ENGL 215 Live Chat 2b

The meeting will begin at 11.00 a.m. ET

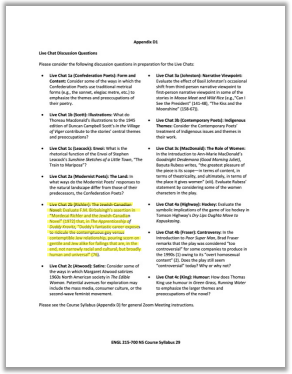
Zoom Meeting Information

- Zoom Meetings are about 60 minutes in length.
- Zoom Meetings are recorded.
- Recordings and PowerPoint presentations are posted on onQ (under "Activities" > "Zoom Meetings").
- Participate in the discussion by using the "Chat" window or by raising your hand in "Reactions."
- Your camera may be on or off.

ENGL 215 Zoom Meetings

Weeks 1-3	**Live Chat 1a** Confederation Poets	**Live Chat 1b** Duncan Campbell Scott	**Live Chat 1c** Stephen Leacock
Weeks 4-6	**Live Chat 2a** Modernist Poets	**Live Chat 2b** Mordecai Richler	**Live Chat 2c** Margaret Atwood
Weeks 7-9	**Live Chat 3a** Basil Johnston	**Live Chat 3b** Contemporary Poets	**Live Chat 3c** Ann-Marie MacDonald
Weeks 10-12	**Live Chat 4a** Tomson Highway	**Live Chat 4b** Brad Fraser	**Live Chat 4c** Thomas King

ENGL 215 Live Chat 2b



Appendix D1

Live Chat Discussion Questions

Please consider the following discussion questions in preparation for the Live Chats:

- **Live Chat 1a (Confederation Poets): Form and Content:** Consider some of the ways in which the Confederation Poets use traditional metrical forms (e.g., the sonnet, elegiac metre, etc.) to express the themes and preoccupations of their poetry.
- **Live Chat 1b (Scott): Illustrations:** What do Thomas MacDonald's illustrations to the 1945 edition of Duncan Campbell Scott's In the Village of Viger contribute to the stories' central themes and preoccupations?
- **Live Chat 1c (Leacock): Greed:** What is the essential function of the Greed of Stephen Leacock's Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town's "The Train to Mariposa"?
- **Live Chat 2a (Modernist Poets): The Land:** In what ways do the Modernist Poets' responses to the natural landscape differ from those of their predecessors, the Confederation Poets?
- **Live Chat 2b (Richler): The Jewish-Canadian Novel:** Evaluate F.M. Birbalsingh's assertion in "Mordecai Richler and the Jewish-Canadian Novel" (1972) that, in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, "Duddy's fantastic career exposes to ridicule the contemptuous goy versus contemptible Jew relationship, pouring scorn on gentile and Jew alike for failings that are, in the end, not narrowly racial and cultural, but broadly human and universal" (76).
- **Live Chat 2c (Atwood): Satire:** Consider some of the ways in which Margaret Atwood satirizes 1960s North American society in *The Edible Woman*. Potential avenues for exploration may include the mass media, consumer culture, or the second-wave feminist movement.
- **Live Chat 3a (Johnston): Narrative Viewpoint:** Evaluate the effect of Basil Johnston's occasional shift from third-person narrative viewpoint to first-person narrative viewpoint in some of the stories in Basil Johnston's Moose Meat & More (see the Preludes" (135-48), "The Kiss and the Moonshine" (158-67)).
- **Live Chat 3b (Contemporary Poets): Indigenous Issues:** Consider how the Contemporary Poets' treatment of Indigenous issues and themes in their work.
- **Live Chat 3c (MacDonald): The Role of Women:** In the introduction to Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, Basuta Rubeo writes, "the greatest pleasure of the piece is its scope—in terms of content, in terms of theatricality, and ultimately, in terms of the role of women in society." Do you agree with this statement by considering some of the women characters in the play.
- **Live Chat 4a (Highway): Hockey:** Evaluate the symbolic implications of the game of ice hockey in Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*.
- **Live Chat 4b (Fraser): Controversy:** In the introduction to *Poor Super Man*, Brad Fraser remarks that the play was considered "too controversial" for some companies to produce in the 1990s (1) owing to its "overt homosexual content" (2). Does the play still seem "controversial" today? Why or why not?
- **Live Chat 4c (King): Humour:** How does Thomas King use humour in *Green Grass, Running Water* to emphasize the larger themes and preoccupations of the novel?

