MR PIM Passes By

by

A. A. Milne

A Production Thesis Presented
For The Degree Of Master Of Arts

by

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Approved by:

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The November 30, 1919 issue of the Manchester Guardian carried a brief statement announcing the premier of a new comedy by A.A. Milne to be staged December first at the Gaiety Theater, Manchester. It was entitled Mr. Pim Passes By. The scant advertisement made no mention of the author's previous dramatic success nor of his literary career, and indeed played up the importance of the forthcoming production only on the grounds that it would provide the last opportunity to see Dion Boucicault that season. With this modest almost apologetic introduction, Mr. Pim Passes By began a career which was to be generously crowned with success both in England and in America.

The play's author was one already in possession of an established reputation as a writer of amusing and whimsical articles which for some years had been, under the initials "A.A.M.", pleasing the British public, particularly the readers of Punch. By the time Pim appeared, Milne had already stormed the redoubts of the English theater to gain a substantial foothold, particularly by virtue of his Belinda. It is thus a matter of sheer speculation to say how many members of the audience the night Pim opened appeared out of curiosity as to what Milne would do next and how many were virtually certain of another typically Milne creation.

As has already been alluded, Milne had for several years enjoyed prominence as a free-lance writer of essays and short articles before he chose to turn to the field of drama. He was born in
London in 1882 and began his career as a writer at the age of eleven when he entered Westminster School. For seven years he wrote poems, parodies, and short amusing essays for school publications. It is said, and he verifies it, he was once shown a copy of the Granta, an undergraduate publication of Cambridge University, by a friend who remarked that he ought to go to Cambridge and edit the paper. "I will," came the serious reply. "This sounds," he adds, "like the model boy who became a millionaire and I apologize for it, but it really happened."¹ This determination, coupled with ability and love of writing, set him well on the road toward a journalistic career in utter defiance of his parents who had great hopes that he would teach as had his father before him.

In 1906 Sir Francis Burnand retired from the editorship of Punch and Sir Owen Seaman succeeded him. Milne was offered the assistantship which Seaman had just vacated.² Our author had been a steady contributor to Punch until 1914 and had then a reputation as one of the deftest and wittiest of contemporary humorists up to the war. But the war brought a halt to full-time writing and with the outbreak of hostilities he joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and went to France.

The war seemed to ripen his humor and the happy union of de-
sire and opportunity induced him to try his hand at drama. His first play, *Once On A Time*, was obligingly written for Mrs. Milne and the commander of the training garrison where Milne was located in the south of England as part of an entertainment program for the troops.3 Then came *Wurzel-Flummery*, a farce produced two years later in London (1917) after Milne had been invalided home from France. Its success laid the foundation of his dramatic career. *Belinda* followed in 1918 and *Make Believe* appeared the same year. In 1919 the exquisitely whimsical and quaintly emotional comedy *Mr. Pim Passes* By appeared and won praise both as a play and in novel form.

As to how Mr. Milne conceived of the plot for *Mr. Pim Passes* By we can turn to two possible explanations which may ultimately prove to be but two facets of the same. The first is the long period of humorous and light satirical writing which took Milne to the assistant editorship of *Punch*. He gave up *Punch* to write drama, but it is to be noted that there was in those slight thistledown sketches the same nimble dialogue, the sense of drama and foreshadowing of the satire and ironical humor that he uses with quiet mastery in all his comedies.

For the second explanation, and a more specific account of the play's origin, we may turn to Milne's *Autobiography* where his own words explain the birth of *Pim*:

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders

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3 Milne's autobiography terms it a long fairy story.
to perform, he plants his footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm. Grand hymn that; why did it suddenly come into my head? And why did I never see what an absurd 'non-sequitur' it is? I mean the first two lines are all right by themselves and so are the second two, but they don't mix. In effect he begins by saying that great events from little causes spring, or whatever the line is, and then... It's ironic the way things happen like that. Or the other way about. Little events from great causes.

... The little gods must have fun, deciding what mountains are to be in labor in order that our ridiculous little wishes should be gratified. Here's a woman wants to hang a pair of curtains in her house but her husband won't let her, and the little gods say, 'All right, darling, you SHALL hang your curtains,' then they get into a corner and chuckle together, and arrange the most frightful shocks for both of them... and up go the curtains.

That became a play called Green Curtains until it suddenly occurred to me that a better title would be Mr. Pim Passes By. ¹

¹A.A. MILNE, Autobiography, p. 302.

The author's obvious emphasis upon the importance of the curtains in contrast to the critic's profound view of the play as an expose on marital relationship and social conventions provides considerable room for speculation. At first glance one might conclude that the critics have read into the play more than the author intended, or, that the author himself wrote more profoundly than he had first planned. This point will be discussed more fully in an analysis of the play. For the present it is sufficient to say that Milne's own explanation demonstrates his consistent drawing of beginnings from light and trivial sources regardless of how profound the implications (intentional or unintentional) might be.
According to the author, Mr. Pim Passes By had been originally conceived for Lillah McCarthy, the script having been written during a six weeks period of leave prior to demobilization.\(^5\) For some time it was under consideration by Miss McCarthy's manager, A. E. Drinkwater, until seeing that Drinkwater was apparently never going to make up his mind, Milne offered it to Dion Boucicault, a prominent actor-producer then doing a season in Manchester. Boucicault signed an agreement covering a week's trial and the play opened December first (1919) in Manchester's Gaiety Theater.

The play was highly successful, Milne attributing the major portion of its success to Boucicault and Miss Irene Vanbrugh who played in the roles of Pim and Olivia respectively. Miss Vanbrugh had played Belinda a season or so before and it might be said that this was the point of influence causing Boucicault to decide on a trial. In the words of Milne: "The house was so delighted to see its beloved and lovely Irene back again that in sheer happiness it extended its favor to the play."\(^6\)

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 204.

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 205.

The reviewer for the Manchester Guardian was also pleased with the play and said that: "Although it lacked in full the decisive wit of Wilde, the sentimental whimsicality of a Barrie or the breadth of character-drawing of a Houghton, he (Milne) yet strikes a very charming blend of these and adds a deft and easy
humor that is his own." The writer also felt that Milne had made

definite progress as a playwright since the appearance of Belinda. There was added strength in the composition that showed increasing skill in the hard job of playwriting and the handling of the stiffer theme than that of the earlier comedy.

The Guardian understood at once the intent of the author and gave him credit for keeping what could have lapsed into a serious problem play from becoming over-balanced. Milne, according to the Guardian, had painted George as picturing his six years of irregular union as they must appear to the law, his aunt, the county and Heaven as well. Olivia, having only her heart to which to refer the problem, is at a disadvantage. Such a situation, in the opinion of the reviewer, might have crushed the comedy, but Milne steadied it successfully by keeping George mainly a humorous character who serves as relief to the seriousness of Olivia. The Guardian listed the cast as follows:

GEORGE MARDEN, J.P. - - - - - Ben Webster
OLIVIA - - - - - - - Irene Vanbrugh
DINAH - - - - - - - Georgette Cohan
LADY MARDEN - - - - - Sybil Carlisle
BRIAN STRANGE - - - - - Philip Easton
CARRAWAY PIM - - - - - Dion Bouicault
ANNE - - - - - - - Ethel Wellesley

On January 6th Mr. Pim Passes By opened in London at the
New Theater. Miss Vanbrugh and Mr. Bouicault continued to take

top acting honors and the author was called upon repeatedly to make an appearance. The cast remained virtually the same as it had been in Manchester except that Miss Ethel Griffies replaced Sybil Carlisle as Lady Marden and Leslie Howard took over the role of Brian originally played by Philip Easton.

The Times reviewer called the play "a pleasant trifle playing around the virge of the deeper feelings without tumbling into them and gay with light-hearted talk." In the case of Brian and Dinah he felt the talk gravitated to chatter which "is appropriate to their age --- and, we fancy, a weakness of Mr. Wilne's." Whether the word "weakness" is used in the sense of delight or a shortcoming is not clearly indicated.

The play moved to the Garrick Theater on February 2, 1920. Aside from the occasional commercial "plug" attached to the formal press notices, there was no particular comment made during the London run to mark any deviation from the average run of any successful comedy. The plot was not radical in theme or style, nor was it concerned with controversial issues. Its run of the season merely proved the play to be what Wilne had intended --- good theater. On April 26 Pim moved from the Garrick to the Playhouse where it finally closed on July 31, 1920 to take an extended tour, the location of which was not revealed.
The Theater Guild of New York presented *Mr. Pim Passes By* in New York February 28, 1921 while it was yet popular in England.\(^{12}\)

Alexander Woollcott, then dramatic critic for the *New York Times*, praised both the play and the Theater Guild's production. His most outstanding remark was that the play was much more intelligently produced and much better acted in New York than it had been in London the previous season. The cast was listed as follows:

- **ANNE** - - - - - Peggy Harvey
- **CARRAWAY PIM** - - - Erskine Sanford
- **DINAH** - - - Phyllis Povah
- **BRIAN STRANGE** - - - Leonard Mudie
- **OLIVIA MARDEN** - - - Laura Hope Crewes
- **GEORGE MARDEN** - - - Dudley Digges
- **LADY MARDEN** - - - Helen Westley

Setting designed by Lee Simonson

Woollcott and Heywood Broun of the *New York Tribune* were free in their praise of Laura Hope Crewes as Olivia and attributed much of the success of the play to her personal ability as well as to the role.\(^{13}\) Attention was also drawn to Phyllis Povah, then a relative newcomer to the theater circle, forecasting considerable success for her as an actress based on her work in the role of Dinah in the *Pim* production.

