

# **The Angry young men protest against the English society of 1950's in Kingsley Amis and John Braine's work**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Protest Rozhněvaných mladých mužů proti anglické společnosti 50. let v dílech Kingsleyho Amise a Johna Brainea.

Klíčová slova: protest, místo nahoře, bohatství, láska, John Braine, Kingsley Amis

Tato práce se zabývá protestem generace Rozhněvaných mladých mužů v Anglii proti konzumní společnosti, zvráceným hodnotám bohatých lidí a jejich vlastnostem. V práci je možné vidět vlastnosti jako snobismus, naivitu, pokrytectví nebo závist. Ze všeho nejdříve jsou zde ovšem charakterizovány rozdíly a společné vlastnosti Rozhněvaných mladých mužů v Anglii a Beatnické generace ve Spojených státech amerických.

Další část zahrnuje krátké popisy knih vybraných k analýze. Předposlední a nejrozsáhlejší sekce se zaměřuje na rozbor protestu proti anglické společnosti 50. let. Tento protest je ukázán na analýze hlavních postav vybraných knih. Poslední část práce je shrnutí, které poukazuje na ty nejdůležitější touhy a zklamání hlavních hrdinů na jejich dlouhé a nesnadné cestě za místem nahoře.

## **ABSTRACT**

The Angry young men protest against the English society of 1950's in Kingsley Amis and John Braine's work.

Keywords: protest, room at the top, wealth, love, John Braine, Kingsley Amis

The work deals with a protest of angry young men generation in England against a consumption society, rich people unnatural values and their features. There can be seen characters such as snobbism, naivety, hypocrisy and envy in the work. First of all, the work analyses the differences and connections between Angry young men in England and Beat generation in USA.

The next part includes short descriptions of the books chosen to analyze. The last but one section of the work aims at the analysis of the protest against English society of 1950's. This protest is shown on the analysis of the main characters of the selected books. The final part of the work is a summary which resumes the most important desires and disillusion of the main characters uneasy journey to the room at the top.

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**DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and certify that any secondary material used has been acknowledged in the text and listed in the bibliography.

February 10, 2009

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## **CONTENTS**

<b>I</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>1 COMPARISON OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANGRY YOUNG MEN AND BEAT GENERATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANGRY YOUNG MEN</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEAT GENERATION</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>IV</b>	<b>2 THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROTEST IN JOHN BRAINE'S WORK: ROOM AT THE TOP, LIFE AT THE TOP.</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>JOHN BRAINE: ROOM AT THE TOP – A DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY.</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>2.1.1</b>	John Braine: Room at the Top – analysis of main characters of the story.....	15
<b>2.2</b>	<b>JOHN BRAINE: LIFE AT THE TOP – A DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY.</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>2.2.1</b>	John Braine: Life at the Top – analysis of main characters of the story.....	23
<b>V</b>	<b>3 THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROTEST IN KINGSLEY AMIS' WORK: LUCKY JIM AND I WANT IT NOW.</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>KINGSLEY AMIS: LUCKY JIM – A DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY.</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>3.1.1</b>	Kingsley Amis: Lucky Jim – analysis of main characters of the story.....	30
<b>3.2</b>	<b>KINGSLEY AMIS: I WANT IT NOW – A DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY.</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>3.2.1</b>	Kingsley Amis: I Want It Now – analysis of main characters of the story.....	35
<b>VI</b>	<b>4 SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>VII</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>VIII</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>44</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The topic of my bachelor thesis - The Angry young men protest against the English society of 1950's in Kingsley Amis and John Braine's work – is very attractive for me. I chose this topic, as I am interested in the period of Angry young men generation and I wanted to reveal and analyze what they desire for and what features characterize them.

The main aim of this work is to analyze the protest of the young men with great ideals against the sick values of the English society of 1950's. The thesis is especially based on the analysis of characters, their development through the stories and awakening of the right values after some disillusionments. The features and behavior of the characters show their way of the protest. The analysis of their behavior allows a deeper look into a reason why and against what they are protesting.

Concerning the literature that was used to support and develop the bachelor thesis, the books by John Braine and Kingsley Amis were used to draw from as well as the literature books to describe and analyze the differences and connections between the generation of Angry young men in Great Britain and the Beat generation in USA.

The thesis is structured into several parts. The first one includes the description of facts about Angry young men and analysis of the protest against the society of 1950's. Astute readers can also read a comparison of Angry young men with Beat generation, their distinctions and common features.

The second and biggest part of the thesis consists of the short descriptions of the stories of selected books and analysis of the young men protest against English society. The final part is a summary of the main characters feelings, problems, desires and wishes; development of their personalities.

# 1 COMPARISON OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANGRY YOUNG MEN AND BEAT GENERATION

## 1.1 The philosophy of the angry young men

The angry young men are a group of writers that originated in Great Britain in 1950's. One of the main ideas connecting these authors as a group was protest against the values of conventional and consumption society in England in the period in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Writers included in this generation were mostly coming from lower class in English society and their resentment was aimed mainly against the upper class, which they scorned.

On the contrary, due to the reason, their mind and way of living were deeply rooted in the life of lower classes; these angry young men secretly admired and envied the young nouveau riches. The main character appearing in their work is a young and intelligent man, very often educated at a university. Despite his education and intelligence, this young man is predetermined to the life in poverty, due to the roots he comes from.

He knows he will never be able to reach extreme wealth, however he rejects to come to terms with his determined fate. The only and easiest way out of such unhappy destiny appears in a marriage with a young pretty girl from the upper class even though from the beginning the aspect of calculation predominates above the aspect of love.

According to Prokop<sup>1</sup> the young man refuses to become one of the successful careerist within English society and tries to fight against its worst values represented mainly by careerism, hypocrisy and false morality by his own available means. Common trait of their lives is that at the end they accept exactly the same values of society they were criticizing and rejecting. Their desire to become members of the life of upper class is so extremely powerful that they are willing to forget and throw away all the values they admired till this time. Moreover, the angry young men do so without any pricks of conscience.

In comparison to Beat generation in USA, where the protest appears in much stronger way including experiments with sex and drugs, angry young men seems conventional even when protesting against consumption society in England. They still stay within the possible ethical borders given by common way of living in their society.

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimír Prokop, *Přehled světové literatury 20. století*, (Sokolov: O. K. – Soft, 2003), 36.

In the end, they always succumb and forgo own vital ideals such as morality, fight for truth and serene conscience. According to Prokop<sup>2</sup> there was no need to express the protest too extremely, as Great Britain has been known as puritan and chaste since the Victorian era in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At the beginning, the main characters have and really feel the strong intention to protest, however, in the end, broken by the vision of power and money; they surrender and join the nouveau riches way of living they disapproved before.

It is possible to say that the angry young men were representing heartless social criticism and protest against the consumption behavior of English society of 1950's. Their frankness, which appeared through their work, was often completed by colloquial speech that together created the impression of veracity.

## 1.2 The philosophy of Beat generation

Beat generation was an artistic and literary movement of one generation mainly in USA in 1950's. We can notice it was in the same time as the movement of Angry young men in Great Britain. As well as Angry young men, Beat generation was protesting against the consumption way of living in USA.

However, their revolt proceeded in much stronger way. The vital difference, when comparing Angry young men and Beat generation, could be seen in their behavior and attitude to the protest. In the opposite to the way of protest in Great Britain, Beatniks never surrendered their ideals due to the vision of money or power as Angry young men did. They strongly rejected to be somehow classed in society.

They mocked the cults of traditional conception of families or wealth as an instrument to reach power. This attitude toward society was their main goal to fulfill. They did not perceive the world around them and did not care of what other people thought about them. Beatniks had two terms, which distinguished them and the consumption society – hipsters and squares. They belonged to hipsters, people, who rejected to be part of an ordinary society with their conventional values.

