. 241). Clearly though, these aspects of their performing career can be set against the backdrop of the Cold War, and serve to highlight the interaction between popular culture and then-current concerns.

3. The songs

Hawkwind’s performing career was thus partly shaped by the Cold War, but as with any rock band or performer, it is their musical output that is central to their existence. An examination of Hawkwind’s songs further illustrates the influence of the Cold War on their work. While not a dominant theme in their songs, the presence or absence of Cold War messages, imagery and sounds coincides with increases and decreases in Cold War tensions, demonstrating the relevance of popular music as a means of gauging societal concerns at a particular time. In addition, the science-fiction element of their work comes through strongly, allowing it to be contextualised as an extension of both the film and the literature of that genre being produced during the era, frequently also mediums for the expression of Cold War concerns.

Many of the Hawkwind songs that feature Cold War imagery can be categorised as reflecting what Susan Sontag called “the imagination of disaster”. In a famous essay of the same name written in 1965 Sontag, discussing science-fiction movies of the 1950s and 1960s, observed that “modern historical reality has greatly enlarged the imagination of disaster”. She added that “a mass trauma exists over the use of nuclear weapons and the possibility of future nuclear wars”. This trauma, Sontag said, was “suffered by everyone in the middle of the 20th century when it became clear that ... every person would spend his individual life under the threat not only of individual death ... but of something almost insupportable psychologically—collective incineration and extinction which could come at any time” (Sontag, 1965, pp. 103–112). Peter R. Beckman et al. have postulated that the social upheavals of the 1960s were partly a result of this: confronting anxiety and potential crisis led the generation that came of age during this time to perceive an urgent need for social and political change. The thought that life could end at any moment also led to a desire to do as much as possible as soon as possible. Thus, “there was a great preoccupation with intensified forms of experience via drugs, sex, rock music, meditation, dance, religion and even politics” (Beckman et al., 2000, p. 290). Elements of nearly all of those categories are evident in Hawkwind’s output and ethos.

In his study of science-fiction novels and films, David Seed has noted “the fine responsiveness of fiction and film to a whole range of social, technological and political changes taking place during the Cold War” (Seed, 1999, p. 11). Numerous scholars have explored the ways in which this occurred, from 1950s science-fiction movies through to the novels of Ray Bradbury (Hoskinson, 1995; Torry, 1991). Both Brock and Turner were science-fiction fans and, as discussed below, both films and novels were referenced in their work. Indeed, in a literary crossover, two science-fiction novels feature the members of Hawkwind as the central characters. Written by Michael Butterworth from an idea by Michael Moorcock, the first book was called *The Time of the Hawklords*, published in 1976, and the second *Queens of Deliria*, published in 1977. In these books, the band and other survivors are living in a post-holocaust world of shattered ruins and decaying bodies. A battle for supremacy is underway between the forces of good and evil, and music is the weapon employed by both sides. The evil enemy attacks the minds of its opponents by broadcasting music at them through the Death Generator—Frank Sinatra, Tony Blackburn, The Carpenters, Simon and Garfunkel, Elton John and the like. Only the songs of Hawkwind can protect the valorous and counterattack the forces of darkness, broadcast back at them through Hawkwind’s own weapon, the Delatron (Butterworth, 1976, 1977). Hawkwind did in fact use an audio generator as part of their instrumentation: capable of producing high-frequency and unusual sounds, one-time manager Doug Smith remembers it contributing to the “spacey sounds” of the band and enhancing the science-fiction aspect of the music (Abrahams, 2004, p. 20; Clerk, 2004, p. 17; Smith in Lerner & Chu, 2007). Thus, the science-fiction music of Hawkwind can be seen as a natural adjunct to the science-fiction novels and films that were depicting Cold War themes and concerns.

Thomas Crimble remembers feelings of doom during the 1960s and 1970s, noting that “it was very much in everyone’s minds, we’d just had the Cuban missile crisis, so that end-of-the-world scenario was very real” (Abrahams, 2004, p. 9). Similarly, guitarist and vocalist Huw Lloyd-Langton (born in North London in 1951) commented that “the future doesn’t look too bright does it?” He continued, “you can’t ignore it unless you’re a total dreamer. The music entertains but I believe in writing about these things” (Abrahams, 2004, p. 128; Clerk, 2004, p. 26).