However, Dudley Digges, still wearing laurels from a recent
production of Jane Clegg, failed to impress the critics as George, feeling for the most part that he was unsuited to the role. He employed "a peculiar jackal whine," as Woollcott put it, which, in his conception, was not desirable in this particular part.14

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The New York Tribune of March 2, 1921 devoted the lion's share of its praise to the Theater Guild for its excellent production, but it was somewhat reluctant to accept Milne in spite of the fact that it spoke of the production saying: it "... deserves to be ranked among the conspicuous successes of the Theater Guild." Broun, of the Tribune, credited Laura Hope Crewes with outdistancing Milne before the evening was over. "In her art," said Broun, "there is no slackening while Milne does begin to waver just a little before he has finished his stint."15 Humorists, in his opinion, all need vacations and he accused Milne of taking one in the third act.


Broun considered the first two acts as the best and looked upon his theme as being to all intents and purposes the theme of Ibsen's A Doll's House even though the surface was high with polish. "Under the wax is emotion and heartache — probably the author never knew that."15

Far from the self-confessed intent of the author in writing this play, voiced in his autobiography, is Broun's statement that Milne undertook here to discuss the fundamental basis of marriage.
Under a somewhat ludicrous threat of bigamy he was submitting his two chief characters to a test which was just a little too searching to be set in farce comedy.15

Broun's dissatisfaction with the third act concerned Kilne's decision to play it through as sheer amusement rather than to continue the theme as a serious discussion which Kilne allegedly started. This decision, in his opinion, resulted in letting a great chance go by the board in what he insinuated was sacrificing truth for humor. The specific element to which Broun was referring was, of course, the fact that Olivia, having been virtually discarded by her husband in his desperate attempt to right himself where conventions were concerned, takes him back again in a manner which to some seems incomprehensible. His parting remark was to the effect that it was a good play, but he adds: "We wish it weren't half so funny."

O.W. Firkins assailed Olivia from a slightly different angle in the March 23rd issue of Weekly Review16 by claiming that Olivia,  


supposedly a clever woman, should have been able to circumvent a mulish husband without the extraordinary alms from destiny contained in Mr. Pim's convulsing revelation and without the commission of an act which he says: "puts her definitely outside the pale of the probities and decorums. It paternity in our day so inexorable," he goes on to say, "that the improbable and iniquitous must both be called in to effect its subdual?"16 In general, however, he favored the play as
a worthy creation and admitted that the acting was praiseworthy.

Mr. Pim Passes By played at the Garrick Theater, New York, until April 17, 1921\(^{17}\) when the Theater Guild moved to Henry Miller's

\(^{17}\)New York Times, April 17, 1921, Sec. 6, p. 3, col. 3.

Theater to continue performance until June 13, 1921.\(^{18}\) Once again


it appeared at the Garrick Theater where it innaugerated its final run lasting until September 3, 1921.\(^{19}\)

\(^{19}\)New York Times, September 3, 1921, p. 10, col. 6.

Whether or not Mr. Pim Passes By enjoyed any further production of note in the states has been hard to determine. Burns Mantle lists it among the New York productions of 1921 with a total run of 140 performances\(^{20}\) but apparently this ended the season's run and

\(^{20}\)BURNS MANTLE, Best Plays Of 1921-1922, p. 472.

the height of its popularity on the Great White Way where it was replaced by successive Milne plays, most notably The Truth About Blayds and The Dover Road.

II

CRITICAL COMMENT

Although literary history has since conceded A.A. Milne's play Mr. Pim Passes By a worthy place in contemporary English drama, the
difference in the opinions of the critics at the time of the play's debut indicate that the honor was not too easily won. Such a statement might hold true in the case of a number of plays, but what makes it particularly valid for Mr. Pim Passes By is that the point of controversy is one vitally affecting interpretation and, consequently, direction. Because of the importance of this controversy to proper direction of the present production, it might be well to begin an analysis of the play from this point.

Perhaps the review most thorough in its discussion of Mr. Pim Passes By and at the same time one which may serve as a springboard to an accurate analysis of the play is O.W. Firkins' commentary in the Weekly Review of March 23, 1921, of which the following is a portion:

The serious and comic aspects of the same situation must beware of each other. If a chaplain and a buffoon occupied the same stateroom --- as they do in human nature --- it would be politic in the chaplain not to wake the buffoon while he is saying his paternoster, and politic in the buffoon to hide his tomfoolery from the chaplain. But Mr. Milne does wake the chaplain and he does put forth the moral claims and duties of a wife whose first husband is discovered to be alive. The husband is conventional, the wife liberal. Mr. Milne stresses the difference. All he wants, however, is his laugh and he gets his laugh for Mr. Milne was known as a wit before he turned playwright and the objection I have named does not trouble all playgoers.

But the state of mind which he rouses or tends to rouse is inimical to his own jest. He should not lead us to the tavern by way of the church and churchyard if he does not want those of us who are capable of terror to find ghosts in the tankard. 21

21FIRKINS, loc. cit.
Considering particularly the latter portion of this excerpt, one cannot help but note the possibility of variance between what the playwright desired to do and what he actually accomplished, implying, of course, that he may have dug for water and struck oil which could be either good or bad depending upon the circumstances. The source of Milne's play has already been referred to\(^{22}\) and being the author's own explanation, its validity can hardly be questioned. Furthermore, Milne was not a writer groping for a medium of literary expression. His long experience as a humorist had carried into his drama and it was only natural that he should select a plot which would serve as an exponent of further humor. Also, as one commentator put it, in comparing Milne's writing talents with those of Swift, the latter could write an essay on a broomstick, but Milne was capable of writing on one of the straws.\(^{23}\) These qualities, a sense of humor and the ability to draw from the trivial things of life, vouch generously for his own explanation of the origin of his plot. It is felt then that Firkins is right in saying that Milne was striving for a laugh and got it although he puts it rather strongly in using the word "all".

That Milne actually did accomplish more in his play than his own explanation will admit cannot be denied and the critics are undoubtedly doing the correct thing in stripping away the humor in an effort to get at the real play which lay beneath it. Milne's prose writings for *Punch* more than justified this attitude and his preceding plays had yielded up, in the form of light satire, more than

\(^{22}\)See footnote No. 4, p. 4.

\(^{23}\)ST JOHN ADOCK, *Gods Of Modern Grub Street*, p. 244.
mere humor.

But it is this writer's opinion that the reason for the adverse criticism of the play, focusing particularly upon Olivia and the question of bigamy, was just one thing: The critics were too anxiously searching the humor and whimsey for a profound lesson and were attempting to squeeze from the satire more than it actually contained. Milne's writing had skirted the border of a serious problem and the critics attached a singular significance to this, desperately seeking both the questions he raised and the answers he was implying. But if the author did raise a question, he certainly had no intention of answering it for, like the hero of his play, he was merely passing by.

Unfortunately Milne's Autobiography did not appear until twenty years after the play Mr. Pim Passes By,\textsuperscript{2} so the writers of

\textsuperscript{2}Milne's Autobiography was copyrighted in 1939.

that period evidently had not the advantage of Milne's own explanation, otherwise they might have been quick to see the lack of relationship between their interpretation and the author's actual intent. But for us the advantage makes the latter quite clear. He began with the idea of insignificant occurrences sometimes bringing about great events and introduced a situation wherein a liberally-minded wife is blocked in her efforts to hang new curtains by a most conventional husband. To this he added a potential engagement which is thwarted by the same conventional husband. The addition served to intensify the issue and to give it more substance. According to Milne, the gods then inter-
vened by permitting a passer-by to drop a chance statement

25 See footnote No 4, p. 4.

which, because of its nature and eventual retraction, reduced the position of the conventional husband and provided the wife with the means of bringing about acquiescence to both curtains and engagement.

A story so constructed does provide ample opportunity for reflection upon conventions, manners and society and, in spite of his silence on that point, there is little doubt that the author took advantage of it. But as for the play being primarily a discussion of marital relationship26 this writer feels the critics have gone too far, particularly in attempting to read a serious treatment into the mention of bigamy. Milne is not concerned with bigamy. In truth, he is not directly concerned with George and Olivia's marital status as such at all, and, for the most part, neither is Olivia. It is the conventional George who is upset. Obviously, the author must point out this characteristic quite clearly or the entire play disintegrates. He does so by introducing a complication which not only resolves the plot, but also strikes directly at George's conventions — an alleged case of bigamy.

