CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISATION

In any fictional writing the themes and motifs are concretized only through characters. Characters are fictional creations and novelists create them to humanize their themes. They are the instruments that finally create an illusion of reality and procure for a work what Coleridge calls ‘that willing suspension of disbelief that constitutes poetic faith’. The character in a novel is made to behave in a particular way – his thoughts, his actions, his dream and his frustrations are all brought in the required proportions to create on the pages of the novel the picture of a man who is more than a mere reality. The novelist follows the twin method of simplification and exaggeration (Ramamurthy, The novels of Charles Dickens). Sometimes a particular character is given a dominant trait such as love, hatred, jealousy or greed, which becomes its characteristic mark. In characterisation the modern novel has moved from a simple descriptive method to the evolution of character through more sophisticated techniques such as the use of interior monologue and the stream of consciousness.
According to Lauriat Lane, Jr., characters in literary art are of four kinds (9). They are psychological, social, ethical and spiritual. E.M. Forster classifies characters into 'Flat' and 'Round' characters (10). The 'Flat' characters are those, which stand for a single idea or quality. They also represent a particular trait in the society. But the 'round' characters are endowed with intricate feelings, emotions and introspections. A character can be revealed in five ways by his action, his speech, his thoughts, his physical appearance and what other characters say or think of him. The alienated characters break away from their social mores and stand aloof. The revolutionary characters are those who revolt against the existing social order. Ian Milligan, Opines in his The English Novels that the novel has been used to report 'on people and places, to introduce readers to new environments and condition of life (8). Richler introduces his own people and place in his novel thus enlightening the readers about various characters prevailing in his world.

It is noteworthy that the nature of the sufferers and conflicts of the protagonists of many of the 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 and
rootlessness. Richler’s characters too face such tension and rootlessness and constantly search for their identity. They strive hard to establish themselves in the Canadian Society. This chapter deals with the characterization of the protagonists and the other minor characters of Richler’s novels which are taken for study.

In *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, Richler creates a morally complex character, Duddy Kravitz, a Jewish youth who is obsessed with the desire of acquiring land in order to escape the Jewish ghetto and make something of himself. His grand-father’s words “A man without land is nobody” constantly echoes in his ears and mind. He does not want to remain a nobody. He wants to establish his identity somehow or other. He does not mind to stoop to any level to achieve his goal.

Duddy’s character is such that his decisions have been made on the wrong terms and based on nothing at all. He is impulsive who does not think about the consequences of his action. He has devoted his energy to acquire the vast area of land he is dreaming of. He is highly enterprising, hard working and all the more crazy in money making. Son of a poor taxi driver, he wants to climb up the social ladder by hook or crook and not by forthright ways. The ambitious
Duddy Kravitz does not mind doing odd jobs. He sells toilet supplies and drives his father's taxi at night. He is so enamored of money and land that he is incapable of loving and marrying a girl. Even his love towards Yvette fades away when his crooked mind centers round acquiring money to be paid for the land. Duddy is a motherless boy. This might be the reason for his insincere, fraudulent and impulsive nature. Had he been brought up by his mother, his character might have been entirely different. Being a boy brought up by his irresponsible father, Duddy chooses wrong ways to achieve his goal in life, that is, money making. Max, Duddy's father proudly reminiscing about his highly successful son, gives praise for his wrong acts.

you could see from the day of his birth that he was slated for fame and fortune. A Comer. Why I remember when he was still at F.F.H.S, they had a teacher there, an anti-Semite of the anti-Semites, a lush-head, and my boy was the one who led the fight against him and drove him out of the school

(Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, 318).

Duddy's father does not try to spot out the wrong doings of his son. On the contrary he is proud of Duddy who is inclined to come up in life somehow or other. Had his father been strict with Duddy,
the latter's lifestyle and money-making device would have been entirely different. Duddy is a neglected, underprivileged boy from the Montreal slums and he wants to improve his lot by slippery tactics. Duddy is described by his uncle as a little Jewish boy on the make and a busy, conniving little yid. The author as well as the readers love as well as despise Duddy. He is ambitious. This makes the readers and the author love him. His ways are crooked. That is why everybody hates him.

In the very beginning of the novel, the little scoundrel Duddy Kravitz is introduced to the readers as a teen-ager and a student of Fletcher's Field High School who is the leader of a gang of notorious students. Richler describes his physical appearance thus.

David Kravitz was a small, narrow-chested boy of fifteen with a thin face. His black eyes were ringed with dark circles and his pale, bony cheeks were criss-crossed with scratches as he shaved twice daily in his attempt to encourage a beard (Ibid,11).

Duddy wants to establish himself even when he is in his fifteenth year. He was the president of room forty one. Duddy and his gang try to bully Mr. Mac Pherson their new class teacher in several ways. He does not bother about Mr. Mac Pherson when the latter sees him
smoking. He does not have moral fear for his teacher. Mac Pherson asks Duddy to put out the cigarette immediately. But Duddy coolly says that his father is aware of his smoking habit. Mac Pherson retorts saying that Duddy's father is not fit enough to be a father at all. This comment enrages Duddy. As Mac Pherson begins to climb up the icy concrete steps that led into the school, he feels a plunk on the back of his neck as the snow ball smashes to smithereens just about his coat collar. This is how Duddy takes revenge on his teacher for abusing his father. "Nobody gets away with insulting my old man", (Ibid, 12) Duddy says. Duddy is a spoilt child, thanks to his father. This is a sample of Duddy's character and there are several episodes in the novel which proclaim the perversion, arrogance and filthy side of his character. Mac Pherson accuses Duddy that he is responsible for his wife's death. "you murdered her, you filthy street Arab" (Ibid, 40) Duddy asks his classmates, "what does he mean? I killed his god dam wife?" (Ibid, 40) So the cold war continues between the two. Why does Duddy behave so badly to his teacher? Even at the age of fifteen he wants to establish his identity in F.F.H.S. He wants to prove his leadership qualities by leading a gang of students. He wants to become popular, but he becomes notorious. He wants to make his
classmates believe that he has the guts to act against his school masters. If Duddy’s bad qualities are nipped in the bud either by his father or grandfather, he would have blossomed into a man of perfection. But Duddy commits mistakes after mistakes which lands him into trouble.

