CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish – Canadian Literature is characterized by a sense of homelessness and exile, which dominated the writings of the Immigrant writers of Canada. A.M. Klein, the father of Jewish - Canadian Literature, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, Adele Wiseman, Elia-Mandel, Monique Bosco, Matt Cohen and Mordecai Richler reveal their feeling of solitude and insecurity through their writings in an alien land. Neither English nor French, Jewish Canadian writers wrestle with marginality and exile as they search for status and recognition in the Canadian society. The protagonists of their novels try to establish their identity in the Canadian society. The major characteristics, which mark all Canadian writings, are the recurrence of the pattern of isolation, fear of survival and search for identity. Many Canadian novels show a profound preoccupation with the problems of exile and isolation and this is to be expected in a country whose population comprises mostly of immigrants.

The most dominated theme of Canadian writing is the theme of survival. This subject has been discussed widely in Margaret Atwood's well known work Survival. The theme of isolation and the theme of survival are
Related and the immigrants try to overcome these problems by establishing their identity. Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a longing for the past, the struggle to maintain the difference between one self and the new unfriendly surroundings, an assumption of moral or cultural superiority over the host country and a refusal to accept the identities forced on one by the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around himself and he experiences hostility and unfriendliness in the new country. It has been identified that nostalgia is the real reason for the expatriate’s need to evoke ethnic origins.

Canada exists in a mosaic of social regions and ethnic cultures each retaining its own identity. The nation exists in dialectic of regional and ethnic tension. The country itself is a fully transplanted culture - the French, the Jewish, the polish, the Ukrainian, the Indian and the English. And they tried to survive still. For nearly two hundreds years all of them have been attempting to produce an art and an identity of their own. Like its history, the growth of Canadian Literature has been cautious and slow. It reflects the struggle of a young nation to assert itself against the pressures of a mother country and a neighboring giant to the south.
As a new literature in English, Canadian Literature is more akin to Australian Literature or New Zealand Literature than to African or Caribbean literature or even Indian literature in English, because it has not been a literature produced by a native population as a consequence of the colonial rule or the introduction of English education as it happened in the case of India or Africa. It is the fruit of the British seed planted in American soil (Parameswari, 1). This literature grew in the hands of the English-speaking people in Canada who had settled there as immigrants, having migrated to Canada in various stages, starting from the period of pioneering adventurers and gold-seekers to the period of the 20th Century migrants. Hence,

early Canadian Literature was only a literature in English produced by British immigrants whose mother tongue was English (Anuradha, 1).

Little Canadian fiction was published before 1900 is worth reading either for pleasure or for any intrinsic literary worth. Northrop Frye observed that they were nothing but ‘formula writing’. The literary works that deserve mention today are Susana Moodie’s Roughing it in the Bush, and Major John Richardson’s novel Wacousta (1832). Richardson’s novel is a thriller, which has ‘Revenge’ as its theme. The Imperialist (1904) is one of the
earliest Canadian novels of the twentieth century that has a lasting value and importance.

'It is not till the second quarter of the twentieth century that the Canadian Novel began to grow in bulk and stature' (Salat, 17). F.P. Grove, Morley Callaghan, Hugh Mac Lennan and Sinclair Ross began to write and publish novels that, in retrospect, became canons of Canadian literature and gradually built up a respectable corpus of Canadian fiction. The Governor General's Awards were initiated in 1937 and new literary magazines and journals began to make their appearance on the Canadian literary scene. By the early forties, Canadian literature began to generate serious, critical attention in Canada as an area worth study and research and E.K. Brown's On Canadian Poetry (1943) became the first recognized classic statement on the development of Canadian Poetry and the first big step towards asserting the presence of a growing Canadian literary tradition.

