

2014

ISSN 2278-5655

Aarhat Multidisciplinary International Education Research Journal (AMIERJ)

(Bi-Monthly)

Peer-Reviewed Journal

Impact factor:0.948

Aug-Sep Issues

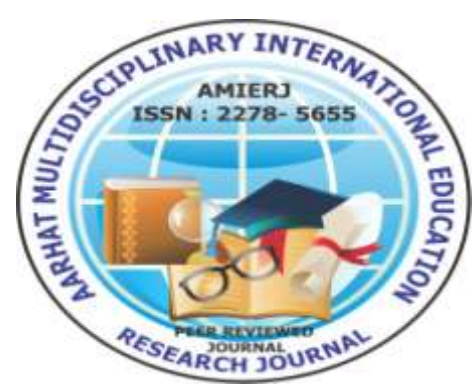
Chief-Editor

Ubale Amol Baban

PEER-REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL



[Editorial/Head Office: 108, Gokuldharm Society, Dr.Ambedkar chowk, Near
TV Towar,Badlapur, MS



ANTI- SEMITISM IN THE APPRENTICESHIP OF DUDDY KRAVITZ

ENGLISH

Dr. J. P. Kamble

K. N. P. College, Walwa

Dist. -Sangli

The Canadian writer Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, the novel that established and popularized him as a significant novelist, explains the Jewish ghetto of Montreal. It depicts the struggles of David (Duddy) Kravitz, a fifteen year old young Jewish boy from the working class, who became rich. He, however, reaches the target by various relations.

Although Fletcher's Field High School (FFHS) is basically Jewish school, the students in the school belong to the various Gentile communities such as Anglo-Saxons, Ukrainians, Poles, and Yugoslavs. In such schools teachers face students from a variety of social classes, religions, cultural and language groups. It provides diverse students an equal chance in school and in contributing to building healthy communities and societies and at the same time an opportunity of anti-Semitism which creates prejudice against another culture.

Mr. John Alexander MacPherson, the teacher of History subject, is the Scottish person who follows the multicultural ideology. He trusts proper education and is against to punish the



students. His unusual way, to conduct unannounced exams, to cancel athletics and to give two hours of homework or to expel the naughty boys from school for a week, expresses his deep desire to become devoted teacher to educate students. The award of the merit cards to students who score high examination results is an inspiration to them to behave in good manner and write neatly. He maintains healthy atmosphere among the students of all cultures in the school. This leads to preserve beauty all cultures.

Duddy, the protagonist and who studies in Fletcher's Field High School, has mysterious mischievous qualities. He has inborn ability to lead, but he engages in many naughty activities. On the way back to home from school, he meets a man, who is converted in Christian.

The concept of multiculturalism encourages the people to know about other culture and that creates admiration for the guest culture. This guides to exchange good thoughts between two or more cultures. Moreover, the converted man represents the religious freedom that people enjoy in Canada. The conversion awakens religious knowledge or understanding within a human being who had previously no belief in or no concerns with religious or spiritual matters. This awakening to moral and spiritual realities thus precedes a transformation of lifestyle and properly changes thought patterns often taking place over a long period of time. This requires a significant level of effort and commitment as described in the spiritual teachings of the world's great religions. It is the first and basic meaning of religious conversion. In popular usage, religious conversion refers to the adoption of a set of beliefs identified with one particular religion. Duddy, who is eager to know about the other religion, articulates respect for other culture.

With his impish activities in the school, Duddy develops Dead End Kids, the group of mischievous students. His deeds create nuisance to MacPherson. The conflict between Duddy and MacPherson begins when Duddy and the group draws the chalk figure of a lean man being crushed by a snowball with the underneath inscription 'Our Mac'. MacPherson feels bad and expects the student to accept the responsibility. Duddy accepts partly responsibility. This forces Mac to declare the punishment. 'This class will not go the basketball game this afternoon, but



will stay in for an hour after school is out. And you, Kravitz, will do the same tomorrow and the next day' (12). Duddy's reaction to Mac, 'But why am I different from everybody else?', speaks of need of equality for all. What Duddy feels bad is the separation in the punishment. He is given extra punishment although he is equally responsible with other students for drawing picture on the blackboard.