But it is to be noted that even before the curtains are hung and the youngsters engaged, the circumstance, having made the aforementioned possible, loses its usefulness and is cancelled out of the play by Pim's own confession. The thought behind the entire play was
that "mighty oaks from little acorns grow" — consent to an en-
gagement and the liberalizing of a mulish husband are eventually
brought about by the chance visit of a stranger. To look upon
these developments as the outgrowth of a threatened case of bigamy
is to give the play an interpretation never meant by the author.

The play itself is too frail of construction to bear even
semi-serious treatment of a bigamy theme. Its entrance into the
plot is only to underline the views of George and Olivia and to
give them a playing point. Beyond that it is too weak because it
has no real foundation. The death of Telworthy has been accepted
on the evidence of a mere newspaper and his return is accepted on
the comment of a stranger! Surely Milne would have provided a more
solid base for this idea had he intended it to receive more serious
consideration than that just mentioned.

Mr. Milne's views of the whole idea are reflected in a line of
the dialogue in the second act. A certain gentleman of the theatrical
world had cautioned him as he was writing the play to have George and
Olivia merely engaged as the public would stand for no talk of bigamy.
Milne disregarded the advice and inserted the line: "Bigamy! — It
is an ugly word, isn't it." 27

27 See p. 33 of the play script.

A second criticism of the marital relationship was that Olivia,
virtually dismissed as a wife, should condescend to re-accept George.
We lay this remark also to the tendency to over-emphasize the ser-
iousness of the case. Milne has taken great pains to paint Olivia as
an intelligent, sophisticated, and clever woman who has been quick to place the proper evaluation on the situation — quicker, perhaps, than those observing. While she is quite naturally concerned in the beginning over the supposed sudden reappearance of Telworthy, there is little concern in evidence over the prospect of being taken from George.

Olivia, then, does not look upon herself as having been suddenly cast off by her husband and consequently cannot be said to have taken him back. The matter is treated with such delicacy that personal relationship does not enter. Olivia knows her husband well and accepts his narrow views as a part of him. She makes a statement to that effect in the third act when she comments upon George's attitude saying in part: "But then it wouldn't be George, not the George I married ..."28 Only in one or two instances does she reveal

28See p. 43 of the play script.

her feminine nature and attempt an emotional appeal. Such an instance occurs in the second act following George's discourse on the importance of considering his conscience when she pleads: "But, George, don't you think I'm worth just a little ——"29 Milne denies her the

29See p. 36 of the play script.

chance to finish, however, for Dinah enters at this point and the sentence remains incomplete. Such instances of emotional appeal are slight and the author merely suggests them in an attempt to assure a true-to-life character.

That Olivia is not anxious over the thought of losing her
husband is proven by her immediate bending of the story to her own ends once Pim admits his error, rather than rushing into George's arms in a dramatic display of emotion. This fulfills her promise to "think of something" and credits her as a clever woman in spite of Firkins' insinuation to the contrary.\textsuperscript{30} There may have been

\textsuperscript{30}See footnote No 16, p. 10.

other ways to handle George as Firkins suggests, and simpler ways too, but this opportunity appeared first and Olivia was clever enough to see it as such. \textemdash And how unexciting and untheatrical would have been a commonplace solution!

III

THE TYPE OF PLAY

In spite of what is apparently a variation between what Milne claimed was his purpose in writing Mr. Pim Passes By and its reception by the critics, the type of play that was forthcoming can be rather clearly defined. It is basically a comedy of manners on the social level of what is frequently referred to as "drawing room comedy".

Mr. Milne's play came to the stage at the close of the World War. It was a time when the public was weary of a four-year-struggle and was welcoming most particularly that type of entertainment which would by-pass the issues previously so pressing and form a genuine means of escape. Cunliffe writes of the period:

\begin{quote}
The commercial theaters found it a patriotic duty as well as a profitable enterprise to provide for the frivolous tastes of the flappers and
\end{quote}
the men on leave who brought them. . . Albert de Courville, a leading London manager, estimated that the theater crowds consisted of 'ninety per cent soldiers or people engaged on national requirements' — i.e. young munition girls and the like.31


Cunliffe continued to say that this was obviously no time for the presentation on the stage of social or psychological problems or for the consideration of the interests of dramatic art. Newell Sawyer wrote more specifically of the comedy of the period as follows:

The continuity of dramatic endeavor was irrevocably interrupted. The normal forms of comedy gave way to somber tragedy or hectic farce. Few of the older writers of comedy regained their stride after the war; some of the older ones it blotted out, others like Sutro and Maugham continued to be prolific. In the main, however, we must entrust the comedy of upper or middle class manners to other hands.32


To these "other hands" belongs Mr. Milne, and it was his Mr. Pim Passes By that filled the requirements of the time with its theme, setting, and style totally alien to the war problem.

But while Milne's drama may have been designed partially as an antidote for a confused and exhausted world, it is safe to conclude that his plays of this period would have been written as they were in spite of the war. The war itself had three effects: It started Milne to writing drama, sharpened his wit, and guaranteed a
receptive audience. Other than this, the brand of humor resulting was his version of a style of writing which had rather early begin-
nings. Fundamentally, Mr. Pim Passes By is a comedy of manners and, as such, came to the stage reflecting an English playwriting tradi-
tion begun over three hundred years earlier by Shakespeare's con-
temporaries and the writers of the Restoration drama. This tradition was a direct outgrowth of a tendency to ridicule folly which charac-
terized the writing of the period until the bourgeoisie influence turned writers from the ridicule of folly to the praise of virtue and a resulting sentimental comedy. Brooks and Heilman's historical sketch of the drama discusses the period as follows:

Restoration drama reached its peak in the comedy of manners --- the gay, witty, satirical presentations of the sophisticated world which we see in Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Van-
brugh and Farquhar. Actually, the most famous play from the group, Congreve's The Way of The World, as well as much of the work of Vanbrugh and Farquhar, falls in the eighteenth century, which then sees the gradual disappearance of comedy of manners and the rise of sentimental comedy. . . . This type tends to substitute the admiration of virtue for the ridicule of folly; its influence extends even to Sheridan whose School For Scandal is a late-century effort to rehabilitate the comedy of manners. The bourgeoisie influence, to which the change in comedy is generally ascribed, also affects tragedy. . . .

33CleAINTH BROOKS & R. HEILMAN, Understanding Drama, p. 483

From that time forward the comedy of manners has been an important part of English theater tradition. This tradition was carried for-
ward by Beaumont and Fletcher in particular, was brought to a high level in Congreve's The Way Of The World and in Sheridan's School For Scandal and was championed in the later years by Oscar Wilde, Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, George Bernard Shaw and others. The devel-
opment was the natural result of an awakening of the public to social consciousness which was well under way at the end of the nineteenth century. It was a public with the vision of a new social organization as Dickinson called it:

... In this general movement the drama now began to take its place. It had been drawn into the social arena through the emphasis on its social connections by Matthew Arnold, H.A. Jones, Wm. Archer and others. ... 34


It must also be remembered that consideration of social conventions and manners received additional impetus with the outbreak of the war. Here the absolute necessity of circumventing established custom in many cases brought the validity of that custom into question and made ridiculous either the custom or the dogmatism which served it. The result was a field made most fertile for the writers of satire by a public stimulated to the need for social reorganization.

Because of these influences about him, it is natural that Milne's writing should reflect an interest in the manners. Pim, of course, "passes by", but not without staining his apparel with the influence of the times. Serious thinking might carry us even further by raising the question of whether it was the humor of Pim that made the play popular or the timeliness of the satire it contained.

Further discussion of the origin of the type of play Milne has written brings us to one other item. It is very evident that the plot hinges entirely upon Pim's confusion of names — his associating the name "Telworthy" with the gentleman who traveled with him on the
boat. This confusion is but a variation of the well-known case of mistaken identity which was made the basis of plot complication as far back as Plautus and Terrance of the Roman theater. Plautus' plays in particular are characterized by the confusion resulting from mistaken identity as appears in The Twin Menaechmi and in Amphitryon, both of which influenced Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors and, to a lesser degree, some of his other comedies.

In Mr. Pim Passes By, however, the mistaken identity is not actually dramatized; (i.e. characters do not confuse each other on the stage) it takes place in the mind of Mr. Pim, but the confusion that is brought into being on the stage is equally as great.

We have discussed to some length the origin of the type of play Mr. Milne has written and have referred to Pim as a "comedy of manners." It might be well at this point to clarify what is meant by the term and thereby determine more definitely the play's claim to being that type. By a "comedy of manners" is meant any play characterized particularly by the fact that within it social types are revealed with attributes which have significance in the society of the period in which the play was written. The comedy of manners most frequently has an element of criticism directed at existing conditions, codes, or pattern of life. It may fall upon any level of society and, like fashion, can be outdated or revived later. "Drawing room comedy" is the comedy of manners focusing upon social types of a highly codified level, usually of the upper middle classes. Both terms, comedy of manners and drawing room comedy, are applicable to Mr. Pim Passes By.
That a comedy of manners involves a degree of criticism has already been implied. That is to say, there is either a subtle or a blatant attack upon some aspect of the social code whose validity has become questionable largely because, for one reason or another, the code fails to function properly. This validity is of the utmost importance, for the code owes its existence to the fact that it is utilitarian and serves as a touchstone for all situations within its scope.