A.M. Klein, the founder of Jewish Canadian Literature wrote The Second Scroll, which appeared in 1951. After a span of a decade appeared Fiedler's novel, The Second Stone. From then on, Jewish Canadian writers started contributing to the growth of Canadian literature. Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen in Montreal, Phyllis Gottlieb in Toronto and Miriam Waddington and Eli Mandel on the prairies have all paid homage to Klein in their
poetry. And if Klein has influenced his fellow poets, so too in fiction are
Jewish Canadian authors indebted to him, for Klein’s seminal short novel The
Second Scroll acts as a point of departure for short stories and novels by
Mordecai Richler, Henry Kreisel, Adie Wiseman, Jack Ludwig, Norman Levin,
Naim Kattan, Monique Bosco and Matt Cohen. At first glance, such a diverse
group of writers appear to have little in common, but a closer scrutiny reveals
their recurrent attempts to mediate between tradition and modernism, home
and exile, Jewish – Canadian particularism and universal significance. To
understand better the ambiguities of this mediation in the works of Klein and
those who follow him like Richler, it is necessary to look south of the border
and across the Atlantic, for other voices in the Diaspora.

Grove, one of the best novelists of Canadian literature when it was at
the budding stage, wrote The Master of the Mill, which gives a warning
against the indiscriminate mechanization and industrialization and embodies
a prophetic vision. After span of forty years, George Grant in his Empire and
Technology expressed views very similar to Grove’s, and later on Margaret
Atwood worked out with the same theme in her novels. Among the most
worthy of the time are Martha Ostenso’s Wild Geese (1925), Robert Stead’s
Grain (1926) and Sinclair Ross As far Me and My House (1941). This
was followed by W.O. Mitchell’s who has seen the wind (1947) and Sheila
Watson's *The Double Hook* (1959), all of which belonged to the tradition that explored in realistic or symbolic terms, man's relation with the hostile and overwhelming natural or man-made environment.

The two writers who dominated the Canadian literary scene in the second quarter of the twentieth century were Morley Callaghan and Hugh McLennan. In *such is my beloved* and *The Loved and the Lost* (1951), Callaghan explored the human relationships of ordinary people in the uncheerful urban environment. Canadian society was in a transitional stage between the years 1890 and 1940, progressively changing from a rural to an urban and Industrial economy. Callaghan's novels reflected this shift and the Canadian Novel in a sense could be said to have come of age. Callaghan's novels reflected the spirit of the times and were symptomatic of a significant development in the evolution of the Canadian Novel.

From the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, significant events, not all of them literary, occurred in quick succession and accelerated the development of Canadian literature. On the political front, Canada at last broke the British imperialist connection by the statute of Westminster in 1949 thus asserting complete supremacy of its own parliament and appointed a Canadian as its Governor General in 1952. These were achievements that helped Canadians acquire a better sense of independence.
and national pride. The Canada Council was set up in 1957, which in subsequent years became a significant agency and a catalyst to create a body of Canadian literature that simply could not be ignored. New voices that were to become important voices began to be heard in the 1950s. Robertson Davies, Ethel Wilson, Ernest Buckler, Mordecai Richler, Sheila Watson and Adele Wiseman, novelists who went on to enrich the gradually evolving Canadian literary tradition, began their writing careers in the 1950s.

Mordecai Richler, the Jewish Canadian writer, published his novel The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz in 1959, along with Adele Wiseman whose novel Sacrifice had appeared in 1956, he gave voice to the minority culture and anticipated the voices of the silenced minorities to be heard in the novels of Rudy Wiebe in the 70s. Another major event to take place was the publication of Canada’s premier scholarly journal Canadian Literature in 1959 that, under the able and judicious editorship of George Woodcock, provided a credible platform for critical writings on Canadian literature.

The decade of the 1960s was probably the most significant and decisive decade in Canadian cultural and literary history. Since the Centenary year marking the completion of the 1867 Confederation fell in this decade, there was a vehement resurgence of nationalistic sentiments across Canada. The quest for identity became a national objective so as to shake free from the
The centenary celebrations provided a context and pretext to acquire finally the elusive Canadian identity. After nearly a hundred years, on February 15, 1965, Canada adopted its Maple Leaf flag and symbolically enhanced the growing sense of nationhood. The election of Pierre Trudeau in 1968 provided a hope for an eventual acquisition of a unitary and holistic Canadian identity.

