Chapter Five: Assessment

5.1. Multi-layer Evaluation: A Perspective through the Prism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1. Pankaj Mishra’s Selected Works</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2. Milan Kundera’s Selected Works</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2. Notes and References                         385
5.1. Multi-layer Evaluation: A Perspective through the Prism

Up to this part of the study, the *intra/extra-textual* features of the selected texts have been explored and reviewed as far as possible. At this point there will be a multi-layer evaluation of the selected texts which are, by and large, both product of and engaged with the forces of globalization. Considering the relationship between globality, globalization and the chosen texts from Mishra and Kundera, here two relevant levels of assessment are concentrated upon. At one level, the selected texts are observed as bearing the reflections of some dimensions and effects of globalization within their events; being thematized within the texts globalization becomes more directly traceable. In the meantime and in a different function, some parts of these selected texts are developed into platforms which could evoke, support and interpret various social, political, literary, and cultural aspects of globalization. The ideas and occasions which are reviewed at this level can partly clarify the topographical status of the selected works in relation to globalization and its debates. Of course, it may be noted that the qualities mentioned at this level are not necessarily applicable in a collective mode to all four selected texts. However, some of the features referred to in the discussion of this level may fit into the *intra-textual section* of the approach, as well.

The other level of the assessment is based on the observations perceived through the prism of Grabovszki-Deshpande-Israel which was elaborated on before this in chapter two. Evaluating the selected texts through the speculative filter made from the triad combination of relevant ideas and reflections of these three scholars in modern literary sphere is what gives more coherence to the structure of the study. On one hand, some of the features referred to at this level mostly fit into the *extra-textual* part of the approach. And on the other hand, the results or outcomes arrived at this level assist and support the construction of a viewpoint about how writers and their works under study ascend to a soaring level of globality. Quite naturally some elements from both levels can meet when a common denominator (such as language) appears. Consequently in order to improve the function of the analytical approach here these two levels are considered side by side.
5.1.1. Pankaj Mishra’s selected works

Pankaj Mishra’s works contain a running critique of the effects of the new era and globalization in India, while focusing on one main love story in *The Romantics* and on the travels around the subcontinent in *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India*. At the same time apparently Mishra does not link those effects historically to certain ‘-ism’ or ‘-ization’ in the kind of systematic way we find in other writers’ works. And yet in his texts discussed in this study, we can find characters that move back-and-forth between the East and the West in their real life or in their dreams as they long for fulfillment in cultures other than their own. Accordingly, culture clashes, search for identity, and quest for a better life-pattern in a rapidly changing world become prevalent topics. Various forms of dislocation, disruption, migration and mobility could be traced in both texts with different levels, keeping in mind that a country like India – with around 22 national languages and 844 dialects together with its geographical vastness as well as cultural diversity – quite suits to be considered as an appropriate setting for a writer’s groundwork; the subcontinent is actually a world itself within a country. Following Pankaj Mishra’s narration, the reader comes to know more about the challenges of treating categories like the local and the global, the personal and the historical, and the cultural and the economic as if they represented fixed distinctions.

In *The Romantics*, Pankaj Mishra explores various themes amongst which class and caste problems, the meeting of the East and the West, modernization against tradition, culture clashes, migration, identity, transition and changes heading for a modern India are all set within the background of the changing landscape of the Indian holy city of Benares in the late 1980s and 1990s, where one can see the emerging prosperity of the new middle class India. The moment we come to know better about the protagonist Samar or other characters like (ironically-named) Miss West, Rajesh and the group of bohemian Westerners, then we involve in a world of ideas and concepts which best clarify the above-mentioned themes. The presence of Samar with Brahmin origin and Rajesh with humble origin as major characters in the story asserts on the chronic problem of class and caste. Confrontation of the East and the West is sometimes symbolized in the mind of the protagonist Samar who reads books from Proust, Schopenhauer and Edmund Wilson and resides in places with
strong ties to Eastern religion or philosophy (Benares is an example), or even is symbolized in the name of the character Miss West who has been living in India for a long time. Of course, such East-West meeting is embodied more positively and in a larger scale if we consider how foreigners romanticize the mysteries of India or how Indians romanticize the freedoms of the West. Modernization, tradition and the effects of cultural differences are partly represented in the lifestyle and careers of the characters, too. In this regard, Mark is the character who romanticizes the mysteries of India and is finally absorbed in this infatuation and Anand is the character who romanticizes the attractions of Paris and is finally overwhelmed in this fancy.