When Duddy was seven years old, he was sent to his grand-father’s house. He spends away his time in gardening. Simcha Kravitz, Duddy’s grand-father sows the seeds of ambition in his grandson’s mind. He says,

your grand father was a failure in this country............your uncle Benjay will all his money is nothing too. Of your father I won’t even speak. A man without land is nobody.
Remember that, Duddel (Ibid, 49).

Duddy’s desire to become a big shot in the society sprouts on hearing his grandfather’s words. In the school he fights with the weak students and makes friends with the stronger ones. He teaches them how to steal at Kresyes and split street car tickets so that one could be used twice, how to smoke with bubble pipes and the way babies are made. His friends’ mothers warned them not to move with Duddy Kravitz.. Such is the character of Duddy even at the beginning of his
teens. For tormenting a School boy, he is expelled from the Parochial School. It is but natural for a spoilt child to turn into a fraud in future.

Duddy’s ambition to be a businessman is sparked when he is in the Parochial School itself. His school activities are decidedly more commercial. He gets his start in stamps like so many other boys, by responding to an advertisement for salesmen in Tip Top Comics. Duddy gets commission in this deal and he invests stamp business profits in the comic book market. He buys contraband American comics, 204 a piece and rents it out for 34 a day. Gradually he starts selling books like Dick Tracy’s Night out supplied by Barney, a Park-Avenue News-stand Proprietor. Duddy orders these type of books since the American Comics books are in demand to quench the sexual thirst of the teen-age boys. But Barney was picked up by the police and fined. Duddy was caught with a large stock on hand. This venture is the first one of Duddy to end in disaster. He also fails in selling the hockey sticks with the star–players’ name stenciled on them. He has got the hockey - sticks only through stealthy ways and this business does not last long. Duddy has taken his first regular job at the age of thirteen in the summer of 1945. He starts working in his uncle
Benjay's dress factory for sixteen odd hours a week. He starts saving money then on.

Duddy worked on the week ends and each summer..... He continued to put money in the bank. For Duddy had never forgotten what his grandfather had said 'A man without land is nobody' (Ibid, 62).

Duddy wants to be a somebody, one who is recognized by this Canadian Society. He has started searching for identity, right from the age of thirteen. Duddy Kravitz is influenced by his father's exaggerated description of the Boy Wonder. He wants to be another Boy Wonder. But the latter is a fraud and a total corrupt.

Max, in fact, delighted in telling tales about the legendary Boy Wonder. His favourite, a story that Duddy had heard over and over again (Ibid, 24).

A good father would not push his son into a gutter like this by rubbing him on the wrong side. Duddy wants to emulate the example of Boy Wonder to establish his identity. He could have done this by proving his merit in studies and by placing himself in a good job. On the contrary he tries all back-door methods for social recognition. After
graduating from F.F.H.S., in third class with poor scores, Duddy takes up a job as a waiter in an hotel in the Laurentian Mountains. It is in Ste Agathe des Monts, he befriends Cuckoo, an employee of the same hotel. Duddy tells about his business ideas to Cuckoo. Richer brings out Duddy's hidden desires of the heart.

Next summer, he thought, he might try to set up in the movie rental business..... Another idea he had was to make colour movies of weddings and Bar-Mitzvahs. There might be a goldmine in this......

(Ibid, 72-73).

The self-confidence in Duddy Kravitz has to be appreciated. But the way in which he acquires the land to build a big restaurant is a crooked one. After getting the salary at Rubin’s and the most handsome amount of 300 dollars as tips, Duddy dreams about his future, lying exhausted on his cot.....

Duddy realized how little money he had in big business terms and he dreamed about his future. He knew what he wanted and that was to own his own land and to be rich, a somebody, but he was not sure of the smartest way to go about it. He was confident. But there had been other comers before him. South America, for instance, could no longer be discovered.
It had been found. Tani Home permanent had been invented........was something art there, like let's say the atom bomb formula before it had been discovered and Duddy dreamed that he would find it and make his fortune

(Ibid, 75).

A desperate Duddy’s dream though positive, sounds childish. He hopefully says that everyone has to make a start. He thinks that only a small grocer turns out to be the proprietor of a super market. He thinks of the Boy Wonder’s wonderful deeds (as narrated by max) and decides to learn from his father about the steps taken by Boy wonder to pluck the fruit of success in life. Poor Duddy plans for a successful future. He keenly observes the businessmen who visit St. Rubin’s. He goes to the extent of printing his letter head thus: ‘Duddley Kane, Sales agent’. Every week he marks the advertising section of the Sunday edition of The New York Times for novelties, bargains and possible agencies. The most enterprising Duddy gets tips not only for his service as a waiter but also for his business from the businessmen staying at the hotel. He also acts as a banker for the roulette game and tries to multiply the money in hand.

Duddy Kravitz happens to meet Yvette, a beautiful teenager, the second floor Chambermaid at St. Rubins. Love blossoms between the two
for the first time, Duddy and Yvette make a trip to the other side of
the mountain, where there is a beautiful lake, far away from any
habitation. The romantic atmosphere kindles Yvette to make advances
towards Duddy. She tries to make love but the ambitious and ever
dreaming Duddy fancies a possibility of owning the vast area of lake
to build a huge restaurant. There are no signs of life or ownership or
construction near the lake.

Duddy cracked his knuckles, he beat his
fist into the palm of his open hand again
and again (Ibid,97).

Yvette tries to attract Duddy towards her beauty but Duddy is totally
absorbed by the fact that he has found out the land he wanted to
acquire that is his life time ambition of fulfilling his grandfather's words.
Duddy was not in a mood to love Yvette. His reaction shocks Yvette.
Duddy Kravitz broke rudely from Yvette's embrace and raced down
the hill and plunged into the lake. This search of fortune of Duddy
makes him unkind, drained of love and motivates him to commit
forgery. Duddy comes out of the lake and discloses his heart's desires
to Yvette whom he thinks would be his life partner. He says that he
wants to buy the entire land. The rocks in the lake have to be
cleared. He has to buy the land as early as possible because prices skyrocket overnight. He asks Yvette to keep the proposal of buying the land as a secret. His only aim is to manipulate funds to buy the land. Yvette is also willing to part with some of her savings. This is her contribution to the happiness of Duddy, whom she loves sincerely.