Hawkwind’s first, self-titled, album was released in August 1970. The first track, “Hurry on Sundown” reflected the busking antecedents of Dave Brock. Brock had partly served his “apprenticeship” as a busker on the streets of London, particularly the Notting Hill area, and also throughout Europe. Several other early members had similar backgrounds. So while much of the first album was electronic experimentation, the busking roots did show through on some songs. “Hurry on Sundown”, and indeed most of the album, contains little that can be directly related to the Cold War, but the song does include one pointer for what was to come, saying, “hurry on sundown/see what tomorrow brings/well it may bring war ...” (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 9–26; Clerk, 2004, pp. 2–34; Hawkwind, 1970; Tawn & Marinoni, 1991, p. 32).

As its title infers, their second album, *In Search of Space*, released in October 1971 and peaking at number 18 in the charts, continued to strengthen the band’s association with the “space rock” genre (Clerk, 2004, p. 83). According to Nik Turner, the album represented “a lot of the things we believe—particularly the ecology thing”. It told, he said, of “a space-ship visiting earth in 1985” and discovering “a total mess of concrete and iron” (Abrahams, 2004, p. 49). *Melody Maker* writer Andrew Means noted that the album presented a “big picture” analysis of several contemporary crises, such as the loss of individualism and threats of ecological disaster and nuclear war (Abrahams, 2004, p. 49). The magazine described the band as “prophets in our own back yard” (Clerk, 2004, p. 84). The song which best exemplifies these themes is “We Took the Wrong Step Years Ago”. “The way things are going”, it exhorts, “the end is about to fall ... take a look around and see/the warnings close at hand/already weeds are writing/their scriptures in the sand/we took the wrong step years ago” (Hawkwind, 1971; Tawn & Marinoni, 1991, p. 35).

A similar theme can be found in “The Watcher”, from the band’s third album, *Doremi Fasol Latido*, released in November 1972 and making number 14 in the charts (Clerk, 2004, p. 107). The Watcher was a character from Marvel Comics who observes man from a distance (Abrahams, 2004, p. 256).

In this song, he is not happy with what he sees. Over a sparse acoustic guitar accompaniment, Lemmy sings in soft, menacing tones, “We gave you the chance to do the right thing/we gave you the chance to do the bright thing/but now our sense is all disgusted/reaffirm you can’t be trusted”. The song concludes with the repeated statement that “this is the end now” (Hawkwind, 1972; Tawn & Marinoni, 1991, p. 38). The themes enunciated by Sontag are thus slowly becoming more clearly articulated.

These themes are then vividly brought out in one of the most startling pieces Hawkwind have recorded—“Sonic Attack”. Performed live on the *Space Ritual* tour, which started in November 1972, it appeared on the live album of the same name, released in May 1973 and reaching number nine in the UK charts. The concerts were a sight and sound extravaganza, featuring an elaborate set, spectacular light show and, as with many of their early 1970s shows, a statuesque female dancer, Stacia, who often performed naked (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 43–45; Clerk, 2004, pp. 60–61, 110–115). The brain child of poet and vocalist Bob Calvert, the show was the synthesis of everything Hawkwind had been striving for to that point. Described as a space “opera”, it told the story of a group of space travellers in suspended animation, and of the dreams they had whilst in that state. Calvert said that the work was “a mythological approach to what’s happening today” (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 58–62; Clerk, 2004, p. 110). The concert was designed as much as a theatrical as a musical show and the press recognised the successful integration of the two, providing extremely positive reviews (Clerk, 2004, p. 113). Indeed, the intricate stories the band were presenting intrigued the fans, who would pore over the lyrics and produce their own Hawkwind-inspired material. Ian Davidson, from Belfast, recalled writing his own story that he wanted to present to the band when he attended a *Space Ritual* concert. As other fans had found he was able to simply walk into the dressing room after the show and chat to Nik Turner, to whom he did indeed present his book. Davidson still credits Hawkwind with influencing his life as an adult, stating “I’m still asking questions, still wanting to know, ‘Why?’” (Clerk, 2004, pp. 131–133).

“Sonic Attack” is a spoken-word piece. Recited by Calvert, it was written by the well-known science-fiction author, Michael Moorcock, who rose to prominence in the early 1960s and had a love of rock and roll. Moorcock was one of Hawkwind’s favourite authors, and as he operated in similar areas of London, it was inevitable that they should meet. He started performing poetry with them, such as “Black Corridor”, which described space: taken directly from the opening passages of his book of the same name, it appeared on the *Space Ritual* album (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 35–36; Clerk, 2004, pp. 31–32; Moorcock, 1969, p. 7; Tawn, 1997, pp. 3–9, 18–22).