The East-West panorama bears another advantage in the novel as well. In such a setting, the romantics of different lovers are globalized for their unique or even sometimes similar qualities. The relationships between Miss West and Christopher, Catherine and Anand or Catherine and Samar remind us about the same motif of unfulfilled love stories, no matter if it is seen in a local or global scale as they are stories of mankind; these motifs seem familiar to many readers.

However it’s not only through characterization that we get a better understanding of the greater themes developed in the story. Also through narration and the depiction of the novel’s setting we are reminded about transition, culture differences, etc. as relevant examples of these cases have been fully explored in chapter three. The narrative structure of The Romantics with its dependence on the first person narrator proves to be outstanding, and can be considered as a proof in Nico Israel’s definition of newer forms in the literature of globalization; moreover the novel’s narrative shows certain qualities for itself, as for example, Pankaj Mishra allows, at some parts of the story, the characters’ actions and thoughts to speak for themselves, a technique to let readers reach their own assessment. However that special form of the narrative structure of the novel is making its grand effects; this sense remains with the reader that it’s not possible to distinguish Mishra from his hero, Samar. It is such a stance for Samar that helps him to travel from being a local hero to a global one, to approach “the world very tentatively, through hesitations, indecisions, blind alleys and reevaluation”¹ and emulate many other great fictional heroes. It is through the accounts of this gifted narrator that we come to know about the interconnectedness of human beings all around the globe; in fact, happenings from

- 343 -
local to distant locations are revealed in the story to prove the intensification of social human relations. In this way, we come to know about a handsome young Sadhu who speaks Hindi with Sanskrit accent in a remote temple in India, or a tedious middle-class woman (Catherine’s mother) in Paris who complains about his would-be groom for spilling water on her bathroom floor.

As part of man’s life in the modern globalized era, the identity search becomes another important theme in the career of modern characters such as Samar, Rajesh, Catherine, Mark and Anand. This search for identity is, in turn, intertwined with the theme of transition and migration for characters like Samar (in a smaller scale within the subcontinent) and Catherine (in a larger scale beyond borders). For Samar it’s a long journey from Allahabad to Benares, Mussoorie, Dharamshala and again back to Benares. Catherine turns this quest to a relative failure. For Rajesh it remains vague and unclear if that uptight life could reach any peace or stability. Anand’s destiny is of a sad kind, as he remains trapped in his happy past days with Catherine and cannot get through that tumultuous journey of identity search. There are also many instances in the novel which emphasize on the cultural biases or preferences of the people involved, even though they are concerned about other cultures as well. Such cultural expressions are at the core of identity problem. At one usual gathering, Debbie is telling Catherine that she is more eager to go to Latin America rather than coming to India as she feels this urge after reading Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *Love in the Time of Cholera* but Catherine contradicts her idea since she herself prefers Milan Kundera as “he says serious things about contemporary life.” In addition to the identity and cultural expressions conveyed by the mentioned writers themselves, here we can see how the characters’ identities are also passed on to the readers of *The Romantics*, as to assert the concept that “it is through our culture that we define our identities even to ourselves.”

