

Topic Page: [Richler, Mordecai, 1931–2001](#)

Summary Article: **Richler, Mordecai**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1931–2001, Canadian novelist, b. Montreal. He fled his native city in the early 1950s and lived mainly in London, returning to Canada in 1972 and from then on spending part of his year in London and part in Montreal. Reflecting his youth in that city, Richler's novels are often set within the Canadian Jewish community. Typically, his works skewer provincialism, combining fantastic and wildly comic elements with realistic themes and mingling street-smart sarcasm and ribald wit. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1959, film 1974), his best-known work, chronicles the ascent to wealth of a poor and fiercely ambitious Jewish youth. His other works include *The Acrobats* (1954), *Cocksure* (1968), *St. Urbain's Horseman* (1971), *Joshua Then and Now* (1980), *Solomon Gursky Was Here* (1989), and *Barney's Version* (1997).

Richler also wrote numerous screenplays, including *No Love for Johnnie* (1959) and movie versions of his own works. A number of his essays were collected in *Notes on an Endangered Species* (1974); *This Year in Jerusalem* (1994) discusses his personal reactions and relationship to Israel. Richler also was a spokesman for the English-speaking population of Quebec, strongly opposing the separatist movement; this position was reflected in his *Oh Canada, Oh Quebec* (1992). He also wrote several children's books. Winning all of his native country's important literary awards, Richler succeeded in being both an enormously successful icon of Canadian culture and one of its most influential critics.

See studies by G. Woodcock (1970), G. D. Sheps, ed. (1971), A. E. Davidson (1983), V. J. Ramraj (1983), M. Darling, ed. (1986), and R. F. Brenner (1989).

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