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<sup>2</sup> Vladimír Prokop, *Přehled světové literatury 20. století*, (Sokolov: O. K. – Soft, 2003), 36.

On the contrary, squares were the normal people living under the ethical rules given by society. This difference can be seen on many factors that distinguished members of Beat generation of the ordinary people. They extremely desired for freedom at all levels of their lives.

According to Prokop<sup>3</sup> looking for inner freedom led them to commit eccentricities, which developed into shocking style of clothes or, on the other hand, rejection of any care of appearance. Beards and long hair were also characteristic signs that marked members of Beat generation.

Another sign of rejection of conventional society was professing eastern religious ideals, when the most favorite religion among them became Zen Buddhism. To the anarchistic way of expressing themselves and separating from society belonged mainly extreme using of various kinds of drugs and alcohol.

However, to justify them, these young men were both rebels and writers, who tried to find the proper way, how to put their literary work to the public. One of the ways became jazz music that accompanied their general public reading of their poetry.

It is necessary to mention that in expressing dissatisfaction with conventional and consumption society in USA, the attitude and courage of Beat generation writers were much bigger in comparison to the expression of Angry young men. This was also one of the main reasons, why their work was not accepted in a proper way.

Some writers were even prohibited to be published. Probably just this extreme rejection of some literary authors of Beat generation brought them later such immense popularity not only within USA, but also in Europe.

Beat generation was one of the strongest factors that influenced origins of the later movement called hippies, which was noted for a wandering life, experiments with drugs and also strange style of clothing, long hair and beards.

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<sup>3</sup> Vladimír Prokop, *Přehled světové literatury 20. století*, (Sokolov: O. K. – Soft, 2003), 36.

## **2 THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROTEST IN JOHN BRAINE'S WORK: ROOM AT THE TOP, LIFE AT THE TOP.**

### **2.1 John Braine: *Room at the Top* – a description of the story.**

Through the whole story we are accompanied by Joe Lampton, a poor young man from North-England Dufton who moves to rich Warley due to a better job. From the first moment he comes to the big city, he is fascinated by every little detail that seems so different from his hometown. The cleanness of the environment, freedom of the festivities and non-punishable luxury was surrounding him from all sides. The more he compares every aspect of luxurious Warley to dirty Dufton, the less understandable it seems to him, how he could ever bear such life. Joe moves in the house of Thompson family, where he almost immediately domesticates and gets into close contact mainly with Mrs. Thompson, whom he strongly commemorates her dead son.

During one visit of Mrs. Thompson friends, Joe is introduced to the young couple Eve and Bob Storrs - who take him to the theatre. There he meets Susan Brown, a pretty young girl from upper classes, who he immediately falls in love with. However, she is in a relationship with Jack Wales, a very rich man Susan knows from childhood. Their relationship appears more like friends than real lovers.

At one rehearsal at the theatre, Joe meets Alice Aisgill, an older woman unhappily married to George Aisgill. Their relationship gradually grows from friendship to extremely passionate and true love. Joe continues in relationship both with young, innocent Susan and older, experienced Alice. Susan means for him vision of luxurious life, perfect young beauty, and an innocent toy with strictly given borders regarding sex. What he cannot get with Susan, he finds at Alice. She is for him a symbol of an independent adult woman, natural love without any inhibitions.

As he falls madly in love with Alice, Joe keeps his relationship with Susan only due to calculation. However, Susan discloses his affair with Alice and parts from him. Joe sends Susan a love-letter to retrieve her and she forgives him everything. During one tiff Joe ravishes Susan and promises her that he will split with Alice. He really does so. Short time after that, Susan's father communicates Joe that his daughter is pregnant and offers him a good job in his company. Joe confesses to his love to Susan and wants to marry her.

Afterwards, drunken Alice dies in a car crash. Shocked Joe blames himself for her death and drinks heavily. Lying drunk on a pavement, he is saved by his friends, Eve and Bob Storrs. Joe, desperately thinking of dead Alice, keeps repeating he caused her death. Eve consoles him that this is the best way it could end and that anybody blames him for nothing. Joe suddenly horrifies to realize that very that is the worst tragedy.

### 2.1.1 John Braine: *Room at the Top* – analysis of main characters of the story.

#### Joe Lampton

Joe Lampton is a poor young man from a small dirty town Dufton moving to a city. He perceives it as a chance to start a new and better life far from his hometown. Joe desperately covets for emancipation from the life of the low social class he lives in and to become one of the members of high society.

When he can see personification of everything that wealth meant for him, Joe frankly admits to envy, which was souring inside him, and to poignant desire to be rich. In his first monologues, there appear no considerations, why someone is rich and someone poor. Joe even characterizes himself as a man, who does not like abstract thinking.

A few times, he emphasizes that he wants to be rich and that he even considers it to be his right. However, how to achieve it Joe does not know by that time. When Susan appears, Joe does not know she is wealthy. He perceives her as a girl that is nice according to conventions; she is very young and innocent.

Up to the allusion that Susan is a very rich girl, Joe reacts in this manner: “I always go straight for what I want.”<sup>4</sup> “All right, I muttered to myself childishly, I’ll pinch your woman, Wales, and all your money won’t stop me...”<sup>5</sup> According to the sentence, the primary motivation was to humiliate somebody, who has money.

Susan was a princess according to Joe and he characterized himself like a swine-herd. Male vanity came to the surface. He just wanted to finish the fairy tale. When he firstly has a rendezvous with Susan, there wits his feeling that he leads over Jack, whom he takes over Susan. When meeting Susan, Joe is aware he lies to her. He just pretends, their interests agree.

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<sup>4</sup> John Braine, *Room at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1959), 42.

<sup>5</sup> Braine, *Room at the Top*, 56.

For the first time, a topic of war appears between them. It is intriguing, how war is assessed by Susan and on the contrary, how Joe evaluates it. Susan says that her daddy worked awfully hard at the factory and that sometimes even stayed up all night.

Joe comments it, but only for himself. His internal monologue shows evidence of that he is capable of judgement: “The rich always had the most fun during the war. They had the double pleasure of influencing the course of events and making themselves still richer.”

6

One of Joe’s significant traits of character was the ability to create secret and funny formulas to ridicule when thinking of Dufton’s councilors and chief officials. He compared them to zombies. “And there was the Washable Zombie, the grocery manager who was always talking about baths, and the Smiling Zombie, who ran a clothing club and a moneylender’s.”<sup>7</sup>

This example shows, on one side Joe hated the way of living of these highly positioned men, however, on the other side, he was envious about it. He knew he does not want to live such pre-planned life of carrier advance with scanty possibilities to buy what you really wish. He desired for something much better, not just to embed in dirty small Dufton only to speak and do exactly the same things every dull day.

Joe’s main desire and wish was to gain absolute freedom in financial field and he strongly realized that no lucid career is waiting for him in Dufton. The easiest possible way how to reach it appeared in marrying a sufficiently rich girl.

His envy, hatred and desperation result from sentences like these: “The salary which I had been so pleased about, an increase from Grade Ten to Grade Nine would seem a pittance to him. The suit in which I fancied myself so much – my best suit – would seem too cheap and nasty to him. He wouldn’t have a best suit; all his clothes would be the best.”

8

Joe envies the man his wealth, he perceives it as huge injustice that he has to work hard to earn quite satisfying amount of money, and this young man can have everything he

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<sup>6</sup> John Braine, *Room at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1959), 76.

<sup>7</sup> Braine, *Room at the Top*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Braine, *Room at the Top*, 29.



desires for immediately. He hates him, because he knows, he will never be able to reach his role, which allows behaving belittlingly resulting from the consciousness of being rich.

Joe suddenly realizes, he hates the young rich man and feels strong envy to be on his place. He knows it can never happen when working as an accountant and hoping for the best, which seems to be promotion after some time in his function with some more money. And these visions are not satisfying at all for him.