Among the outstanding mechanisms we may refer to in the novel is the characterization of Rajesh, his life story and the related accounts about his character. In fact, his case is one of the good examples of the expression and thematization of globalization in the novel. This manifestation best indicates social, political, cultural and literary connections worldwide. Accordingly, Mishra describes Rajesh as a student with humble origins but so much talented and full of ambitions for his
generation. On the surface, he is a rebellious student who leads some movements in the campus but an in-depth analysis reveals more than this. Through pages 245 to 251 of the novel, Samar discloses a precious part of this analysis. Samar receives a letter from Rajesh after a very long time. The content of this letter together with the underlined sentences by Rajesh in the xeroxed copy of Edmund Wilson’s essay on Flaubert which he once had lent Rajesh makes Samar ponder more about his mysterious friend:

In the hard and mean world he had lived in, first as a child labourer and then as a hired criminal for politicians and businessmen, Rajesh would have come to know well the grimy underside of middle-class society. What became clearer to me now was how quick he had been to recognize that the society Flaubert and Wilson wrote about wasn’t very different from the one he inhabited in Benares.⁴

As a matter of fact, Rajesh makes a fabulous account when he finds similar grounds in his own life history and the western intellectuals’ writings. This link, in the first place, may seem just as a literary one functioning between writers and readers in distant places in the world, but in a further measurement it is indicative of the association of social, cultural and political trends which is achieved in the process of globality. Rajesh’s remarks reveal that he had read this novel, too. And that makes him sympathize with the familiar characters in Flaubert’s novel. He sees Gustave Flaubert’s Sentimental Education as his own life story and identifies with the people in this novel. It is by the help of Edmund Wilson’s essay that he draws his own conclusion about the novel. What is more, the significance of Samar’s evaluation of this occurrence should be noted. In a second reading, Samar’s perceptions about the novel gain more grounds:

The protagonist, Frederic Moreau, seemed to mirror my own self-image with his large, passionate, but imprecise longings, his indecisiveness, his aimlessness, his self-contempt. Also, the book – through its long, detailed descriptions, spread over many years, of love affairs that go
nowhere, of artistic and literary ambitions that dwindle and then fade altogether, of lives that have to reconcile themselves to a slow, steady shrinking of horizons – held out a philosophical vision I couldn’t fail to recognize. Something of Hindu fatalism seemed to come off its pages, a sense of life as drift and futility and illusion, and to see it dramatized so compellingly through a wide range of human experience was to have, even at twenty, with so little experience of anything, a chilling intimation of the life ahead.5

Moreover, Samar interprets Edmund Wilson’s commentary on Flaubert as the association between life and literature:

Wilson’s denunciation of capitalism here had an old-fashioned Marxist ring. Nevertheless it was a good passage in that it offered a small glimpse of Wilson’s way of finding connections between life and literature. But why had Rajesh underlined it? Again, how had he interpreted it?6

If Samar appraises Wilson’s work as a link between life and literature and if Rajesh appreciates Flaubert and Wilson as he finds the manifestations of their accounts in his own life, then the immense impact of borderless forces can be felt:

Reading the same book but bringing another kind of experience to it, Rajesh had discovered something else; he had discovered a social and psychological environment similar to the one he lived in. He shared with Flaubert and Wilson – so far away from us in every way – a true, if bitter awareness of its peculiar human ordeals and futility.

‘To fully appreciate the book,’ Wilson had written of Sentimental Education, ‘one must have had time to see
something of life.’ Rajesh had exemplified this truth even as he moved into a world where he couldn’t be followed.\

In *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India*, Pankaj Mishra describes the social and cultural changes in India in the new context of globalization through the form of a travelogue. Together with his taste in literary non-fiction, Mishra uses this form to make a sharp insight into the minds of the people all around India. With the aim of depicting India in transition, Mishra describes the lives of various everyday people all through a huge undercurrent of economic and social change which in turn is changing the quality of people’s values, customs, hopes and dreams. And what makes his attempt a fairly different and outstanding one is Mishra’s focus on small towns. Moreover, since this phenomenon of transition, according to Mishra, has a new and unsettlingly vague nature, then a principal tone of defensive irony and humor has been adopted in his book. Such ironical tone is organized in accordance with and at the service of a powerful dislocation Mishra implements in his work. To borrow the phrase from Amitav Ghosh, it is possible to claim that Pankaj Mishra tries to locate himself through the travelogue, so he does it by the act of dislocation at several points in the book. This needs much talent and energy since the writer himself is an insider. However, Pankaj Mishra distances himself from his immediate environment in order to make a better judgment and “it is with this dislocation that the writer moves from the particular to the universal,” as Shashi Deshpande maintains it.

