

CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSIONS

Kingsley Amis is a conscious novelist of the post – war British literature. He remains alert enough to observe the happenings of all sorts around him. He is a faithful witness of his own times. For his prolific writing Amis draws ample material from his own life as well as from the life around him. He is a harsh enough to pick up the major flows of his society and to strike them very hard with a positive intention of pointing out these flaws to the society itself.

The thorough study of Kingsley Amis's three major novels – i.e. *Lucky Jim* (1954), *That Uncertain Feeling* (1955), and *The Green Man* (1969) reveals that Amis transfers a lot of material from his own life to the lives of his heroes like Jim Dixon, John Lewis and Maurice Allington. Alike Amis Jim Dixon is a University teacher. As far as Amis's attitude to women is concerned, his heroes inherit it from him. Amis was never happy in his domestic life. He had developed illicit relations with Jane. The hot arguments between John Lewis and his wife, Jean in *That Uncertain Feeling* remind the readers of the conflict between Amis and Hilly. John Lewis, too, is not happy with his wife, and develops his relationship with Elizabeth. Maurice Allington, the protagonist of *The Green Man*, desires to seduce

every lady insight. This is obviously Amisian attitude. Maurice, too, is disloyal to his wife, Joyce. Alike Amis Maurice is shown interested in seducing teen – age girls especially. Amis and John Lewis make use of women to improve their own career. Amis shows his heroes always engaged in the activities like love – making, gossiping, smoking and drinking. Jim Dixon, John Lewis and Maurice Allington smoke and drink a lot like their creator. Amis, in his personal life, was too much addicted to wine and cigarettes. But Amis could never smoke as much as he wanted. Jim Dixon is shown facing a similar problem. Amis used to drink excessively. Jim Dixon, John Lewis and Maurice are always shown drinking sitting in bars. Amis had worked in the army during the Second World War. He derives some references from his army life for Jim Dixon in *Lucky Jim*. Prof. Welch looks like an army officer who doesn't qualify, but still who has decisive power over the subordinates. Amisian novels, thus, are closely associated with the personal experiences of Amis. Amis's heroes speak in his tone of voice.

Amis seems to watch the world around him quite intently. He, therefore, is in a position to point out the major weaknesses of the society of 1950's and of the following decades. Amis carries out this job through the pen of a satirist. Amis is critical of the women of the upper class especially. He watches them engaged in drinking,

smoking, love affairs and fashions. They never hesitate in maintaining extra – marital relationship. Elizabeth Gruffydd - Williams, the wife of a councillor, likes to enjoy physical pleasure with a sub – librarian, John Lewis. Diana, the wife of Dr. Jack Maybury, in *The Green Man*, is fascinated to her husband's friend, Maurice Allington. These female characters never feel ashamed of having such objectionable relationships. Amis desires to strike on the issue of fallen moral standard in his times. Maurice Allington feels to enjoy two women at a time – Joyce, his wife and Diana, his girl – friend. Joyce, too, confesses that she has had a similar experience before her marriage. The institution of marriage has lost its sanctity. In Amisian novels, married characters like Jim Dixon, Margaret, John Lewis, Elizabeth, Maurice Allington, Diana maintain illicit relations. Maurice is after teenage girls. Jim Dixon, too, desires to enjoy young girls on the campus. Amis observes that in the contemporary society 'lust' has replaced the delicate 'sex'. Sexual activities have crossed all the boundaries of normality and delicacy, and they have become means of temporary enjoyment only. Maurice Allington all the time thinks of sex only. Even on the day his father dies he enjoys sex with Diana. Maurice wishes to enjoy two women at a time. Later on this plan results into a homosexual affair between Joyce and Diana. Maurice and Diana exchange kisses in the presence of

