CHAPTER V

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

Narrative Technique is an important art that the novelists and short-storywriters should pay attention to. They must impress upon the readers with the help of narrative tools like humour, irony, symbol, flash-back technique, use of powerful dialogue, language and a style of their own. Mordecai Richler excels in this technique of narration. Readers are carried away by the way of his story-telling ability. Dr. S. Ramamurthy in his work up, ‘Malgudi to Montreal: An Assessment of the Novels of R.K. Narayan and Mordecai Richler’, has compared the narrative technique deployed by Richler with R.K. Narayan, the doyen of Indian writing in English who is a great storyteller too. Both Narayan and Richler reflect the episodes of the day-to-day life of the middle class people especially of their own community in their literary works. The readers feel oneness with the authors on reading their novels. This could be attributed to their extraordinary skill of narration. Mordecai Richter’s narrative technique is dealt with in this chapter. The author’s use of language and his unique style of writing too are explored in this unit.
Richler's technique of narration is quite appealing; his art of storytelling impresses one and all. Richler's retrospective narrative technique in which he amalgamates the past and the present of the protagonist into a story form produces thrill, suspense and interest among the readers. Richler's narrative strategies deserve a mention here that tends to strengthen the underlying theme in his novels.

Mordecai Richler has deployed a Unique technique to narrate the episodes, incidents and events in his novels. Almost all his novels have a portrayal of the Montreal Jewish ghetto in general and St. Urbain's Street in particular. The author was born and brought up at St. Urbain's street in Montreal. A closer look at Richler's novels provide the readers with various kinds of feelings. The way in which he tells the story impresses many but unpalatable to some. Each novel of this Jewish Canadian author has many characters. There are plethora of episodes and events to build up the plot. To give shape to this abundance of materials, Richler employs an intricate configuration of flashbacks. Flash backs within flash backs though creates interest, calls for attention and alertness on the part of the readers. The coherence and unity are maintained in his novels. His laborious venture into this type of narration is more challenging than ever imagined. His very
narration excavates from his protagonists, their ambitiousness, desires, perversion, love for their family, consciousness about their past and more than anything else, their search for Identity.

*St. Urbain's Horseman* could be treated as a continuing string of the previously written *Son of a Smaller Hero*. To give an impetus to the whole narration, Richler picturizes Jake as a person longing to see his adventurous cousin Joey Hersh. The Horseman looks like a hero to Jake. To him, he is an avenger of the Jewish society. The novel *St. Urbain's Horseman* begins with an introduction to its protagonist Jake Hersh, who has attained his middle age. He recalls his days at Toronto, the time he spent with his friend Luke. All of a sudden Richler shifts the narration to Jake's trial at the court at old Bailey. Some scenes from Jake's film-script, *The Good Britons* is read by Mr. Pound. The readers may tend to be confused by the assorted episodes of chapter – I, of the novel. But at the very beginning, Richler has given a picture of Jake who is in a crisis. He is tried at old Bailey and this makes the readers assume that he is alleged to have committed a crime. The fact that he is a director of films is revealed by the reading of an excerpt from the film script, *The Good Britons*. Richler succeeds in giving a lucid picture of the protagonist in the very first chapter.
The current action of the novel extends just over a few days, beginning on the evening of the first day of Jake's appearance at the old Bailey and ending a short while after the third and final day of the trial. Everything else is let known to the readers through flashbacks. The novel is divided into four parts. Part-I relates the incidents of the first evening and the second day of the trial, with flashbacks to events in London inclusive of Jake's first meeting with Nancy and his recent introduction to Ruthy and Harry. The Second part of the novel is a flash back to Jake as a youth planning to leave Canada. After a further flash back to the Horse man's activities in Montreal and his sudden absconding, the novel reverts to Jake's experiences just before he leaves for London and Jake's earlier experiences on his arrival there. Part Three oscillates between the immediate past in London and Jake's earlier experiences on his arrival there. The final part informs about Jake's trial and its resolutions.

Such a complex pattern of accumulative flashbacks could perhaps confuse the readers. To safeguard against this, Richler uses dates frequently and constantly introduces significant incidents as temporal signposts in the opening paragraphs of most chapters and parts (Ramraj, 86).
For example,

Yesterday, the case against him had looked shaky
very shaky, but today, Friday...

(St. Urbain's Horseman, 62)
The author enlightens the readers that the narration has shifted back to the present happening

Chapter VII of the novel begins thus....