Undoubtedly, it is Pankaj Mishra’s stylistic attempt and mannerism that has led to a different form within literary non-fiction in his debut. This is to say that for presenting a different form of travel-writing, this attempt could be considered in the same thought-line as of Nico Israel when Mishra creates his own form of expression inside the popular genre of travelogue writing to show how life is englobed. As a matter of fact, though in this book we experience the autobiographical, memoir structure typically associated with many other travelogues, the structural design resembles another register which is mostly referred to as *travel novel.* Accordingly then in *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* you can trace some of the structural qualities of a literary work as well as the fascinating adventures of various geographical settings. Moreover, as a reassertion of Nico Israel’s viewpoint
on the appearance of newer forms of expression in contemporary literary productions, Mishra’s satirical and humorous voice shines throughout this book. And just in order to enhance the aesthetic attractions of the work in hand, Pankaj Mishra exercises his sensibilities on various topics, indeed. He makes an amalgamation of themes, facts, scenes, and characters to produce a tangible account of a nation’s life in the last decade of twentieth century. Different themes from cultural, social, political, religious and literary grounds are dealt with in this travel book: caste and class problems, discrimination, infrastructures and the emergence of new economies, tradition against modernity, corruption, some aspects of human rights, education, transportation problems, and so on.

Among different themes which are elaborated on in this travelogue, there is a reference to the ambitions and practices of the India’s finance minister at the time and the new waves of economic reforms. This is to assert the fact that these changes need more time to take effect. The narrator reveals that in some parts of the subcontinent such as Bangalore there have been great progresses, for example, in building up new shopping-malls which showed no sign of the expected reception. Later Mishra makes an association between economic globalization and ethical, social and cultural problems experienced by the people. This happens when he comes to know that some hotels at Kovalam Beach do not admit Indians. Here the writer makes direct remarks:

But India wasn’t a tourist economy – at least, not yet. All the more disturbing, then, it was to know about places where the shoddy practice of poor parasitic nations had crept in. In India, they were an unpleasant reminder of old colonial hierarchies: whites at the top, Indians somewhere at the bottom, finding their own different levels of degradation. They spoke, at least in certain quarters, of the growing damage, after just forty-seven years of independence, to national self-esteem; and they were the unexplored darker side of globalization. ¹⁰

During his travels around the country Pankaj Mishra exemplifies about the culture and customs of the people he meets and sometimes he describes their personal
attitudes and preferences. In the meantime, he refers to his own individual taste and tendencies as well. Aside from personal outlooks, this could be interpreted as to show the great challenges and changes in the attitudes and viewpoints of the new generation in India which the writer himself is a part of. Pankaj Mishra keeps on projecting different names of writers during his own travels. Sometimes the outcome is funny: the middle-aged policeman at the hotel in Bundi wants to know if Iris Murdoch (whose novel the narrator is reading) is the wife of Rupert Murdoch or no. Mishra’s response is negative, though it doesn’t seem convincing for the policeman. But at other occasions it becomes a pleasant experience; the narrator is talking to George, a medical representative from Kerala. Mishra, then makes a beautiful combination of global and local tastes:

This was what perhaps I had long wanted to do – discuss Thomas Mann on a rainy morning in Kerala over genuine South Indian coffee and I was happier than at any other time on my travels so far.¹¹

Chapter nine of the book deals with one of the most brilliant scenes of Mishra’s craftsmanship in juxtaposing different generations’ wants and desires. The passengers’ interactions in the cabin on TN Express train create one of the best representations of the motif of transition and change in the modern India. At one side, we see Mr. Rastogi, the young journalist from Delhi, and on the other side, we meet the middle-aged Mr. Goenka, the Marwari businessman based in Madras. The three men chat about various social, political, and economic topics (including South and North Indian conflicts and corruption) until Mrs. Shukla and her variously-addressed daughter (Rita, Sunrita or Ritz) come into their cabin. Mrs. Shukla is escorting her daughter to Bombay in order to find a career for her in fashion modeling. Contrary to Mr. Rastogi who shows interest to be helpful for the young girl and her mother, Mr. Goenka doesn’t take part in their conversation and even behaves and talks in an offensive mood. Mishra’s instantaneous mental judgment here is noteworthy:

To the tradition-bound Mr. Goenka – whose own daughters probably wore nothing more modern than a salwar-kurta, who hesitated for days before daring to ask his permission
to go to a restaurant with college-friends, and who languished at home after reaching a certain age, embroidering old cushion-covers, waiting for marriage – to an old-fashioned tyrant like Mr. Goenka, the fact of a mother encouraging her daughter into a dubious profession like modelling could have only seemed an appalling indecency.\textsuperscript{12}

There are also many other scenes and events in the book which remind us that “travel in fact facilitates the consolidation of social identities—particularly affiliations with race, class, gender, nation and empire.”\textsuperscript{13} In a further extension, it can be claimed that this facilitation also develops into the realm of cultural identities. Travelogues then become much more valued writings if seen as a means for documenting this consolidation of socio-cultural identities. On one hand, we are once again reminded about the grand role of culture as a defining element of identity (as emphasized by Shashi Deshpande and many others). Accordingly, there are some examples in the book which refer to positive aspects in the course of consolidation of socio-cultural identities of a nation’s existence while at the same time reveal one of the turning points in India’s recent history. One such moment is when Mishra describes a background for his visiting Mrs. Mary Roy:

Mrs. Roy, in a celebrated court case in the mid-eighties, had taken on the entire Syrian Christian Church, and won. She had contested the legality of a pre-independence Succession Act that denied women their rightful share in paternal property, allowing them only a pitiable fourth of the son’s share. Amazingly, this Act, which stood automatically repealed after India became a republic in 1951 and promulgated its own Succession Act, had been allowed to govern property distribution for thirty-five more years. Finally, Mrs. Roy took up the cudgels on behalf of Syrian Christian women, and filed a public interest litigation in the Supreme Court. That was in 1983. In 1986
came the historic judgement declaring the old Succession
Act null and void.\textsuperscript{14}

On the other hand, it is through the same facility that we come to know about
some dark sides of the same culture as well. In chapter fourteen of the travelogue
about nine pages are specified to the occurrence of foreign women harassment and
molestation particularly in Benares. Recalling the bad experiences they had been
through, Jane, one of the two British tourist cousins, whom Mishra comes across on
the train, denounces the situation:

I suppose the shock was greater because of that, [happening
in Benares] and also because we had just come up from the
South where we had faced absolutely no problems at all.
We really had been looking forward to Benares. From all
that I’d read about it, it seemed like the cultural capital of
North India. And I suppose having seen it now, it \textit{is} in a
way. But culture isn’t just about the past, about old temples
and musical traditions and things like that. I think it also
has something to do with the present moment, with how
people treat each other in daily life, civic manners, a certain
basic decency towards women, older people, and if you
take that criterion, Benares comes right at the bottom of all
Indian cities we visited.\textsuperscript{15}

Such indecent situations of women harassment together with the analysis made by this
British tourist, on the surface, seem to be in disparity with what Mishra refers to as
India’s great “tolerance for otherness”\textsuperscript{16} but indeed it is through same quote from Jane
that Mishra emphasizes on the importance of culture in the present day of India and
on the need for more positive social and cultural transformations. However, through
his parallel perspective and in his 2006 afterword on the book Mishra himself has
elaborated on the fact that he attempts to depict the rise, expansion and appearance of
the middle class India which is “just as culturally ambitious and politically
conservative as those classes that have emerged in modern Europe and America.”\textsuperscript{17}
Such a new and ambiguous phenomenon reflected through Mishra’s travelogue
skillfully portrays India’s new cultural, social and political challenges which are part of other major global transformations.