Please see the Course Syllabus (Appendix D) for general Zoom Meeting instructions.

ENGL 215-700 NS Course Syllabus 29

Appendix D1

- **The Jewish-Canadian Novel:** Evaluate F.M. Birbalsingh's assertion in "Mordecai Richler and the Jewish-Canadian Novel" (1972) that, in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, "Duddy's fantastic career exposes to ridicule the contemptuous goy versus contemptible Jew relationship, pouring scorn on gentile and Jew alike for failings that are, in the end, not narrowly racial and cultural, but broadly human and universal" (76).

Sympathy	Oscillation	Judgement
"Duddy is a sympathetic character. Despite his flaws, he behaves in ways that are ultimately justified."	*"Our attitude towards Duddy oscillates between sympathy and judgement throughout the novel."*	*"We should judge Duddy harshly for his cruel actions. His failings are his own, and he has no one but himself to blame."*
Tallman, "Richler" (1960) Tallman, "Wolf" (1960) New (1966) Woodcock (1970)	Ferns (1974) Ower (1976) Davidson (1983) Henighan (1988)	Bevan (1969) Birbalsingh (1972)

📖 **Richler, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz***

Sympathy Oscillation Judgement

When Duddy was seven, his grandfather illuminated his life by saying, "a man without land is a nobody. Remember that Duddel." And the difference between Duddy and everyone else in the novel is that he wakens to this vision. What is more, he believes. What is most important of all, he has faith…. Duddy emerges as the secret hero of the world he has played at with seeming fast and loose. For no one else in that world has any dreams, faith, or a truth: not MacPherson (who vowed never to strap a boy then fell to strapping boys); not uncle Benjy (who wore a false cloak of impotence in order to shield his wife's neurosis and so drove her into a deeper neurosis); not Virgil (the type of devotion who was devoted most deeply to his own illness); not Yvette (who sacrificed herself to Virgil's illness); not even his Zeyda (who sent Duddy on a journey he would not take himself). (63)

Warren Tallman. "Richler and the Faithless City." ***Canadian Literature*****, no. 3, 1960, pp. 62-64.**

Sympathy Oscillation Judgement

Duddy's father, his brother Lenny, his uncle and aunt, his teacher MacPherson, his friend Virgil, his enemy Dingleman, and his shiksa Yvette all live tangled lives in a world where they do not know themselves. But they are caught up by personal disorders rather than world disorder, family strife rather than international strife, individual conflict rather than ideological conflict…. Duddy has ceased to care for appearances and this insouciance releases him from the nightmare. All of the other people in the novel cannot possess themselves because their vital energies are devoted full-time to maintaining the fake appearances in terms of which they identify themselves. These appearances—the cultural, ethical, communal pretensions to which they cling—mask over but scarcely conceal the distinctly uncultured, unethical, isolated actuality in which they participate. (45)

Warren Tallman. "Wolf in the Snow Part Two: The House Repossessed." ***Canadian Literature*****, no. 6, 1960, pp. 41-48.**

Sympathy Oscillation Judgement

But Duddy, who has ceased to care for appearances, sees people for what they are, himself included. And what he sees, he accepts—himself included. In an acquisitive world he is exuberantly acquisitive. When he is tricked, he weeps. When threatened, he becomes dangerous. When attacked, he bites back. When befriended, he is generous. When hard-pressed, he becomes frantic. When denied, he is filled with wrath. From the weave of this erratic shuttling, a self struggles into presence, a naive yet shrewd latter-day Huck Finn, floating on a battered money raft down a sleazy neon river through a drift of lives, wanting to light out for somewhere, wanting somewhere to light out for. (45-46)

Warren Tallman. "Wolf in the Snow Part Two: The House Repossessed." ***Canadian Literature*****, no. 6, 1960, pp. 41-48.**

Sympathy Oscillation Judgement

The humour that pervades the book is not gentle…. Duddy moves through a complicated but essentially extra-human sequence of events which, because incongruous, excites laughter. The laughter is directed at an outsider to the ordinary human predicament whose conflict is yet typical of it, and because he can surmount his difficulties in unorthodox and cumulatively extravagant ways, he wins … admiration without respect, a sufferance without approval, an attraction without sympathy, and an attachment without involved concern…. Duddy follows a course of life in order to locate an appropriate pattern for it. Though this is pursued in iconoclastic—but innocent, and therefore laughable—terms, it illustrates a growth to maturity…. The changes that take place in Duddy prepare him for the discovery of Lac St Pierre, and the discovery is an essential step in his growing up. (19)