The conflict between Duddy and MacPherson increases as Mac makes personal comments regarding Duddy's father and culture. There are many human beings like Duddy who are very sensitive to the issues related to family and religion. He, therefore, does not like Mac commenting on his father. 'You said my father wasn't fit to bring me up. I've got witnesses. That's an insult to my family, Sir'(12). Duddy's behavior in the class and particularly with Mac can never be justified; however, Mac's reaction also cannot be acknowledged. At one side Mac does not believe corporal punishment and at another side Duddy decides to teach a lesson to him because he insulted his family. He says, 'Mac is gonna to wish he was never born. It's the treatment for him'(13). He pretends dialing a number on the telephone, "Hey! Hullo, hullo. Is Mac in? Em, this is The Avenger speaking. Yep, none other. Your days are numbered, Mac" (13). The quarrel leads Duddy to make unnecessary offensive calls during midnight. This disturbs Mac's peace of mind.

Duddy deliberately telephones physically weak Jenny, MacPherson's wife, who is terribly disturbed and dies subsequently. MacPherson loses his control and punishes Duddy, who is strapped. He blames Duddy as the murderer of Jenny. He says, 'You murdered her, you filthy street arab'(39) and he forces himself into drinking addiction. In fact Jenny was suffering by severe cough. Multiculturalism is a concept that expects two way communications. Although, he thinks of good improvement of Jewish boys, one would feel sorry to see the way Duddy behaves with MacPherson and his wife. His ideals of life are shattered by Duddy's bustle. The multicultural relationship disturbs their life. Richler seems to suggest that the success of



multicultural relationship depends on positive ends of both communities. It would be wrong to blame any particular community for the failure of it.

MacPherson started hating Jews. The Jewish boys preserve their identity when MacPherson loses temper and says, ‘The trouble with you Jews is that you are always walking around with a chip on your shoulder’ (34). The Jew boys in the class maintaining their uniqueness react against this:

Hay! Hey, there!

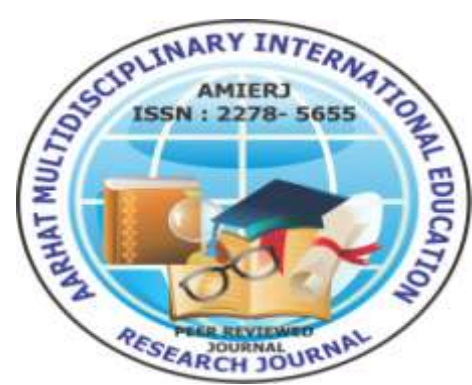
What exactly do you mean Jews?

This is not Germany, you know.

He’s a Nazi fascist. (34)

Germany was the symbol of discrimination on the basis of religion, caste and class. The words like Jews were referred to humiliate the minor categories. They were considered inferior only because they belonged to Jewish community. The students in school know that this is an atrocity; therefore they react against MacPherson’s comment. Unlike Germany, Canada favours respecting each other, so the insulting words like ‘you Jews’ are strongly reacted. What Duddy does to MacPherson is undoubtedly wrong and may be considered as an impish act by a school student. One should not neglect the fact that his disturbance to MacPherson is not at all out of religious hatred. Secondly Duddy is immature while MacPherson is mature. MacPherson directly attacks the very Jewish traditions which in a sense are anti-Semitic. He generalises Duddy’s activities to Jew community.