With these characteristics in mind we might pause to measure the validity of Pim's claim to being a comedy of manners. First, does the play deal with those conventionally of the upper middle class? Apparently so, George is a landowner and a county magistrate and, in his own words, "Dinah has been properly brought up in an honest English country home."35 Secondly, is there a specific moral code involved? Yes, it is the accepted formula for determining whose wife a woman actually is, championed on the one hand by George who says, "Not in the eyes of the law . . ."36 and on the other hand Olivia's challenge that "What seems wrong to me is that I lived for five years with a bad man whom I hated and what seems right to me is that I lived for five years with a good man whom I love."36 This leads to the next question: Is the code actually challenged by the author? Astounding as the answer may be at this point, it is "No."

35 See p. 17 of the play script.

36 See p. 34 of the play script.
because the logical avenue of attack — the charge of bigamy ——
is poorly grounded, thereby throwing the emphasis upon the humor
rather than upon the criticism.

The logical conclusion to be drawn therefrom is that Mr. Pim
Passes By comes closer to being sheer farce as some would have it,
than to being a comedy of manners. This might be true except for
one facet of the comedy of manners which so far has been overlooked.
It is pointed up in Brook's definition which reads in part:

... But manners also means 'moral actions'
and hence character. Thus 'comedy of manners'
becomes 'comedy of character' in contrast with
'comedy of situation' or 'intrigue comedy.'37

37BROOKS, op. cit., p. 500

This factor leads us directly to George and the point that Milne's
satire attacks not so much the actual code as the dogmatic adherence
to the letter of the code as represented by George. It is George's
conventionality which is funny even to Olivia who says George was
so unconventional when he married her, but is so conventional over
Dinah's marrying Brian. It also points to George as not only the
representative of the conventional view, but also as one of the many
individuals whose present strict conformity has blotted out the mem-
ory of their own youthful passions. This fits well with the critics'
conception of Milne's writing and consents to Sawyer's mention of
Milne as a post-war dramatist who took the comedy of manners into
the field of whimsey.38

38SAWYER, loc. cit.
Either by choice or other reason, Milne has adhered rather strictly to the lighter touches of satire here demonstrated which, coupled with Barrie's sentiment, has proven to be a successful style of writing, at least for Milne. John Cunliffe writes of this directly by saying of *Pim*, "it obtained a great popular success partly due to its clever combination of Barrie's sentiment with a gentler satire which is Milne's own." 39

39 Cunliffe, op. cit., p. 213.

There was considerable hope that the former editor of *Punch* would carry further into the writing of a more serious vein and cater more definitely to the exaggerated concern over the problems of marriage, sex, and individual freedom dominating the post-war period. But again, due probably to choice and the fact that he had for years been a humorist and not a philosopher, Milne failed to respond as the critics desired and the latter gave up trying to read social significance into his plays.

In summary then, one may conclude that *Mr. Pim Passes By* is basically a comedy of manners taken into the field of whimsey. This implies somewhat more than Mr. Milne confesses, yet will not admit to the discussion of a domestic or social problem as some would insist. The result has been a form of drawing room comedy --- a trivial theme put into a farcical situation and generously seasoned with a brand of satirical wit on conventions and the uncompromising individuals who champion them.
IV

THE SCRIPT

If each act is broken down into what is known in the theater as "French Scenes" marked by the entrance or exit of an important character, the actual plot development can be more readily determined. Aside from the introduction of Mr. Pim by the maid at the rise of the curtain, the first significant scene is that between Pim and Dinah. This scene is expository and, like most opening scenes of a play, it is highly essential to the understanding of what is to follow. Its importance centers on the following points:

1) To acquaint the audience with the facts of Olivia's first marriage.
2) To plant the name "Telworthy" in Pim's mind and activate the plot.
3) To acquaint the audience with George and Olivia before entrance.
4) To acquaint the audience with Mr. Pim and Dinah.

Most exposition is rather talky and this opening scene of Pim is no exception. Aside from the humor of Carraway Pim and the antics of Dinah, there is little to relieve the stuffiness of an expository scene. Therefore the director must rely on character and at the same time watch that the import of Dinah's lines is not lost in a deluge of mannerisms and a too rapid rate of delivery.

Upon Pim's exit Brian is introduced. Other than to present Brian and reveal his relationship to Dinah, the scene is designed to:

1) Introduce the curtains as a point of conflict.
2) Build further the coming entrances of George and Olivia.
3) Express George's hostility to the engagement.

Olivia's entrance at this point (third scene) is significant as it completes the trio of sympathetic characters in preparation for
the coming conflict with George. The audience is made to sense
the coming conflict and here gets its first view of the curtains,
associating them with the more liberal views of Olivia.

So far the play has been concerned mainly with introducing
characters and defining issues, but with George's first appearance
(the fourth scene) all that has been said is now adequately demon-
strated in the first open conflict between the opposing sides.
George outright forbids the engagement in what comes close to a
family row and so presents visually all that has been said of him in
the preceding scenes. With Dinah and Brian's exit the argument
shifts to the curtains and then back again to the engagement.
George eventually leaves the stage after, to all appearances, having
virtually won the field on all points.

The sixth scene is falling action inserted primarily to clari-
fy Olivia's attitude and show her as being by no means defeated. "I
shall think of something," she says pointedly and with that thought
across to the audience the author is ready to introduce the first
significant development designed to influence the outcome of the con-
flict.

The seventh scene introduces that development. Pim and George
meet for the first time and the name "Telworthy" comes out as the name
of one who came over on the boat from Australia with Pim — allegedly
Olivia's first husband. Both the Hardens and the audience are now
concerned with a matter of apparently greater importance than either
the curtains or the engagement.
Act II begins with a short obligatory scene between Dinah and Brian which has no particular significance other than to serve as a stabilizer to the more serious note on which Act I ended and, as such, provides further opportunity for comment upon George's attitude. Closely following, however, is a long scene between George and Olivia most important for its implications. The significant feature to be derived from this long scene is the great contrast in attitude and mode of behavior between George and Olivia. The former is upset and in a state of near panic as he contemplates his "sin" and the publicity likely to result. Olivia, on the other hand, takes what is by far the more intelligent approach, preferring to think the thing through in a practical way. Although she is concerned over the alleged return of her first husband, it was no problem for her to decide what to do and she is just a trifle impatient with her husband's attitude. Thus the scene marks the beginning of the author's ridicule and satire which reaches full intensity in the third act.

The scene following in which Lady Marden is told of the news is again a scene of open conflict in which the issue is brought down to the simple question of liberal views versus conventional views. George champions the latter, aided by Lady Marden, while Brian is principle spokesman for the liberal view. In spite of the humor running through the scene, it is a difficult scene to handle because of its natural tendency to turn to serious drama. But if played correctly, it holds the serious element just long enough to provide an excellent background for the climax of the play — Pim's story of the fishbone.
The return of Pim at the end of Act II, as just mentioned, is the climax of the play. His story of the fishbone relieves both George and Olivia of bigamy and, what is more important, throws the scales in favor of Olivia, giving her the power necessary to handle George and eventually resolve the plot.

Act III belongs primarily to Olivia and, we might add, to the author. In this act the satire and ridicule reaches its height as Olivia, now certain of her position, proceeds to throw George's conventionalism into his face and to grind it in, so to speak, at every opportunity. Aside from the brief appearance of Pim and the youngsters, the entire act is devoted to subduing George and ridiculing his attitude.

Carraway Pim appears, in what is his last important scene, to dissolve completely Telworthy's "reappearance" and thus give Olivia the last remaining bit of information necessary to guarantee the successful conclusion of her plans. A short scene between Brian and Olivia follows, designed to acquaint the audience with Olivia's intentions so that the audience will thoroughly understand what she is attempting to do in the concluding scenes of the play.

There is very little plot complication from this point on to the final curtain. George, after having stormed out earlier in the act, meekly returns, apparently having undergone a change of heart and the author is satisfied to amuse us with the behavior of the "new" husband. Milne is, of course, true to his purpose in showing great events springing from little causes and he ends his play on George hanging the new curtains while Brian sketches his fiance. Because the
closing scenes of Act III are composed of falling action, care must be taken to prevent the play from merely coasting to its conclusion. Strict attention to tempo and the humorous element will avoid this and properly introduce the climactic note of Pim’s parting remark.

V

THE STYLE OF DIRECTION

The preceding discussion has had as its goal the determination of the inherent qualities of the play under production. Specific conclusions have been drawn as to the author’s purpose and the type of play that has been forthcoming. With these conclusions in mind, it now becomes the director’s task to select the style of direction which will most effectively present them to the audience.