their wife and husband respectively. Joyce and Dr. Jack Maybury reply in the similar fashion. Elizabeth Gruffydd - Williams is a symbol of lust. Her dress, too, symbolizes her attitude to sex. Amis depicts the fallen standard in the academic field too. Amis spares no pains to criticize the deterioration of academic values. Prof. Welch, the Head of the Department of History, doesn't qualify for a promotion. Still he is promoted. He hasn't published even any research article. Jim Dixon, Welch's assistant, is not interested in teaching. He is after young girls only. Jim's addiction to drinking and smoking indicates the fallen standard in the field of education. Jim drinks excessively in the presence of the Principal and students. Drinking and smoking have become popular fashions in the Amisian society. Surprisingly women in this society leave men far behind in these habits. Jim Dixon, John Lewis and Maurice Allington – all drink and smoke. But Elizabeth Gruffydd – Williams is always shown drinking excessively either beer or brandy. Once she orders for forty cigarettes. *That Uncertain Feeling* satirically points out the moral degradation of the youth. The novel depicts graphically bars and clubs crowded by the youngsters. Amisian society experiences loss of faith too. Human bond seems to be totally broken. The delicate relationship between husband and wife, father and son, father and daughter, friend and friend is shown weakened. Amy Allington represents the

self – absorbed youth always busy in watching television and listening to pop records. She reacts very coldly on the death of her grandfather. Maurice Allington, too, doesn't mourn the death of his father. On the contrary, he prefers enjoying sex with Diana.

Amis's treatment to his male characters and female characters is not consistent. In *Lucky Jim* and *The Green Man* the male characters – Jim Dixon and Maurice Allington respectively are more dominant. The female characters in these two novels like Margaret, Christine, Joyce and Diana look quite subordinate. They have been used by the male characters as sex toys only. They have been also used as a stepping stone in the career advancement of the male. On the contrary, Amis portrays Elizabeth Gruffydd – Williams as a lady dominant more than John Lewis in *That Uncertain Feeling*. The female characters go to any extent to attract men. Margaret tries to commit suicide to win sympathy of Jim. Elizabeth's low – cut costume is an attempt to attract Lewis's attention. Amis shows the meek – looking Joyce and Diana stronger than Maurice in the bed – scene incident. Maurice prepares Joyce and Diana for sexual enjoyment. But, surprisingly, Joyce and Diana join hands and rebel against Maurice. Maurice is left alone as a spectator in the bed.

Amisian hero like Jim Dixon represents 'Angry Young Man'. Jim struggles against old authority and standards. He hates rules of the academic life. He looks unbothered about his daily activities. Jim is aggressive against the upper – class morality. His burning of bed and insurance policies in the house of Welch looks very odd. John Lewis of *That Uncertain Feeling* follows Jim to some extent. His child – like behaviour indicates his rebellious attitude. Both – Jim Dixon and John Lewis – represent the 'Anti – Hero' trend which becomes a very significant cause for the popularity of Amisian novels. Jim and John come from ordinary class. They lack bravery, courage and all such requisites for a hero. They look quite ordinary. And their very ordinariness is responsible for the great success of Amis.

Death is the issue Amis deals with only in *The Green Man*. The novel records a variety of deaths – death of Dr. Underhill, death of Margaret, the death of Maurice's father, and even the death of a dog, Victor. Amis gets an opportunity to note a number of views on death. Death may be an ordinary event. It may be a permanent sleep; or may be eternal awakening. Amis philosophizes death.

Two of Amisian novels – *Lucky Jim* and *That Uncertain Feeling* – have been regarded as very successful comedies. *Lucky Jim*, especially sets a new trend for comedy writing. Jim's dislike for

his subject and teaching, his hatred for his boss – Prof. Welch, his involvement with his colleagues, his habit of making faces, his addiction to drinks, his speech on 'Merrie England' all such events certainly create great laughter. The comedy goes on developing through individual traits and comic situation. John Lewis in *That Uncertain Feeling* escapes in a Welsh woman's dress. He shuts himself first in a lavatory. Then he disguises as a plumber. Such series of incident lead to the farcial effect. The dentist's mistress in *That Uncertain Feeling* is never individualized, and she is referred throughout as the dentist's mistress only. She is present in every party, and seems to be available for everyone.

Kingsley Amis seems to concern himself with presenting a sardonic vision of his own society. As a conscious satirist he desires to atack all sorts of pretensions. These three novels depict his own lifestory and also social problems of his times, and he remains successful in reflecting the mood and atmosphere of the contemporary life. Two of his novels – *Lucky Jim* and *That Uncertain Feeling* - have a rich comic texture and are extremely entertaining. ✓ *The Green Man* presents a superb mixture of sex, comedy, horror and the supernatural. Amisian heroes seem to be representatives of Amis who himself represents his own society. ✓