All these events in the Centenary decade generated a sense of euphoria and patriotic sentiments across Canada. The Expo 69 at Montreal in this context therefore became a symbol of national greatness and greatly accentuated the sense of local pride, the absence of which had been a significant deterrent in the Canadian search for recognition and a distinctive identity. Pearson, the then Prime Minister, voiced this newfound self-confidence when in regard to Expo 69 he said that anyone who said that they weren't a spectacular people should see this.

It was against this background of resurgent nationalism that the Canadian literary 'renaissance' took place in the post-60s. The climate was
charged and just right for Canadian literature to blossom and flower which it did and how. More books were published in the two decades, the 60s and the 70s, than were published in all the preceding decades. There was a mushrooming growth of Little Magazines and publishing houses all over the country and increasing all around commitment to the idea of creating and possessing a national literature. Even Frye who in his Conclusion to the first edition of Klinck's *Literary History* had castigated the critical evaluation of Canadian literature as a debunking project had to revise his opinion in the second edition of Literary History and admit that it was now no longer a gleam in a paternal critic's eye. Canadian literature thus, in all appearance, was firmly established, at least within Canada.

Mordecai Richler was born of Jewish parents in Montreal in 1931. He first left Canada in 1959 and lived mostly in England until he returned to Canada twenty years later. A third-generation Canadian Jew, Richler straddled as a youth the traditional orthodox life of his immigrant grandparents. His grandfather ventured to Canada by steerage in 1904 to escape the Eastern European pogroms and settled with other Jewish immigrants in Montreal. Richler was born into a world rigidly circumscribed by orthodoxy and by fear and ignorance of French and English Canadians. Very much a part of this narrow, self-contained society initially, he attended the Jewish
parochial school, studied the Talmud and Modern Hebrew, and was expected
to become a rabbi. Parochial schooling, ironically, opened his eyes to the
world beyond the Jewish ghetto. The time spent there was for him a mixed
pleasure, but more significantly, it was the starting point for Richler to
understand life and the plight of his community. He was exposed to the old,
conservative teachers of Hebrew as well as to young female English
language instructors who were charming, and modern and were concerned
about the future of the Jewish community.

Richler began easing away from orthodoxy while still at parochial
school, and continued to do so while attending Baron Byng High School,
which had a student body almost totally Jewish, was under the
jurisdiction of the Protestant school Board of Montreal here, as he stated in
the foreword to The street. He became further aware of the non-Jewish
world, and began to conceive of himself as both Jewish and Canadian. This
was not always an easy complementary conception of himself. Exposed to
the real and the imagined prejudices and resentments of Jews on the one
hand and of French and English Canadians on the other, he found being
Jewish and Canadian at times virtually antithetical. Canadianism and
Jewishness jointly form the main theme of his early fiction. Richler's novels
deal with the large national problem of assimilating a Canadian identity out of
racial and cultural elements in general, and with the process of integrating Jewish elements into Canadian culture in particular.

In his 1989 study of Jewish Canadian writing, Michael Greenstein describes the early invisibility of Jewish writing on the Canadian Literary scene. Ravvin similarly, but more specifically, points at Canadian literary criticism, which historically has tended to ignore Jewish specificity excavating and acknowledging other literary ethnicities. The tension between the assertion of the Jewish heritage and the rejection of Jewish roots constitutes the spectrum of Richler's exploration of Jewish survival in the post-war world.