Style itself is pervasive and is the quality which gives a dramatic production its general tone. Primarily, style is the degree of selectivity employed in direction. It concerns itself with all phases of production — the characters, their speech, manners and costumes as well as the environmental elements of lighting and staging. All phases are unified by the reflection of a dominant style. Frequently it is possible to subject a script to more than one style treatment, but more frequently does the author’s purpose and the type of play dictate a specific style which will make the production most effective.

We have already classified Wilson’s Mr. Pim Passes By as being most generally a form of the comedy of manners with slight farcical
notes interspersed. Because, in a comedy of manners, the author is intending to do more than present a slice of life, or even to reveal a dramatic situation, a higher degree of selectivity is demanded. On the other hand the element of criticism found in a comedy of manners demands that the object of that criticism be made to conform reasonably to accepted standards of the particular strata of life being observed. As a result, the treatment of a play such as Mr. Pim Passes By must incorporate a degree of realism which is highly selective.

The degree of selectivity to be used can best be determined by reference to three aspects of the play. In the first place the physical aspect is quite realistic. The stage setting, lighting, the character's appearance, costumes and make-up are acceptable as being realistic. It is an honest English house, as George calls it, and no attempt has been made by the author to have it otherwise. There is likewise nothing improbable or exaggerated in the physical appearance of any of the characters --- even of Carraway Pim.

As to the situation, we may look upon it as being possible but highly improbable, which means that it is somewhat exaggerated in its structure for the sake of the humor and satire. It is possible that a visit from one such as Pim might occur, that a confusion in names might likewise occur, and that a case of two men claiming the same wife, as is here threatened, might easily come about. The somewhat farcical element and a challenge to probability enters, however, in what may be termed the unlikelihood of accepting either the death or the "resurrection" of the first husband on such flimsey evidence as has been inferred. This improbable situation
has been selected specifically for the purpose of adequately pointing the manners of the individuals concerned.

Looking now at the characters, one may accept as realistic such persons as Dinah, Brian, Olivia and even Lady Marden. Pim, himself, will measure up to the standard. As for George, however, it is believed that certain traits of his personality stand out as alienating him from the standard of a realistic character. His strict conventionalism is probable, as is his tendency to become overly excited. However, probability ends here when we recall that George is a county magistrate and, holding such a position, he should have been able to evaluate quickly the sudden development without becoming unduly alarmed. This fact, along with the obvious inability to fathom even Olivia's most blatant remarks, makes him an exaggerated figure and serves as the origin for much of the play's humor.

But an important object of consideration is the light satire running through the play, for satire requires more than a realistic treatment to express it. It must be accented by every means available to the director, i.e. voice, movement, etc. This accent must be over and above what might be termed as normal since a satirical remark delivered by one character is not usually for the other's benefit though it be addressed to him; it is for the benefit of the audience. A greater amount of "audience-consciousness" exists on the part of the actor whenever satire is prevalent and calls for somewhat more selective treatment than pure realism can afford.

In consideration of the above points one concludes that in
the directing of *Mr. Pim Passes By*, realism is not enough. The style of direction must at times employ more selectivity 1) to incorporate an exaggerated situation, 2) to accentuate and facilitate comedy of character, and 3) to expedite the proper handling of satirical lines. Directing the play in the style of Selective Realism will accomplish this.

VI

THE CHARACTERS

Once the play has been carefully examined to determine the type, the author's purpose, etc., and a specific style has been selected to govern the play's direction, the director must next consider how a visual representation of these factors can best be realized on the stage. Naturally, his most effective medium of expression is the characters.

It is a generally accepted principle of playwriting that no character will appear on the stage without a specific purpose which cannot be readily delegated to any other character. For this reason it behooves the intelligent director to study his characters, not only that he may fully determine the purpose of each, but that he may also extract from each role its full potentialities.

OLIVIA

To begin with, we may first look at Olivia as the play may definitely be said to have been written around her. This assertion can be defended by more evidence than the fact that Lillie designed the part for Lillah McCarthy. Olivia is the protagonist of the
play and, as such, is the dominant character. The initial point of conflict, the curtains, is of her making and she champions the cause of the young couple who, as the remaining sympathetic characters, take their cues from her. Aside from the humor of Mr. Pim, the amusing situation dominating the play is engineered by Olivia at the expense of George and in her mouth is placed the satirical jibes of the author.

One might guess Olivia's age to be about thirty-five, but whatever it might be chronologically, she has definitely reached that stage in life when the flower of womanhood is in full bloom. She is charming, poised and vivacious, but more than that she is clever and possesses a degree of intelligence that enables her to master almost any given situation, particularly one in which her husband is involved. She is much quicker to grasp the significance of each new development than is her husband George for, as Dinah tells Mr. Pim in the opening scene of the first act: "She always seems to have thought of things a week before they happen. George just begins to get hold of them about a week after they happen."

\[^{[4]}\text{See p. 13 of the play script.}\]

Olivia knows exactly how to handle George and does it simply by avoiding any head-on disagreements with him. "Very well, George," she says in her patient way and then bides the time when her side of the argument has greater advantage.

It is apparent Olivia is more liberal than her husband, probably due to the fact that she has seen a bit more of the world. She
had been to Australia with her first husband and, because of the character and associates of the latter, saw some of the seamier side of life. These experiences contrasted those of George who apparently never strayed far from his Aunt Julia. But Olivia is most patient with her husband's conventional views although her desire to fix up and re-decorate her home gives her a willingness to battle George's conventionality for that privilege. Above all, Olivia loves George. That point is clear and she has no fear of losing him even at the alleged reappearance of Telworthy.

The principle means of presenting the major qualities of Olivia upon the stage is through the use of voice and body movement. Her patience and understanding in particular are best represented by her soft-spoken manner. At no time does she speak harshly to George, but of equal importance is the absence of a submissive quality in her speech. Olivia is neither submissive to, nor afraid of George and the actress must beware conveying these ideas in her voice. Her method of delivery is soft and deliberate, but often quite emphatic, deriving its emphasis from a liberal use of inflection coupled with careful enunciation. This contrast to George's blustering points Olivia's complete control without the domination that comes from the use of force.

Olivia's bodily movement is generally slow and marked by a very definite grace and ease. In no way are any of her movements impulsive or suggestive of impatience or agitation and every cross is executed with a minimum of effort. Except for those instances where it is necessary to conceal her amusement from George, her facial ex-
pression registers a playfully pretended innocence. Her actions should be easily executed to portray poise, control, and self-assurance.

The greatest problem in the proper interpretation of Olivia from the standpoint of the play as a whole is the mastery of the satire which predominates. This mastery must be brought about without creating an embittered Olivia. She does have a sense of humor and the role must be played lightly with this in mind. The tendency to play the role seriously results in an overpowering of the humor and the development of a social problem play. This humor is of an intellectual quality and it must be remembered that we laugh not at Olivia, but at what she says in relationship to George. Very seldom does she make any approach to George on an emotional plane. "Try thinking about it, George," she says in the second act in an attempt to stir his heart, but her suggestion misses the mark and no further appeal is made.

GEORGE

With the exception of Olivia, George is the most significant role in the cast primarily because he provides a target for the pointed humor of the author. In reality, the power of Olivia as Milne's spokesman rests upon the successful characterization of George as the representative of the strict conventionality over which Milne jests. George is a narrow-minded but honest English country gentleman of forty years who believes what was good enough for his grandfather is good enough for him. Beyond a doubt, most of his narrow mindedness found birth in the apparent long association
with Lady Marden, his aunt, to whom he turns for aid at the least provocation. One is lead to believe that George has allowed himself to be controlled by Aunt Julia even at the ripe age of forty and his marriage to Olivia, a divorcee, was probably consumated only with the reluctant approval of Lady Marden.

As a result of this influence, George has become quite conventional and now looks upon the letter of the law (legal, social, and religious) as being on an equal plane with the spirit. Such an outlook puts him frequently at odds with his more liberal wife and therefore he stands out as being the antagonist and principal opposing character.

Because of the satirical notes in the play, Milne has pictured George as a comic individual. He is a blustering, impulsive, dogmatic character — an exact opposite to the quiet ways of Olivia. His blustering is really the expression of an intense pride and underneath it all can be seen the likeable, friendly, goodnatured individual Olivia is proud to have as her husband.

It is the blustering and gruff manner on the surface of George's personality that may trip a careless actor in his interpretation. George must be played in a fashion that will make him appear favorable to the audience in spite of his narrow views. Underneath it all he is a good fellow and the audience must be made to feel that Olivia is right in sticking to George. She accepts his narrow mindedness as "just George"; the audience must accept it too.

In order to bring about this conception of George on the stage, the actor must speak and move in a manner which directly contrasts
Olivia. We have already said he was a blustering individual. From the moment of his first appearance George should speak loudly and gruffly, but not in a way that will reveal him as being irritable. George is not irritable. His speech should be emphatic and aggressive in keeping with his bodily action and most of his emphasis should come from the generous use of force and volume.