Simultaneously with these traits of character, Joe shows really extreme ambition as to his career. Although he comes from poor family and his parents could not indulge him a comfortable life in luxury, he does not resign due to the worse conditions he had to come through because of lack of money. On the contrary, he studies hard and increases his expertise to raise on the imaginary ladder at his career as an accountant.

This is one of the main points by which Joe varies from the young rich men and women who have never had to attempt to earn money to survive. That is the reason, why he hates and envies them as well as he feels respect and admiration before money and power. These feelings mix inside him and force him to think of possible ways how to get into their world of money, how to become an effectual member of the society of wealthy egoistic but powerful people.

Another feature of his character turns to cynicism. This is very obvious as Joe and his friend create the grading scheme for women called The Lampton-Lufford Report on Love, where women are treated as goods traded between men according to men's amount of money and women's face and body qualities. "I remember that a Grade One woman gave one such a marvelous time in bed that it was just as well that all Grade One husbands had inherited fortunes because they couldn't possibly have had any strength to spare for earning money."<sup>9</sup>

Their rules for making pairs between a rich man and a pretty woman, poor man and a bearable woman as to face and body, reveal a cynic feature of their characters. It generally comes from results of his research that women are attracted by money and that is the unarguable advantage of rich men that they can choose the prettiest pieces.

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<sup>9</sup> John Braine, *Room at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1959), 36.

This kind of cynicism Joe also nonconsciously uses when he firstly meets Susan. Estimating her bodily qualities, Joe posts her into the most prestigious category women – Grade One.

His consciousness that he does not belong to the same category as she does makes him jealousy to Jack Wales, who owns all the needed qualities to gain a woman like Susan.

“Susan was a princess and I was the equivalent of a swineherd.”<sup>10</sup> Joe is sorely aware of the fact that he has no or really miserable chance to gain her. However, just this consciousness of own pettiness is the main driving power for him, as to male vanity between him and Jack. So firstly, Susan means for Joe an object of his calculation.

Joe is absolutely sure about his success as to women, so he does not doubt, also Susan will definitely fall for him. His absolute certainty about his irresistibility by women results from the feeling of win over Jack Wales, when dating with Susan. “I was undecided as to which to taste first; the plain dark chocolate of going out with a pretty girl, the Turkish Delight of vanity, the sweet smooth milk of love, the flavour of power, of being one up on Jack Wales, perhaps the most attractive of all, strong as rum.”<sup>11</sup>

Joe is used to great success by women of all categories for his whole life. He is aware of being very attractive for women, who immediately fall for his magic and he does not have to make an effort about some of them. That is the reason why he is absolutely sure; he can have every woman, even the one, who is far from his financial possibilities as Susan Brown, according to the grading scheme he worked out with his friend.

On the contrary, when meeting Alice, for the first time, he is put out of countenance, how come his magic does not touch her at all. Firstly, this can be the most significant reason, why he begins to make some effort; to check if his attractivity is still working.

### **Susan Brown**

Susan Brown, a beautiful daughter of a wealthy businessman, is a naive, quite shy, inexperienced and a well-behaved girl often showing really childish behavior. Her naivety is rooted in comfort and carelessness of the life in luxury; she was involved in all her life.

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<sup>10</sup> John Braine, *Room at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1959), 58.

<sup>11</sup> Braine, *Room at the Top*, 70.

Susan characterizes herself this way: “I am just nineteen. I haven’t learned anything to do. Usually I can get what I want.” Joe’s internal commentary sounds like that: “Why Susan should be different, when she is still lucky in her life. She did not experience, what are a chilled bedroom and a musty living room.

Joe is equally frankly also when he says that as soon as it ceased to be new with Susan, it started to be tedious. Susan is more active, she writes a letter to Joe, she requires Joe never more to meet Alice. Alice is in a hospital. When Susan expresses unflatteringly about Alice, Joe slaps her.

It is interesting that after that Susan agrees with Joe’s suggestion to tell Alice about breaking-up after she will be home from the hospital. A pampered young lady gets a first tough lesson that takes effect.

### **Alice Aisgill**

Alice Aisgill is an older woman unhappily married to a rich businessman Jack Aisgill. She does not expect from her life any changes but when she meets Joe, a young charming man, Alice gradually changes her opinion and her friendship with Joe quickly turns to an affair.

“I could tell her everything and be sure that she’d understand.”<sup>12</sup> What a difference it is, on the contrary, when Joe alludes to Susan! Even a little smear on her tooth gave Joe feeling of affinity, which he missed by Susan. Alice loved him, however, on the contrary, she was also strict to him: “You make a great to – do about your humble beginnings, but you’ve never gone hungry.”<sup>13</sup>

How Alice is frank to Joe, we can recognize according to her confession. Alice tells to Joe: “I love you, I love you like a woman. I’d die for you.”<sup>14</sup> Alice knew Joe goes out with Susan; however, she was sure she is able to keep him to stay with her. Alice was convinced that Susan is not going to marry Joe. She settled for waiting.

The deeper Alice’s certainty about Joe staying with her was and longer the waiting for him became, the deeper her desperation started to be.

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<sup>12</sup> John Braine, *Room at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1959), 77.

<sup>13</sup> Braine, *Room at the Top*, 118.

<sup>14</sup> Braine, *Room at the Top*, 180.

Alice absolutely did not doubt Joe must break up with childish and naive Susan. When she realized Joe does not desire for her anymore, she fell to incontrollable apathy.

Walking out with two women did damn well to Joe's vanity. He was a married woman lover as well as he walked out with a daughter of one of the richest man in Warley. According to him, there existed nothing he would not achieve. While all this, Joe realized very well that with Alice, there begins something real, something bigger than he was able to manage.

In the end, he got even scared of such strong feeling. An unusual thing was that age difference was not the decisive factor. When Alice decides to commit a suicide, Joe feels responsible for her death. He cries.

Joe assesses himself after ten years, when he looks back behind his immature life. He does not want to change with former Joe; he realizes that over all the negatives he was a better man before these years than he is now as a refined guy. He quotes Alice, who once told him he is alive, immediate and human.

Joe perceives that nowadays, she could not say that. Poignant desire fulfilled Joe. He desired for the life at the top and how he succeeded in it, the second part of the book tells.

Above readers can find and read the most crucial motives that led Joe on his way. The author of the book describes the main character both directly and by internal monologues. Both women are necessary in his life. Look at them tells the story also about him.

It is a common thing that every man desires for something he does not have. We do not live in vacuum; we are looking for our room. Joe was looking for a room at the top and we were looking for it with him.

### **Mr. Brown**

Mr. Brown is an old rich businessman. With his authoritativeness, self-confidence and decisiveness in behavior, resulting from his success in business, he firmly leads not only his own company but also takes control of his whole family lives.

Due to the fact, that he is a wealthy and powerful man, he is well respected by people around him. Mr. Brown is used to a luxurious, comfortable life and that when he needs something, everybody immediately fulfills his wishes. He is also used to manage the lives of his family, even though the members of the family are already adult and independent.

Mr. Brown also enjoys testing people, plays with them a little bit, which can be seen on the example of Joe Lampton. He tests Joe's love to his daughter Susan. He promises

Joe, he can make him a very rich man, however only if Joe never meets Susan. Joe's reaction: "If you were a younger man, I'd knock you down, by God, I would!"<sup>15</sup>

Susan's father reaction: "Wanted to see what you were made of."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> John Braine, *Room at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1959), 207.

<sup>16</sup> Braine, *Room at the Top*, 209.

## 2.2 John Braine: *Life at the Top* – a description of the story.

Life at the Top is a free instalment of a previous book Room at the Top. In this story author introduces readers into the life of young Lampton family. Joe and Susan have already two children – ten year-old Harry and four year-old Barbara. Due to the profitable job in his father-law's steel company Joe enjoys the life in luxury that he desired for his whole life.