Traditionally the Jews have represented the exiled people; they were persecuted and they had to flee the country to different parts of the world. They were humiliated, ill-treated and butchered. Life was miserable for them and they struggled for survival. They had fear and a sense of alienation though they had the wish to assimilate and assert their identity. Also the anti-Semitism openly propagated by the fascist movement in Quebec corroborated a sense of insecurity and alienation on the part of the Canadian Jews. In fact, fear of survival is the major characteristic that marks Canadian immigrant writings. A major problem that arises owing to these forces is the conflict in the mind of the individual to discover and create his own identity.
Canada is chiefly a land of immigrants. Almost every racial and cultural group has come there only as explorers or immigrants and have settled down. Hence, Canada has turned out to be a multiracial country, which contributes to attract people from many parts of the world. Over the past five decades Canada has experienced a fresh wave of immigrants who have exerted tremendous impact on its society and literature. The immigrant community cut off from their native culture and settled in Canada, an alien country in the midst of ethnic as well as religious groups has had to face the problem of adjustment to a new environment.

It is noteworthy that the nature of the sufferings and conflicts of the protagonists of many of these novels of the Jewish Canadian writers show great variations depending on various hostile forces at work, such as economic inequality, social alienation and a sense of insecurity against which they have to battle facing psychic tension, ruthlessness and restlessness (Ramamurthi, Malgudi to Montreal, 70).

Writers such as A.M. Klein, Mordecai Richler, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen and Adele Wiseman are a few outstanding Jewish Canadian writers who have genuine concern for the plight and problems of the Jewish settlers in Canada. They presume the danger to the Jewish community form the Fascist movement of Quebec and anti-semitism. Deeply agitated by the rejection of the humanistic value in the post-war world, they express their growing skepticism against people’s proclivity and
recalcitrant attitude towards the inhuman victimization of their fellow men. Among the Jewish writers, Mordecai Richler shows a lot of concern for the problems of the Jewish immigrant youth. An attempt is made in this dissertation to examine this immigrant consciousness in Richler's novels, a consciousness which has been shaped by his mythic concern for his ancestral past and his archetypal search for freedom and identity. A close scrutiny of Richler's novels reveals the writer's preoccupation with the Jewish agony and suffering and their brutal ill-treatment by the fascist forces. The protagonists of the novels of Richler seem to be adventurous and ambitious young men who want to free themselves from the Jewish ghetto by breaking family ties. On the other hand, the elders in the Jewish community are bound by the tradition and desirous of preserving the Jewish religious rites and culture and they expect their children to faithfully follow them. The resultant action, the clash between the old value and modern thinking forms the subject matter of Richler's novels.

Mordecai Richler's first novel The Acrobats portrays the intensity of Richler's feeling for Canada. In this novel, Richler is preoccupied with the problem of relationship between the gentile and the Jew. He deals with the individual's inability to resolve the conflict between the wish to assimilate and the desire to assert his identity in this novel.
Richler’s second novel *Son of a Smaller Hero* is set in Montreal and deals almost exclusively with Canadian subjects. The novel reproduces the local Jewish community in which the author grew up. The plot traces the career of Noah Adler, who rebels against the religious orthodoxy of his family. Though the novel focuses on Jewish society and Jewish characters, Richler is not preoccupied with ethnic issues.

As in all his fiction set in Jewish communities and peopled by Jews, he looks beneath the racial to the human, and uses the Jewish world as a metaphor for human experience. The novel transcends time, place and race. It is at once Jewish, Canadian and universal.

(Ramraj, 17)

*A choice of Enemies* published in 1957, three years after Richler moved to London is the first novel to have that city as its setting. The London it depicts, however, is a narrow one that of Canadian and American writers and directors who fled to England to escape McCarthy’s witch-hunt in Hollywood. Richler started supplementing his income by writing scripts for movies. In *A Choice of Enemies* Richler has portrayed the character of Norman Price, a former Canadian professor who is making his livelihood in London by writing scripts for movies and television. Ernest a refugee from East Germany, Sally, Karp and Nicky are the other interesting characters in
this novel. Horn Stein, the Jewish pilot who fought along with Norman Price against the Germans and Karp, the concentration camp survivor are the two Jewish characters in this novel. Karp is terrified by the advent of another Holocaust. He opines that by assimilation into the gentile world, he can survive in this world. He chooses to move with Norman price and rents out a portion of his house to him. He hopes this gesture of him could make him recognized by the gentiles.