George's movement should follow the same pattern. His crosses should be vigorous and emphatic, denoting either aggressiveness or impatience and restlessness as the particular mood may demand. In the case of impatience or restlessness, much of his bodily action should suggest wasted energy or pent-up emotion and in every case his gestures should be generous and free.

LADY MARDEN

George is supported by his Aunt Julia to whom, as mentioned above, he readily turns for advice at the least provocation. It is rather obvious from the observation of both characters that Aunt Julia considers herself George's governing board. She is a vigorous woman of sixty years whose ability to lead an active life at this age is, to her, further proof that she should be consulted whenever advice is desired. This fact is pointed up in the second act where Olivia first reveals the news brought by Pim. The others merely exclaim, but Lady Marden's reaction is quite obvious as she turns to George and says sternly, "George?" with a definite rising inflection. Later, when the details of Telworthy's past come out, her remark implies not so much an explanation of George's conduct as an explanation for her not having been told of this detail --- "George, you
Lady Marden is a person not infrequently found in many families. In fact her common existence has caused her to become the butt of humor and a semi-caricature. A somewhat similar type is found in Lady Bracknell of Wilde's The Importance Of Being Earnest. However, Lady Marden is not drawn quite so obviously for the reasons that she is not as important a character and Milne's touch is more delicate than Wilde's. Lady Marden then affords the problem of creating a humorous yet convincing character to second George and, like Pim, she must be created in a way that will make her an individual and not a fugitive from a cartoon.

Lady Marden's strict adherence to staunch conventionalism should be made most apparent in her voice. Her speech is formal with emphasis attained principally with a biting enunciation augmented by force applied to individual words. Her manner should be somewhat haughty and expressive of a feeling of superiority. The latter is best revealed by her willingness to "beagle" whenever the opportunity occurs. All her movements should be rather masculine and almost as emphatic as those of George.

DINAH

Dinah is George's ward and niece. She is a gay young girl of nineteen with boyish high spirits and she has not yet fully abandoned her school-girl mannerisms. It is obvious that George has kept Dinah well in the shelter of his "honest English country house" for her manner is reflective of an innocence and lack of sophistication that would naturally result from such restraint. Dinah, however, is by no
means dull or backward; on the contrary, she has been well educated and is both intelligent and quick witted. In a way, we can see that Dinah's quick wit and obvious ability to grasp hold of situations often not especially meant for her understanding have proven to be a problem for George in the past and had not Olivia come along to assume much of the responsibility for raising Dinah, she might have proven to be a bit too much for George.

It is Dinah's impulsiveness and willingness to converse on anything with anyone that earns for her a share of the responsibility for the confusion charged to Pim. She provides Milne with the means of setting his plot in motion by planting the name "Telworthy" in the mind of the old gentleman.

Because of her youth and spontaneity, Dinah's actions are extremely impulsive, quick, and frequently follow one upon the other in no particular order. She shifts body position with great frequency, sitting, kneeling, standing, sitting first on one leg and then on the other. There is none of the grace and lady-like quality in her actions that characterize those of Olivia. However, this does not mean that her movements are coarse. They should all come as the natural expression of youth bubbling over and any lack of refinement should be caused by her innocent youth, not by any implied lack of training.

For the most part her boyish high spirits are expressed in a rather rapid rate of delivery. Her manner of flitting from one idea to another with startling rapidity demands that her voice be extremely flexible in pitch, tempo, and inflection. Care has to be exercised, however, that this rapid variation did not destroy clarity which is
frequently the case when the audience is overburdened with continual readjustment to a changing pattern.

BRIAN

Brian is the personification of all to which George is opposed. He is a modernistic painter with no money, possesses what George alleges to be socialistic views, and, what is possibly worse, he intends to begin experimenting with a wife in the person of Dinah. Aside from this, Brian is a likeable chap and must over-balance these "objectionable" qualities with sincerity, self-assurance, and an obvious but not offensive love for Dinah.

The problem of fitting Brian with a manner of delivery expressive of his nature was primarily that of emphasizing his age and maturity over that of Dinah. These qualities may be implied by avoiding the extremes of pitch variation and inflection and by speaking in a more subdued manner expressive of stability and orderliness.

CARRAWAY PIM

Although one might be inclined to look upon Mr. Pim as neutral (which he tries so desperately to be) it is quite proper to list him among the sympathetic characters. Mr. Pim is a kindly, inoffensive old gentleman whose mind, tending toward senility, has frequent difficulty in comprehending a rapidly moving situation. He is possibly in his late sixties although this is not quite as evident in his movement as in his manner of speech.

Pim takes great pride in what he feels is his accuracy in names and events. This may be due to his being a bit conscious of his age as well as of the natural tendency at that age to confuse
and forget. Because of this consciousness he may take pride in the
fact that such, in his opinion, is not his case and he, being dif-
ferent, is very exact and accurate in details. Pim is a bachelor.
This is revealed in the script, but Pim impresses one as being the
type that never marries.

What his business has been for the past forty years is a mat-
ter of speculation. This writer concludes that Pim may have been
for years a student of plant life and recently has been engaged in
reading papers on various types of rare vegetation before women's
clubs and the like. It is possible that he is an agent for a large
organization, the National Geographic Society perhaps, and makes fre-
quent trips to out-of-the-way places to study unusual specimens in
their natural environment. If such is the case, Pim was probably in
Australia for just this reason and now seeks a letter of introduction
to a man in charge of some large arboretum housing important rare
specimens.

Since Mr. Pim is kindly and sympathetic, it is natural that he
should gravitate to Olivia, seeing that his story may have upset her.
But Pim has also a slight fear of (or shall we say "respect for")
George which would not be unlikely in this case and, like the others,
he sticks rather closely to Olivia when his footing is not secure.

The problem in the creation of a suitable Pim is, first of all,
to develop a convincing character avoiding all suggestion of carica-
ture. It is simple to turn Pim into a clown of the side-show variety
which would lower the quality of the play considerably to say nothing
of stealing the show in a most detrimental fashion. Both Pim's
speech and movements are built upon a basic rhythmic pattern made to prevail throughout his entire behavior. True, a rhythmic pattern should be the basis for all characters, but in the case of Pim it is most vital. The pattern becomes most noticeable in his speech. It is slow, broken, and irregular, denoting his senility and his struggle to keep abreast of the changing situation.

Pim's slowness of speech, if not controlled, can easily retard the tempo of the play. It is therefore necessary to take advantage of periods when Pim is "up to the conversation" and move his lines along with increased speed. This increase compensates for those moments when hesitancy is essential and at the same time destroys any conception of Mr. Pim as being merely dull or stupid.

Aside from the broken walk which is also in keeping with the rhythmic pattern, most of Pim's actions are confined to facial expression wherein the audience sees the inner working of his mind. The lifting of the eyebrow, the scowl, the stroking of his chin and the shaking of his head reveal his character as much as George's character is revealed in the vigor of his crosses.

It is well to note that, with the possible exception of Lady Marden, Pim is the only character whose humor is of a physical nature. All others are intellectually humorous. By "physical humor" is meant that based primarily upon physical characteristics, mannerisms or mode of conduct most often expressed in pantomimic dramatization. Such a one is Pim. Intellectual humor is that based upon the wit of what one says, or upon his reaction to what is said to him. George is of this type. Drawn out to extremes, the difference is fundamentally
that between high and low comedy, Pim tending toward the latter.

This accounts for the cast with the exception of Anne, the maid. In the hands of another writer the role of Anne might have been developed further. Milne, however, must have preferred otherwise for he has left Anne a typical maid with the main purpose of expediting the introduction of Pim and further authenticating the setting and level of society upon which the play was written.

But in spite of its being a "bit part", a resourceful actor can turn the role into something worthwhile. The lines are few, but there is opportunity for pantomimic dramatization. In the opening scene, for instance, the maid's entrance can be played in a manner that will clearly convey to the audience Pim's significance before he, himself, has more than opened his mouth.

In a comedy of manners the characters are of extreme importance. A successful performance of this type of comedy looks to varied and well-developed characters. Milne has provided these and has hinged his play upon the complete use of all the dramatic values their various natures may provide. In the following sections further discussion of the use of characters will be taken up under composition, picturization, movement, and pantomimic dramatization.

VII

COMPOSITION

The first step in the transformation of a given script into terms of the stage is to arrange the characters in such a pattern or sequence as will have definite aesthetic significance. Dean calls it
"the rational arrangement of the people in a stage group to achieve
an instinctively satisfying clarity and beauty."\[1\\]

\[1\] ALEXANDER DEAN, Fundamentals of Play Directing, p. 137

In order that good composition may be assured, the director
must first decide which character or feature is to be emphasized,
for every stage group must have its emphatic figure or figures. Then,
by the use of area, level, plane, or body position, the attention of
the audience is directed to that figure.