'when Nancy had first met Jake...... (Ibid, 43).

It is assumed that the narration is about the blossoming of love between Jake and Nancy. After the flash back, Jake comes back to the current situation. 'The baby's piercing hungry howl jolted Nancy awake...(Ibid,22).

The narrative structure in Joshua then and Now resembles that of St. Urbain's Horseman. This involved structure too demands alertness from the readers. The author himself was aware of the confusion the readers might undergo while reading this complicated and mysterious novel with Zigzag flash backs. In this novel, Richler with the help of temporal sign posts facilitates the readers' understanding of the story. The constantly mentioning of hours, days, weeks, years and seasons, as Richler did in
St. Urbain’s Horseman, the reader finds it easy to understand the coherence of the incidents that happen in the novel. Only this type of narration adds thrill and suspense to a mysterious novel like Joshua, Then and Now

The first version of the novel was organized achronologically, but afraid that the story had just possible, became too confusing for the reader he attempted to unravel the whole thing

(Ramraj, 114)

Richler himself admits that he unwisely tried for some time to rewrite the novel, setting it in the chronological order. Then he realized that he was spoiling the entire lot. The mysteries were lost. It did not work out for him. So, he dropped that idea and went back to the layered construction which came out well.

Joshua, Then and Now is made readable only with Richler’s reorganized construction. In organizing an extended and involved narrative, Richler chooses not to employ the chronological approach of his previous novels. ‘Flash back is the technique adopted by Richler in giving a neat form to the novel without generating any confusion. By employing this
complex structure, the writer succeeds in imparting a tight form to this biographical study, which would have been difficult to achieve with a linear organization. Though the novel remains characteristically episodic, it has a cohesion and density not evident in the preceding novels and by beginning and ending with the trial, it acquires a structural symmetry which is emphasized by the repetition at the conclusion of the novel of certain phrases and scenes found in the opening chapters, such as the excerpts from 'The Good Britons' and from 'Babel's sunset' and the account of Jake's dream of the Horseman attacking Mengele in Paraguay. The structure also makes it possible for the reader to see how much an individual's present is haunted by his past – a theme given more extended consideration in Joshua Then and Now – and mirrors the protagonist's confessional, recapitulating frame of mind, which in turn constitutes a major unifying factor of the various episodes. And the structure accommodates itself readily to the traditional narrative requirement to which Mordecai Richler firmly adheres, holding readers' interest.

In Joshua Then and Now, rapid and constant shifts back and forth among several time sequences occur (Ramraj, 113).
The first two chapters clearly illustrate this. The novel begins with Joshua recuperating from his accident in late spring 1978, then provides a flash back to 1937 when Joshua is six years old. This is followed by a portrayal of Joshua’s condition before his accident in early spring 1978. At this point, lonely and depressed since Pauline is ill in hospital, he finds himself scanning his past, thus necessitating several flash backs. Joshua is introduced to the readers as a patient getting discharged from a Montreal hospital. Once he comes home, he climbs up to his study and starts planning about his scripts to CBC and the proposed articles to magazines like The Advocate. The author, at once makes the reader understand that Joshua now is a duty-bound, responsible, family–loving and an honest person. Only the flashbacks in the ensuing chapters make the readers know about the bitterness of Joshua’s past.

The second chapter continues with an account of Joshua’s experiences as a boy of twelve, returns to early spring in 1978, goes back to Joshua as a boy of eight years advances to 1972 then reverses back to 1963 travels forward to early spring in 1978, recollects the happenings in Joshua’s life. When he was twenty years old in 1951 and concludes with early spring 1978. Richler has achieved clarity of narration by adopting this
layered structure over which he laboured so long. It is not an untidy or coarse construction needlessly employed. The form obviously enabled Richler to avert boredom that could result from a linear chronicling of experiences of a middle-aged protagonist. The constant shifting not just among different time sequences but also among different times, situations and characters imparts a vibrancy to the novel acknowledged by most reviewers. Richler's structuring also allows him effectively to create suspense of which the Times Literary Supplement says, "I have seldom seen it used more skillfully". The device of suspense and mystery as termed by Richler is the hallmark of his plotting and structure. It creates an eagerness and curiosity among the readers not to keep the novel down till they read the last page. Thrill and suspense are maintained in *Joshua Then and Now* and this may be attributed to the narrative technique adopted by the author.