Moorcock wrote “Sonic Attack” especially for the band. It is essentially a parody of the nuclear “four minute warning”, a message informing people of what steps to take in the case of sonic attack. The message is uniformly bleak—while it ironically commands that people “do not panic”, it also informs them that they “have only a few seconds to escape/use those seconds sensibly or you will inevitably die”. This meant abandoning “friends, relatives, loved ones”, for “survival means every man for himself/statistically, more people survive if they think only of themselves”. The track builds to a crescendo as it describes the physical effects of sonic attack, including vibrations in the diaphragm, hissing in the ears, dizziness, vomiting, “bleeding from orifices/ ... an ache in the pelvic region/you may be subject to fits of hysterical shouting, or even laughter/these are all signs of imminent sonic destruction”. Finally, it fades with the repeated mantra, “you can help no-one else/ do not panic/think only of yourself” (Hawkwind, 1973; Tawn, 1997, p. 11). Given the visual extravaganza accompanying the performance, and the likelihood of much of the audience having consumed assorted substances, the effect must have been quite extraordinary. A review of one of the 1972 concerts at Dunstable noted that the audience was “reacting physically to each mood created on stage [and] became part of the spectacle”. The electronic effects the band created during the concert clearly caused a reaction, as the review continued that “whenever the stage gave off electronic pulsations, the crowd became uneasy, restless, perturbed; when the characteristic heavy metal riffs started up the sense of relief was made physically manifest” (Pidgeon, 1972). “Sonic Attack” remains a key Hawkwind track, and is without doubt one of the best examples of the Cold War influencing

their work, presenting as it does, in the words of band biographer Ian Abrahams, “a contemporary nightmare of nuclear fall-out” (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 36, 60, 258). The imaginations at work producing this version of disaster were vivid indeed. Moorcock has described the lyrics as “dystopian”, in the sense that they were intended to issue a warning, trying “to change things”: there was a serious message behind the spectacle, popular culture clearly being used to influence as well as reflect attitudes. The *zeitgeist* of the times, he said, centred on a belief that things could be changed for the better (Moorcock in Lerner & Chu, 2007).

Hawkwind’s next three albums (1974, 1975 and 1976) contain no overt references to the Cold War. It is tempting to speculate that this is due to the *détente* of the era. With western relations with China improving in 1972, the Vietnam war finally ending in 1975 and the Helsinki Agreement of August 1975 representing a highpoint of *détente*, it would appear that the band felt free to pursue other musical themes (Isaacs & Downing, 1998, pp. 278, 288–289). However, 1977s album, *Quark, Strangeness and Charm* (which charted at number 30), makes up for the break with a nine-minute epic, “Damnation Alley”, that definitely returns the imagination of disaster to the forefront (Clerk, 2004, p. 174).

By this stage, Calvert had taken over as lead singer and chief lyricist. Born in South Africa in 1945, he came to England with his family at about age three. They returned to South Africa when he was 17, but his opposition to the political regime there made him stay in England (Abrahams, 2004, p. 37; Clerk, 2004, p. 10). Nik Turner observed that while the rest of the band were not consciously trying to be political, “Bob was politically aware ... [he] would use current images, topical things, to express basic universal truths” (Abrahams, 2004, p. 68). Calvert knew both Turner and Moorcock, and joined Hawkwind as a lyricist and poet, later turning to singing as well. He suffered from mental illness, and was in and out of the band throughout the 1970s, leaving for the last time in 1979, although he did make some later guest appearances at concerts. Calvert died of a heart attack, aged 43, in 1988 (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 37–38, 153–154, 175; Tawn & Marinoni, 1991, p. 15). But he brought an important stage presence to the band at a time when the rise of punk saw them in danger of being written off as rock dinosaurs: some writers were becoming increasingly hostile to the band but others recognised Calvert’s pivotal role in communicating their ideas. In fact, key punk figures such as Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols and Jello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys openly acknowledge Hawkwind as an influence—Rotten regularly attended Hawkwind shows and knew Calvert. Additionally, Hawkwind’s known history as part of the squatting movement also gave them credence with the punk brigade (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 99–102; Clerk, 2004, pp. 164, 175–179).