He and his family live in a big luxurious house in Warley. Joe really enjoys all the things that belong to such comfortable life. He meliorates his own house, yearly chooses and buys new modern furniture and wears only high quality clothes.

After Joe is sent to London to negotiate a big order and he successes, Mr. Brown starts to respect him. However, Joe and Susan often argue about Joe's work that he spends there most of his time. His father-law introduces him to a journalist Nora Hauxley, writing an article about him. Joe is impressed by her and starts thinking of her.

After he returns home from one business trip in London, he detects his wife making love with his friend Mark. Susan reveals him that their relationship lasts for a few months and compares him to Mark that he was always helpful, listening to her needs and wishes and was not still thinking of Alice. Joe realizes that she is right.

Due to their children, his loved little Barbara and ten-year old Harry, Joe and Susan decide to stay together. After one of their quarrels, Joe visits Nora Huxley in her flat and spends a night with her. They become lovers. He announces to Susan that he is going to leave Warley and wants to divorce with her. Afterwards, Susan reveals Joe that his loved little Barbara is not his own child but his friend Mark.

They quarrel over that for a while but after some time, they reconcile and Joe leaves for London to Nora. Seemingly, Joe should feel happy, however often he remembers his little Barbara and regrets that decision.

When his son Harry needs him, Joe returns to Warley, reconciles with Susan and realizes that this is his real home for the rest of his life.

### 2.2.1 John Braine: *Life at the Top* – analysis of main characters of the story.

#### Joe Lampton

In the second part of the book, Joe has already a family – four-year old Barbara and ten-year old Harry. When Joe realizes, he loves his little Barbara much more than Harry, he feels ashamed: “Thinking of him eating his breakfast alone in the kitchen here, I felt obscurely that somehow I had failed him; I should have been with him.”<sup>17</sup>

Joe also works at his father-in-law’s company. He has a big house, a wonderful wife; however, he does not feel satisfied. From time to time, he remembers his old life. Although he did not have enough money, he managed his life himself. However, Joe is very successful doing business for his father-in-law, he feels, he does not respect him, even as a husband of his daughter Susan.

When his father-in-law wants Joe to become a councilor, Joe thinks of it when driving home: “For ten years now this drive home had been an escape, every inch nearer to Warley had been a farther distance between me and my father-in-law’s world.”<sup>18</sup>

Joe feels he would lose even the rest of freedom which distanced him from his father-in-law, if he took the offer to become a member of Council. He knew he would be forced to meet Susan’s father not only at work, but also at various parties that related to one of duties of being a councilor.

His own house was his castle, where Mr. Brown had no power over him. In contrast to his job where Joe felt he is treated still as that poor accountant he was, before he started to work for Susan’s father company. In own house, Joe felt happy, free, safe and mainly far from his father-in-law’s perpetual supervision and valuation.

Sometimes Joe remembers Alice and this memory always hurts him. Immediately afterwards he realizes, Alice is dead and he is married to a wonderful Susan, they have two nice children and suddenly he feels better.

After Joe successfully arranges a big order with a significant customer, he feels great satisfaction and is proud of himself that he, an accountant, did well in something that other much better experienced, did not.

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<sup>17</sup> John Braine, *Life at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1965), 13.

<sup>18</sup> Braine, *Life at the Top*, 32.

Joe is much more self-confident when dealing with his father-in-law, because he realizes very well, he did a really good job and helped a lot to Mr. Brown's company. With a feeling of satisfaction, Joe is well aware of the fact that the roles changed and his father-in-law is the one who has to be grateful for something now. Joe gradually comes to the point, when he can buy or have everything he suddenly desires for.

It could seem that it is exactly what he ever wanted since he was the accountant in Dufton. For Joe, it is incomprehensible and bewildering paradox that he realizes, this is the situation he was always dreaming about and that now he should be happy. However, something is wrong. Neither satisfaction nor feeling of happiness appears. Joe feels circumvented and disbelieves this is what he desired for whole his life.

He realizes, he wants much more and that the possibility to own and buy what he just sighs is not enough for him. Joe requires more. His attitude expresses the image like this: "I wanted power, power to put through my own ideas, I wanted to be taken more seriously, I wanted to be something more than the boss's son in law."<sup>19</sup>

Joe knows very well, he cannot oppose his father-in-law; otherwise he could stay without the job very quickly. Sometimes Joe realizes, he does not feel naturally in the role of a big businessman and feels uncomfortable especially when facing with rich men. He still did not use to the fact that he is one of them and has the same right to be respected as a member of their society as well as they do.

Joe's thoughts about it prove sentences like these: "There was no good reason to be frightened; I was a respectable and responsible citizen, father of two children, candidate for the St. Clair Ward, returning from a successful business trip. I had as much right to be here as anyone else; why did I feel out of place?"<sup>20</sup>

When Joe talks to his father-in-law in Conservative Club bar, he watches all the successful businessmen sitting around him and realizes he is becoming one of them in the negative way. He conforms own personal life to his job. Family, interests, own opinions.

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<sup>19</sup> John Braine, *Life at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1965), 51.

<sup>20</sup> Braine, *Life at the Top*, 66.



“It was all settled; I had taken what I wanted, and now I was paying the first instalment.”<sup>21</sup> Once Joe returns earlier from a business trip in London, he catches Susan and Mark in his own house making love. Firstly, he feels shocked. He cannot believe it. After some time, everything then appears clear to him like a blue sky; for example her exaggerated reaction on the thrown bottle-scent.

When Joe gradually starts to be angry and blames Susan for her betrayal, she tries to defend herself and reproaches him that he still thinks of Alice. Joe strongly rejects it, however, in secret, he realizes, she is right and feels ashamed as if he was the one, who betrayed her before a few minutes in his own bed.

Thinking of his children, Joe suddenly feels, he likes his little Barbara much more than Harry and blames himself for that. Sitting in his room and looking at the poor equipment of it, he does not understand how he could neglect Harry in such a way.

After Susan betrays him with Mark, Joe drives across Warley and surprisingly realizes that he does not care about it. The only person he ever took care about was dead. Joe expresses his thoughts in this way: “I had never hoped for much from people, except one, and now she was dead.”<sup>22</sup> An attentive reader can recognize, Joe is thinking of Alice here.

### **Susan Lampton**

In this second part of the book, Susan is already a married woman. She is no longer the naive, confident girl as she used to be ten years ago. However, how Joe bitterly realizes, Susan was brought up in a world of luxury and got used to it. From this upbringing, therefore, comes her confirmed persuasion that everybody is here just to serve her and everything is made for her pleasure.

She got used to a certain high level of living and the same one expects from her husband. Susan, living her whole life surrounded by luxury, is probably not aware of such behavior, and Joe realizes he cannot resent it to her. Sometimes, though, her selfishness in everyday trifles excites him.

On the way at one of Browns parties, a bottle of scent is dropped to the floor of the car. Susan’s reaction seems quite illogical to Joe, because he still does not suspect her love

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<sup>21</sup> John Braine, *Life at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1965), 73.

<sup>22</sup> Braine, *Life at the Top*, 170.

affair with his friend Mark. That is the reason, why he laughs to her exaggerated reaction on the accident. After this accident Susan sobs: “I don’t like it,” she said. “It’s horrid. I don’t want it any more.”<sup>23</sup>

She realizes her infidelity is not fair to Joe at all and feels ashamed for her behavior. She compares the spilled bottle scent to her affair with Mark. She knows it does not work; it does not satisfy her anymore. Mark is not the man she wants to be with, as she loves her husband and regrets it. Joe laughs to such exaggerated reaction, as he thinks, she cries due to the spilled bottle scent.