Had Richler employed this intricate structure just to achieve a lively and suspenseful narration with no thematic correlation, its use here would have been less easy to justify. However, Richler harnesses the structure to his portrayal of Joshua as a man Absorbed with and conscious of the past (Ramraj 115).
To evoke the interest of the reader, Richler raises questions in the first chapter itself about Jake’s predicament in *St. Urbain’s Horseman* and about Joshua’s current plight in *Joshua Then and Now*. The questions are not fully answered till the end of the novel. This is done only to kindle the reader’s curiosity and to go ahead with the reading of the novel or the author might conveniently forget the questions he has raised in the beginning of the novel.

The story of Joshua in Ibiza is also structured suspensefully. The second journey is necessciated by the need to solve the mystery why Joshua had to flee the first time, a problem that holds the reader long enough for the more important discovery, that it is time for Joshua to gather his loved ones together. Now ends the Spanish journey, the story of Joshua’s obsession with the civil war, introduced by the poster on the wall and continued through his pilgrimage across the battle fields of the civil war.

For Joshua, as far as many, this war was an event that haunted his imagination….. Now he sees that the best of all possible worth is….., and he vows to become the honest fisherman, casting out his net to gather fish for his loved ones (Wright, 437).
The novel ends with the hero in retreat from the world, cultivating his garden, surrounded by the loved ones.

**Joshua Then and Now** is a comic novel that reads like a detective story. Comedy begins with a society in disorder, with the wrong people in charge and it ends, with an image of the ideal society. It is what has happened in this novel. Northrop Frye has said that melodrama is a comedy without humor. The same technique has been adopted by Richler while giving a form to **Joshua Then and Now**. Its fabric is satire. A profound and detailed satire of the time is fabricated into the narration and makes the novel interesting. Richler is out to show up the baseness and folly of the world. This he does through his protagonists. Anger, revenge, frustration, renovating the society, creating awareness, and evoking laughter are the common motives behind satirical pieces. Satire is one of the techniques used by Richler to enhance the interest of his narration.

The account of Joshua's experiences from boyhood to the present which constitutes the current narrative is more episodic, straightforward and uncomplicated. Richler focuses almost exclusively on Joshua's relationship with his strikingly unconventional parents. His
father Reuben has his own ways of living but loves his son. His mother, a sensual woman, who rehearses before Joshua and who daringly performs striptease on Joshua's Bar-Mitzvah do not impress him. He is shocked to know about his mother's starring in pornographic movies. She has also opened a massage parlour. The psychologically upset Joshua tries to go astray in his childhood. Following his father's footsteps, he shoplifts, steals cars and spends a short time in a reform school. As he grows old, he develops an interest towards journalism and starts educating himself acquiring some experience in the field. He writes good scripts for the CBC and articles for magazines, he undertakes his first trip to Ibiza.

With the existence of umpteen number of characters and hundreds of episodes, the narration does not skid much in the course of the story. There are digressive commentaries on London during Suez crisis, on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Programming, on the founding of Ottawa, on the charges in Montreal and effects of the Parti Quebecois victory, on the course of the war between Nationalists and Republicans in the Spain and on the Autos do fe directed towards the Jews (Ramraj, 111).
The above mentioned digressions add pepper to the gravy of narration though they do not contribute much to its main stream.

Joshua's father Reuben's lively discourses from the Bible on The Ten Commandments, on Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac and on The Book of Job are digressive pieces but they add moral flavour to Richler's art of story telling. There are minor characters and set pieces, appealing in themselves and sometimes significant to theme and characterization, but not effectively integrated with the main narrative. There are two extended accounts of the William Lyon Mackenzie king Memorial society founded by Joshua and his former school mates, not to honour but to ridicule the former Prime Minister. The author satirizes Mackenzie King, as

Mean spirited, cunning, somewhat demented

and a hypocrite on a grand scale

(Joshua, Then and Now, 160).

The ambitious members of the Mackenzie King Memorial Society try to out do one another and snub those with lesser intellect. This seems to be a parallel to the Hampstead Heath episode in St. Urbain's Horseman.
The introduction of minor character like Seymour, the flirt, Molly his wife and sergeant Mc Master add strength to the narration. Sergeant Mac master has a secondary role in the main narrative, but there are digressions when he discusses about the novel written by him to Joshua.

Victor Ramraj in his write-up Mordecai Richler says...

Joshua’s relationship with Mac master is characterized by many such pieces of dialogue which, they hold up the narration, animate Mc Master’s character and enliven the novel (Ramraj, 112).