Composition was an ever-present concern in the directing of
Mr. Pim Passes By, not only in the desire to obtain aesthetic beauty
and balance in arrangement, but also to secure clarity through the
identification of important figures. A good example of careful com-
position in this production was the entrance of George Marden in the
first act.\[2\\] All actors were moved away from the center of the

\[2\\] See p. 15 of the play script.

stage to assure the audience a clear view of the terrace windows
through which George was to appear. They formed two groups on either
side of the stage pointing toward the windows. When George did appear
he was greatly emphasized by the following means: 1) He entered from
a stronger area, 2) he had the advantage of level, 3) he formed the
apex of a triangle (Both visual and line focus centered upon him.)
and 4) he was emphasized by the vertical lines of the windows. In
brief, the picture was balanced, the entrance emphatic, and the mood
was heightened thereby. This was a scene employing selective realism
in the treatment of composition.

Mr. Pim's exit in the first act\textsuperscript{43} illustrated how the basic arrangement of figures may be changed and the important figure be made to hold emphasis. As Brian enters, Pim is on the rise UL, Dinah having crossed to Brian leaving Pim in the emphatic position by virtue of level and the weak body positions of the other two. As he is about to depart, Pim descends and crosses to Brian. Dinah's simultaneous cross DL holds Pim still in the emphatic position as the apex of a small up-stage triangle. Thus, while the composition was completely changed, the important figure maintained emphasis first by level and then by plane.

An example of composition in one of the more farcical scenes of the play is found in Act III\textsuperscript{44} where Olivia insists that George again propose to her. The rapid shifting of emphasis from one character to the other in this scene was accomplished by a shifting of position. Olivia had the advantage of body position facing DC while George had the advantage of area, playing for the most part at C. This balance was tipped in either direction as the action demanded by a change in plane. The emphasis was placed upon George by moving him to a higher plane, while he "up-staged" himself, as it were, by moving down-stage to place the emphasis upon Olivia.

To some, this shifting may have been so subtle as to pass un-
noticed as a directing device. Nevertheless, the principle of artistic selection was here at work adding much to the effectiveness of the scene.

VIII
PICTURIZATION

Picturization is closely related to composition in that the latter contributes the rational ordering and rearrangement of technique and the mood of the subject while picturization contributes the meaning or the thought to be expressed in a stage group. This story-telling value shows vividly the attitude of one character toward another and these attitudes can be grasped without the aid of dialogue or movement.

Consider the scene in Act I where Brian has virtually failed in his suit for the hand of Dinah. He sits crest-fallen upon the hassock at center-stage as George summarizes his own views by reflecting upon his own uncertain economic status and laying the blame upon such persons as Brian. George is standing behind the settee (UR) and points to Brian with his pipe saying: "... and that's thanks to you, my friend." Here the surprised Brian rises and with voice and gesture appeals the accusation as Olivia looks up from her sewing (L) to inquire as to what George is referring. At this point anyone just entering the theater could easily see that the figure in the center was the object of attention and was most likely making an appeal as
revealed by body position. The accusation was being made by the figure UR revealed by his body position and most clearly by his pointing. Our new-comer would also quickly conclude that those seated (DL) were either directly concerned or much interested in the accusation as noted by the momentary disregard of the sewing and the focus upon the figure at the center of the group. Here is a story-telling picture emphasizing without words or movement the attitude of one character toward another.

A more unified example of the same use of picturization is found in Act II. At this particular point the recent developments have made necessary a decision on the proper course of action. Arguing over what is ethical and proper to do has led directly to a clash between Brian and George over their respective codes. Brian sneers at Lady Marden's suggestion that Olivia return to Telworthy and moves to above the left end of the settee where Olivia and Dinah are seated. George, down by the fireplace, wheels angrily and assails Brian's code of ethics whereupon Brian retorts with equal vehemence, lashing at George across the settee.

In this instance the picturization reveals more definitely the exact element over which the two men are at odds. The two are separated by the settee upon which is seated the two women whose destinies are virtually being determined by the outcome of the argument. Without dialogue or movement this arrangement and the individual body positions reveal clearly the emotional attitudes and relationship of the characters to each other. With Brian in the stronger
position by reason of area and direction, his argument is made to appear the stronger which, to a degree, forecasts the ultimate triumph of the more liberal outlook over the old conventionalism with which the play ends.

Such arrangements seldom come about of their own volition in everyday life. On the stage they must be deliberately brought about in order to adequately picturize the basic ideas within the play. The more important the idea to be expressed, the greater the degree of selectivity the director must employ in his picturization.

IX

MOVEMENT

It is frequently said that an audience comes to the theater to see a play, not to hear it. While this statement may be a bit strong in relegating the auditory to a position of secondary importance, it does serve to underscore the importance of movement to a successful stage presentation. The use of movement in the portrayal of character has already been discussed under a separate heading. We must now examine the use of movement as an aid to picturization.

For an excellent illustration of the use of movement we turn again to George and Olivia. Throughout the major portion of Act III George is attempting to "break through" to Olivia, to fathom her behavior and to bring her down to his way of reasoning. Olivia, on the other hand, is deliberately evasive, uncondescending, and elusive. She "holds all the aces" as it were, and knowing it, refuses to come to any terms with George except her own. This situation was most
effectively demonstrated through the use of movement. From the time of Olivia's first appearance in this act George executed vigorous crosses to Olivia expressive of his determination to break through her defense. Technically, he was trying to get into the area she occupied. In every case, however, he was either repulsed by a reply which forced him to move away from Olivia or she glided away from George leaving him standing in a state of momentary frustration. Strong crosses were made from every possible angle only to be met with the same failure in the same manner. Strong movements were continually neutralized by the proper execution of weak movements.

Act II contained scenes of a similar nature although the specific will-o-the-wisp attitude on the part of Olivia was not so much in evidence. Here George is seeking to drive home to Olivia the seriousness of the predicament in which they find themselves --- a seriousness which Olivia is not willing to recognize. Consequently, George was made to continually circle the settee, approaching it from every angle as if it were Olivia's citadel, in an effort to dislodge her from her apparent indifference. This pattern of movement contrasted that of Olivia who remained calm and composed upon the settee. Handling such scenes with a careful selection of movement reveals more emphatically the relationship of characters than is revealed in the mere use of words.

Other uses of movement included moving in or out of the area occupied by another character to denote increasing or decreasing accord. In Act II George moves down around the settee toward Olivia as
she says in part: "... You do love me, don't you?" They are virtually in accord at this point reflected by their occupying the same area and their nearness to each other — that is until Dinah is again mentioned. George then removes Olivia's hands from his shoulders and violently moves off left, pointing his verbal disagreement by vacating her area.

Strong movements followed by weak movements, or the reverse order, are often expressive of the rise and fall of fortune. This changing fortune can probably be seen in other uses of movement similar to those already mentioned, but the first act of Mr. Pim Passes By contained a scene where the movement was deliberately arranged for that specific purpose. George stands between Brian and Dinah, physically representing the obstacle to their marriage. He demands to know what the two will live on and Brian moves toward him with a timely reply. Dinah then crosses to George saying that Brian sold a picture last March. Both Brian and Dinah have made strong movements toward George, the obstacle, revealing their hopes to be at high level. George's reply, however, destroys their hopes of the moment and the two move away from George. Strong movements followed immediately by weak movements have shown the momentary rise of hope and the plunge to despair.

Movement is the stage in action. Generous use of significant
and purposeful movement such as attempted in the examples cited above make any production more interesting and, above all, clearer in meaning.

X

RHYTHM

Once characters have been visualized, movement planned and composition determined, the whole must be immediately brought under the influence of a single unifying force referred to as rhythm. Alexander Dean explains rhythm as "primarily the factor that gives life to a play; that ties it together into a unified whole, coordinating action, actors, dialogue; creating an illusion; carrying the audience along through the action of the play." 49 Actually to define rhythm from the actor's point of view: it is a series of pulsations or beats following each other in a definite fixed order to form a pattern, the nature of which is indicative of the inherent mood, action, or locale of the particular scene. These pulsations are variable in decisiveness, regularity and tempo and, while each play will have a dominating rhythm, the pattern will vary depending upon the mood or locale of the specific scene. Because of its importance, no group of actors can perform effectively without individual and group awareness of the fundamental rhythmic pattern.

Aside from the rhythmic pattern of the play, each character has a rhythm of his own. Mention has already been made of rhythm as

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49 DEAN, op. cit., p. 286.
an essential to the character of Carraway Pim. It is basically slow and irregular as manifest in his speech. George Marden has a rhythm moderately fast with a vigorous beat which dominates all others the moment he steps upon the stage. Consequently, its effect upon a particular scene was to quicken the rhythm and intensify the pulsations of the preceding scene. Dinah was the example of a light, airy rhythm, quick and gay, although at times it became more emphatic and vigorous similar to that of George.

Since the locale of Mr. Pim Passes By remains the same throughout the play, any variation in the rhythmic pattern is brought about by a change in the action or the inherent mood. Both of these are strongly affected by the person or combination of persons on the stage at the particular time so that we may say the rhythm of a scene as a whole is, to a great extent, dependent upon the rhythm of the individuals playing the scene.