For “Damnation Alley”, Calvert turned to another science-fiction author, Roger Zelazny, for inspiration. His book, *Damnation Alley*, published in 1971, was set in a world destroyed by nuclear warfare, with most countries now radioactive wastelands. A man is sent to Boston from California to deliver serum, battling mutants, monsters and terrible storms (Zelazny, 1973). The track begins with a rumbling sound, seemingly depicting explosions, and then a funereal keyboard note leads into about 30 seconds of a siren sounding, presumably the “four minute warning”. Calvert’s lyrics then tell the tale as a mainly straight-forward narrative, speaking of how the protagonist must “ride the post-atomic radioactive trash/the sky is on fire from that nuclear flash”. He travels through a “radiation wasteland/ashes coming at me now/craters coming at me now”. However, Calvert also broadens the story’s parameters by making reference to another icon of Cold War culture. In Zelazny’s book, the survivors of the nuclear war descend on universities and kill academics of any persuasion, scientific or not, as they were blamed for causing the disaster. Calvert pauses to wryly credit a specific person. “Thank you Dr. Strangelove”, he sings, “for going doolally/and leaving me the heritage of Damnation Alley” (Hawkwind, 1977). Dr. Strangelove, of course, appeared in the famous Stanley Kubrick film of the same name (specifically, *Dr. Strangelove: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*), starring Peter Sellers and released in 1964. In that film, a black comedy, an incompetent military brought about the complete nuclear destruction of the world (Abrahams, 2004, p. 262; Beckman et al., 2000, p. 291; DeGroot, 2004, p. 298). Calvert thus merges two similar imaginings of disaster in the one song.

A similar theme is pursued in Brock's song, "Who's Gonna Win the War?", released on the *Levitation* album of 1980, reaching number 21 on the charts (Clerk, 2004, p. 219). He too raises the spectre of "radiation wastelands" and of "lonely figures waiting, shadows on a hill/looking into valleys where everything is still/only death is lurking/the creeping sickness waits". "So", he concludes, "who's gonna win the war?" (Hawkwind, 1980a; Tawn & Marinoni, 1991, p. 56). Brock re-uses the line "already weeds are writing their scriptures in the sand" from that earlier song, "We Took the Wrong Step Years Ago", and thus, said Peter Huxley in his liner notes to the 1999 CD reissue of *Levitation*, "extends the pessimistic philosophy of the earlier track to its logical conclusion" (Huxley, 1999). The disaster is not merely being imagined now, it has definitely happened: to Langton, this was "Dave writing science-fiction based on truth" (Abrahams, 2004, p. 128).

The early 1980s saw Hawkwind release a good deal of material that clearly reflects a Cold War influence, and it is difficult not to attribute this proliferation to the rising tensions of those years. "Who's Gonna Win the War?" was released as a single, and its B-side was a song called "Nuclear Toy". In this track, concerns about both nuclear power and nuclear weapons are raised, presenting a bleak picture of the outcomes of their use. The song name-checks Harrisburg, site of the Three Mile Island nuclear power station accident, and also Windscale (Sellafield), the British nuclear reactor that suffered a disastrous fire in 1957, releasing dangerous amounts of radioactive material into the atmosphere. Such stations are thus referred to as nuclear toys, "polluting the atmosphere and killing en-masse", causing cancer by the production of Strontium-90. "Who's gonna pay for the radiation flood?", the song asks. It then turns its attention to an "M4 missile cruising in the sky/setting off catastrophe in a flickering of an eye". The result of all the "radiation fallout" is that "nuclear death is sweeping the earth/babies being born deformed from birth" (Abrahams, 2004, p. 265; Adamson, 1981, pp. 41–54; DeGroot, 2004, pp. 219, 226–227, 332; Hawkwind, 1980a; Huxley, 1999). While the single was not a commercial success, packaging two such doom-laden songs together was clearly an attempt to impart a powerful warning of impending disaster.

Hawkwind's next album, with Michael Moorcock again guesting and contributing several lyrics, pursued a similar vein, at the same time once more revisiting an earlier work, in this case "Sonic Attack". The album, released in 1981, had the same title and included a re-worked, heavier version of the track. The whole album, points out Abrahams, "captured the essence of the Cold-War paranoia, post 'winter of discontent', early Thatcher administration", while he describes the new version of "Sonic Attack" as having "added menace with its thumping, marching electronic drone suggestive of a nuclear attack let loose and unstoppable" (Abrahams, 2004, p. 133). While some reviewers criticised the heavier sound as "dour and mediocre", others praised it as "a return to form, a hard-assed take on space-rock" (Clerk, 2004, p. 242). With song titles like "Living on a Knife Edge", "Rocky Paths", "Angels of Death", "Disintegration", "Streets of Fear" and "Lost Chances", the message was difficult to overlook (Hawkwind, 1981). The heaviness of much of the album actually saw the band being briefly thought of as drifting into the heavy metal genre, but an appearance at a "Monsters of Rock" festival in August 1982 alongside bands such as Status Quo and Uriah Heep was poorly received (Abrahams, 2004, p. 137; Clerk, 2004, pp. 250–251). Despite this, the album charted in the top 20 in England, and Hawkwind's own tour was a sell-out (Clerk, 2004, pp. 242–243).