Some missionaries distributed pamphlets regarding religion deliberately and preached for conversion in front of Jewish school. The introduction of any religion should not disturb the integrity of another religion. As soon as, Duddy feels the danger of it, he speaks to his father and brother, and expects the community to preserve their religious identity. Normative



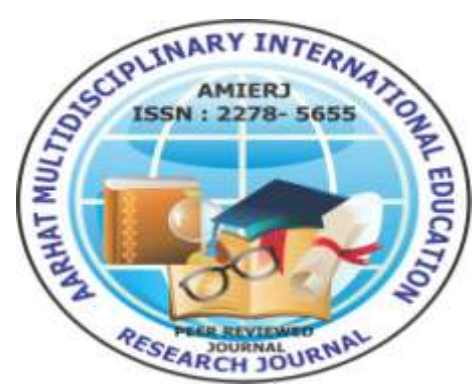
multiculturalism tells to understand and co-operate people of different culture. But Mac's comment violates the norms of normative multiculturalism as it insults the students. The teacher is idol to the students and so complain of Max is appropriate, otherwise such types of comments will develop hate among the people. Duddy is very angry and in the conversation with his brother, Lennie, he points out:

Hey, guess what? I heard a rumour that a sort of mission's opened up on St. Joseph Boulevard and the jerk who runs it is going to hand out pamphlets and stuff at FFHS. Isn't that an insult to our religion like? I think somebody ought to complain. (20)

It symbolizes that everyone is alert to preserve the beauty of their religion. This attitude is cultivated because of the Liberal multiculturalism which encourages religious passion. Still being a school boy, Duddy's reaction against the insult of his religion explains awareness about his community. About the individual identity of a group Ali Rattansi in his book *Multiculturalism: A Very Short Introduction* states:

The point is that the histories and demands of different types of ethnic minority groups vary quite considerably. Substate national minorities such as the Quebecois in Canada, the Scotts and Welsh in the UK, the Catalan and Basques in Spain, the Flemish in Belgium and the indigenous people mentioned above have claims that they different from others.(13)

Bush Leonard, the principal of FFHS, agrees that it is an insult to people of Jewish faith if somebody hands out free copies of the New Testament outside FFHS.. Being the head of the institution he depicts his ideal model for multicultural healthy relations. Anything that shatters such bond is strongly criticized and despised. The healthy atmosphere is encouraged by



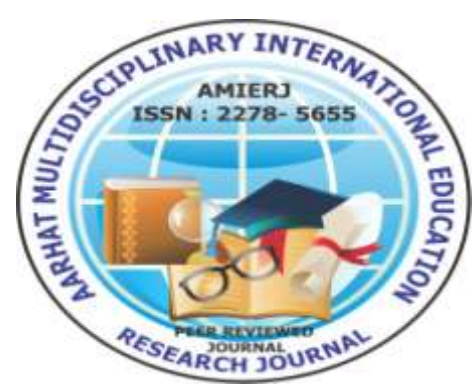
admiration of other culture. Therefore the principal's denunciation of MacPherson's comment to Jewish boys is the support for multicultural ideology.

Duddy's father, Max Kravitz's expectation of Mr. Leonard Bush to honor Jewish again states his stand against anti-Semitism. He says to the principal:

I mean saying such a thing as "you dirty Jews" to a bunch of boys. I mean a phone call at three o'clock in the morning, Mr. Bush. You know what I ask myself? What kinds of men are teaching my boy? How can they expect to make decent citizens of them when they themselves are like bad children? Tell me, if I'm wrong, sir. You can be honest with me, and I'll be honest with you. That's what I'm like. (37)

Max complaints to the principal about Mac's misconduct and expects him look into the matter. According to him honesty is the best policy which would create healthy multicultural atmosphere in the society. The principal of the school is liberal and he assures Max that there will be no repetition of such communal comments in the school. Accordingly he gives instructions to MacPherson.

Duddy's leaving the factory work is the consequence of his consecutive thinking of grandfather's message of money and land and his failure to maintain healthy relations with uncle Benjy. He joins Rubin's Hotel Lac des Sables in Ste Agathe des Monts as a waiter. Although all boys at the hotel are McGill college students, Duddy, who only studied at FFHS, tries to develop healthy relation with them. Rubin's Hotel is another place with the boys belonging to more prosperous families of various cultures and classes. Conflict is the part of life, but what Richler depicts it. There is some rivalry between Duddy and others who taunt him for his wretched condition. The anti-Semitic ideas are focused by the novelist. He is hated only because he belongs to Jewish tradition. Duddy is the only waiter from humble background which makes him



different from others. He, however, does not allow himself to be depressed and crushed. He does not feel inferior to them.