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Having Grabovszki’s definition in view, we may admit that the literary relations are really *intensified* if you peer into Pankaj Mishra’s selected works and his literary career in general. Similar to some other writers’ position in the world, Pankaj Mishra’s status as a writer is a reflection of the definition of globalization proposed by Grabovszki. This is to say that Mishra’s works are a good example of intensification of literary relations, literary communication and production. Of course, if we are recalling Grabovszki’s emphasis on the principle of development of electronic media, cultures of information and the modern mediums such as internet (earlier mentioned in chapter two) then there are different points regarding Pankaj Mishra’s status. As a matter of fact we might claim that Mishra’s first works are produced in a context where still “a piece of literature is always linked with the name of a person” since the old models of literary communication are prevalent in India – and many other parts of the world – even though there have been great progresses in IT technology worldwide. This is to say that like many other parts of the world, literature in the subcontinent is yet bound up with the traditional medium of *book* although in a simultaneous procedure, various internet websites, journals or blogs provide literary productions – as well as interactions – for their miscellaneous fans. However investigating the manifestations of literary productions through electronic media around the globe reveals different patterns. For instance, if you search for Mishra’s books on the internet you will get a number of references to regional or international publishers’ homepages through which it is possible to order his books in various editions of paperback or hardcover. And contrary to some other writers such as Milan Kundera, till date, Pankaj Mishra’s books, for whatever reason, are not available in the electronic format (eBook, audio-book, pdf, djvu, kindle, etc.). In the meantime, it is through the same medium of internet that Pankaj Mishra’s most recent articles in Guardian newspaper become instantly accessible worldwide (through its guardian.co.uk homepage). In addition, the current news of Mishra’s professional career and his participation in different literary events around the globe are conveyed through World Wide Web. It seems that Mishra is quite familiar with the significance of *mediascapes* – and their power in disseminating information and shaping images.
for the world – as he has been contributing his literary and political essays to mass media for a long time.

From another perspective and true to Grabovszki’s emphasis on the prerequisite tool of literary institutions as leading to a better circulation and knowledge of literature, we can claim that Pankaj Mishra is lucky enough to find the gateway of literature at a very early stage of his life. This lays the foundation for his future career. In fact, the start point for Mishra goes back to his early experiences with reading great books from his father’s rich library in his family hometown:

My first memory of a book is of a red clothbound volume printed in England: *Queen Victoria* by Lytton Strachey. This was in the mid seventies, in my family home in a North Indian small town, which was hundreds of miles away from a bookshop. There were other books in the house, clothbound editions of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, some novels in Hindi, my first language, and also translations in Hindi of Bengali fiction, books on meditation, theosophy, and holy Indian men – my father read books for spiritual instruction – and a few volumes of Shakespeare, English classics by Dickens and Thomas Hardy.¹⁹

For Mishra the next steps are taken gradually but quite systematically as he later on contributes reviews and articles on various topics to regional, national and international journals and magazines. Also working as the chief editor with Harper Collins India marks a turning point at the outset of his professional career. This experience might be perceived as related to another major concern through Ernst Grabovszki’s perspective, i.e. the monopoly of media businesses, enterprises, and publishers. As a matter of fact, by getting published at Picador Mishra himself experiences direct cooperation with media giants which according to Grabovszki show an escalating propensity towards the globalization of their operations. Picador is an imprint of Pan Macmillan Ltd. which is one of the largest general book publishers in the UK. Pan Macmillan itself is part of the Macmillan group, which operates in
over 70 countries worldwide. Besides Picador, their imprints include Macmillan, Pan, Boxtree, Sidgwick & Jackson, Tor, Macmillan Children’s Books, Young Picador and Campbell Books. Accordingly the literary institutions such as publishers, libraries, bookstores, and so on have played a major role in both creating a literary perspective for Pankaj Mishra and in forming the circulation and knowledge about his works.

