

have come from that area – they haven't come from people who are dealing with electronics exclusively. They've come from people searching for gimmicks, something as banal as "What kind of sound can we get now that nobody's got before?" What I like about the Parliament/Funkadelic people is that they really go to extremes. There's nothing moderate about what they do.³⁸

And here Eno reiterates his dream of bringing together the "strange, rigid" electronic music of Kraftwerk with the "weird physical feeling" of Parliament: "Put those two together and say, 'Make a record.'"³⁹ In addition to Eno's own *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, which was then in the planning stages with David Byrne, a large quantity of popular music in the 1980s has turned out to parallel Eno's dream rather closely: with Prince and Michael Jackson leading the way on the black side and Phil Collins and Peter Gabriel on the white, synthesizers have come to dominate the sound of popular music, and many musicians have learned how to take the hard, metallic edge off electronic sounds, or to use them creatively at cross-purposes with their mechanical nature.

Although Eno was momentarily enthusiastic about funk and disco, at least with regard to their possibilities when taken to creative extremes, by 1983 he had had enough of "the formula disco style where it has to have this or that and it has to have the girls doing a refrain. You hear so much of this junk coming out all the time."⁴⁰

Like many other white musicians of the late 1970s (most notably the Police, who forged a distinctive popular style based on the angular vocal melodies and off-beat bass lines of reggae), Eno was fascinated with the sounds of Jamaican reggae music. Once again, it was the procedure of how the music was put together, as much as the sound itself, that interested Eno:

The contemporary studio composer is like a painter who puts things on, puts things together, tries things out, and erases them. The condition of the reggae composer is like that of the sculptor, I think. Five or six musicians play, they're well isolated from one another. Then the thing they played, which you can regard as a kind of cube of music, is hacked away at – things are taken out, for long periods.

A guitar will appear for two strums, then never appear again, the bass will suddenly drop out, and an interesting space is created. Reggae composers have created a sense of dimension in the music, by very clever, unconventional use of echo, by leaving out instruments, and by the very open rhythmic structure of the music.⁴¹

The "sculptural" approach has clearly influenced Eno's own way of composing. It is characteristic that he has shown no interest in reggae's political implications, neither in terms of the indigenous philosophy or life-style of Rastafarianism nor in terms of Western white musicians

³⁸ Glenn O'Brien, "Eno at the Edge of Rock," *Andy Warhol's Interview* 8 (June 1978), 32.

³⁹ O'Brien, "Eno at Edge of Rock," 32.

⁴⁰ Bill Milkowski, "Brian Eno: Excursions in the Electronic Environment," *Down Beat* 50 (June 1983), 57.

⁴¹ Brian Eno, "Pro Session – Part II," 53.