In Act I the rhythm was initially quick and spritely, becoming more intense and uneven as the influence of George upon the situation became more evident. George's influence, it should be noted, was felt even before he made his first entrance. When he did appear and the question of Dinah's engagement was made an issue, the dominating rhythm was intense, erratic and irregular with flares here and there as emotions spilled over in the first open conflict of views. The uneven, irregular quality became less apparent, however, in the second act as the situation came more definitely under the influence of the strong driving pulsations of George. His tempestuous and forceful manner predominating throughout most of his scene with Olivia was ex-
emplified in his pacing, gesture, and loud manner.

Act III was slightly different, however. With the news of Pim’s error in her hands, Olivia was able to seize control. In spite of the strong driving pulsations of George’s rhythm, Olivia was able to dominate the act with a quiet and steady but nevertheless strong beat. This predominating even quality gave to the rhythm once more its spritely quality and enabled it to move the play to its inevitable conclusion.

But the principal characteristic of the rhythm of Mr. Pim Passes is its increased tempo. Any comedy, and most particularly a comedy of manners, must be stepped up above and beyond the pace normally kept by a true-to-life situation. Repeated reference has been made to the danger of allowing the play to become serious drama and the most effective way of preventing this was to increase the tempo.

Every possible consideration was given to tempo. Selective realism was quite evident in the matter for the desire to keep to a fast pace meant that much business and movement had to be only suggested or sacrificed completely. The opening scene of Act II, for instance, called for Brian to smoke a cigarette; yet only after several rehearsals in which the action had to be deliberately timed was it possible for him to so much as light it. The tempo of the play had been so accelerated beyond a life-like pace that by the time the cigarette was lit, the scene was calling for other business.

The best example of this foreshortening of the time element through increased tempo was to be found in Act III at George’s second
entrance.\footnote{See p. 57 of the play script.} George comes upon the stage completely subdued after having been bested by Olivia earlier in the act and he attempts what amounts to a reconciliation. Olivia sews on her curtains and George, fooling with his pipe and humming a tune, saunters about the room in an effort to re-open the discussion and still appear casual about it. Such a scene, handled naturally, would have been static. The rhythm is very slow and uneven as George feels his way with Olivia offering no assistance. Five or more minutes could have been so consumed and the feeling of anticipation or expectancy on the part of the audience would have been quick to perish.

To make such a scene theatrically effective it was once again necessary to resort to suggestion and rely upon tempo to relieve the boredom certain to develop otherwise. From a position of virtual immobility the scene was subjected to a steady increase in tempo which brought it up to a normal playing rate within a space of ninety seconds. Thus, the effect was obtained, the mood suggested, and at the same time a static and uninteresting situation was averted through the use of a selected rhythmic pattern.

\section*{XI}

\textbf{PANTOMIMIC DRAMATIZATION}

The fifth fundamental element of directing, and one to be immediately affected by the selected style, is pantomimic dramatization. This element, frequently called "stage business", incorpor-
ates such action, movements and behaviorisms as are not directly concerned with the development of the plot.

"Business" may be executed individually or collectively, with the use of a property or without. The important thing to consider is that pantomime, closely allied with picturization, is essential to the complete interpretation of the play, particularly regarding such points as cannot be adequately expressed in dialogue or composition. Often a bit of pantomime will reveal instantly important features of character, situation, or atmosphere where line after line of dialogue would fail, simply because the average audience will frequently see in action what they may not understand in dialogue.

As has already been hinted, the amount and kind of pantomime is determined by the style of direction as well as by the type of play in production. The director's use of pantomime, in fact, will often go far to determine the kind of play. In the case of comedy, the amount and kind of business varies inversely with the comedy's intellectual value. In high comedy (to which the comedy of manners belongs) the business is apt to be small and carried out with great selectivity and precision. As the comedy becomes broader, the business assumes greater and greater proportions, incorporates exaggeration and is executed with broad strokes. It requires less motivation than the business of high comedy which must first be well motivated and then suggested rather than executed. The meaning to be derived therefrom is thus frequently subtle and at times the business becomes symbolic rather than descriptive.
If the director follows through the conception of *Mr. Pim Passes By* as a comedy of manners with slight farcical touches, the pantomime he employs will reveal definite selectivity and precision with occasional bits of business executed on a slightly broader plane as a concession to the farce. In the present production this pattern was followed. Much of the business was subtle, becoming at times symbolic, while other instances of its use were more blatant.

Olivia's sewing on her curtains, for example, throughout the major portion of three acts goes far to express visually her control and the composure which appeared to be her basic characteristic. It is to be noted that her curtains were usually with her and, because of their design, they became silent reminders of Olivia's more liberal views.

At the conclusion of the long scene between George and Olivia in Act II following the announcement that Pim will return, George crosses to his desk followed by Olivia who informs him that *Mr. Pim* must be told. In the short scene at the desk she stands by her seated husband and taunts him with the need for apologizing to Telworthy. All this time the curtains are over her arm and Olivia manipulates them in such a manner that George is always confronting them. In a strictly realistic treatment it is likely the curtains would have been laid aside earlier in the scene, but their use in the manner described was business fairly selective for the purpose of visually augmenting the taunts of Olivia and further accentuating the basic conflict of liberalism versus conventionalism.

But a specific property is not always essential to effective
business. A pattern of movement or a mannerism may be equally expressive of an attitude or mood. George's continual return to his desk was intended to visually represent the struggle to hold to his conventional views. Momentary confusion resulting from his having "lost a round" was invariably followed by a return to the desk with its official and business-like atmosphere denoting George's desire to approach the problem conventionally. His shifting of the papers each time as if searching for something pantomimed his often-used expression, "I must consult my solicitor."

The creation of Mr. Pim incorporated varied uses of pantomime. In the first place it was used to cover the slow and broken rate of delivery essential to his character. The habit of tasting his words and the continual use of facial expression served to fill in the gaps where no words were forthcoming and relieved the monotony which would eventually grow from waiting for Pim to continue.

It was also Pim who provided the few tricks of broad humor reflective of farce. Dean mentions the common use of "gags" in a farce: "... bits of business not intrinsic to the action, but put in merely for their ability to provoke laughter." One or two such bits of business were introduced by Pim centering about his hat. In Act I Dinah asks about his hat, whereupon Pim absently places it on his head and proceeds to look about for it. More was made of the hat business in Act III when Pim walked off with George's cap. Such bits of by-play were representative of business selected to dramatize the farce found in the play. It was extremely important, however, to see
that such instances were played convincingly and were not over-emphasized. Mention was made in the analysis of the characters that there is the danger of allowing Pim to become a stereotyped clown. The business mentioned could bring him precariously close to a burlesqued figure and great care had to be exercised to see that he remained an individual.

A word might be said in respect to smoking as a type of business. For the most part smoking and the mixing of drinks are time-worn devices whose continual use frequently exposes a lack of originality or the inability to devise business more suitable. Dean makes mention of the statement that some directors have as their only ground plan the generous distribution of cigaret boxes, matches and ash trays.\(^52\) In this production there was a definite attempt to give specific meaning to what little smoking was employed. George had his pipe and although he seldom lighted it, he handled it in a manner that made the pipe a varitable barometer of George's state of mind. When the discussion moved in his favor, the pipe usually appeared, but when George was thoroughly dismayed and upset, the pipe disappeared into his pocket or was laid on the desk. At other times the waving or pointing of the pipe aided in the expression of his character.

Beyond a doubt, the pantomime demanding the greatest amount of selectivity and care in execution was that employed by Olivia. Mention has been made of her use of the curtains, but of even greater importance was her use of pantomime in keeping the play in the proper
atmosphere. Frequently her lines demanded serious treatment, especially those lines delivered in scenes with George. Whether or not she actually "meant it" hinged entirely upon the gesture and facial expression of those moments void of dialogue. The third act held a particular instance of pantomime revealing both Olivia's character and her attitude. 53 Olivia has effectively driven home the point

53 See p. 53 of the play script.

that their predicament will surely get into the newspapers and she serves George notice that she intends to see it through by saying she is in no hurry to go up to London and get married. George storms out of the room in a fit of anger, whereupon Olivia quickly crosses to the center of the stage and tosses a kiss in the direction of his departure. Then, with a little laugh, she returns to her curtains.

Without the kiss and the chuckle at the end of the scene, the audience has ample reason to fear Olivia may have tired of playing with George and now intends to see it through. But this business mentioned makes quite clear that her attitude is one of sport, and just so long as this is clear the play remains the comedy it was intended to be.

Once again it must be stated, a serious move and the audience would have lost the mood and set themselves at once for Hilne's answer to a social problem. However, bits of business well planned and carefully executed assured the proper reaction and once more illustrates now style in direction can influence a production. A satirical comedy may be made a serious play or a melodrama and using identical scripts. The controlling element is style and in pantomime, as in everything else, it should always receive careful consideration.
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