### **Mr. Brown**

He strongly feels that his fatherlike duty is to manage and intervene into his daughter’s life. He perceives it as his parental right, as he does not respect Joe as a rightful husband he imagined for his beloved daughter. Joe did not bring to their marriage any money; he just set Susan in pregnancy.

He is a successful leader of his big company, however, he is an older man and he does not manage to adapt to the requirements of a quickly changing business world. His strong standpattism expresses when Joe tries to enforce installing computers into the company and his father-in-law resists it. He got used to a certain system of his work and feels surely in it. Being older, it seems very hard for him to adapt to new changes.

Mr. Brown has a great experience with leading his big company; however, nowadays his methods, which were innovative twenty years ago, are quite obsolete. His obscurantism and dourness can be seen in sentences like these: “Programming. Why the hell don’t they call it planning? However, they’re the people to do it, and they’re the people who will do it. But they’re not getting five thousand pounds out of us.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Mr. and Mrs. Brown**

A pretty example of snobbery resulting from Browns wealth and the advantage to behave in this way is this Joe’s train of thought about Sunday parties at Browns: “It was a convenient way of working off social obligations and at the same time was a sort of screening process; if you were invited to a Sunday morning sherry party it didn’t

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<sup>23</sup> John Braine, *Life at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1965), 92.

<sup>24</sup> Braine, *Life at the Top*, 201.

necessarily mean that you'd be invited to dinner, but if you hadn't been invited to a Sunday morning sherry party then it meant that you didn't exist as far as the Browns were concerned.”<sup>25</sup>

From this sentence results their frivolousness and strong focus on money and power. They divided people in Warley on the significant ones, therefore the invited, and those, who were not even worthy the invitation to the party.

### **Norah Hauxley**

Norah represents for Joe uncommon beauty, she seems to him as something unattainable. Firstly, Joe thinks she ignores him that he is not attractive enough for her even to look at him. Joe is convinced; she only plays with him as a cat with her mouse. On the other side, Norah realizes, Joe is a married man, respects that and behaves to him rather restrainedly.

When Joe can see Norah with her boyfriend, he feels pretty jealousy of him. However, he assures himself, he can see her, whenever he will wish and feels also strange certainty that Norah remembers him. Nevertheless, Joe's state of mind appears rather like a desperate wish than confirmed sureness: “And I would be in her mind; we remember those we disagree with rather than those with whom we're in perfect accord.”<sup>26</sup>

After Joe finally made himself out that Norah desires for him, like a hunter who got a resisting prey, he felt relief. He retrieved his self-confidence, sense of being attractive, that women still desire for him. His injured vanity got great satisfaction. Joe realized that he is even able to talk to Susan as if no affair between her and Mark had happened before.

Norah meant a big challenge for Joe. He desperately needed to prove himself that he is still able to lead women into temptation. He wished to raise his humbled self-confidence. Therefore, Norah's pride and inaccessibility was exactly what he was looking for.

Norah really thinks, she can help Joe by getting him a job after he left his father-in-law's company. She arranges him a meeting with potential employers. However, Joe strongly feels that he does not want anyone to organize his life. He perceives Norah's help as effort to control him. Therefore, Joe goes away from her then it is too late.

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<sup>25</sup> John Braine, *Life at the Top*, (Aylesbury Bucks: Penguin Books, 1965), 90.

<sup>26</sup> Braine, *Life at the Top*, 126.

Wedded monotony constrained Joe already for long time. When he met Norah, she became a welcomed diversification, flow of fresh air to his stereotypical way of living. She meant for him a kind of excitement and adventure, however it has never been love from Joe's side, even though he tried to convince about his love Norah and finally himself.

Even if he would finally fall in love with her, it is necessary to realize that Joe got used to certain comfort in his life, which ensured him working at the prestigious position in Susan's father company. Joe was well aware of the fact that by leaving Susan and going out together with Norah would definitely cause a loss of all the luxurious things he got used to, but mainly his loved little Barbara. Finally, Joe realized, he would not be willing to lose neither the comfort nor his children and returned home.

The only thing Joe desired for all his life was to become one the rich people he both admired and hated. When he succeeded and got to the top due to his marriage with Susan, he recognized, it is not exactly, what he expected. He realizes that run for more and more money cannot satisfy him, however there is no way back. Once he got used to a comfortable life and he does not want to return.

After Joe experienced, what exactly life at the top is about, found out that he does not want to become one of the unbelievably wealthy men, who just screw people for money and desire for power.

Readers can watch the development of the main character as the story evolves. How money and power are able to change human personality and mainly in which way the main character is able to take care of such sudden change in his life and fulfillment of his lifelong desire.

The author of the book stands Joe in front of difficult situations, when he is forced to select priorities and we can concede, Joe tried to retain his humanity and finally always decided in benefit of his family.

### 3 THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROTEST IN KINGSLEY AMIS' WORK: LUCKY JIM, I WANT IT NOW.

#### 3.1 Kingsley Amis: *Lucky Jim* – a description of the story.

At the beginning of the story, we meet Jim Dixon, a history teacher in discussion with a professor Welch, his senior. Gradually, the author introduces readers Jim's relationship with Margaret, who is also a teacher. They get to know each other better after Margaret tries to commit suicide due to unhappy love. Margaret starts to feel liking for Jim, however, he is not sure about his feelings to her.

At one party organized by Professor Welch, Dixon is introduced to Welch's son Bertrand and his girlfriend Christine Callaghan. Jim is immediately charmed by her and compares her to Margaret – small, spectacled, cheaply dressed and realizes that girls like Christine are hard to get for him.

Firstly, Christine ignores him, however, when they meet at a university ball, they become acquainted more. After Jim takes her home by taxi, they kiss. They settle on the next rendezvous. Bertrand somehow finds it out and threatens Jim to let Christine be. On the rendezvous, both make understood to end their affair, Jim also due to Margaret, because he feels guilty, she frets over him.

However, Jim still desires for Christine and wants to get her back. After one unsuccessful lecture at the university, Welch suggests Dixon to give notice. Within few days, one famous artist, who visited his lecture, offers him a job. By chance, it is the job that Bertrand desired for long time. Jim is thrilled until he realizes that Bertrand is the man, who goes out with Christine.

Meanwhile, Jim Dixon meets Margaret's previous acquaintance and finds out that Margaret emotionally extorted both of them in the same time and decides to free of her. When Christine learns, her boyfriend Bertrand deceives her, she disperses with him and before going to London, she wants to see Jim for the last time.

When they come together at the station, each other explain what happened. After meeting whole Welch family by the sweetshop, Jim realizes, he is the winner of all prizes and beside Christine, he is leaving.

### 3.1.1 Kingsley Amis: *Lucky Jim* – analysis of main characters of the story.

#### **Jim Dixon**

Dixon is a young history teacher. He teaches under Professor Welch supervision. He tries to make an impression on him, as he decides about his future job at a university. Dixon expresses himself as a person who likes having everything planned in advance. This character trait appears mainly when planning his smoking. Every cigarette is scheduled on the exact hour of a day; nevertheless he is rarely able to keep his plan.

When Professor Welch invites him to spend a weekend artistic party at his house, Dixon realizes he cannot refuse, if he wants to keep his job, even though he cannot sing at all. After Jim is introduced to Bertrand and his girlfriend Christine, he feels desperate envy and hatred mixed with resignation to Professor Welch's son. Christine's beauty embarrasses him mainly when comparing her with Margaret.

Dixon is convinced, he can never have a girl like Christine. His conviction stems both from his shyness and feeling of not being insufficiently attractive. On the other side, he wonders, how it is possible that such an egoistic, not very handsome and big-headed coxcomb like Bertrand can reach as wonderful girl as Christine undoubtedly is.

Dixon considers Margaret just a colleague and a good friend, though he realizes she would like to be more than that. He feels compassion for her love to him and does not want to hurt her. However, this respect for her feelings causes him lots of troubles.