Richler’s art of story-telling impresses the readers. Every country can boast of a unique form of story telling (Iyengar, The Hindu). Canada can boast of Mordecai Richler who is an excellent storyteller. Giving an account of the journey undertaken by the protagonists, for example, Joshua to Ibiza and Jake Hersh to New York gives a readability to the novel. The protagonists search for identity is revealed in the course of narration. The retrospective narration brings out the happenings of the past, thus revealing the flaws in the character of the protagonists. Their weakness and strength, the situation and circumstance under which they have been brought up are brought to light through the retrospective narration; comparing the past and
present situation of the protagonist is made possible too. The third – person Narrative which is adopted in the novels of Richler reveals the character and feelings of Richler himself. The autobiographical element that is imbibed in this sort of narration makes the reading of the piece more interesting. Richler is a prolific writer. Humour and irony are part of his narration and they are the pivotal perception and mode of communication. His portrayal of the mental trauma of the protagonists of his novels adds vitality to his narrative technique and power.

Mordecai Richler is the recipient of the ‘humour award’ for his wonderful book *Barney’s Vision*. Richler has won the 1998 Stephen Leacock award for Humour and this Montreal – based writer has written many comic novels. Humourist Dave Broad foot says that he is often puzzled by the Richler dichotomy.

He writes very, very funny things, and then
he writes about Quebec and it’s so nasty
it's incredible (John McKay, Internet).

*Joshua Then and Now* itself is a comic novel that reads like a detective story.
Comedy begins with a society in disorder,
with the wrong people in charge, and it ends,
like Joshua Then and Now, with an image of
the ideal society (Wright, 437).

The *Toronto star* has appreciated this novel as 'the best of Richler's novels.... erudite and devilishly funny'. A raucous and tender novel, *Joshua Then and Now* is a memorable excursion into Richler's comic universe. Comedy and satire are combined in his portrayal of the Mackenzie king who took his dog pat to be a living symbol of his mother. Pat died in his arms in 1941. Then ...

Pat II soon came to his life and before

going to bed, king and the little angel dog

often used to chat together about the Christ

child and the animals in his crib

(Joshua Then and Now, 162).

When Pat II died, the prime minister of Canada wrote...

I felt as if he had died for me, that my

sin might be forgiven (Ibid, 162).
His dog's death is paralleled with Christ's crucifixion. Comparing a pet dog's death with that of Crusade looks ridiculous and brings to mind Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. Richler also makes fun of the Macenzie king’s obsession with the position of the hands of the clock to be at 12 O’clock, or in a straight-line, as at 6 O’clock. He considered it as 'auspicious' and this superstitious aspect evokes a fountain of laughter in the reader. Richler’s description of Mc Master, the cop is rib-tickling...

Mc Master was a chubby man with icy blue eyes, pudgy cheeks, a sly tiny mouth, and a chin receding into wobbly fat, the price paid for too many submarine sand witches on the fly

(Joshua Then and Now, 18).

During a conversation between Joshua and Mc Master, the latter says, “I know your father in the old days” (Ibid,19). Joshua replies “There isn’t a cop in town who don’t” (Ibid, 19). The readers are burst into laughter as Joshua’s father was a notorious figure in those days. Mc Master requests Joshua to go through the novel written by him.

I was going to tell why ten character”. Mc Master sucked into mighty puff of cigarette...."There is one major character from each province of Canada".

-166-
Joshua whistled, impressed. "No one from the Northwest Territories or the Yukon..? “Minor”
If Quebec separates, will you have to revise (Ibid, 19).

The Comic vein running through this dialogue reveals Richler’s unique sense of humour and his endeavour to entertain the readers as well as to brandish his whip of satire at people concerned. In The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, the narrative pace is very lively and the dialogue has a tinge of humour. Victor J. Ramraj says in his Montreal novels.

Humour becomes organic and integrated

and is not simply relegated to set passages (Ramraj, 30).

He further says, “An important aspect of this Richlerian style is the pervasive use of humour” (Ibid, 31). Richler’s use of puns and jokes is very lively and they are tailored for the people with less sophistication and the mediocre citizens. The exiled Jews who could not defend them physically, resort to verbal invectives and absurd insults to ease their frustrations. A critic of Richler describes this type of humour as ‘comedy of insults’ and is out of proportion to the offence, but the greater the noise, the greater is the relief. This particular type of comedy of insult could be traced in Richler’s novels.
The best example can be derived from the novel, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. The insults directed against Rubin by the gloomy patrons at his holiday Home who are made to believe that Duddy is drowned in the lake after his disastrous roulette game. In another incident when Cohen refuses monetary help to Duddy, the latter curses him...