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, Richler’s fourth novel was published in 1959. In this interesting novel, the author creates a morally complex character Duddy Kravitz, a Jewish youth who is obsessed with acquiring land in order to escape the ghetto and make something of himself. He is highly enterprising, hard working and wants to climb up the social ladder by hook or crook, to establish himself. He is obsessed by his grand father’s words. ‘A man without land is nobody’ (The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, 49). These words constantly haunt Duddy’s mind that he goes to the extent of forging his friend’s signature to draw money from the bank. He blackmails Dingle man. He is not true to his girl friend Yvette. But Duddy tries to convince her by saying that he has done it only for her welfare and promises that he will repay the money he has taken from Virgil. Though Yvette cuts off her friend ship, Duddy achieves his goal of owning a vast area
of land to build a restaurant. The ambitiousness of Duddy is portrayed well by Richler. This novel was featured as a film and has fetched him many awards.

Mordecai Richler's unique work *St. Urbains Horseman* bears testimony to his greatness as a novelist. The protagonist Jake Hersh is a replica of Richler himself. Jake’s sensibility and beliefs are similar to that of Richler. Jake is ambivalent towards Canada like Richler. This novel was published in 1971. Jake Hersh, a Jewish Canadian, currently living in London, is a scriptwriter for television and films. He marries Nancy, a gentile and leads a happy, and contented life with his three children. He is obsessed with reviewing his life which occasions major flashbacks to his boyhood, youth and early manhood. The horseman Joey Hersh, is portrayed as a revolutionary and a fighter. George wood cock considers the novel *St. Urbain's Horseman* as a rich book, tragic, funny and sad, that strangely but successfully combines something of Dickens’ scope and gusto with Jewish tryst and humour.

Jake’s accidental exclusion from the Spanish War, from the Holocaust and Vietnam intensify his Jewish nightmare, invokes the novel’s ‘terrible refrain’ (Levene,45) Joey’s death makes Jake Hersh assume the role of the Jewish...
defender himself. The novel seems to represent the thematic reconciliation of
exile and ghetto. Richler has taken up, 'Canadian anti-Semitism' in
**St.Urbain's Horseman.** Jake Hersh's search for identity, his desire to
become a number one director, his recollection of childhood and youth, his
longing for making a trip to New York, his love for his religion and his
responsibility as a son, father and a husband are interestingly spun by Richler
in his **St.Urbain's Horseman.**

In **Solomon Gursky was Here,** the author deals with the Jewish
community's search for origins. Solomon Gursky, the protagonist of the novel
hails from a notorious family of boot-leggers. But he chooses a path different
from that of his two brothers Bernard – the greedy business man and Marrie,
the weak willed one. Taken by his energetic grand-father Ephraim to the
polar sea when he was young, Solomon learns and practises survival and
strange mystical rituals of the worth based on Jewish rites and customs.
Moses Berger, the son of a poet, is the narrator of the story of Solomon. In
this novel, Mordecai Richler deals with the Jews who had left Europe at the
turn of the 20th Century. He tries to fuse the Jewish and the Canadian
historical experiences as well.