Choose Your Masques, released in 1982, does not contain as much overtly pessimistic imagery, but two songs in particular are worthy of mention. The title track, "Choose Your Masks", again co-written by Moorcock (credited as L. Steele on the record), called on people to take sides: weapons have been handed out, the lyrics state, but the most important aspect had been left to each person. They must select a mask which "stands for [either] chaos or for law", and it cannot be taken off until the person is "no longer in the war". "Choose your masks", the song continues, "and choose the side that you'll be on .../ the battle will be long ... so long", it concludes (Clerk, 2004, p. 248; Hawkwind, 1982; Tawn, 1997, p. 77).

The second song, "Waiting for Tomorrow", is much more openly related to the Cold War, and again the imagination of disaster is at work. Pilots are silently circling, it says, and then a "red alert goes through the world the heavens are opening/run to the shelter nearest you". Following the sound of

an explosion trees die, clouds turn to mist, the moon turns red and stars fade from the sky. The song was written by Huw Lloyd-Langton and his wife, Marion. Both became Christians in the 1970s, and there is Biblical as well as Cold War imagery evident, with “clouds forming into swords”, and “words written in the sky” (Hawkwind, 1982). Marion said that the song was “inspired by thinking about the threat of nuclear war and ultimately Armageddon” (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 159, 268; Clerk, 2004, pp. 48–49, 256). *Choose Your Masques* reached number 29 on the charts, with the accompanying tour once again proving popular with audiences (Clerk, 2004, pp. 254–255).

While not appearing on albums of the time, three more Moorcock pieces need to be considered as contributing to Hawkwind’s presentations of imagined disaster. All poems, they were performed as part of concerts in 1984, on a tour called *The Earth Ritual*, with Moorcock himself appearing at some venues. Hawkwind were still a popular live act and the UK tour lasted for five weeks (Clerk, 2004, p. 275). The concept is established in “*The Earth Ritual*” itself, which states that the group was presenting “the ritual of the ravaged earth” and “the rites of the reign of fire”. They were, Moorcock continued “the oracle of the nuclear night/heralds and explorers of eternal ice” yet also “the ghosts of that lifeless nuclear night”. They were trapped, “ravenous and white in perpetual freezing night” (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 149–153, 269; Tawn, 1997, pp. 80–81, 88).

Moorcock is obviously alluding here to the concept of “nuclear winter” whereby, it has been suggested, the world would descend into another ice age as a result of a catastrophic nuclear war. In 1984, this theme was vividly placed in the public consciousness through movies such as *The Day After* and *Threads*, both of which examined the aftermath of nuclear war by looking at its impact on local communities (DeGroot, 2004, pp. 316–317). Moorcock enlarges on the theme with his second piece, “*Note from a Cold Planet*”. It describes a group of people living in a frozen world, digging through ice to reach trees that they drag to the surface to burn, and to find food—“mining for Campbell’s soup and Birds Eye peas/for Heinz baked beans and sliced Kraft cheese”, all preserved, frozen, below the surface. The survivors faced such a world after mankind, in its “euphoric ferocity ... loosed the fires/no water could extinguish a hundred billion funeral pyres” (Tawn, 1997, p. 89).

This has all happened, explains the third poem, because of “*The Curse of Man*”, which is violence. As a result mankind had “despoiled the earth ... /with our weapons we have melted every gateway to salvation”. People refused to listen to reason but instead “raised a genocidal flag” and became “the herald of apocalypse” (Tawn, 1997, p. 90). Thus, woven through the songs of Hawkwind’s concert is Moorcock’s narrative of the aftermath of nuclear disaster: with “*Sonic Attack*”, those earlier audiences were treated to a warning of impending doom, while at these concerts the audience was presented with the accomplished fact.

After this the presence of songs that highlight the imagination of disaster becomes scarcer. As with the 1970s lull, it seems reasonable to attribute this to events of the time, with Reagan’s unexpected mid-1980s change from perceived warmonger to peace-seeker, coupled with Mikhail Gorbachev’s ascension to power in the Soviet Union, leading to perestroika, glasnost and the end of the Cold War in 1991 (DeGroot, 2004, p. 323; Freedman & Hughes, 2006, p. 155). It is not until 1988s *The Xenon Codex* album that another clearly anti-war song surfaces. The song “*The War I Survived*” states that “there’s only bombs, nobody’s left alive”, reminding listeners that “these were people like you and I”. However, the song’s refrain is “I can’t live no more, this is slaughterhouse five”, obviously referring to Kurt Vonnegut’s novel, so it appears to be about the fire-bombing of Dresden in the Second World War (Hawkwind, 1988). 1992s album, *Electric Tepee*, also contains an anti-war song, “*Death of War*”, but it does not specifically refer to Cold War themes (Hawkwind, 1992). For Hawkwind, then, the urgency of the message portrayed by “the imagination of disaster” appears to have lessened as the 1980s progressed: to demonstrate the correlation with society’s concerns, it is pertinent to note that membership of CND fell during the second half of the 1980s as fear of nuclear war once more receded (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 169, 271, 273; Hudson, 2005, p. 161).

