

## SYNOPSES

*Great Expectations: A Pattern of Disillusion*

Masaie Matsumura

Pip's journey to London at his first stage of his expectations reminds us of Dickens' own experience in his childhood, when he left Chatham for London. But the significance is different. Pip was rejecting the forge in the country, because it was the place of humiliation and crime. The journey meant a farewell to the misery of childhood, and he was full of the prospect of sharing in the fantastic world of Miss Havisham. So there is no missing of home there was in Dickens' experience, nor the pathetic scene as when David Copperfield was sent away from home.

London was to be a grand place to make Pip a gentleman. But don't we know what London was to Dickens? It was the place of misery and humiliation. And Pip finds himself on his arrival in the precinct of horrible crime which gives him a sickening idea of London. There is no escaping for him.

The request of his benefactor is very suggestive; he must always bear the name of Pip. There could be no metamorphosis for him such as Oliver Twist or David Copperfield underwent. Pip is now a gentleman, but still miserable, because he is always uneasy and irritated with the threatening idea that his identity would be betrayed. So *Great Expectations* becomes significant among Dickens' works; instead of the two worlds, the world of good and happiness and that of crime and misery, there is only one. Miss Havisham was no more the fairy godmother Pip had expected than Estella was a star as her name suggests. And the moment the real benefactor turned out to be the condemned convict, all the illusion Pip had cherished was dispersed, and his life is left again flat as the marsh country. Pip's disillusion of his great expectations is a Nemesis, as Angus Wilson says, to the premature consummation of happiness of David Copperfield.

## A Study of *The Octoroon*

—From the Viewpoint of the Negro Problem Play—

Koichi Chikata

Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon, or Life in Louisiana* has been well-known as a representative 19th century American melodrama with a striking theatrical effect. But its specific significance as a forerunner of American social problem plays has not thoroughly been clarified in the dramatic criticism though it was quite often alluded to. In the present paper the primary effort is given to the working out of this question: what are the essential characteristics of the work as a Negro problem play?

After a brief preface, the body of the essay consists of four parts: a review of the literary background of its composition (Part 1); a survey of the construction to explain dramatic effectiveness (Part 2); an investigation of the major characters in terms of their action and dialogue, to see both sides of the play, success and failure, as a social problem play (Part 3); and a historical evaluation of the play which broke through difficult social, as well as artistic, barriers of that critical period into a new stage of the American theatre, its early realism (Part 4).

Throughout the process our focus is put on the leading character, the Octoroon Zoe. The revealed picture of the protagonist with too much pride but too little hope brings forth a sharp irony, characteristic of the marginal human existence in American society where racial discrimination has ever been one of the most serious concerns. The active development of the play is thus found to be the relentless self-destroying course of the tragic heroine. Hence we may reasonably conclude that it is this quality that has made the play uniquely belong to the main stream of American drama.

## The Influence of a Voiced or Voiceless Consonant on Vowel Duration: an Approach to a Comparative Study of English and Japanese Phonetics

Tae Okada

The past phonetic studies on various languages have revealed that the voicing of a consonant has a lengthening effect upon the preceding vowel. (For a bibliography, see footnotes 3 and 14, pp. 14-16 of this volume.) The experiment reported here has proved that this same phenomenon exists for three Japanese vowels; it also revealed that, in Japanese, the voicing of a consonant exerts influence not only upon the duration of the following vowel but upon that of a preceding vowel as well.

For this experiment three Japanese vowels /a, o, u/ were combined in all the possible manners with four voiceless consonants /p, t, k, t/ and their voiced counterparts /b, d, g, d/: each of the three vowels was placed (1) between two voiced consonants, (2) between a voiceless consonant and a voiced consonant, (3) between a voiced consonant and a voiceless consonant, and (4) between two voiceless consonants. The result was 192 combinations ( $8^2 \times 3$ ) of the type /bab, pob/ etc. These were in turn put in a frame of /a—ano/ so that the vowel to be studied would invariably be stressed by Japanese speakers; the frame also served to render the artificial phoneme-combinations more Japanese-like on the phonological plane.

The 192 "words" were first recorded on the tape by a male speaker and a female speaker, then analyzed by a spectrograph. The vowel in question was segmented on the spectrogram, measured and computed in terms of millisecond. The result is shown in the tables on pages 6-12: Tables 1 (1)-(4) are the data from the recording

of the male speaker and Tables 2 (1)-(4), of the female speaker. The last row and the last column in each of the eight tables indicate the average of the figures of the same row or column. In Table 3, all these average values are put together, along with the average, this time, between the male and the female average values.

From these experimental data, I conclude that in Japanese the voicing of either the preceding or the following consonant has a regular lengthening effect upon the vowel duration. I would tentatively conclude also that the voicing of the following consonant has a slightly stronger influence on the vowel duration than the voicing of the preceding consonant; the difference in the strength of influence, however, is negligible (3/100 seconds on an average). This proves to be an interesting characteristic of Japanese phonetics: in most other languages, the preceding consonant has *not* been known to influence the vowel duration in a regular fashion. Ample evidence on American English permits us to conclude that the correlation between the voicing of consonant and vowel duration constitutes one of the differences between the English (American) and Japanese "dynamics of phonetic elements."

(Januray, 1969)