**Joshua Then and Now** is one of the best novels of Richler. The
protagonist, Joshua Shapiro has a similarity to Jake Hersh in temperament.
The author describes Joshua as a man charged with contradictions who sent his children to private schools and complained in other people's houses about being the father of children who attended private schools. This novel too has long flashbacks to Joshua's childhood in Montreal and later years in Europe. Joshua's constant search for identity is portrayed by Richler in an amazing manner. Joshua is also similar to Richler in certain aspects. Richler's other novels *The Incomparable Atuk* and *Cocksure* are characterized by their fantastic plotting and sustained humour. In the former one, the foolishness of a 'Canadianisation' policy applied to American pop culture allows Richler to give a vent to his hostile wit on two of his preferred subjects – facile Canadian nationalism and the North American entertainment. Richler's novel 'Cocksure' attacks the latter by creating a scabrous tale of a narcissistic Hollywood director who aspires to god-like powers, literally creating film stars to suit public taste. This has made the novel an object of controversy but won for him the Governor General's award. Richler's caustic satire surfacing in this novel has a semblance to that of Jonathan Swift.

Though Richler concentrated himself in writing novels his financial dependence grew after his marriage in 1960 to Florence wood, a Canadian
model living in London. Within a few years, his family expanded and he had to provide for five children. His many scripts of this period include No Love for Johnnie (1959), Life at the Top and The Looking glass of War.

Mordecai Richler narrates his experience of growing up in the working class Jewish neighbourhood in his autobiographical sketches collected in The street. In fact, some of his experiences do find artistic expression in his novels. Since he had witnessed the political turmoil – the Spanish civil war and the second world war, they too figure prominently in his novels. Also, there is a reference to his participation in the struggle against – Fascism in his novels. The Jewish youth of Richler's time wanted to establish themselves as popular and rich persons. They searched for identity and this contemporary feeling of the Jewish youth gets reflected in Mordecai Richler's novels.

Richler is a Journalist as well. The article "The Holocaust and after" which he wrote in the Spectator in 1966 reveals the gravity of the cruel incident of the past. Margaret Atwood remarks in Survival that there is "a literature – unearthing the buried and forgotten past" (112) and relates this phenomenon to Canadian writer's desire for roots and origins. Although this cannot be claimed as a uniquely Canadian motif – Atwood does not claim it as such either – this digging into the past for roots however constitutes a vital necessity in a culture such as Canada, which as a result of being a New
Nation suffers from a sense of rootlessness and minimal history that, in turn, becomes problematic in its ability to assert a distinctive – rooted – identity. A British or a European writer can write within a culture–literary tradition that he can trace back through centuries. An American writer can take his tradition for granted without feeling any obligation to define it because in the relatively, older and well-established American culture, the question of tradition as a settled issue – a non-issue, in fall. A Canadian writer, however, is always in an unenviable defensive position in regard to his culture–literary tradition. He is not even sure if it exists at all. As Robert Krotesch remarks in “The Canadian writer and the American Literary Tradition” “In American they ask: who am I? Canadians do not ask who they are, they ask, rather “if they are”. (qtd. in Salat, 91). This is the plight of the Canadians, especially the Jewish Canadians who feel alienated in a foreign land. They search for their identity, they search for their roots, they strive hard to keep themselves on par with the gentiles.

It is imperative to make a reference about the Holocaust at this juncture. Holocaust was the mass murder of European Jews by the Nazis during the World War II. Holocaust means widespread destruction (Holocaust).
The Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler was the root cause of the genocide. He planned to exterminate the entire Jewish race as part of his plan to conquer the world. By the end of the war in 1945, the Nazis had killed about millions of Jewish men, women and children – over two-thirds of the Jews in Europe. The Nazi persecution of the Jews began after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. As Germany prepared for war, the government imposed many laws and restrictions that deprived the Jews of their rights and profession. The Nazis prohibited Jews from attending universities and seized their property and business. The next year, the Nazis conquered Belgium, Denmark, France, Norway and Netherlands and hundreds of thousands more Jews fell into their hands. Jews were forced to live in special area called ghettos and to work as bonded labourers.

The Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 and began a campaign of mass murder against all the Jews of Europe. Special Nazi units followed the rapid advance of German Army and killed more than a million Jews. Millions of Jews were also imprisoned in concentration camps. Large number of Jews were sent to the gas chambers and were killed. The camps also had factories in which prisoners were worked to death. The captives lived under horrible condition. Doctors performed cruel experiments on some prisoners.
Those unable to work – the aged, the sick, many women and children were put to death.