Consideration of Hawkwind's Cold War songs cannot come to an end without the mention of two more. They do not conform to the large-scale "imagination of disaster" model, but rather to a more personal, individual worry about impending disaster. The songs deal with another icon of the Cold War—the spy. The 1979 album *25 Years On* (released, for various reasons, under the band name Hawklords) saw Calvert evoking the imagery of a John LeCarre novel in the song "(Only) The Dead Dreams of the Cold War Kid". The protagonist has a "secret career in counter espionage": to avoid blowing his cover he "stays in the shadows like he always did/deep in his trenchcoat secret papers are hid". The spectre of another high-profile Cold War icon, the Berlin wall, is raised with the line, "in a town by the wall the machine gunners wait", while the LeCarre-like mood continues with the observation that a hotel "has gun oil on the sheets". Similarly, Calvert's voice has a slightly echoing effect added, creating the impression that he is singing via a radio or telephone, a familiar spy trope (Hawklords, 1979). This man is constantly trying to avoid an impending disaster—to himself.

So is the protagonist in the second song. Brock returned to the theme in 1992, with the light-hearted and frenetically paced song "The Secret Agent", from *Electric Tepee*. All manner of spy clichés are run through—he has "an old worn Trilby hat", a mac, he wears "dark shades every day of the year" and has his "collar up, hat pulled down". There are "a dozen gadgets concealed in [his] clothes", and he has "some suicide pills that taste like herb of cloves". He is "always getting in tight spots" from which he "manage[s] to escape/by either jumping off a train/or swimming in a lake" (Hawkwind, 1992). In many ways, the song is a musical version of the *Get Smart* television series (where Agent 86 tended to be a walking, one-man disaster), a reminder that, despite the grim underpinnings of the Cold War, people still managed to find ways to extract humour from it.

These Hawkwind songs, then, provide a revealing glimpse into the ways in which the Cold War impacted on popular culture, and demonstrate that Sontag's "imagination of disaster" could be expressed in other ways than science-fiction films. Once again, the band's output can be set against the rising and falling tensions of the time, with subject matter ranging from nuclear destruction to the misadventures of spies reflecting predominant societal concerns. Yet, Hawkwind also found another medium with which to impart their message—a visual one.

4. The visuals

In keeping with their often-theatrical mode of presentation, Hawkwind used the visual medium of print to impart their message almost as much as they did their concerts and recorded output. Here too the influence of the "imagination of disaster" can be seen, along with more interaction with Cold War science-fiction films and literature.

Rock music and artwork have long been fellow travellers. Many of Hawkwind's album covers, particularly from the 1970s, are regarded as excellent examples of the genre. Several of these were designed by Barney Bubbles (real name Colin Fulcher, born in south-west London in 1942), who is remembered as one of the great practitioners of the art. However, although he reportedly had a Cold War fixation, this is not evident in his work for the band (Abrahams, 2004, p. 150; Paytress, 2007, pp. 76–79). Indeed, none of Hawkwind's album covers, even *Sonic Attack*, depict any overt Cold War imagery. However, there are some other covers (not designed by Bubbles) that are relevant.

The single "Who's Gonna Win the War?" was released with a picture sleeve, and it further reinforces the "imagination of disaster" portrayed in both that song and the "Nuclear Toy" B-side. A giant aircraft/spaceship with a hawk-shaped nose, taken from the cover of the *Levitation* album, is depicted bombing what appears to be a naval base. Dozens of bombs rain down, and massive clouds of smoke rise into the sky (Hawkwind, 1980b). In 1982, the song was again released as a single, this time a 1978 live version recorded under the Hawklords name and taken from a 1982 compilation album, *Friends and Relations*. The single also featured a picture sleeve, a rendition of the famous CND peace symbol over a montage of the face of an apparently dead person (Hawklords, 1982). The first release showed the disaster happening, the second the result.