Jim Dixon chooses a policy of little harmless favours and compliments, as he assumes they cannot cause grievance from his refusal and do not let her think he is in love with her. It appears as great policy until he meets Christine Callaghan. Suddenly, Margaret and her flows of love mean even bigger dead weight for James than usually.

Her jealousy rather bothers him. All his failures, indifference as well as occasional unconcern towards her Margaret interprets as denotation of tact and courtesy.

After Christine Callaghan helps him to solve his problem with burned flaxen linens and a bedside table in his room, he completely changes an estimation of her. Hatred and rancour to her that stems from jealousy of Bertrand going out with Christine instead of him transmute into a sudden flow of sympathy and gratitude for a quick help.

This unpleasant accident again causes inevitable comparison of Christine and Margaret, when James expects Margaret to be tickled by his night adventure with cigarettes. However, she just shortly rebukes him for childish behavior, when trying to hide the burned things after night fire.

Although, the real reason of this curt reprehension is not her consistency or sense of order, but mainly jealousy of Christine Callaghan. Margaret feels jealousy and grievance that it is Christine, who helped James from his difficulties, not her. It was Christine that set off him.

When Jim tries to calm Margaret down, he meets with injured female vanity that was humiliated by other woman. Moreover, a woman that is much more beautiful than she is. Margaret is well aware of the fact. Her curtness and severity causes, Jim is inclined much more towards Christine. He wonders and is surprised by Christine's sudden change from a strict and rigorous woman to this helpful and playful little girl.

Margaret's professions of love always cause embarrassing moments to Jim. It is becoming harder and harder for him to think out new innocent lies not to hurt her feelings and to keep distance from the dangerous possibility of becoming her boyfriend. It is almost a horrible rule that the worse sentence he tells her, the more wonderful and affectionate it seems to Margaret.

Despite of the fact that James has never promised her undying love, he feels ashamed when she shows very clearly to be in love with him and he tries to avoid any true professions of love. Dixon feels that some connection constrains him and he is not able to leave her. It may be compassion on her feelings to him or rather just inability to change monotonicity of the relationship he got used to and feels safe in.

Jim Dixon tries to hide his feelings to Christine. She seems like a goddess according to him and he is thinking about himself like a poor thing that cannot even think of her. However, when he finds out, Bertrand betrayed her and she does not behave as strict as she usually does, James encourages himself and tries to get closer to her.

His male vanity and desire not to be discomfited in front of the arch-enemy and rival in love cause, he does not admit Christine and him ended up their affair and provokes Bertrand with telling him how much he hates him.

As regards a lecture, Welch asks him to prepare and read, Dixon echoes back speeches of significant persons at the university. Firstly, completely unaware of that, though, later he realizes, it is probably his final lecture, so Dixon decides to show strong aversion against education at the university.

After being fired, Jim feels as a winner in a struggle between him and Bertrand, after he gets the job, his rival wanted for long time. This feeling does not last long enough to enjoy it, because he sorely realizes, his rival has got the most valuable prize – Christine.

### **Margaret Peel**

The most expressive feature of her character appears the ability of excellent calculation with people. One of her victims becomes also Jim Dixon. After Margaret finds out, Jim experience the affair with Christine, she feels jealousy of them and reproaches him that he neglects her and behaves possessively to him.

Margaret falls down; when he finally dares to tell her that their relationship is over. Jim feels both guilt and relief. The strange relationship between him and Margaret just stifled him. The most difficult thing, as both know, will be the separation. Jim cannot suppress wringing of conscience, despite the fact that Margaret's behavior is unexpectedly reasonable and dispassionate with feelings of absolute indifference to him. Contrary to her calm conduct, he cannot secede from her and meets her again.

Jim feels guilty for such an abrupt refusal of Margaret in his life and tries to compensate it by his care. However, he does not realize, Margaret extorts him by hysterical attacks and tears. He sinks into their strange relationship again more and more. Compassion with Margaret does not allow him to break away from her.

After meeting Margaret's former boyfriend Catchpole, Dixon understands Margaret is emotionally labile and just enjoyed emotional exploitation. It becomes much easier to leave her and also let her out from his life forever. For the first time, Jim realizes, the whole relationship with Margaret was nothing more than just compassion with her and that he finally got the power to let her go.

### **Christine**

Christine expresses inaccessible beauty for Jim Dixon. Christine is well aware of the fact that she is beautiful and she can use her prettiness with men. It is proved on the example, when Jim outsmarts his kith to get a taxi for Christine. She takes it for granted that men are able to do these things for her, however James is irritated a bit by such easy receiving of his unfair behavior. He feels disappointed by her conduct, but her unusual beauty will definitely repair this little lack of sense for fairness.

Dixon is very surprised, when he finds out, Christine is not the curt and severe person, he thought before talking to her. She reveals her real personality to James, which shows freshness and shyness, despite of severe behavior which serves as a defensive mask in front of men. Dixon recognizes a little scared girl behind the mask and interests him much more. He desires to get to know her better.



A little love affair between her and Dixon causes, she feels guilty in face of Bertrand and decides to end their strange relationship. Jim feels great relief that she solved his dilemma, as he felt bad because of Margaret. Christine either does not suspect Bertrand has an affair with her acquaintance or does not want to admit of it, however, Jim decides not to tell her that. He is aware of the fact that then it would be easy for her to leave Bertrand, but he feels, it would be too simple.

When Jim and Christine hand in hand meet the Welch with Bertrand, feeling of satisfaction overrules him. He well knows he overplayed not only Bertrand but Welch. Jim does not have to make much of their opinion. He is free.

At the beginning of the story, Jim Dixon is not a too self-assertive man and humbly accepts what is given to him. As the story and character develops, readers can notice changes in his behavior. Courage and protest appearing in his conduct reach the strongest form at the lecture, when he openly shows his opinion and stultifies all the snobs at the university.

Jim Dixon realized which things are worth making an effort and which are not. This recognition helped him to free himself from Margaret who just emotionally abused him and Professor Welch's snobbism, when he had to pretend an absolute loyalty and agreement with him to keep his job. Finally Jim gained love he desired for and much better job than he had at the university.

### 3.2 Kingsley Amis: *I Want It Now* – a description of the story.

Ronnie Appleyard is a young, ambitious and successful TV anchorman, who lives in the world of persistent entertainment, parties and girls. When Ronnie is invited at one very famous and significant party, he meets Simon Quick. For the first time, he is not sure, whether the maddish and childish person is a man or woman; however, he is immediately magnetized by his or her perfect face.

After they spend a night together in his flat, he learns, Simon is not only a really childish and selfish woman, but she comes from very rich family, which is pretty interesting fact for Ronnie, whose main desire is to marry any wealthy girl and to the world of the rich. When introduced to her parents, lady and lord Baldock, he is invited to spend a few days of entertainment at their summer residence at Malakos.

Shortly Ronnie learns the real purpose of his invitation was just to entertain Simon and keep her in good mood, while her mother plans to marry her with a young rich man at the same level. When Ronnie is kicked out by Simon's mother after a wordy conflict with a future Simon's husband, he is desperate, because he realizes, he fell in love with her which he did not intend to.

Ronnie knows, Simon is under her mother's strong influence; however he tries to persuade her to leave with him. He is really surprised when she does so. After few days, they are caught up by policemen and lord Baldock and under threat of being accused from anything, Ronnie is forced to let Simon be and to leave back to London.

After Lady Baldock is invited to the television discussion with rich people, introduced by Ronnie, it finishes by huge argue about Simon. However, within a few days, Lord Baldock visits Ronnie and brings him to Simon. He tells Ronnie, that after argue in television, he recognized, he does not want to marry her due to money.

Lord Baldock recommends them to marry secretly and gives them some money to leave. Ronnie suddenly realizes that Simon grew up and changed her behavior of a rich girl and that he does not have to affect his love to her anymore.