Duddy toils day and night to make money to buy the land. He drives his father’s taxi at night, sells liquid soap and toilet supplies to factories. He tries for jobs which do not suit his age. His friends and well wishers say that he cannot run before he learn to walk. Duddy is very enthusiastic. He is hasty. His only aim is to earn money to be paid for the land. His eyes fall on the film Industry and television too. He gets into contact with one Mr. Friar the distinguished Director of documentary films. Duddy expresses his idea to make films of weddings and Bar – Mitzvahs. He wants to investigate the whole field of film industry and one day he hoped to make real features. This self-confidence, optimism, courageousness, industry and perseverance in Duddy’s character make the readers admire him.

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz is a novel about the wish fulfilment of an incompetent child, who dreams of performing heroic deeds to establish his identity. The Jewish youth from the Montreal
slums aspiring to become a top-most figure in the society, is willing to work hard to succeed in his endeavor. But, for the fulfilment of his ambition, he has to pay dearly that he loses the friendship of Yvette and Virgil. The Poor boy’s desire to escape the Jewish ghetto, to prove his individuality, to own the vast area of land, to stand on his own legs, Duddy has to run from pillar to post jumping from one job to another. He wants to boost up his image by hook or crook. Duddy is carried away by his grand father’s words that a man without land is nobody. He is always haunted by the very thought that he must hold a status in the Canadian Society by owning the land. He stoops to any level and ready to mortgage his head to mobilize funds to buy the vast area of land. Duddy’s moral perplexes the readers but he has a sense of fulfilment and achievement in whatever he has done to reach the ultimate goal. He has achieved what he desires. Perhaps this would give him a status in the society. He feels that he is no longer the son of a taxi-driver but the owner of a big hotel. But in this process, he has alienated his friends Virgil and Yvette.

There are many reasons for Duddy’s impulsive nature. Duddy’s feeling of insecurity and isolation might have led him to forge the signature
of his friend Virgil to draw money from the bank to pay the balance amount for the land. He is forced by circumstances to commit mistakes after mistakes. Apart from longing to buy a vast area of land, Duddy indulges in the mean act of blackmailing Dingle man, a drug-trafficking scoundrel. When a situation arises that he cannot clear his bills in the hotel and Dingle man has the idea to buy the land, he forges Virgil’s signature and obtains money from the bank. Both Virgil and Yvette are shocked by the act of Duddy. Yvette bids good bye to Duddy once for all. But Virgil does not sue Duddy and this shows the latter’s magnanimity and forgiving nature.

Duddy tries to earn money by videographing the Bar-Mitzvah of the boys of wealthy men with the help of Mr. Friar, an excellent videographer. Duddy says “They must be in Colour. That would be a big selling point”. (Ibid, 116) Duddy craves for perfection in the art of videography. That is why the exorbitant charges made by him have never been minded by his customers. Mr. Friar says that a new Camera is required for their profession and this is readily sanctioned by Duddy. Thus came ‘Dudley Kane Enterprises’ into existence in the Empire building, an office that had telephone facility too. The budding businessman works day and night to mint money and establish his fortune. Yvette reminds Duddy of the balance amount of thirty-two hundred Dollars that has to be paid within three weeks,
otherwise there is severe Competition among wealthy ones to buy the land.

Duddy gives instant reply.

We've got three weeks and I'll raise the
rest of the money even if I have to kill
somebody for it (Ibid, 122).

Duddy's reply shocks not only Yvette but also the readers. Duddy's ruthlessness, inhuman nature, greediness, obsessive ness about the land and lack of concern for his fellow-beings reveal the fact that in his search for identity and to establish his individuality, he has become totally devoid of Compassion, kindness, love and sincerity. He has no heart at all, to say. Humanism is totally drained and this aspect of Duddy's Character creates an ambivalent feeling in the readers. They at once love and despise Duddy Kravitz. Poor Duddy might be feeling isolated like an island in the midst of his family consisting of his father and brother. In the absence of his mother, Duddy's father Max has failed to mould Duddy's Character in a proper way. Duddy's insecurity about his future might have made him selfish, greedy and crazy about the acquisition of land. Restlessness, characterises Duddy. 

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz reflects the psyche of Mordecai Richler, who himself was an immigrant and brought up in the Montreal St. Urbain street's surroundings.
Mordecai Richler, the creator of the Character of Duddy Kravitz has succeeded in bringing out the feelings and emotions, desires and ambitiousness of his protagonist. Richler himself views Duddy with commendable objectivity. The author’s ambivalent attitude towards the protagonist Duddy who claws his way to the top bears testimony to the fact that ambivalency is in the very blood of the author and his creations. Richler both admires and despises Duddy. He has portrayed the positive and the negative side of his character. Like Richler, Duddy simultaneously accepts and rejects the Montreal society of his childhood and youth. This tendency is to mock and at the same time accommodate human shortcomings. This novel marks the beginning of Richler’s mature period as he employs a strong counterpointing comedy, satire and compassion, reality and fantasy in his portrayal of the protagonist, towards whom he has openly expressed both admiration and detestation. Richler’s ambivalence contributes largely to the scintillating portrait of this young rogue Duddy and it serves to set apart this novel from other novels. Duddy himself has two opposing personalities within him that he vacillates between his grandfather’s morality and his business rival’s corruption.

Duddy’s positive side of his character is his pushing nature, ambitiousness and optimism and his statement to Yvette that he has to
create jobs for he is a public benefactor. Duddy wants to create jobs for
people, it is a good sign, showing his hidden nobility. He discloses his
desire to Yvette...

I want to buy this lake. I'm going to build a
children's camp and a hotel here. Want to make
a town. St. Agathe is getting very crowded and
five years from now, people will be looking for
other places to go (Ibid, 100).

This brings the hidden optimism in his character. A deep vision about his
future and his self-confidence makes Duddy an admirable Character too.
Having only a small amount of money, his ability to fancy such possibilities
of building a number one hotel to cater to the needs of the future tourists
make the readers to view Duddy as an enterprising person. Duddy Kravitz,
in his search for identify and to establish himself in the society, buys the
land. His father is as usual, all praise for his son and the latter never feels
sorry for his act of forgery and severing of the friendship of Virgil and Yvette.
Time becomes an obsession with him and he is soon trying to do two or
even three things at once.