One other cover deserves mention. “(Only) The Dead Dreams of the Cold War Kid” was released as part of a three track, 12-inch limited edition E.P., with the “A” side song being “25 Years” (Hawklords, 1979). The concept of the *25 Years On* album (on which both tracks appeared) and the accompanying tour, was, according to Brock, based on the idea of *Metropolis* and of a factory society with workers performing mundane tasks. The press release for the album claimed that it was “the story of Pan Transcendental Industries, a massive corporate organization dedicated to the univication [sic] of religious thought and modern technology” and the song “25 Years” Calvert said elsewhere, was “about the small man, the average person’s plight” (Abrahams, 2004, pp. 111, 115; Clerk, 2004, p. 200).

The tour programme describes the company’s plans in rather confusing detail, but notes that it has “created a successful radical alternative reality which is as critical of communism in its ascendancy as capitalism in its decline. Governments of both East and West are being advised by us” (Hawklords Programme, n.d.). The cover to the E.P. is similarly ambiguous. One side depicts a mass of Calvert’s small men walking, miserable and downtrodden, while fighter planes or bombers fly overhead. It is labelled “1979”. The other side depicts those same workers, armed and victorious, one central character holding aloft a staff in triumph. One of the planes, crashed, rises vertically from the ground behind them. This side is labelled “2004”—25 years later. Whether this is an allegory for the overthrow of oppressive regimes of any political persuasion is open to speculation, but it is interesting to note that the cover design is credited to “Rocking Russian” (Hawklords, 1979).

Apart from covers, another useful Hawkwind source for images relating to the Cold War, and again often depicting the “imagination of disaster”, are the tour programmes. Here too, some are more applicable than others, and the rise and fall in Cold War tensions reflected in the presence and absence of pertinent songs is often echoed in the programmes to the tours that corresponded with them.

The first programme Hawkwind produced was for the “Space Ritual” tour of 1972–1973. It presents the story of the space travellers, interspersed with song lyrics, and opens with those for “Sonic Attack”. These are followed by a description of an ultimatum presented to the planet Terra by the Galactic Union, stating that Terra’s ambitions were “no longer tenable” and calling for it to “suspend immediately all traffic in arms” and to break down “complex defence systems”. The story ends with the lyrics from “The Watcher” (“this is the end now”). The back cover depicts a large diamond-shaped sign containing this message: “The show is over. The audience turn to leave and put on their coats and go home. No more coats. No more homes” (Space Ritual Programme, n.d.). Parallels can be drawn between this story and the classic 1951 science-fiction movie, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. In that movie, an alien lands in Washington and demands that all countries of the earth cooperate to end violence and destruction otherwise the civilisations he represents will themselves destroy the earth. The film is recognised as a thinly-veiled allegory of the Cold War, and its clear message was, said its director Robert Wise, a “warning about the dangers of nuclear warfare” (Broderick, 1988, p. 17; Weaver, 1988, p. 54).

After the “Space Ritual” programme, as with Hawkwind’s albums, there is little overt imagery for some years. Their 1974 and 1976 programmes contain nothing reflecting Cold War issues. 1970s *détente* appears to have been an influence here as well.

Come the late 1970s and early 1980s though, the programmes, as with the albums, are again clearly projecting the band’s concerns. 1977s “Quark Strangeness and Charm” programme (supporting the album containing “Damnation Alley”) restarts things slowly with a small article headline reproduced, stating that “Russians rage over neutron bomb” (Quark Strangeness and Charm Programme, n.d.). The Hawklords programme contains the references mentioned above, while the programme for the 1979 “Masters of the Universe” tour contains a very telling page indeed. Most of the programme is taken up with band information, but the second-last page is different. Headed “Nuclear Facts”, it is dominated by a skull. Inside the skull, and next to it, are reproduced cuttings

from newspaper articles. These articles outline potential and near disasters to nuclear power stations, including Windscale. One large headline proclaims “Living in the Shadow of Fear”. Another article states that if a series of incidents that had occurred in German plants had happened at the same time they “could trigger off a nuclear disaster”. The increasing number of Soviet and US nuclear weapons is mentioned in another piece. Below these articles, the contact details for several anti-nuclear groups, including SCRAM (Scottish Campaign to Resist Atomic Menace), Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and West London Anti-Nuclear Group, are provided. Finally, in the bottom left corner is a picture headed, at the top, “Nuclear Power”, and at the bottom, “Give and Take”. Above the word “give” is a picture of a light bulb, and above “take” a picture of a skull (Masters of the Universe Programme, n.d.). The page is a striking contrast to the rest of the programme, providing a clear indication of the band’s stance, and definitely reflecting the “imagination of disaster”.