With his skill and hard work, Duddy gets favour by Mr. Rubin and this leads to other boys and particularly Irwin Shubert to antagonize him. Irwin comments,

*'It's the cretinous little money grabbers, like Kravitz that cause anti-Semitism'.
(68)*

It means that the Jews are considered as money grabbers by some the gentile community people. Jews are called as cretinous which means very stupid fellows. It is an injustice to them. They are considered so only because they belong to Jewish culture.

Irwin criticizes Duddy that he stinks. He continues to ask Duddy, 'Would you do us all a favour and take a bath. You stink'(69). As stated earlier this is a form of anti-Semitism. Duddy belongs to Jewish community, this turns out to be the reason for hatred towards him. The gentile people criticize Jews as they stink, they smell. Their presence is detested. And therefore they are asked to get the wash. This explains the cruelty of gentiles towards the Jews. Irwin's hatred is symbolic to understand the feeling of anti-Semitism.

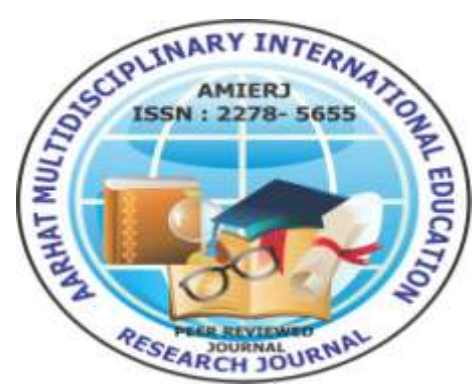
Irwin's comment refers cultural conflict. Irwin and his friends blame Duddy of stealing money. One morning Bernie discovers ten dollars missing from his pocket. The incident of missing money occurs twice. The conversation between the boys goes like this.

I'm missing fifteen, Irwin said.

But we all went to Val Morin last night, Donald said. It must be an outsider.

David didn't come with us, Irwin said.

I'd better check again, Bernie said, Maybe I'm mistaken.



Sh, Irwin said, here he comes. The Judas. (69)

The hatred among the boys hints the struggle between them. All feel insecure and doubtful about each other. In this regard, Robert Putnam in *Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century* states:

The people in diversity do not trust the local mayor, they do not trust the local paper, they do not trust other people and they do not trust institutions. The class, income and other factors in a racially diverse community sometimes cause the greater loss of trust. (30)

The conflict between Duddy and Irwin increases day by day. Irwin doubts that Duddy has insulted him by offering wrong drink. He says to Duddy, You filthy little swine, he said, is this your idea of a joke? (70). He asks his colleagues to teach a lesson by forcing Duddy to drink his own urine. Duddy tries to convince them he is innocent, but in vain. This misunderstanding swells day by day which increases the fear of anti-Semitism. It is Irwin's hatred towards Duddy that counts on both. The very thought of forcing Duddy to drink urine discloses loathe towards the Jewish people.

At Rubin's Hotel, Duddy befriends Cuckoo Kalpan, a Montreal comedian. Duddy's appreciation of his work as undisputed number one comedian strengthens the bond between them. Cuckoo also likes his company. In broader sense multiculturalism means to know each other, understand each other. Cuckoo's abhorrence of Irwin is the reaction against Irwin's bad behavior to Duddy. He accuses Irwin deceiving Duddy. He, therefore, blames Irwin expects him to recognize the hard work that Duddy does. He defends Duddy and blames Irwin. Richler mentions the fact that Duddy is supported by the Canadian Cuckoo Kalpan. The Gentile Irwin hates Duddy for his Jewish tradition and on the on the hand Kalpan aids him in all respects.



Bibliography-

Richler, Mordecai. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. London: Andre Deutsch. 1959. Print.

Heywood, Andrew. *Political Ideologies*. Palgrave: Macmillan. 2007. Print

Vassanji, M. G. *Mordecai Richler*. Canada: Penguin Books. 2009. Print.

Freudmann, Lillian C. *Antisemitism in the New Testament*, University Press of America, 1994.

Hilberg, Raul. *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Holmes & Meier, 1985. 3 volumes.