William H. New. "The Apprenticeship of Discovery." ***Canadian Literature*****, no. 9, 1966, pp. 18-33.**

Sympathy Oscillation Judgement

Duddy is not the least comic of the characters in the novel that bears his name, but there is a difference between him and the others, in the sense that he is not locked like them within one of the small cells of habit or prejudice or pretence. He really combines the role of an *ingénu*—for there is a ferocious animal innocence about Duddy—with that of a Max Stirner egoist who, relentlessly pursuing an aim he has decided is right for him, turns out ironically to be more moral—or moral in a deeper sense—than the people around him, because he is moved by natural and spontaneous desires while they are moved by dead precepts whose validity they have never examined.

George Woodcock. *Mordecai Richler*. McClelland and Stewart, 1970.

Sympathy Oscillation **Judgement**

Richler's … protagonist, who has never weighed the consequences of his actions in any but material terms, is … much less of a man. His decisions have been made on the wrong terms, have been based on nothing at all. He has destroyed himself and others for a piece of land that means nothing to those who love him. He has devoted his energy to acquiring property; he has done nothing to develop himself…. Duddy gets his land; but because he believes that any means can be justified by the beauty of his vision of the future, he emerges at the end of the novel as a failure in all the relationships that should have mattered to him. He is rejected by his grandfather, and by Yvette and Virgil, and is left with the loud unthinking admiration of his father, Max the Hack…. It is difficult to feel very much sympathy for Duddy…. (85-87, qtd. in Ferns 77-78)

A.R. Bevan. Introduction. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* by Mordecai Richler. McClelland and Stewart, 1969.

Sympathy Oscillation **Judgement**

With shameless self-interest, Duddy eagerly plunges into one enterprise after the other … showing not the slightest awareness of compassion. It is a savage portrait, bordering closely on caricature; Duddy comes close to being merely a neatly packaged capsule of energy, competence, and success; but the bracing vitality, electric energy, and pointed humour of the prose makes him thoroughly convincing as a human being. Duddy's fantastic career exposes to ridicule the contemptuous goy versus contemptible Jew relationship, pouring scorn on gentile and Jew alike for failings that are, in the end, not narrowly racial and cultural, but broadly human and universal…. Duddy's shameless pursuit of self-aggrandizement is the result of delusion, for it is the whole substance of Richler's argument that Duddy is ridiculous because he is a bad Jew and a bad Canadian, not simply because he is Jewish-Canadian. (76)

F.M. Birbalsingh. "Mordecai Richler and the Jewish-Canadian Novel." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, no. 7, 1972, pp. 72-82.

Sympathy **Oscillation** Judgement

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz depends for [its] total effect upon an oscillating pattern of sympathetic and judicial response to its central character. This pattern seems to be consciously created but whether this is so or not is finally unimportant. Such a pattern is after all a fairly regular device in tragic drama. What seems to have happened in the criticism of *Duddy Kravitz* though is that Warren Tallman, for example, has been attentive only to the novel's pattern of sympathy, while A.K. Bevan has responded almost solely to its pattern of judgement. To gain a fuller appreciation of what this novel is about we need to attend to both patterns and their skilful interaction. (78)

John Ferns. "Sympathy and Judgement in Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*." *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, no. 3, 1974, pp. 77-82.

Sympathy **Oscillation** Judgement

Duddy's character is … a maze of contradictions, combining virtues like generosity, loyalty, and unpretentiousness with an often repugnant ruthlessness and crudity. He is at once hard and sensitive, loving and cruel. For instance, Duddy's breakdown reflects a genuine remorse for his misdeeds, which he then proceeds to compound by robbing his victim Virgil. To add to the complexity, even Duddy's vices are signs of an unabashed vitality which is somehow appealing…. In creating a hero who defies simplistic judgements, Richler is not revealing moral confusion or indecisiveness, but rather a perspective broad enough to embrace the contradictions of experience itself. It is for this reason that he is able to develop Duddy as a fully-rounded personality…. (428)

John Ower. "Sociology, Psychology, and Satire in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1976, pp. 413-28.