The programme for the next tour, 1980s “Levitation”, supporting the album featuring “Who’s Gonna Win the War?”, does not contain any such forthright imagery. Once again it focuses on the band members, but the lyrics for six songs, very few considering the band’s catalogue to this date, are provided. Given this, it is significant that two of the songs are “Who’s Gonna Win the War?” and “Nuclear Toy”, meaning that one-third of the chosen lyrics reflect depictions of disaster (Levitation Programme, n.d.).

Given the subject matter of the 1981 *Sonic Attack* album, it might be expected that the accompanying tour programme would be similarly blunt. As with “Masters of the Universe”, there is one page that does not disappoint. On one side of the centre pages, the lyrics to the only track reproduced in the programme are printed. It is “Sonic Attack” itself. The lyrics take up the top half of the page, while the bottom half is taken up with a bright yellow and red graphic, headed “The Ultimate Weapon”. It depicts a nuclear explosion. The link between what the track is parodying and the reality of the disaster is thus firmly established (Sonic Attack Programme, n.d.).

The “Choose Your Masques” programme from 1982 returns to the more low-key approach of “Levitation”, but there is still relevant material to be found. Four song lyrics are reproduced, one being “Choose Your Masks”. Then, the page outlining tour details has as its background a picture of a person in full contamination gear—helmet, goggles, gas mask and protective clothing. There is no explanatory text, but the picture is familiar to anybody aware of concerns about either nuclear warfare or nuclear power (Choose Your Masques Programme, n.d.).

It might be expected that “The Earth Ritual” programme, given that the tour included the Michael Moorcock pieces discussed above, would include their lyrics, but it does not, nor is there anything resembling the dire warnings from the “Masters of the Universe” programme. There is, though, a more subtle message, one that provides a direct link with the subject matter of Sontag’s “imagination of disaster” essay. Stills from old science-fiction movies are included, some from *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Earth Ritual Programme, n.d.). Thus, Hawkwind appear to have been using the pictures to supplement the message Moorcock was imparting in his pieces on stage.

But once again, as with their albums, as Cold War tensions eased during the later 1980s, so do references to the Cold War disappear from the Hawkwind programmes. The 1985 “The Chronicle of the Black Sword” Programme (n.d.), and the one for “The 1988 Tour” (n.d.) of that year, contain no overt imagery or other messages that can be taken as comments on the Cold War. Here too, then, we find an extremely useful method of gauging the impact of the Cold War on popular culture.

There is also a set of publicity photos of the band that is worthy of examination. Taken in the late 1970s and reproduced in some CD reissues, they show the band skylarking outside a tall, barbed-wire topped wire-mesh fence. In one photo, they are gathered around a sign, each person with a finger to their lips in the classic “Shh!” pose. The sign reads “CSOS Morwenstow: public are not permitted to pass this point except on the authority of the officer in charge”. This is a British government facility, a listening station to intercept radio messages, obviously a key part of Cold War intelligence

gathering. Given the band's, and especially Brock's, dislike of government intervention in everyday life and its surveillance of the general public, the spot would be a prime location for them to make a point (Hawklords, 1992).

The visual elements produced by Hawkwind, then, neatly complement the performance and recording aspects of their career, again highlighting the recurrent Cold War concerns regarding nuclear issues as well as making reference to the ever-present spy, once again appearing or receding according to the tensions of the times.

As popular culture has become an ever-more appreciated source to learn about the past, its examination as an integral part of the Cold War is an obvious example of this usefulness. Film, television and literature have largely dominated the scholarship to date, but the place of music as a conduit for Cold War concerns is rapidly becoming more clearly understood. This examination of the work of Hawkwind has demonstrated that such analysis can provide a valuable insight into the effects of an event like the Cold War on popular music, culture and society. Their output provides confirmation of the dictum that popular culture both reflects and reinforces the concerns and attitudes of a particular time. Hawkwind's emphasis on science fiction also provides a strong link with other popular culture genres, particularly literature and film that have traditionally been understood to frequently depict Cold War concerns. Thus, an appreciation can be gained of the totality of popular culture, of the extent to which it forms a coherent whole that many people living within that particularly society are often exposed to and influenced by. The concerns of the era are echoed in the band's appearances at benefit concerts and in the way the "imagination of disaster" regularly plays itself out in their songs and visual presentations. The waxing and waning of the presence of such material reflects the increases and decreases in Cold War tensions themselves, and so demonstrates that the depiction of the "imagination of disaster" in music could serve as a useful barometer of society's concerns. During some periods there was the potential for panic, at others the populace might be reassured—"do not panic".

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