He kept self improvement books beside him in the
car to glance at when he stopped for a red light

(Ibid, 229).
Duddy has started improving his physique by doing exercise and has enriched his Vocabulary by reading books. He makes a trip to New York to bring back his aunt Ida. His uncle asks Duddy to give up shooting vulgar movies and take over his factory. But Duddy says “I've got other ambitions”. (Ibid, 242) when Duddy’s uncle rebukes him that he is always after money, Duddy retorts...

.....you think I should be running after something else besides money? ....... I want some land,

uncle ........ I'm going to own my own place

one day. King of the castle, that's me

(Ibid, 244).

Duddy is thrilled, when in the end, he hears the waiter pointing at him to somebody saying that he is the man who has purchased the land round lake St. Pierre. Duddy has established his identity by owning the land he has been dreaming of. He has got recognition in the society. Duddy who has no mother and not much of a father is almost like an orphan. His brother Lennie is devoted to his studies. Max, a drunkard does not show any interest in bringing his son in an upright way or teach the Values of life. Duddy reminds the reader of Tom Jones the foundling. Like Tom, he sets out to find his place in the world and succeeds in it. Duddy's search for
himself has strongly picaresque overtones. Like Tom, he ranges through a very broad spectrum of his society, exposing to the reader the vices and follies of the world in which he is forced to make his way. He is less fortunate than Tom for whom everything works out beautifully, since Duddy discovers at the end of the novel that he belongs to the rotten world of his father Max and Jerry Dingle man. He realises that there is no place for him in the gentle, loving and kindly world of his grandfather or even in the world of Yvette and Virgil. His frantic headlong search ends with his discovery that he fits all too well into a vulgar and raucous world devoid of understanding and love. Duddy's statement to Cohen that there is not a businessman in town who hasn't at least one bankruptcy in his pocket is absolutely correct. Many a businessmen adopt crooked methods to develop their business and there are some in the field who are absolutely forthright persons. Duddy belongs to the former category and the readers have to wink at Duddy's fraudulent practice. The researcher is not trying to justify Duddy's follies. It is but natural in a society in which Duddy is put up to practise stealthy way to come up in life.
Duddy becomes a ruthless entrepreneur with an impressive list of omission and commission to his discredit and all to follow the dream implanted in him by the kindly old Simcha

(Bevan,6).

It may appear as a defence mechanism to put the entire blame on Duddy's grandfather. It is Duddy who puts in his efforts to earn money by doing jobs after jobs and when he fails, he resorts to forgery in order to acquire the land he is longing for. In R.K. Narayanan's The Guide Raju is a matured hypocrite who forges the signature of Rosie, but Duddy is only a teen ager who is not aware of the gravity of his misdoing of forging Virgil's signature to fulfil his dream of buying the land. But he says to Yvette that he has done it only for all of them and he would certainly pay back the money to Virgil in course of time. But Yvette totally cuts off his relationship. He becomes the Boy wonder as wished by his father. Jerry Dingleman, the original Boy wonder whom Duddy takes as his role-model and a living symbol of success is none but a racketeer. It is Max, his father who sows the seed of ambition in the mind of the budding teen-ager Duddy. At the end of the novel, when Duddy has been rejected by his friends and grandfather, Max is
there to embrace his son patting on his back for his misdoings. It is but natural for a father to give solace to his son who is in trouble.

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz gives a picture of the apprenticeship of the protagonist, which is the very subject of the novel. There are brilliant sketches of minor Characters such as Auntie Ida, cuckoo Kaplan, Rabbi Goldstone and many others, but they remain as extras. The motivating Characters behind Duddy's apprenticeship are Max, Simcha Kravitz, uncle Benjai, the Boy wonder, Virgil and Yvette. They are also the leading characters but Duddy alone remains in the readers' hearts as he outshines the other characters.

The novel The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz is an attack on the world of Duddy Kravitz, which is the world of Jewish Montreal. It is interesting to note that Duddy's Montreal is a bi-cultural city, Jewish and non Jewish. All non-Jews, French and English are seen as pretty much the same, the two culture theme of two solitudes takes as a new look in Richler's novel. The first part of the novel deals with the school life of Duddy Kravitz at F.F.H.S, the second part is concerned with the protagonist's attempts to produce an art movie in collaboration with Mr. Friar; the third part revolves round Duddy's initial success as a movie producer and the final part deals with Duddy's various tricks to obtain the land.
He acquires the land in the end thus establishing his social status. He fights his way to success by battling against an established order and system. By fair or foul means he does reach his goal.

The most Jewish of Richler's novels, *St. Urbain's Horseman* is an incisive study of the ambivalent mind of Jake Hersh, the protagonist, a replica of Richler himself in character. The author has stated with frankness that Jake is closer to him than anybody else. The autobiographical tone can be traced in this excellent novel of Richer.

Jake Hersh, the Jewish youth who is at the threshold of his middle age, has left Canada long back and living in London as a mediocre film Director married to a gentile. His mind is oscillating between love and suspicion about Nancy. Nancy, Jake's faithful wife tries her best to keep her family in happiness and harmony. Jake is very much attached to his family. He adores his wife and loves his children. But he compares his mediocrity in his profession with that of his friend Luke who has ascended to the top in the film industry. Jake is a loveable husband, father and a son. Such a person has been charged and being tried at old Bailey for alleged rape, sodomy, indecent assault and possession of Cannabis. How he overcomes his
mental trauma, his search for his cousin Joey the horsemman, the humiliation when he is prevented by the immigration officers to proceed to New York, his desire to establish himself as a number one director in the film Industry, his possessiveness towards Nancy, his jealousy towards Nancy's consultation with the gentile gardener about gardening, his ignorance about the gentile way of life and Jake's reminiscing of the past events form the story of this novel. His character is revealed through various episodes spun by Richler.

Jake Hersh is obsessed about his cousin Joey Hersh who protests against anti-Semitism and directs the Jews to fight against the Jewish community; the Jewish leaders betray him to the anti-Semitic group. Jake holds uncle Abe responsible for this and soon discovers that the terrible tragedy of the Holocaust has not changed uncle Abe's response towards the haters of the Jews. On the other hand uncle Abe thinks that any confrontation with the French Canadians will seriously affect the Jewish immigrants. He is sad that the younger generations have severed ties with the Jewish tradition and align themselves with various liberal groups. He wants an understanding between the Jews and the Jew-haters. The alliance of the younger generation with various liberal forces in Canada seems to
reflect a desperate need to belong to form a part of a group which will define their identity.