Boil in acid, Duddy thought. I hope all your teeth fall out. All except one. And the one that is left should give you a tooth ache for life

(The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, 293).

Richler’s writing bubbles with humour. Richler’s tone perplexes even the critics. Richler’s Humour as black as it is brilliant. There is hard – even cruel mockery in Richler’s laughter. About Richler’s *The Incomparable Atuk*, one can feel a very light satire. This is an amusing but insubstantial book. Richler tends to criticize harshly the Canadian cultural scenes. He says he has done this merely for the sake of fun. *The Incomparable Atuk* is essentially fun. The complementary elements of realism, satire and humour are blended in appropriate proportion in his novels and they appeal to those with a sense of appreciation for fictional craft as well.
There are many episodes created just for entertainment in *Joshua Then and Now*. The author's wry observations on the contemporary English-speaking Montreal, where almost everyone Joshua knew was...

- inclined to stumble out of abed at 3 a.m,
- to jot down a list of redeemable assets on the back of the envelop, or study French verbs

(Joshua Then and Now, 65).

There is a plethora of comic characters from Montreal Jewish world. Added to this, there are several funny set pieces to entertain the readers. Joshua's *Bar-Mitzvah* at which his mother's shamelessly performed striptease, the meetings of the William Lyon Mackenzie King Memorial society at which Joshua and his St. Urbain's street friends annually meet to dishonour the memory of the mean-spirited Prime Minister of their boy-hood: *Joshua Then and Now* is successful as entertainment but seriousness is missing in it.

Daniel Golden in his essay, *Mystical Musings and comic confrontations: The Fiction of Saul Bellow and Mordecai Richler* says that his intermingling of satire and humour to a great extent is caustic.

Mordecai Richler depicts a far more scheming and energetic bunch with his formidable arsenal of comic weapon. He has a splendid ear for the
rhythms of speech in diverse capacity for purely of literary and popular culture forms, from the weighty Buildings roman to the television game show is dazzling (72).

Mordecai Richler exploits into modes of humour at once black, grotesque and pornographic would evoke jealousy in writers from Jonathan Swift to John Bark. And if there is a strand that links these diverse comic modes and strategies, it is the posture of moral outrage implicit in humour that attacks Jews, Canadians, and the entire culture establishment.

False pretensions, self delusions and pomposity take quite a beating at Richler's hands-no surprise for those who see him in the great tradition of literary satire as a social purgative, the heritage of swift, Nathaniel west, and Evelyn Waugh (Meyers, 61).

St. Urbain's Horseman is an interesting piece of work which reveals of Richler's ability to construct comic modes – satirical, parodic, topical and psychological.

Jake's on going ability to discern and appreciate the absurd, to laugh at and recognize the posturing and phoniness in media marketing, the self righteousness and bigotry of his fellow Jews, the
dusty cultural smugness of Canada and England, is a crucial saving an tribute (Golden, 84).

Mordecai Richler has skillfully fused literary styles of parody and satire with an ongoing Canadian heritage of popular put-ups and put-downs.

The twenty-year tradition of television’s Wayne and Shuster is an unbroken string of delicious topical satires and literate (though not necessarily literary) parodic skits that punctured everyone from Shakespeare to the Governor general to the RCMP. David Cronenberg’s horror films..... are akin to Richler in their transformation of a traditional genre through humour and sex-his films are simultaneously frightening, dirty and genuinely funny’ (Ibid, 72).

Richler draws on the traditionally extensive involvement of Jews as writers and performers in popular entertainment.

From the narrow range of the Yiddish theatre and ‘Borscht Belt’ hotel night clubs, Jews have expanded onto national and international platforms, always employing what Robert Alter calls an auto of ridicule to diminish their own suffering and include the plight of others (Alter, 257).
The autobiographical elements can be traced in Richler's novels. His personal experiences and sufferings are reflected in, through the protagonists of his novels. The origins of *Joshua Then and Now* and certain parallels between Joshua's and Richler's experiences inevitably invite consideration of the closeness of the author and his protagonist. The novel is based in parts on Richler's experiences. Like Richler, Joshua has spent some time in Spain. Richler's *Images of Spain* reveals the author's knowledge of the topography of Spain. The author's visit to Ibiza and his liking for that place might have insinuated Richler to create the protagonist Joshua with an obsession for Spain. The mystery revolving his two trips to Ibiza is unraveled in the end.