Sympathy **Oscillation** Judgement

Duddy Kravitz is a divided man. And this is probably why the critical response to him has been so divergent. But the truth of the matter is that Duddy Kravitz is neither a hero nor a villain. In a sense he is both and neither. He is in many ways a North American everyman and through creating him and following his progress Mordecai Richler has been able to test the way we live on this continent. Duddy Kravitz expresses our materialism and our lack of love. We both sympathize with and judge him but we can neither account for him nor dismiss him easily. He mirrors too accurately, too painfully what goes on here, what passes for life on this continent. (80)

John Ferns. "Sympathy and Judgement in Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*." *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, no. 3, 1974, pp. 77-82.

Sympathy **Oscillation** Judgement

Richler, writing in the social-realist tradition, must keep his narrative structure tight if he is to maintain narrative objectivity, and his objectivity must remain uncompromised if his narrative structure is to remain tight. He must avoid the perils of moralizing didacticism on one hand, and either excuses or naturalistic determinism on the other. He cannot afford either to condemn Duddy too harshly, or simply to write him off as a product of his environment…. This kind of … vision almost inevitably brings in its train the moral ambiguity that characterizes so much twentieth-century fiction. (25)

Stephen Henighan. "Myths of Making It: Structure and Vision in Richler and Beauchemin." *Essays on Canadian Writing*, no. 36, 1988, pp. 22-37.

Sympathy **Oscillation** Judgement

Richler neither castigates nor exonerates Duddy…. Instead, Duddy is dispassionately assessed. (81, qtd. in Henighan 24)

Arnold E. Davidson. *Mordecai Richler*. Ungar, 1983.

ENGL 215 Live Chat 5: Mordecai Richler, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*

A Sympathy

[A1] When Duddy was seven, his grandfather illuminated his life by saying, "a man without land is a nobody. Remember that Duddel." And the difference between Duddy and everyone else in the novel is that he wakens to this vision. What is more, he believes. What is most important of all, he has faith. Like the fool who eventually turns up as the type of wisdom, or the outcast who practices those virtues in whose name he has been banished, Duddy emerges as the secret hero of the world he has played at with seeming fast and loose. (63)

Warren Tallman. "Richler and the Faithless City." *Canadian Literature*, no. 3, 1960, pp. 62-64.

[A2] For no one else in that world has any dreams, faith, or a truth: not MacPherson (who vowed never to strap a boy then fell to strapping boys); not uncle Benjy (who wore a false cloak of impotence in order to shield his wife's neurosis and so drove her into a deeper neurosis); not Virgil (the type of devotion who was devoted most deeply to his own illness); not Yvette (who sacrificed herself to Virgil's illness); not even his Zeyda (who sent Duddy on a journey he would not take himself). (63)

Warren Tallman. "Richler and the Faithless City." *Canadian Literature*, no. 3, 1960, pp. 62-64.

[A3] Duddy's father, his brother Lenny, his uncle and aunt, his teacher MacPherson, his friend Virgil, his enemy Dingleman, and his shiksa Yvette all live tangled lives in a world where they do not know themselves. But they are caught up by personal disorders rather than world disorder, family strife rather than international strife, individual conflict rather than ideological conflict. And within the localized dream we meet an entirely different dreamer. We meet the direct intelligence and colloquial exuberance that is Duddy's style—and Richler's. (45)

Warren Tallman. "Wolf in the Snow Part Two: The House Repossessed." *Canadian Literature*, no. 6, 1960, pp. 41-48.

[A4] Duddy has ceased to care for appearances and this insouciance releases him from the nightmare. All of the other people in the novel cannot possess themselves because their vital energies are devoted full-time to maintaining the fake appearances in terms of which they identify themselves. These appearances—the cultural, ethical, communal pretensions to which they cling—mask over but scarcely conceal the distinctly uncultured, unethical, isolated actuality in which they participate. Hence the importance in their lives of Dingleman, the Boy Wonder, who is a projection of their actual longings to be at ease in Zion in a Cadillac at the same time as he is a projection of the limitation of these longings, being hopelessly crippled. (45)

Warren Tallman. "Wolf in the Snow Part Two: The House Repossessed." *Canadian Literature*, no. 6, 1960, pp. 41-48.

