

Kingsley Amis:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator	Amis, Kingsley, 1922-1995
Title	Kingsley Amis Collection 1933-1968
Dates:	1933-1968
Extent	1.5 boxes (.75 linear foot)
Abstract	English author Kingsley Amis published a diverse array of works ranging from poetry to novels to literary criticism. The Amis collection contains juvenilia and draft materials from ten of the seventeen books Amis published before 1968. The collection offers extensive materials for examining Amis' methods of composition and editing.
Language	English.
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchase, 1969 (R4641)
Processed by	Bill Stingone, 1995
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Kingsley Amis (1922-1995) was the author of seventeen novels, three collections of poetry, over twenty short stories, and ten books of social or literary criticism. He was born in London to William Robert and Rosa Annie Lucas Amis. He began school at Norbury College, then attended the City of London School until 1941, when he received a scholarship to St. John's College, Oxford. At St. John's Amis met Philip Larkin; both men were studying English Literature and remained close friends throughout their lives.

In 1942, Amis was commissioned as an officer in the Royal Signal Corps. He served in the British Army for three years in France, Belgium, and West Germany. He returned to St. John's in 1945 and received his degree in 1947. Despite the rejection of his research degree thesis "English Non-Dramatic Poetry, 1850-1900 and the Victorian Reading Public," Amis was able to secure a post as lecturer in English at University College at Swansea within a year. Amis remained at Swansea for 12 years, then became a fulltime writer.

From the beginning of his career in 1947, Amis wrote and publish poetry and essays. His best known work, however, is his prose fiction. In 1954, Amis published his first novel, *Lucky Jim*, to great popular and critical acclaim. The novel earned him the Somerset Maugham award for fiction and a place in a group of young writers, which included Iris Murdoch and John Osborne, whom the critics labeled "Angry Young Men."

While Amis made his reputation with the satiric fiction of his early novels such as *Lucky Jim*, *That Uncertain Feeling* (1956), and *Take a Girl Like You* (1960), in his 48 year career Amis wrote over 40 books in a wide range of genres including mysteries, ghost stories, science fiction, social commentaries, literary studies, and memoirs.

Amis died in London on october 22, 1995.

Scope and Contents

The Kingsley Amis collection, 1933-1968, consists of typescript and holograph drafts and notes for his works. The works in the collection are arranged in chronological order, beginning with two unpublished works, an essay book written by Amis at age 11 and his rejected B. Litt. Thesis (1947), followed by material relating to ten of the seventeen books Amis published between 1954 and 1968.

The collection contains material relating to Amis works in several genres. Included are corrected typescripts of two of his satiric novels, *Lucky Jim* (1954) and *One Fat Englishman* (1963); two mysteries, *The Egyptologists* (1965) and *The Anti-Death League* (1966), and his James Bond novel *Colonel Sun* (1968). Each of these manuscripts is accompanied by notes and outlines. Other Amis titles are represented in the collection by notes and fragments. Among this material is a notebook full of notes and outlines for *Take a Girl Like You* (1960) and copious notes, lists, and drafts from his two James Bond studies: *The James Bond Dossier* (1956) and *The Book of Bond* (1965).

The collection offers extensive material for examining Amis' method of composition and editing: it reveals Amis' propensity for creating lists, outlining scenes, and taking notes on whatever scrap of paper was at hand. There is no material relating to his personal life. The collection contains only one piece of correspondence: a note dated 29 September 1968, from Anthony Hobson to Mrs. Kingsley Amis.

Index Terms

Subjects

Authors, English--20th century.

Bond, James--(Fictitious character.)

Detective and mystery stories, English.

Poetry, English--20th century.

Documents Types

First drafts.

Juvenilia.

- box 1 folder 1** Norbury College essay notebook. Corrected and graded holograph compositions, 1933-1934
- box 1 folder 2** English Non-dramatic Poetry, 1850-1900, and the Victorian Reading Public (B. Litt. Thesis). Final typescript with "some Ms notes by Ld. David Cecil, Oxford 1950"
- box 1 folder 3** *Lucky Jim* (novel, 1954). Composite notes, holograph draft fragments of opening pages, and corrected typescript draft with annotations by Amis and others, some pages missing, nd
- box 1 folder 4** *That Uncertain Feeling* (novel, 1955). Composite notes, outlines, 1952, 1953, nd
- box 1 folder 5** *Take A Girl Like You* (novel, 1960). Notebook of holograph notes and outlines, "Song of the Wanderer" on cover, and composite notes, nd
- box 1 folder 6** "All the Blood Within Me" (short story collected in *My Enemy's Enemy*, 1962)/ *One Fat Englishman* (novel, 1963). Notebook containing holograph notes for each work, nd
- box 1 folder 7** *James Bond Dossier* (book, 1965). Holograph notes, typescript fragment of Preface, and corrected typescript draft with extensive holograph additions and passages from Bond novels taped in, nd

***The Egyptologists* (novel, 1965).**

Notes, corrected typescript of contents, corrected typescript fragment, and corrected
holograph fragment, nd

**box 1
folder
8**

Corrected typescript of late draft, nd

pp. 1-116

box 1 folder 9

pp. 117-220

folder 10

box 1 folder 11 *Book of Bond; or Every Man His Own 007* (book, published under pseudonym `Lt. Col. William ("Bill") Tanner, 1965). Composite notes and outlines, typescript photocopy of Forward, and corrected and annotated typescript fragments of each chapter, nd

box 2 folder 1-2 *Anti-Death League* (novel, 1966). Composite fragments, and corrected typescript draft, nd

***Colonel Sun: A James Bond Adventure* (novel published under pseudonym Robert Markham, 1968).**

Pre-publication criticism of "Dragon Island" by unidentified authors, and holograph notes, nd

box 2
folder
3

Corrected typescript draft with holograph inserts, nd

folder 4