A study of Richler's novels reveals that his novels have an autobiographical dimension and he has successfully transformed the personal experience into art. This is his art of story-telling. The author has effectively blended fact with fiction. Richler has himself admitted that Jake Hersh resembles him in all aspects. Nobody is as close to Richler as Jake Hersh.

Jake is ambivalent towards Canada like Richler. The autobiographical tone can very well be traced in *St. Urbain's Horseman*. Jake's sensibility
and beliefs are similar to Richler's. Like his creator, he is apprehensive of aging; feels he belongs to a frivolous generation; is a socialist but distrusts professional liberals and the masses; strives to be a devoted family man like Joshua and Jake Hersh and celebrates the virtues – decency, tolerance and honour – like Norman price of *A Choice of Enemies*. The double presence of the author and the protagonist is felt only in *St. Urbain's Horseman*.

In *St. Urbain's Horseman*, Jake's cousin Joey is believed to have left for Israel to avenge on Mengale who has caused hardship to the Jews. He is symbolized as the Horseman who would certainly rectify the wrongs of the evil-doers. The Horseman is portrayed as a revolutionary and a fighter. In Jake's imagination, the Horseman is The Golem...

the body without a soul. He was made out of clay by Rabbi Judah Ben Bezalel in the sixteenth century to defend the Jews of Prague from a pogrom and.... Still wanders the world turning up wherever a defender is most needed

(St. Urbain's Horseman, 252-253).

Eugene Bleuler has coined the term, 'Ambivalence' which means having mixed feelings towards a person or thing (Ramraj,1). Richler's ambivalence is revealed not only in his themes and characters, but also in his tone and narrative structure,
The protagonists of Richler's novels constantly find themselves faced with situations in which they experience simultaneously or alternating opposed attitudes and feelings towards people, places or ideas (Ramraj, 1).

Modecai Richler exhibits this vision of ambivalence towards life and his portrayal of characters and incidents. Joshua is also ambivalent like Richler. His duality of character reveals the psyche of the author himself.

Joshua is both hopeful and nihilistic, moral and malicious, accommodating and sardonic. He alternately accepts and rejects his people in Ibiza for instance, he sets himself up as an avenger of Jews.... Yet he responds disdainfully to them (Ramraj, 124-125).

Joshua loves his wife Pauline yet suspects her fidelity.

Richler felt at home only in Canada and nowhere else. He too has suffered from identity crisis, which is echoed, in his novels. The ambivalent attitude of liking as well as despising ones own soil, language, people and religion is also reflected in his novels. Richler's personal feelings are given vent in his art fiction.
Richler’s discontent – eloquent, witty, Vitriolic –
derives from his ongoing creative struggle to
define himself as Jew and Canadian

(Golden, 61).

Mordecai Richler at once accepts and rejects the Montreal society.
Richler’s ambivalence informs not just his treatment of themes and
characters

but his narrative structure and tone and

even the antithetical turn of sentences.....

(Ramraj, 1).

Mordecai Richler’s use of the English language proves that he has mastered the language. But In and between he uses the Canadian slang and Hebrew terms which tend to confuse the readers. Richler uses the verb ‘Gonna’ instead of ‘going to’ which is a colloquial word used by the Canadians. The very opening sentence of St. Urbain’s Horseman

Some times Jake wondered if the Doktor
given his declivity years.....

(St. Urbain’s Horseman, 1).
The reader has to assume that the word 'doktor' is nothing but 'doctor'. The minor flaws are to be winked at because Richler's enriched vocabulary adds 'scholarship' to his novels. Dialogue is a unique mode of discourse in the novels of Richler. The language that the author uses to build up a dialogue if very effective. The obscene language used by the author sometimes irritate and embarrasses the readers. But 'Dialogue has always been one of Richler's most deadly weapons.....'(Smith, 206).

Richler's style of writing is worth mentioning here. He is a careful observer of his own community's sufferings and makes a successful, visual presentation. He is a prolific writer who excels in the art of story telling. Humour and irony are part of his views of life. They are central to his perception and modes of communication. He is sympathetic towards the man, both the individual and the social man. His Biblical references and the parallels that he draws from the Bible reveal the author's Biblical knowledge. It adds moral flavour to his novels. His portrayal of the Montreal-ghetto is realistic and Richler's pen has not written anything beyond the fact. Fact is amalgamated into fiction like spices being seasoned into gravy to add to its taste.