

BOOK REVIEW

Shukla, Suresh. *The Wobbling World of Kingsley Amis* (A Critical Study). Ahmedabad : Vishal Corporation, 2006. Price : Rs. 225.00, Pp 207.

Dr. Shukla's critical book is an exhaustive, informative and compact analysis of gamut of Kingsley Amis's novels. Amis, born in London in 1922 is a novelist, poet and critic. His views about the contemporary literary world specially the western world are quite ironical and satirical. By profession he was a Professor. He was a non believer rather a hater of God.

The book is divided into five chapters, beginning with an introduction on the making of the novelist Kingsley Amis. Chapters two, three and four are complete overhauling of almost all of Amis's novels. Without much ado the introduction gives an amalgamation of contradictory ideologies and the making of the novelist. From an angry young man to a wobbling one.

The second chapter begins with an interesting analysis of his most popular novel, *Lucky Jim*. Jim Dixon the hero of the novel is from a humble background, who rises to consequences by his uncouth intelligence. He is considered an anti-heor, he learns gradually about some of his innate good qualities. The satirical tinge about the prevailing academic atmosphere is mellowed under the garb of subtle humour. Very aptly has Dr. Shukla compared his novels with those of Fielding. Besides, he has also discussed about his other novels like *That Uncertain Feeling*, *I Like it Here*, *Take a Girl Like You* and *One Fat Englishman*. Amis's sense of the comic is, however, a complex blend and is difficult to define. At certain moments, it is touched by a peculiar kind of grimness where it merges with the sense of the grotesque; his art resembles that of Evelyn Waugh.

Chapter III entitled "The Middle Phase : An Experimental Bias" presents Amis as a more experienced writer – he is no longer a satirist of limited range as he was in *Lucky Jim*; his satire now aims at a scope which is much wider and is truly universal and it might place him in the tradition of H.G. Wells and George Orwell. In this chapter the writer has referred to five novels of Amis - *The Anti - Death League*, *I Want it Now*, *The Green Man*, *Girl, 20* and *Ending Up*. Through these novels he has brought into focus the novelist's writing style. He has also highlighted the theme of the novels.

Chapter IV entitled "The Final Phase" covers a wide range of Amis's novels. Starting with *Stanley and the Women*, the chapter ends with *Sex and Divorce in the Amisland*. Amis's novels provide documentary details of fast changing family life and social institution of the present day English society. His novels are not merely the work of imagination; they are a genuine reflection of people's mode of living.

The fifth chapter deals with the craft of Amis's writing skill. It's a thread bare study of his skill comparing and contrasting his novels with those of contemporary novelists. It is the best record of the writer's bitter - sweet experiences. The author very compassionately compares Amis to all the major English novelists. He portrays him not as a hater of contemporary life style, rather a philanthropist who loves righteousness.

Dr. Shukla's style is simple and lucid. Typographical mistakes could have been taken care of. The book bound in a humble and elegant cover could be a treasure trove for the students as well as the research scholars. The author really deserves kudos for bringing the best out of Amis's novels.

Reviewer : Dr. Sarita Veerangana, Professor and Head, Dept. of English, P.G. Centre, Gaya College, Gaya.