They believe that their relationships with the liberal intellectual gentiles, based on their mutual interest in liberal causes, will eliminate hostility and hatred towards Jews. American Liberalism becomes an attractive model for the young Jewish intellectuals, such as Jake Harsh, who emerge from the ghetto (Brenner, 91).

But Jake's dream about his conquest of America is shattered when he has to face a trial in London for sexual indecencies that he has not committed. He is refused entry to the United States and is sent back to Canada. He is mistaken as his cousin Joey and this wounds Jake's sentiments. He is very much disillusioned with American Liberalism.

He realizes now that the American dream which has shaped his life is false, and that his faith in American Justice and equality is an insane as that of the old sick survivor of the Holocaust (Ibid, 95).

At once he embarks upon creating a new myth out of the raw material of the life of his cousin Joey,
a superhuman figure of authority and heroism,
St. Urtain’s Horseman a Jewish avenger who
will right wrongs and punish evil-doers (Ibid, 98).

Like Duddy’s obsession to own land, Jake desires to see the
Horseman, his conscience and mentor. To Jake, the Horseman is the
redemptive deliverer of the Jews. He is a false god whom Jake puts
his trust in. But at the end of the novel Jake realizes that he has
been chasing to reach nothing but a mirage in his isolated, deserted
life as a Jew who is climbing to pluck the fruits of success as a film
- director. Though he has a faithful wife, loveable mother and
children, Jake Hersh, from the beginning looks alienated, looking like an
isolated soul. This immigrant consciousness of Richler, a third
generation Jew, could not assimilate to the surroundings of the new
country for quite a long time. Like Richler, Jake leaves for London to
prove his talent in the field of film industry. He resembles Richler in all
aspects.

Jake is terribly upset by the ruthlessness of the American
Immigrant authorities towards him, the horrors of the Holocaust
particularly the old survivor of the Concentration Camp and the
attitude of the gentile towards the Jews. His imagination threatens him
with nightmares of his own children being murdered by Nazis. Further, the vulnerability of the Jewish population, concentrated in the ghettos during the second world war, the helplessness of the victims taken into gas chambers or shot mercilessly over open graves communicates to his own weakness and defenselessness.

Jake is very much upset and humiliated when he is refused entry into New York. He is mistaken for Joey and interrogated by the American Immigration officers. He experiences all kinds of dishonour and shame. His attempt to migrate to New York is thwarted. He proves his innocence and returns to London. The mature Jake stands apart from the young Jake who emulates Joey's tendency to blame others for his problems. He feels insulted when he is interrogated by the officers.

Jake Hersh is ambivalent like Richler himself. His ambivalence shows itself in various ways. He simultaneously accepts and rejects the Montreal Jewish society of his childhood and youth. He has the tendency to mock and at the same time to accommodate human short comings. In this regard, St. Urbain’s Horseman is a study of the ambivalent mind of Jake Hersh,
At the age of thirty-seven, Jake attempts a self-examination characterized by inner conflicts and Contradictory feelings. In his intimate emotional relationships with his wife, his parents, and other relatives and close friends, he experiences strong feelings of attraction and aversion. His experiences as an artist and as a contemporary Jew reflect deep-seated ambivalent feelings as well (Ramraj, 9).

A serious film director grapples with the artists’ desire to be an active participant and an observer of life as well. Being a modern Jew, he appreciates the need for Jews to buy off calamity and to temporize, but he yearns for heroic confrontation and challenge symbolized by the Horse man in the novel. He has married Nancy, a gentile but he hates the gentile group itself. He at once loves his wife who is a gentile and does not like Nancy sharing a secret with the gardener who is also a gentile. Jake is ignorant of gardening, but Nancy has a flair for the same. The negative aspect of Jake’s mind is reflected when he spoils the plants in the garden of his neighbour, an old lady. Jake has three lovable kids and a beautiful and faithful wife who are showering affection on him.
You have a gorgeous wife. Three kids.

You’re loved. All the same you’ve managed to
remain an alienated Jew, modishly ugly

(St. Urbain’s Horseman, 14).

Jake underestimates his own self. He thinks he is ugly and not a suitable life partner for the angel Nancy. He says, “But at thirty seven you are a disappointment to yourself, a wash-out,……..” (Ibid 14 ). He suffers from inferiority complex and compares himself with his friend Luke, who is a number one script writer in the film industry. He goes to the extent of thinking that a clandestine affair prevails between Nancy and Luke. Jake’s mother Mrs. Hersh also mistakes Nancy when she sees her going out with Luke. But they have a healthy friendship. Right from the beginning when Jake was at the prime of his youth, the desire of becoming a film director sprouted in his heart. He approaches his father, who is already divorced from his mother, and shares his desire of going to New York to start his career as a film director. Both of them are sitting in a pub and discussing about the pros and cons of entering into film industry. Jake says that he needs 250 Dollars to Make his trip to New York, but his father advises his son to seek for a job which gives him self-respect and security. He further says many a businessmen have lost all their money in the end. Some have
either died as bankrupts or committed suicide. A dejected Jake approaches his uncles and brother-in-law for money but he could not get any help from them. Somehow he leaves Canada and settles down in London and establishes himself as a mediocre film director. Finally when he is able to make the trip to the neighbouring country he could not proceed because of the interrogation of the Immigration officers. Though ambitious his misfortune spoils the entire lot.

Jake’s ambiguity in accepting himself as a Jew and a Canadian, at times puzzles the readers. As a small boy at St. Urbain’s Street, he is ashamed of his parents’ Yiddish accent; now as an adult he lives with his family in Hampstead, Sammy mocks his immigrant’s twang. Though he wants to escape from Montreal’s slums, not a day passes, without meditating about Canada.

He went into the kitchen and poured himself another drink 4:15, a quarter past eleven in Toronto. If he were there now he would be shooting pool with Cherished friends at Julie’s, or be drinking in the Park Plaza Roof Bar, enjoying being at home. At ease in Canada (Ibid, 4).

Jake Hersh though physically existing in London, his mind and soul linger around Montreal, his home. He has come to London to try out his fortune to
establish his identity and mint money in the film industry. At Old Bailey where Jake's trial is going on, the Clerk asks Harry a question about his religion. Like Jake, his friend Harry does not want to let down his religion.