Adolf Hitler, the worst tyrant that the world has ever witnessed was behind the ‘Spine – chilling, cruel and inhuman incident, the Holocaust. Hitler spread death as no person has ever done before. He turned Germany into a powerful war machine and started World War II in 1939. He hated the Jews and wiped out the community in the countries he ruled. He nurtured hatred towards the entire Jewish community and wanted to avenge them. The Holocaust, the most dreaded historical incident made the Jews hate Hitler and Germany. The word ‘Adolf’ was derived from the ferocious animal wolf. Adolf Hitler behaved in a fierceful way towards the Jews. Until he came to live in Linz, he did not know anything about the Jews. Linz had a fairly substantial Jewish population, ‘Jews are nothing but Parasites’ (Bunting, 14).

Thus, Hitler confided to his friend Kubizek’. Also Hitler remarked:

‘They are racial despoilers and to be blamed for everything that is evil in this world’ (Bunting, 14).
He declared this vehemently in a speech to parliament. In 1933, on the first of April, Jewish shops and business establishments were barred to non-Jews. Conversely, any Jew found on Aryan premises faced immediate arrest and driven to the concentration camp. An order was passed that the Jews have to display the star of Israel on their clothing. They became the butt of the brown shirts. More than five hundred Jews were beaten up or murdered in the streets of Berlin within a span of six months. Thousands of Jews succeeded in fleeing the country, a large proportion of them finding refuge in Britain but police, surveillance was so strict that many thousands more were apprehended while trying to escape and bounded off to concentration camps.

In another endeavour to uproot the Jewish society, Hitler ordered that all Jews still retaining key positions must be dismissed and replaced by Aryans. He demanded that all bank accounts belonging to the Jews should be carefully inspected and large sums were confiscated by the state. Jews and non-Aryans were referred by Hitler as foreigners and he wanted to banish all of them. Hitler had become so frantically anti-Semitic when he read a news about him in a newspaper that he sued the editor of the newspaper. The statement made him furious and he behaved brutally towards the Jews. The German Jews have been deprived of their citizenship by the Laws of 1935. This led to the migration of Jews to countries like America and
Canada. These are the historical happenings that instigated the Jewish Canadian writers to write about the bitterness of Holocaust and the ill-treatment of their community in their literary works. The Fascist anti-Jewish sentiments expressed in all provinces, the racial discrimination practised against the Jews in Quebec and the evils of anti-Semitism propagated in the 1930 at Montreal in Canada – are expressed in the novels of Klein and Richler. Though Klein gives expression to the sense of insecurity and anxiety inflicted upon Canadian Jewish citizens in Quebec in his works, he is optimistic about the possibility of the sympathetic Jewish – French Canadian inter relationship. His novel *The Second Scroll* brings out his high hope in humanism. In a letter to his nephew, Melech, the survivor, in the novel narrates his tragic experience – the atrocities committed on Jews. Significantly, the arrival of the letter coincides with the celebration of Torah, the feast of rejoicing, observed at Montreal synagogue. On the other hand, Mordecai Richler deals with the erosion and loss of humanistic values in his *St. Urbain’s Horseman*. Both the novels have thematic parallels. In both the novels, the protagonists are the sons of Eastern European immigrants who set out from Montreal to Europe in Search of a member of a family directly involved in the ‘Holocaust’. Unfortunately, both the protagonists die before meeting their elusive relative. In fact, the tension
between the desire to adhere to the ideal of brotherhood of men and the brutal reality of racism have inspired these writers to take up the cause of the Jews in their novels.