[A5] But Duddy, who has ceased to care for appearances, sees people for what they are, himself included. And what he sees, he accepts—himself included. In an acquisitive world he is exuberantly acquisitive. When he is tricked, he weeps. When threatened, he becomes dangerous. When attacked, he bites back. When befriended, he is generous. When hard-pressed, he becomes frantic. When denied, he is filled with wrath. From the weave of this erratic shuttling, a self struggles into presence, a naive yet shrewd latter-day Huck Finn, floating on a battered money raft down a sleazy neon river through a drift of lives, wanting to light out for somewhere, wanting somewhere to light out for. (45-46)

Warren Tallman. "Wolf in the Snow Part Two: The House Repossessed." *Canadian Literature*, no. 6, 1960, pp. 41-48.

[A6] The humour that pervades the book is not gentle…. Duddy moves through a complicated but essentially extra-human sequence of events which, because incongruous, excites laughter. The laughter is directed at an outsider to the ordinary human predicament whose conflict is yet typical of it, and because he can surmount his difficulties in unorthodox and cumulatively extravagant ways, he wins … admiration without respect, a sufferance without approval, an attraction without sympathy, and an attachment without involved concern…. Duddy follows a course of life in order to locate an appropriate pattern for it. Though this is pursued in iconoclastic—but innocent, and therefore laughable—terms, it illustrates a growth to maturity…. The changes that take place in Duddy prepare him for the discovery of Lac St. Pierre, and the discovery is an essential step in his growing up. (19)

William H. New. "The Apprenticeship of Discovery." *Canadian Literature*, no. 9, 1966, pp. 18-33.

[A7] But the world of Duddy Kravitz is whole, and Duddy himself, while not particularly likeable, is very much alive. He wins readers to his side, moreover, because his reaction to traditions is a positive one. The control he wants, the mastery to which he is apprenticed, is a valid aim. His iconoclasm is of value not for itself, but because it is a route towards inhabiting a new world and fulfilling a social individuality. As he is a comic figure, his apparently destructive tendencies can paradoxically be a means for constructing life…. (24)

William H. New. "The Apprenticeship of Discovery." *Canadian Literature*, no. 9, 1966, pp. 18-33.

[A8] Duddy is not the least comic of the characters in the novel that bears his name, but there is a difference between him and the others, in the sense that he is not locked like them within one of the small cells of habit or prejudice or pretence. He really combines the role of an *ingénu*—for there is a ferocious animal innocence about Duddy—with that of a Max Stirner egoist who, relentlessly pursuing an aim he has decided is right for him, turns out ironically to be more moral—or moral in a deeper sense—than the people around him, because he is moved by natural and spontaneous desires while they are moved by dead precepts whose validity they have never examined. (38)

George Woodcock. *Mordecai Richler*. McClelland and Stewart, 1970.

B Judgement

[B1] Richler's novel, however, in spite of its superficial affinity with the two novels mentioned above [James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914) and D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913)], ends with no such affirmation. His protagonist, who has never weighed the consequences of his actions in any but material terms, is less alone in the physical sense than the earlier young men [Stephen Dedalus and Paul Morel], but he is also much less of a man. His decisions have been made on the wrong terms, have been based on nothing at all. He has destroyed himself and others for a piece of land that means nothing to those who love him. He has devoted his energy to acquiring property; he has done nothing to develop himself. (85, qtd. in Ferns 77-78)

A.R. Bevan. Introduction. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* by Mordecai Richler. McClelland and Stewart, 1969.

[B2] Duddy gets his land; but because he believes that any means can be justified by the beauty of his vision of the future, he emerges at the end of the novel as a failure in all the relationships that should have mattered

to him. He is rejected by his grandfather, and by Yvette and Virgil, and is left with the loud unthinking admiration of his father, Max the Hack…. It is difficult to feel very much sympathy for Duddy until perhaps the end of the novel; he is just too aware of the enormity of his own actions to pass for an innocent, and he causes the destruction of too many people to be seen only as a victim of his unfortunate environment. (86-87, qtd. in Ferns 78)

A.R. Bevan. Introduction. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* by Mordecai Richler. McClelland and Stewart, 1969.

[B3] With shameless self-interest, Duddy eagerly plunges into one enterprise after the other, ruthlessly eliminating rivals along the way and showing not the slightest awareness of compassion. It is a savage portrait, bordering closely on caricature; Duddy comes close to being merely a neatly packaged capsule of energy, competence, and success; but the bracing vitality, electric energy, and pointed humour of the prose makes him thoroughly convincing as a human being. (75-76)

F.M. Birbalsingh. "Mordecai Richler and the Jewish-Canadian Novel." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, no. 7, 1972, pp. 72-82.