### 3.2.1 Kingsley Amis: *I Want It Now* – analysis of main characters of the story.

#### Ronnie Appleyard

Ronnie Appleyard is a young and successful moderator of own television show. One of the main factors that helped him to such a success was certainly his self-discipline. On the other side, Ronnie, following his target almost tirelessly, does not mind to hurt anyone on his ascent on a career ladder. Especially the guests of his television show often experience his ruthless and heartless behavior.

An example of his cold-blooded calculation and inconsideration might be seen in the way, which he takes into account his facial expressions. Ronnie is able to create various versions of his expressions according to the situation, he is included in. Once it can be a sympathetic expression that can be recognizable with raised eyebrows and in addition, a lot of nodding to show, how much mercy he feels.

To take effect as an absolutely sincere man, Ronnie uses his lips and the left eye to reach the effect of absolute trustworthiness. The exact procedure of one of Ronnie's facial expressions the author of the book describes in this way: "He spoke into it, half-closing his left eye and pushing his lips forward slightly in one of his sincerity faces."<sup>27</sup>

Ronnie is a real professional at using his face to reach a certain impression with people and is well aware of the way, how to gain credibility with those, he cares about, even when telling them absolute nonsense. After meeting Simon, he is surprised with her directness that he is not used to when talking to other women.

His calculation and great desire for money caused that when he learned Simon comes from a very wealthy family, Ronnie decided not to let the little rich creature go. His cynic and cruel thoughts about her are expressed in this way: "And he had been on the point of letting a sweet girl like that walk out of his life just for being an unstable child-monster of egotism simultaneously suffering from sexual compulsiveness and frigidity."<sup>28</sup>

After Simon's step-father attacks Ronnie that he goes out with Simon just for her money, Ronnie feels injured, however, he well knows, Lord Baldock revealed his real purpose, why he was traveling so far to meet the childish and mulish creature.

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<sup>27</sup> Kingsley Amis, *I Want It Now*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), 11.

<sup>28</sup> Amis, *I Want It Now*, 47.

Although Ronnie really successfully pretends his feelings to Simon, gradually, he realizes, he does not need to attempt so much. Getting to know her better, Ronnie does not want to screw Simon anymore and desires to be frank to her. Suddenly, Ronnie starts to feel, he is falling in love with beautiful Mona.

Therefore, he tries to find out, why Mona hates sex so much. Asking her, Ronnie finds out, principle of her frigidity consists in her first sexual experience, which was very unpleasant for her, but mainly due to her mother, who had never talked to Mona about sex.

Soon Ronnie learns that the real reason, why he was invited to spend the holiday with Simon, Lady Baldock and her rich friends, was just to relax Simon. Lady has never considered him a potential husband for her childish daughter. Ronnie feels humiliated as a man and rather cheated.

What seems much stranger is the fact that when Simon's ex-boyfriend George Parrot owns Ronnie up that she does not heir any money, Ronnie does not feel as shocked as he would suppose even a few weeks ago. The funniest thing about this matter of money is that at the beginning of their relationship, money was the only thing he was interested in, when thinking of Simon Quick.

Ronnie had never thought of the possibility that he would have fallen in love with the egoistic, obstinate and childish creature that Simon very often seemed to be. Now, when he found out Lady Baldock intentions about Simon and Student Mansfield and his role on this trip, he simply rejected to believe it.

Her indifference and implicit confidence in her mother's calculations about her happiness made Ronnie angry; however he was not able to force her to reluct against her mother. At least, until Simon realizes, what he noticed long time ago and Simon rejected to see. It was the fact that Lady Baldock hated own daughter, both due to her juvenility, beauty, her happy-go-luckiness and other things belonging to young age.

When Ronnie reveals, Simon sleeps with Mansfield and feels no wringing of conscience and manages to tell him that as if nothing had happened, he is shocked. How coldly and without protest Simon is able to fulfill all her mother's orders, like an inert puppet in powerful hands of Satan or an emotionless creature only abusing people with a mild smile on its lips.

His jealousy of Simon and strong disregard for arrogant Student Mansfield cause that Ronnie impugns him, when Student is flouting the blacks: “Oh, come on. You heard. Balls. What you’re saying is balls. Rubbish, nonsense, tosh, junk. And also extremely offensive, barbaric, inhumane, foolish, ignorant, outnodded and in the circumstances unforgivably rude.”<sup>29</sup>

Even though, Ronnie is right, nobody in the room would have ever dared to oppose such a rich and coddled guy as Mansfield. Not to mention, Lady liked him and who would be rude at him, would be rude also at her. However, Ronnie had enough of the comedy and his role, to be just a toy for Simon, when not feeling good.

He liked her more than he thought, as he surprisingly realized. Ronnie felt jealousy of her and Mansfield standing together, he was angry about Mona, who was not able to oppose her mother and do what she really desires for. Ronnie was sure; she loves both him and her mother. After Lady Baldock thrusted him from her mansion, he knew, Simon has to decide. Either she stays with her mother, or follows her beloved Ronnie.

He is sure; Lady Baldock will not afford him even to come close to Mona. Despite of the fact that he possibly lost her forever, Ronnie consoles himself that he is not the one, who should feel as defeated in this match about Simon. He is certain; Mansfield’s self-confidence is well injured from such attack on his vanity. Moreover, he afforded such a poor poop to humiliate his snobbish pride.

When Simon catches his taxi in George Parrot’s car and they are leaving, Ronnie feels as happy as he never felt before. Although, he is sure, Lady Baldock will not let her daughter go with him. Ronnie realizes, she will not be willing just to present him, Ronnie Appleyard, well trained puppet that obeys without any protest and that she got used to manage and ill-treat just for own pleasure and feeling of power.

### **Simon Quick**

Simon can be characterized as a rather childish woman with quite arrogant behavior, resulting from her upbringing as a daughter of pretty rich parents. She is not aware of her behavior, as she can see it in her family. Even in her twenty six years, Simon is under her mother’s big influence.

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<sup>29</sup> Kingsley Amis, *I Want It Now*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), 184.

Her childish behavior expresses in her peevishness and dourness, instability of opinions which very often causes that Simon does not think of results of her acts and simply does what she just wants. Her naive and childish behavior partly shows these clauses: "Of course I can. There are plenty of rooms in this house. I'll speak with Antonia Reichenberger. She's an old friend of my mother's." <sup>30</sup> From this Simon's speech is obvious that she does not realize the results of her behavior at all. In these rebellious clauses, she tries to prove Ronnie that when she desires for something, even for sex, everybody endeavour to satisfy the wish. Her mulish and unthinking conduct causes lots of troubles both Ronnie and her potential suitors that desire to receive not only Simon but also the huge amount of money, she will heir.

Her mother plays in her life very significant role. From the outside, it seems, she has a wonderful relationship with Lady Baldock, however, in fact, she governs her daughter's life and Simon terribly fears of her masterful mother. When Ronnie asks Simon if she is afraid of her mother, as she refuses to go to London with him due to her mother, she replies in exaggerated way: "Balls, ballocks, shit." <sup>31</sup>

Simon's childish behavior expresses when she desperately rejects to believe the fact that Ronnie wants to indicate her about her mother: "Mummy loves me," she said and gave a violent gasp." <sup>32</sup> It is completely understandable that she believes own mother rather than Ronnie. However, what seems pretty weird is the way; Simon lets her mother to control her life. The moment, Simon realizes and admits that her mother Lady Baldock really hates her is extremely painful for her.

Simon tells Ronnie that: "I felt awful. But what made me cry was seeing that she'd sent you away so as to hurt me. She kept looking at me. She does hate me." <sup>33</sup> She always considered her mother the best friend, she admired her, Lady Baldock meant almost a cult for Simon.