As the clerk brought Harry Stein the New Testament to swear on, the Usher coughed and asked in a small, courteous voice, "Religion?" Harry's silence was not merely hostile. It scorched. "Are you, ah, Jewish?"

Before Jake's eyes, the ruinously expensive legal advice, the cajoling, the rehearsals, the tranquillizers, all went up in smoke. "For purposes of Census, taxation and pogroms", Harry proclaimed in a swelling voice, his St. Crispin's Day voice, to the somnolent court room, "I am a Jew"

(Ibid, 70–71).

Richler's faith and extreme love for his religion are revealed through many such passages in the novel. Jake has the habit of reading papers and magazines that have been sent by his friend from Montreal every week. Leading the list of unreadable is a book titled Canada, Our Good Neighbour to the North. Canada is the very breath of this immigrant soul in London.

Jake's mental trauma of facing the trial at Old Bailey reveals the fact that he is a victim of circumstances. Nobody could understand his agony, even Nancy could not.
Of course Jake suffered his agonies, his guilt, his attacks of fear, but there were also times when it was getting off That along with him more than going to prison for two years (Ibid, 16).

Jake is very much worried about the plight of his family and the question that lurks in his heart is that somebody has to take care of his near and dear when he goes to the prison. He feels ashamed that he has been sued by a German whore for the alleged rape and in fact he has not committed any crime except allowing his friend Harry to use his Hampstead home when he was on tour and the family was out on a holiday. This shows Jake's responsible role as a husband, father and a son. But he could not help being tensed till the day of the judgement. He is fined and acquitted from the entire case. His mental trauma comes to an end with that. Only Harry gets imprisonment, as he is the main culprit. Jake’s past is Characterised by self-indulgence, soaring ambition and search for identity. He wants to climb up the social ladder and establish himself as a film director. To some extent he succeeds in it. Jake achieves some recognition as a film director; he considers his work to be meaningless when compared to the Horseman's active participation in causes such as the Spanish Liberation, establishment
of Israel and meeting out vengence on nazi war Criminals. Sitting passively in what Jake calls his 'Attic aerie' he often day dreams of the Horse man.

.....may be this very minute, he is out riding somewhere. Our the olive - green hills of the upper Galilee or maybe in Mexico again. Or Catalonia. But, most likely, in Paraguay (Ibid 30).

Richler's Characterization of Jake Hersh is a mixture of his loyalty towards his family and his faith for his Hebrew religion. For the Characterization of the protagonist alone this novel is hailed as Richlar's master-piece and it is a cent percent unadulterated fact.

Richler's third novel A Choice of Enemies is packed with different types of characters. Norman Price, the protagonist of this novel is a man of principles. He is an expatriate is London making a living as a writer of thrillers and film scripts. He is a Former Canadian pilot and he mingles closely with the other American Emigres at London. But the American Jewish exiles Sony and his friends reject Norman and Ernest. Norman magnanimously renders his friendship of many.

Norman loves his brother Nicky. He sends him a hundred Dollars for his birthday. He takes time to write funny letters to Nicky who is in the American Army. Norman is shocked to receive the death news of his dear
brother. He is not aware of the fact that Earnest has caused the death of his brother Nicky. He tries to help Ernest to get his papers but he is totally upset when he comes to know that Ernest has murdered Nicky.

Norman gives much importance to values in life. Such a person of good morality suffers from amnesia at times. He often loses himself in thought.

He had the manner of some one who had forgotten some little task or errand but couldn’t try as hard he could, remember exactly what it was, so while he talked to you he seemed to be thinking of or seeking out, other issues

(A choice of Enemies, 18).

This weakness of Norman lands him into trouble. He becomes a stalk of laughter in the Waterloo Air Terminal where he goes after a balloon which gets stuck into the ceiling. He behaves like a madman. He silently follows Vivian who takes pity on him and takes him home. This is a turning point in Norman’s life. He is self conscious about what people tells him of his remote expression, his severe face and just to please everybody he often smiles. His smile is shy, hesitant and gentle. But his smile is so incongruous that it startles rather than pleases. Norman price has come to London to study and to become a great script writer and film director. He was a Canadian Pilot too. He is as ambitious as any other hero of Richler’s
novels. But the high-principled man does not stoop to any level to achieve his goal. He is highly educated, a University professor in America. But he always thinks about Canada with great love and affection. He reads the Montreal star sent by his friend regularly. He was a student of Cambridge University. He left Canada at the age of eighteen. He had been back to Canada many times-since, but after he had resigned his job at an American university four years ago he had come back to London again. Norman, unlike the other emigres, had taken London to his heart. He enjoys living there.

Coming again to the loss of memory, Norman’s amnesia is not organic. It is functional but inexplicable. He suffered his first failure of memory, about two months after a plane crash. He had put himself in the hands of the psychiatrists. He was there in the hospital for one month. So this mental deformity has caused embarrassment to the hero of this novel many a times.

Norman’s love for Sally and his meeting her for the first time have to be discussed. Norman met Sally at a party hosted by Mr. Winkle man. Norman already knows Sally’s father and Sally is drawn towards him at first sight. Norman too is attracted towards her. Her warm quizzical blue eye captivates his heart. He behaves decently with her in the theatre. He helps
Sally to shift her things to Karp's house. Gradually Norman and sally become inseparable. Norman’s former girl friend Joey who is married to Charlie still has a soft corner for him. But Norman does not betray his friend Charlie though Joey makes advances at times. Norman is an intellectual and has been working on a book called *History of John Dryden and his Time* for nearly a decade. Such a wise person falls in love with a young girl and the latter leaves him by choosing Ernst as her boy friend. Finally Norman marries Vivian and settles in life. Norman’s association with Charlie, winkle man and Bob is friendly as well as professional. He writes interesting scripts and earns money. But he has not fully established himself in his profession. He boozes with his associates but always balanced. Norman cherishes the sweetness of his younger days at Montreal. To put it in a nutshell, Norman price is a perfect gentleman, who has not wounded anybody’s sentiments including Ernst, lovable and kind. His intellect and wisdom add Charm to his Character. His tolerance with Karp, the nagging old man is worth mentioning here.

Middle aged and burdened with memories and affections that belong to other times, Norman has principles that either shot through with Contradictions or acted upon, produce the worst effects imaginable. His veneration of his father and his affection for Nicky are emanation of his own
dissatisfaction with himself, his amnesia an ominous metaphor for his
misapprehension of the past and his flight from any reality too painful to
bear. Each and every reader sympathizes with Norman price when he loses
his memory at the waterloo Air terminal, thinking the woman and the child
who get down from the flight are his wife and child respectively.