The publication of St. Urbain's Horseman marked the end of one phase in Richler's life. He began making preparations to return to Canada. In 1972 he took up residence in Montreal and lived there till he passed away in 2001. Richler took nine years to publish his next novel, Joshua Then and Now (1980) He was a visiting professor at Carleton University for two years, teaching courses in Journalism and literature. He wrote numerous reports and essays and several film and television scripts including that of a television play The Bells of Hell (1974) and of the movie, The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz that earned him nomination for an Academy Award in 1975. He was also appointed to the Editorial Board of the Book-of-the-Month Club in 1976. In 1975, he published his only children's novel, Jacob Two-Two meets the Hooded Fang which proved the versatility of Richler. The novel is about the wish fulfillment of an incompetent child, who dreams of performing heroic deeds for which he earns the respect of his family. This novel won for Richler the first annual Children's book award in 1976 and he became popular in Canada. Then followed a steady flow of novels and the Canadian novelists were beginning to look for ways to express
the distinctiveness of the new Canada in many ways. Search for Identity, theme of Isolation, theme of alienation and fear of survival formed the main theme of the Canadian Immigrant writings. Canadian literature is the fruit of the British seed planted in American soil. It was in the 20's & 30's of the last century that Canadian Literature began to flourish. It gained, down the years, a unique identity of its own, transcending cultural and racial barriers. Even as the country emerged as a single nation its literature achieved a new identity. Margaret Laurence was one of the outstanding figures during the Sixties and Seventies. This period has seen a few others noted figures such as Sheila Watson, Margaret Atwood, Robert Kroetsch, and Mordecai Richler. The later part of the century saw the literary compositions treating realism as one of its major themes. World war II engineered the large-scale movements of population and the refugees finding shelter on the Canadian soil captured the attention of the Canadian fiction writers. These writers took up the immigrant characters and connected them into a figure of contemporary exile and alienation. Mordecai Richler is one such novelist who occupied the Canadian literary scene. He succeeded in portraying immigrants as protagonists in many of his novels.

The present study is confined to six novels of Mordecai Richler, which has been discussed at the beginning of the chapter. St. Urbain's Horseman
The Apprentice of Duddy Kravitz, A Choice of Enemies, Joshua Then and Now Son of a Smaller Hero and Solomon Gursky Was Here are taken for analyzing the theme of Search for Identity, in Richler's novels. This theme exists in Indian writing in English, African Literature and all post colonial literature. Richler's characterization, narrative technique, his ambivalent vision, his satire and style are discussed in the last two chapters. The predominant theme of his novels, that is 'Search for Identity' is explored and presented in the forth-coming chapters. This is done by close monitoring and surveillance of the novels of this Jewish Canadian author.

A judicious combination of the formal, sociological and the psychological approaches are adopted in this thesis to bring out the recurring theme of 'Search for identity' in Mordecai Richler's novels. A formalistic approach becomes necessary in studying the form or structure of each novel, for the form of the novel is not always a matter of arbitrary choice but something which is determined by the writer's vision. The psychological approach is adopted to probe into the delineation of characters so as to bring in full nature and magnitude, of the mental agony and sufferings of the characters concerned. The sociological approach will be helpful in studying the novels in the social context, in discussing and analysing the novels in relations to the social setting against which they have been written, in relation
to social status, the social attitudes and the social vision of the writer. Whatever the approach or approaches be, the principal focus of this study is on the theme of search for identity in, the selected six novels of Mordecai Richler. The writer’s narrative technique, which includes his framing of dialogue, use of language and his unique style, are discussed in the fifth chapter as they are determined by the nature of the themes, motifs and social vision of the writer. A separate chapter is allotted to characterization, as it is concretized with the theme. In the concluding chapter an attempt is made to establish firmly the statement of the thesis, which has been dealt with in earlier chapters.

The reason for limiting the study to only six novels of Richler is that the author has dealt with the theme of search for identity in these particular novels with great vigour. As a Jew, Richler has suffered a lot in an alien country like Canada. He pours out his feelings as an alienated Jew through the protagonists of these novels, taken for study. Hence the selection of only six novels of the author.