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<sup>30</sup> Kingsley Amis, *I Want It Now*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), 30.

<sup>31</sup> Amis, *I Want It Now*, 121.

<sup>32</sup> Amis, *I Want It Now*, 172.

<sup>33</sup> Kingsley Amis, *I Want It Now*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), 194.

The point, when Mona concedes, she is just an object of calculation, an unwanted toy for own mother, caused a turning point in her life. Suddenly, the strong connection between Simon and her mother was broken and she was free.

Simon was not bound to anyone; moreover, she could not rely on anybody. She got out of her usual passivity. Such a huge change was caused by the fact that the only person she implicitly believed betrayed her. It helped her to wake up and realize, who is worth crying for and who is not.

When Lord Baldock with policemen find them in a Cabin 8 in Old Boulder, Simon admits to telling Bish in case Mummy is ill. It is obvious; Simon still loves her mother and is afraid of her. Now, she is terribly sorry for that, however nothing can be done about it. She cries and tries to justify herself to Ronnie: “Don’t get mad at me. Bish. In case Mummy got really upset. She can make herself ill, you know, honestly.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Lady Baldock**

Lady Baldock is a very elegant, decent madam. On the other side, her morgue, which she is able to express, when not satisfied, results from her awareness of being terribly rich. She is well aware, she can afford it. When Ronnie incontinently and without thinking dares to defend Simon against her mother’s public humiliation, he hits Lady Baldock most sensitive point – her nobiliary pride and vanity.

Immediately, Ronnie reproaches himself such impulsive behavior, however, now, he well realizes, he must play this role till the end. Lady Baldock is really shocked by such impertinency, moreover, how such a poor poop, she is mercifully banqueting, dares to oppose her.

Her reaction is concisely described: “Well, what does she need, then? According to you.”<sup>35</sup> Although, she tries to behave greatly, it causes her a lot of trouble to hide her disregard for Ronnie. Lady puts emphasis on the pronoun “you”. By this exaggeration she expresses her contempt of Ronnie.

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<sup>34</sup> Amis, *I Want It Now*, 214.

<sup>35</sup> Kingsley Amis, *I Want It Now*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), 132.

By such conduct on impulse, he unbend her hatred for him and poor hopeless people in general that finally causes she thrusts him from her mansion. Lady Baldock is totally shocked by Ronnie's rudeness. Unwittingly, he woke up a sleeping brute in her.

After Ronnie learns from Simon's former boyfriend, George Parrot, all money owns Lady Baldock, not Simon, he is quite upset. However, Ronnie refuses to believe the fact that her mother would not allow her to heir.

Her well-considered plan about Simon's marriage with Mansfield appeared as one of her really ingenious tactics. Simon, who hated sex should marry Mansfield, who was an extremely corrupted, but rich impotent. What sounds the most ridiculous is the thing that Simon did not mind it.

Lady Baldock desired to manage whole her life. Moreover, she liked leading lives of all people around her. Lady got used to an intoxicating feeling of having power. She well enjoyed power to decide not only about things and events, but mainly lives people, who she had at arm's length and who were less rich than she was. The only people, she felt respect for, were those that had more money than she had.

When Ronnie admits Simon, firstly he wanted her just for the money, but then started to fall in love with her, he feels relief. Moreover, Simon knew that before and now Ronnie can see she is really happy that he confessed it without any long persuasion. Ronnie Appleyard realizes, he loves Simon Quick, no more childish and naive, very much and does not want to hide any secrets before his love.

Their relationship changed both of them. Simon grown up and Ronnie transformed his priorities. He realized money is not the best thing in his life. Ronnie reached successful career, could have girls he desired for, however he aimed higher. His desire for money led him to Simon. In relationship with Simon, he became a better man. Although, he knew Simon is not rich anymore, he did not care about it. Money was not the main thing for him any longer.

Both Ronnie and Simon know that their relationship is not perfect. However, they realize it. Moreover, each of them really wants to change and this is the most necessary thing to start a new, better and truthful life together without lies and pretending.



## 4 SUMMARY

The main thing that connects most of the main characters in the analyzed books is their desire both for money and room at the top that they desperately lack. At the same level of necessity is the disillusion the main characters experience after they reach the top position, which appeared so vital for reaching happiness. As the last pettiness they needed to get to be absolutely blissful.

Paradoxical but very understandable thing is that the rich world they protest against incredibly attracts them. Despite the fact that they criticize the rich people's sick values, the young inexperienced men desire to become one of them. They want to taste, what kind of savour the trouble free world can offer them. After tasting it, the young boys bitterly realize, there is nothing to run after.

The features of character common both to Joe Lampton and Ronnie Appleyard are powerful charisma, ruthlessness and ambition. They do not mind to pretend love to some pretty rich girls to reach their goals. At the beginning, the main characters are willing to sell out themselves only to touch the wealthy people lives.

Fortunately, the roots of their personalities remains unchanged after some time in the upper class. They are still able to realize frivolity and snobbism of the people living more pleasant and happier life according them. Both Joe and Ronnie are aware of terrible loneliness they stay in, as the wealthy, snobbish men and women hardly accept them as equal people.

They strongly recognize their inner life is distinguished by horrible empty-headedness and that this way of spending own lives does not correspond with their imagination. On the contrary, Jim Dixon does not have the typical features of character as Joe Lampton and Ronnie Appleyard do. He does not desire for a marriage with a rich girl. He is just bored by his life and waits for the right chance that will completely change his stereotyped life.

In contrast to the other two young men, Jim Dixon is a sheepish guy with low self-confidence. While Joe Lampton and Ronnie Appleyard are successful with women, Jim Dixon feels that his destiny is to stay with Margaret forever. He does not dare to hope for a princess, which he would fall in love with until he meets Christine.

The feature common to all authors of these books is that the main character is always somehow depressed, both from his financial situation, dissatisfying job and ill luck in love.

Fortunately, the characters gradually develop and are led to become self-confident, successful in work, dare to say, what they desire for. Together with this development, Joe Lampton, Ronnie Appleyard and Jim Dixon realize that not everything always end up according to them.

## CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis has revealed differences and similarities between the angry young men generation and Beat generation as well as among the four analyzed books – *Room at the Top*, *Life at the Top*, *I Want It Now* and *Lucky Jim*.

The deeper analysis of the books discovered similar features of the main characters, as all the books come from one rebellious generation of Great Britain, which was the angry young men generation. Typical features describing the characters appearing in the stories were, for example, naivety that could often be seen in the Susan Brown's behavior in *Room at the Top* or cynicism that Joe Lampton expressed in his conduct in the same book.

Readers could find also snobbism regarding Mr. Brown, Lady Baldock and Professor Welch. Their power or money caused that they expressed exaggerated awareness of own importance. Jealousy appeared with all the main characters of the analyzed books. Both jealousy for money, power, and for girls they did not dare to get.

The common thing for the main characters of the stories is their great desire to reach the room at the top. Sometimes, they do not feel ashamed to misuse or hurt somebody's feelings to get what they want. However, when the dream comes true, they feel, the reality differs a lot from what they really imagined from a life at the top.

Regarding comparison of Beat generation in USA in 1950's and the angry young in Great Britain in 1950's, there can be found similarities and differences between these two generations. First of all, both Beat generation and the angry young men protested against similar things such as careerism, hypocrisy and false morality in society. Their fight against these perverse values joined them, despite the fact that Beatniks came from USA and Angry young men from Great Britain.

On the other side, the generations differed in power and hardness of their protest. While the angry young men seemed conventional even when protesting against consumption society in Great Britain and always stayed within the ethical borders given by their society, Beatniks never surrendered and joined the values they rejected before.

Their protest became much stronger and more rebellious than in Great Britain in 1950's. It included experiments with sex and drugs too. The important difference that distinguished these generations was persistence and stubbornness of their protest.

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