The function and importance of the publisher as a vital literary institution in the process of production has been emphasized before this in chapter two of the study through Shashi Deshpande’s viewpoint. Accordingly, we can claim that one significant element which has globally popularized Pankaj Mishra’s writings is undoubtedly adopting the effective policy of collaborating with famous West-based agents and publishers. Due to their vast operational scope, such publishers have successfully introduced Mishra’s works into various international literary tastes. These Western publishers and agents also market Pankaj Mishra’s works in a relatively great scale. Yet the current marketing procedures for books with their focus on the fast recovery of the money for the publisher include some modus operandi which do not seem pleasant to many, as Deshpande criticizes about the modern methods and manners about marketing for books which usually downgrade the cultural, artistic or literary productions to the level of consumer goods. However, here in Mishra’s case we can claim that those troublesome marketing techniques are either rarely conducted or at least done according to Mishra’s own style and consent; unquestionably he is not making a show-person of himself in this regard as far as his event appearances, book launches, interviews and other performances with the media are concerned.

Pankaj Mishra has truly benefited from what Deshpande posits as the migration of writers, intellectuals and scholars from around the world to the West. Accordingly, these erudite migrants validate and endorse writings from their own countries, while they stabilize their positions in famous Western universities and institutions. For Mishra, this benefiting, of course, happens in two direct and indirect ways. Indirectly, he has taken advantage from the overall endorsements of the earlier educated migrants who entered the Western academic canon long before him. This in part is related to the status of the Indian literature in the world. Not limited to diasporic writings all over world, now-a-days many great Indian-origin writers are
part of literary movements or schools globally; some are authorities in major literary mainstreams. And more directly, for instance, Mishra ventures to introduce and edit major essays from celebrated writers like V. S. Naipaul (who is a Nobel Prize winner in 2001). Undoubtedly, endeavors like this draws more attention to Mishra’s own style of writing as well and gives more validity to his works.20

The smooth, lucid and yet attractive structure of Mishra’s selected works here conform to become a good testimony for Deshpande’s speculation that a sort of varied readership should be considered by the writers. We might rightly consider Pankaj Mishra as one of those citizens of the world who can address the world with ease, when he presents the unfamiliar in his selected works to make them exotic enough, while removing the unexplainable. In both works The Romantics and The Butter Chicken in Ludhiana, there are many occasions which refer to customs, rituals, and habits that are mostly local and regional; or they portray characters that live in remote areas dealing with their daily routines and most of the events just refer to regional problems. Yet, they do not seem redundant or perplexing at all; the language of these works provides a transparency through which readers can easily identify with the characters in their definite world. Of course, in these books we also read about foreign people residing in India but the focal point remains the subcontinent. Since this sense of belonging to a region does not block the ways to the core of the occasions or events in the novel or the travelogue and the ordinary reader is not confused by the world the characters inhabit (as in the critiques mentioned in the third chapter of this study, there has been no reference to any probable ambiguity in this regard), then we can quite fairly judge that Mishra’s selected works become easily accessible to a larger cosmopolitan readership, even though you do not find the name of any clamorous celebrity in them.

The global readership of Pankaj Mishra’s selected works, in part, owes credit to the English language medium. This medium has paved Mishra’s way into the global market of writing and has made his works visible to the world. This comes from the fact that, as it has been emphasized in chapter two, English is the language which is used by a great number of people around the world and thus a suitable medium for literature as well. Hence, literary productions like Mishra’s selected works travel more easily in this borderless territory and exhibit their qualities for a
larger global reader. Additionally, this exposure brings about various consequences, each of which again asserts the significance of *English as the language of globalization*. Of course, this is not an exclusive story. The success of Mishra’s works resembles many other similar cases. Likewise and just at the outset, different local and/or international critics review and analyze the works and after some time their market expands as readers become interested to read them even in their own languages – a demand which, in turn, leads to the translation of these works. Undoubtedly, other parameters of literary institutions such as the role of publishers and agents are involved in this process.