[B4] Duddy's fantastic career exposes to ridicule the contemptuous goy versus contemptible Jew relationship, pouring scorn on gentile and Jew alike for failings that are, in the end, not narrowly racial and cultural, but broadly human and universal…. Duddy's shameless pursuit of self-aggrandizement is the result of delusion, for it is the whole substance of Richler's argument that Duddy is ridiculous because he is a bad Jew and a bad Canadian, not simply because he is Jewish-Canadian. (76)

F.M. Birbalsingh. "Mordecai Richler and the Jewish-Canadian Novel." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, no. 7, 1972, pp. 72-82.

C Oscillation

[C1] *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* depends for [its] total effect upon an oscillating pattern of sympathetic and judicial response to its central character. This pattern seems to be consciously created but whether this is so or not is finally unimportant. Such a pattern is after all a fairly regular device in tragic drama. What seems to have happened in the criticism of *Duddy Kravitz* though is that Warren Tallman, for example, has been attentive only to the novel's pattern of sympathy, while A. K. Bevan has responded almost solely to its pattern of judgement. To gain a fuller appreciation of what this novel is about we need to attend to both patterns and their skilful interaction. (78)

John Ferns. "Sympathy and Judgement in Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*." *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, no. 3, 1974, pp. 77-82.

[C2] Duddy Kravitz is a divided man. And this is probably why the critical response to him has been so divergent. But the truth of the matter is that Duddy Kravitz is neither a hero nor a villain. In a sense he is both and neither. He is in many ways a North American everyman and through creating him and following his progress Mordecai Richler has been able to test the way we live on this continent. Duddy Kravitz expresses our materialism and our lack of love. We both sympathize with and judge him but we can neither account for him nor dismiss him easily. He mirrors too accurately, too painfully what goes on here, what passes for life on this continent. (80)

John Ferns. "Sympathy and Judgement in Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*." *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, no. 3, 1974, pp. 77-82.

[C3] Thus, a central dilemma in Richler's novel, which is never fully resolved, is how to reconcile the hard necessities of a wicked world with ethics. The problem is reflected in the author's complex and ambivalent attitude towards his protagonist. in this regard, the unwary reader is in danger of embracing one of the two opposing half-truths. The first is the view, implicit in Warren Tallman's discussion of *The Apprenticeship*, that Duddy represents a Nietzschean celebration of a raw but exuberant "New World" vitality which "transvalues" the morality of a dead past. The second is A. R. Bevan's contention that Duddy is an ironic failure. As John Ferns has correctly maintained in a recent article, Richler's feeling towards his hero in fact oscillates between sympathy and condemnation, achieving in the end a balanced antithesis between the two. (427-28)

John Ower. "Sociology, Psychology, and Satire in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1976, pp. 413-28.

[C4] Corresponding to this ambivalence, Duddy's character is itself a maze of contradictions, combining virtues like generosity, loyalty, and unpretentiousness with an often repugnant ruthlessness and crudity. He is at once hard and sensitive, loving and cruel. For instance, Duddy's breakdown reflects a genuine remorse for his misdeeds, which he then proceeds to compound by robbing his victim Virgil. To add to the complexity, even Duddy's vices are signs of an unabashed vitality which is somehow appealing…. In creating a hero who defies simplistic judgements, Richler is not revealing moral confusion or indecisiveness, but rather a perspective broad enough to embrace the contradictions of experience itself. It is for this reason that he is able to develop Duddy as a fully-rounded personality…. (428)

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[C5] Richler neither castigates nor exonerates Duddy…. Instead, Duddy is dispassionately assessed. (81, qtd. in Henighan 24)

Arnold E. Davidson. *Mordecai Richler*. Ungar, 1983.

[C6] Richler, writing in the social-realist tradition, must keep his narrative structure tight if he is to maintain narrative objectivity, and his objectivity must remain uncompromised if his narrative structure is to remain tight. He must avoid the perils of moralizing didacticism on one hand, and either excuses or naturalistic determinism on the other. He cannot afford either to condemn Duddy too harshly, or simply to write him off as a product of his environment…. This kind of … vision almost inevitably brings in its train the moral ambiguity that characterizes so much twentieth-century fiction. (25)

Stephen Henighan. "Myths of Making It: Structure and Vision in Richler and Beauchemin." *Essays on Canadian Writing*, no. 36, 1988, pp. 22-37.