

with a general inability on the part of her characters to change their fate or to successfully cope with their problems, as in "The Washerwoman's Daughter," "Vortices," "The Picture," and "Second Thoughts." With admirable precision she mocks the trivialities of the "weaker sex," their follies, their insensibilities, and perhaps their meek acceptance of being treated as playthings ("But, Mummy, What Did You Do Today?"). In the story, "What My Wife Reads in the Newspapers, and What I Read, Are Two Different Things," she contrasts with amusing irony the dissimilar concerns of man and woman. Several stories, such as "Suicide," "The Picture," "Flowers Don't Last Very Long," and "Soliloquy" probe the intricate relationship between the mechanical, materialistic existence led by many contemporary urban dwellers and the more basic inner needs of humans. Through the young heroines of these stories Chua laments the want of idealism and the cold unfeelingness of modern humanity.

Woman writers have always played an essential role in the field of modern Chinese fiction. With the publication of this collection, students of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world will now have a chance to sample the work of yet another woman whose literary concerns may differ slightly from those of the majority of her counterparts in China or Taiwan.

—Hua-yuan Li Mowry  
Dartmouth College

Sebastian Clarke. *Jah Music: The Evolution of the Popular Jamaican Song*. (Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 1982) ix, 216 pp., \$12.50 paper.

In *Jah Music*, Sebastian Clarke has offered a wealth of information on Jamaican popular music especially to this reader who, although a musician and ethnomusicologist, knew very little about the popular music of Jamaica previously. Clarke has provided material on the roots and history of the music: the birth and development of Rastafarianism, then the evolutionary development of Jamaican music, and its three most powerful exponents, Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, and Bunny Wailer. There is also a chapter on the spoken word, which is the key to all African-derived music. Whether articulated by voice or by another instrument, the word is the essence of all musics which have sprung up in the Western hemisphere with roots in Africa. The book has a

very detailed index, directory of artists and discography, and is scrupulously footnoted to support the author's conclusions.

The essence of any popular music is its broad-based appeal. Whatever territory it springs from, it has its roots in the masses. Clarke has a clear understanding of this in his descriptions of the people who make and produce music. He is knowledgeable about Rastafarianism and how Rastafarian ideas are found throughout popular Jamaican music. As an example, he gives verses of several pieces which use those words from the Bible Rastafarians believe are important in communicating their beliefs. In listening to the music I had always found it hard to understand the words and this material reinforced my knowledge on several different levels. The words of the popular music known as Reggae, which is a later evolutionary development, are extremely important in terms of the history, philosophical beliefs, and attitudes expressed towards Being.

The strongest aspect of the book is Clarke's discussion of the cultural and environmental components which make up Jamaican popular music. There are vivid descriptions of the incredible amount of violence which runs rampant in Jamaica. This violence is part of the music because the words consistently speak to the conditions under which Jamaicans must live. He also has a profound awareness of the gradation of social classes in Jamaica which, as in so many other places in the world, is based on skin shade and color, and shows how this is part of the essence of the music. These points are important in the perception of how a music survives and flourishes in a country where many are poor and powerless.

I am confused about the direction of the author's research. It is not clear whether the book is about popular music *per se* or whether it is primarily about the individuals who make up the music and their personality quirks. If it is about the latter, then the book is mis-titled. Although Clarke does make statements about what the music sounds like and most of the time those statements are helpful, that information was far overshadowed by discussion of who played with whom and who produced it. The first part of the book describes the different tribes that were brought into Jamaica as slaves and also the indigenous inhabitants of the island. The author often mentions that "this" was of African origin, but what "this" is is not clear. Further, he gives a very derogatory description of the West African griot and never really explains why he makes that statement, leading one to believe that the only attitudes about griots are the ones he expresses.

This book is about the characters, the producers, the promoters, and the million dollar hit sellers; the really important information is submerged under all the descriptive material. In addition, there are several chapters which are collections of names, individuals, how they

were promoted, or not promoted. I am left with very mixed feelings about for whom, other than novices, this book is intended.

—William S. Cole  
Dartmouth College

Angela Y. Davis. *Women, Race and Class*. (New York: Random House, 1981) 271 pp., \$13.50.

You won't find her listed in *Notable American Women* beside Frances Elliott Davis who won Eleanor Roosevelt's admiration by challenging racial barriers to become the first black nurse enrolled by the American Red Cross. Nor is this Black Power activist found before theatrical educator Hollie Mae Ferguson Flanagan, encouraged by her artistic German mother and dynamic Scot pioneer father to "set a stout heart to a steep hillside." But Angela Y. Davis deserves recognition when this Harvard Press publication goes into a second printing, because seldom in the history of American justice has a criminal court heard a civil libertarian plea to "Free Angela" so forceably expounded as in June of 1972.

Born of school teacher parents in Birmingham, Alabama, she could read at four, went to Brandeis College, spent her sophomore year in Paris and became caught up in the civil rights movement. Emotionally disturbed by the bombings of private homes in her family's middle-class neighborhood, by the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, she "lost the faith" and joined the Communist Party.

She was fired from her college teaching position when she was accused of supplying weapons to the Jackson brothers which they used in a fatal escape attempt from Soledad Prison. She wrote that "George's [Jackson's] death [was like] a disc of steel deep inside me, magnetically drawing towards it all the elements I needed to stay strong and fight . . . ." After months as a fugitive, she was caught and later acquitted following a trial lasting one month longer than a year. Her *Autobiography* was published two years later in 1974, and she was her Party's nominee for Vice-President when a fellow Southerner was elected to promote human rights. She now teaches ethnic studies in San Francisco.

Her new book *Women, Race and Class* gives fresh insights into the feminist cause of a century ago during which whites and blacks united