

ENGL 215 Live Chat 2b



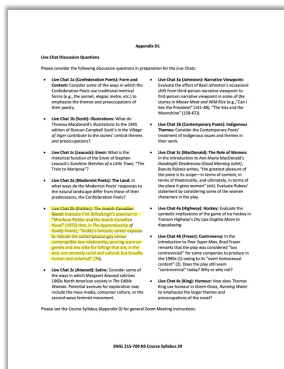
Zoom Meeting Information

- 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

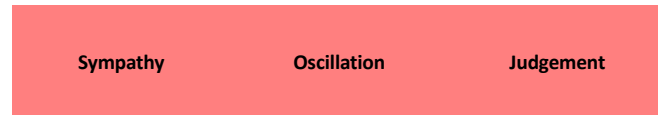
Weeks 1-3	Live Chat 1a Confederation Poets	Live Chat 1b Duncan Campbell Scott	Live Chat 1c Stephen Leacock
Weeks 4-6	Live Chat 2a Modernist Poets	Live Chat 2b Mordecai Richler	Live Chat 2c Margaret Atwood
Weeks 7-9	Live Chat 3a Basil Johnston	Live Chat 3b Contemporary Poets	Live Chat 3c Ann-Marie MacDonald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

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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 gentle and Jew alike for failings that are, in the end, not narrowly racial and cultural, but broadly human and universal" (76).



"Duddy is a sympathetic character. Despite his flaws, he believes 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

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

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

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

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