Norman’s championing of Ernst, his silent editing of Charlie’s screen
play, his attitude towards Horton at winkle man’s party—all gestures that
proceed from disinterested and heart felt loyalties and beliefs-interest
uncomfortably with his new career of writing thrillers, with the downward
course of his misplaced love for sally and with the bathos of his marriage to
Vivian. Norman is unable to confront the dilemma Richler places squarely
before him. He does not know how to deal with Ernest who is his younger
brother’s killer. But he doesn’t take any revenge on him. One can say that
Norman price is a decent man trying to do the right thing. He stands up for
his political convictions when questioned by Mc Carthyites in protecting
Charlie Lawson from the truth about Joey or about the editing of Charlie’s
script. But Norman without his knowledge becomes the cause for sally’s
suicide. He drives Bob home from the party. Had Bob been to Sally’s place
directly from the hotel, Sally’s life would have been saved. Norman’s flight
from Sally and London are the reasons behind the hasty decision of Sally,
an innocent girl. Norman is destined to marry Vivian who is totally a stranger to him. He couldn't identify his enemies but destiny has played a Crucial role in Norman's life.

Richler's portrayal of the character of Ernst Haupt, shows his ambivalent attitude towards Germans. Ernst Haupt a German who escapes in a truck from the eastern Zone of Germany to London seems to be of a fraudulent nature. But as the story develops the goodness, the helping tendency, compassion, kindness towards Sally, longing to earn the friendship of Karp and the other immigrants in London bear testimony to the fact that he wants to lead a normal life like an ordinary human being.

Ernst's response to the truck driver, in the beginning of the novel, is a hairline away from violence. Ernst inserts his hand into his jacket where he might have kept his papers. Simultaneously he reaches towards his knife and this movement is a starting point for one of the novel's more daunting challenges to present Ernst as both more and less than the obvious sum of his political and historical parts to make him a credible moral agent...

an amoral product of his time and place,
a practised pick pocket, an efficient killer,
an expert seducer a multilingual conman

(Wright, 264).
In the very first chapter Ernst is introduced to the readers as a character living in a world that makes him not merely possible, but necessary on the one hand, Ernst is driven by the simple but lethal struggle to survive without country or community, family or friend without the luxury of a system of values and beliefs. Ernst comes into the association of Norman price, Karp, sally and other immigrants. In fact Norman wants to help Ernst and make friendship with him. He extends his support to Ernst in the party hosted by Bella. Ernst had the support of Norman’s brother Nicky. He becomes the victim of circumstances. He is branded as the murderer of Nicky. Ernst keeps this as a secret while he lives with Sally, his ladylove in an apartment, owned by Karp, the concentration camp survivor. Ernst has won the heart of the two brothers, Nicky and Norman.

Ernst feels isolated in London inspite of sally’s abundant love for him. He has Norman’s support till the latter comes to know about the fact that Nicky was killed by Ernst. Ernst does not have a good reception in the parties hosted by the Jews and the other emigres. But he is grateful to Norman for his magnanimity and support. Norman loses his friends because of his acquaintance with Ernst since Ernst is a German. The Jews hate him.
says that he is not a nazi and does not advocate the atrocities meted out to the Jews by the nazis. He is totally against the sending of the Jews to the gas chambers during the Holocaust. But he happens to be a German. The Jews tend to see a Hitler even in an innocent German like Ernst. He patiently listens to the abuses meted out to him. He confesses to Sally that he has come to London illegally. He is from East Germany. He has no papers. He says that he was in the army when he was fourteen. He could speak five languages. But presently he needs money. So he needs a decent job. Ernst expresses his hatred for Germany and Germans to Sally who shares her room with him.

Norman comes to know that Ernst has murdered his brother Nicky. He says that he would kill him. But no such incident happens. Norman understands that it was a mere accident and not a planned murder. When Norman does not turn up to the apartment, it is Ernst who worries a lot. He is not happy about Norman's amnesia. He really cares for him. He suggests that the help of the police should be sought. But Sally does not accept this proposal. This shows Ernst's love for Norman. The latter also forgives Ernst for killing Nicky and snatching Sally his darling from him.
The Portrayal of the character of Norman Price, Ernst, Karp and Sally by Richler shows the author's skill in bringing out the buried expatriate feelings and the longing for establishing their identity in the Canadian Society. Germans are not always the foes of the Jews – this is the message conveyed through the characters of this novel.

Joshua Then and Now, another interesting novel of Richler has some parallels with the happenings in the life of the author. This could be read as a companion piece to St. Urbains Horseman. Like Jake Hersh, Joshua is ambivalent in his attitude and the resemblance between the author and Joshua is much striking. The protagonist Joshua Shapiro is described by Richler as a man charged with contradictions. Though Joshua is not as intensely introspective as Jake, he is neurotically insecure like him in his social and family life. He adheres to traditional, moral values, yet has a perceptible streak of malice in him. He is sympathetic yet sardonic, he has nightmares about his gentile wife's infidelity. He is tormented by fear of real and imagined Nazi butchers and he is obsessively conscious of his mortality. Joshua develops artistic interests and becomes a Journalist. Joshua's childhood at Montreal, his youth and the beginning of his middle age at London are interestingly portrayed by Richler. His
As said earlier Ernst feels alienated in the parties conducted by the other emigres. But he tries his level best to feel at home. He converses with everybody voluntarily though they do not want his friendship. Ernst despite being a German, does not hate the Jews. He is not an anti Semite. He accepts that he is a communist. In the party hosted by sonny, the latter is not inclined in getting introduced to Ernst. Sonny says,

Who wants to know him? Are you seriously asking me a Jew to be tolerant of a little Nazi punk?

(A Choice of Enemies, 98).

But Ernst tolerates all the humiliations and tries to win the emigres’ friendship.

The more hostile his reception the harder Ernst tried to please and the more obnoxious he appeared to others

(Ibid,100).

Ernst Haupt is an embodiment of patience and endurance. In the party he has to answer to so many questions raised by the guests. One accuses him that he was in the ‘Hitler Youth’. But Ernst categorically
fleeing from his constricting home land for Paris, Spain and London makes the readers realize the mysterious side of the protagonist's character. Like Jake Hersh, Joshua Shapiro is first of all a family man. He adores his wife and children. He wants to prove himself a good husband and father to them. Joshua’s past and the present life are well depicted by the author and his character is revealed stage by stage in a mysterious way.

Joshua has an aesthetic sense of beauty. While at the hospital apart from meditating about his future and about his T.V Special that he is going to do in China, he also enjoys the early morning hours, watching the near by lake and seeing the robins feeding on water spiders. As he is a writer he has an aesthetic sense, appreciating beauty wherever it exists. This is the healthy condition of Joshua now but Joshua of the past had bitter experiences. After going home, he manages to hobble as far as his upstairs study, fighting dizziness, trying to gather reassurance from the familiar artifacts.

Joshua is not happy about his mother's profession as a gabret dancer and his father's profession as well. Son of a boxer and an irresponsible person he undergoes all sort of humiliation and hardship by his close relatives. The novel begins with Joshua apparently in
disgrace, holds up in his summer cottage, besieged by the world's press, which has learned that he is apparently at the centre of a homosexual scandal. But the readers see Joshua laughs his head off and they wonder how the first mystery will be solved. Joshua is wearing a black satin panties, when the police detective calls on him. Joshua seems to be a mysterious person and the readers are curious to know how all the mysteries get unraveled.

Joshua is not as intensely introspective as Jake; he exhibits Jake's ambivalent response to his own family and people. Throughout the novel Richler shows Joshua constantly measuring what he and others are now by what they once were. The account of Joshua's ambiguously motivated return to Ibiza in 1978, twenty five years after his first visit, is characterized by recurring comparisons between Spain then and now. The older Joshua's constant thought about Pauline, prone to break downs and alone in Montreal facing the crisis brought on by his brother's embezzlement, contrasts with the more self-centered concerns of young Joshua. After knowing about Kevin's death, Joshua who once deserted Marique and Friebergs in Ibiza now feels responsible for Pauline's break down.
In *Son of a Smaller Hero*, Richler creates an interesting character, Noah Adler, a Jewish idealistic youth who attempts to free himself from the Jewish ghetto.

Noah’s dissatisfaction with his community has much to do with its rigid customs and inherited biases which he feels create a garrison mentality (Ramraj, 21).

Noah Adler, as a boy has spied the gentiles at a restricted beach near his Jewish summer camp and is repelled by their ugly prejudice against Jewish; but Noah is carried away by the beauty and sophistication of the place. He compares this place with his squalid camp. Noah Adler’s aesthetic sense blossoms on his entry into the college. He explores the beauty in music and looks with askance on his communities’ fears and orthodox practices. Though he wants to escape from the clutches of his parents, he is loyal to his mother in the end. The little boy’s feeling of restlessness within his ghetto is portrayed by Richler in an effective manner. Noah’s introduction to Prof. Theo Hall, his unaccepted act of falling in love with Theo’s wife Miriam and his rejection to get married to her. Who is a gentile for the sake of his religion shows who truly is Noah Adler. He is a Jew who cannot embark on any other religion for his own pleasure. He craves for Canadian identity in
the beginning of the novel when he has the perception that all things Canadian are beautiful. But he realises that the loyalty he has for his own religion has made him to cost off his clandestine affair with Miriam. Noah's generosity of hiding his father's past love affair, his belated admiration of his grandfather and his filial love for his mother – all these qualities highlight Noah's character.

Noah's father Wolf Adler is believed to have died for the Torah. But he had an affair with a German girl in the past. The letters written by Wolf Adler, which were not mailed, were kept in a box inside the religious scrolls. Noah Adler alone knows the fact and he conceals it from others. He acts as a true son in the sense that he did not want to let his family's honour down at any cost.

The characters, both major and minor are portrayed in such a way that they contribute to the main theme of the novel. Richler's own brought up at Montreal slums, his striving hard to climb up the social ladder, his search for identity, his concern for his unprivileged community, his feeling of concern towards those sent to the concentration camps and his sense of alienation made him create such characters who could fulfil the author's wish.
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Noah Adler, as a boy has spied the gentiles at a restricted beach near his Jewish summer camp and is repelled by their ugly prejudice against Jews; but Noah is carried away by the beauty of the place and the sophistication of the place. He compares the beautiful place with his squalid camp. Noah Adler's aesthetic sense blossoms on his entry into the college. He explores the beauty in music.

**Son of a Smaller Hero** impresses the readers with its gallery of well-portrayed characters and its remarkable portrait of a sensitive protagonist striking to know himself and looks with askance on his community's fears and orthodox practices. Though he wants to escape from the clutches of his parents, he is loyal to his mother in the end. The little boy's feeling of restlessness within his ghetto is portrayed by Richler in an effective manner. Noah's introduction to Prof. Theo Hall, his unaccepted act of falling in love with Theo's wife Miriam and his rejection to get married to her who is a gentile for the sake of his religion shows how truly is Noah Adler to his religion. He craves for Canadian identity in the beginning of the novel when
he has the perception that all things Canadian are beautiful. But he realizes that the loyalty he has for his own religion has made him to sever his clandestine affair with Miriam.

**Solomon Gursky was Here** is one of the best novels of Mordecai Richler. Solomon Gursky, the protagonist of the novel craves for his Jewish identity. He is inspired by his grandfather and practises the rites and customs of the Jews right from his childhood. Solomon was told in a hotel that it was against the hotel's policy to serve the people of his community. He retorts by saying that he has brought the hotel himself. Solomon is a different kind of Jew who could fight back in order to establish his rightful place in the civilized world. Another character Becky Schwarz wants to establish herself in the Canadian society and she succeeds in her endeavour. Solomon Gursky falls in love with a gentile girl but could not marry her owing to social obstacles. Though Solomon's siblings are rogues of the first order, he tries to be righteous in life. But, Solomon, the champion of the Jews dies in a plan-crash. The second part of the novel revolves round the character – sir Hyman Kaplmsky, a reincarnation of Solomon Gursky.
Richler has created characters who are highly individualistic and capable of asserting the supremacy of the individual over an established order. Even the individual character is influenced and shaped only by the nature and character of the community or socio-cultural situation in which the individual is placed. Richler's novels could be well comprehended if studied deeply against this background and Richler has successfully concretized the characters with the theme of his novels.