However, picking English as the language of communication is the most natural and suited selection for Pankaj Mishra. Natural, because this is the language he experiences from his early childhood while browsing his father’s library (which contained both books from English and Hindi) up to later opportunities when he publishes reviews in regional journals; a fact which is shared by Shashi Deshpande in a greater scale just to recall an important phase of the subcontinent’s history besides showing a portion of other intellectual’s educated lifestyle:

All those books in Ghosh’s grandfather’s cupboard, all the classics in my father’s library at home, were in English – either originally written in the language or translated into it. This language, like the literature it embraced, travelled to us in India and to many others through the world, on the backs of the British Empire.21

In another relevant polemic, Deshpande posits that the selection of language is a clue for reaching to various readers around the world. In other words it is through the medium of language that most readers try to identify with the characters in a new world defined by the writer:

Literature, especially the novel, is a writer’s response to society. Ideas are worked out through people and their lives. And these lives are lived in a particular region which has a social, political and cultural context – all of which is
intrinsic to the novel. The writer, in other words, creates a definite world. Since identification is one of the major doorways through which a reader enters fiction, how did the novel reach readers for whom the world so created by the writer was an unfamiliar one?22

Though the above-mentioned sentences are exemplified mainly with novel, because of the essence and nature of their function these features are not confined to one genre at all. In fact, it is with much delicacy and subtlety that Mishra applies the same qualities to his debut and attempts to make as wide a doorway as passable for larger groups of people to come through and grasp his ideas and concepts. In the meantime, he also inserts Hindi phrases and sentences in his literary travelogue or travel novel *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana* to add to the taste and flavor of the scenes. In addition to other purposes, this is a part of the *local color* device Mishra intends to implement. But in order to transmit whatever goes on in this particular world to the international audience, Mishra adopts the English language to attain his aims seeing that any attempt to address larger numbers of people requires its own proper means such as English language rather than limited local regional ones. Accordingly, through this medium he manages to deal with big themes of self-retrospection, love, loss, grief, the meeting of East and West, caste, the changes in modern India after the liberalization of Indian economy in 1990s, the rise of a new middle class in India with its own patterns of ambitions, manners, and customs and many others. In this way, English turns out to be the most suited language for communicating such regional as well as universal themes. Emphasizing on the vital role of the English language, Pankaj Mishra himself elaborates on the current reasons for its magnificence:

Marx did not take the hegemony of English as the global language into account; he could not have predicted the immense cultural power of Anglo-American publishing to create and shape not only academic canons but also popular cultural and intellectual trends. Certainly, the so-called “boom” in Indian writing in English is due not only to the rise of a new generation of talented writers – these had existed previously – but also to the vastly increased
preference for “ethnic” literature among the primary consumers of literary fiction: the book-buying public of Western Europe and North America.\textsuperscript{23}

Looking from a vantage point, Shashi Deshpande attaches this kind of preference to the concept of the significance of identity even in our current propensity for globality:

However much the world opens out to us, there is an intrinsic human sense of rootedness, of wanting to belong, a desire to stake out our own little territories, which leads to a greater involvement with all that is closest to our lives, arising from our immediate environment, from our individual situations. The fierce ethnic conflicts in different parts of world, even at a time of the erasing of national boundaries, seem to indicate that in a world of increasing globalization, ethnic identities are, as a matter of fact, becoming increasingly important.\textsuperscript{24}

However, in Mishra’s case, the function of language is not merely limited to the authority and value of English in his career. Undoubtedly, being translated into other languages can be considered as one of the reasons (or effects) for the wide-ranging reception of Mishra’s selected works. In other words, the role of translation in publicizing Mishra’s selected works has been a remarkable one. This function of translation, as it was described in chapter two, is in close connection and at the center of globalization of literature. Translating \textit{The Romantics} and \textit{Butter Chicken in Ludhiana} into European languages and henceforth the globality of Mishra’s ideas could be interpreted from different perspectives. It can be considered as a continuation of the process of colonization and decolonization which Venuti contemplates upon. If seen through Venuti’s perspective, then it may be assumed that Mishra’s original works together with their translations are acting as weapons with which the colonized people (or writers as their voices) are rioting against the colonizers. Or even these translations can be taken as a different and abnormal symptom in Cronin’s elaboration on the imbalance of translation traffic (from
economically wealthy nations to poorer ones). Whatever the construal, at least, it can be claimed that a demand or need has been recognized. As Mishra maintains, a part of this necessity originates from the growing market for ethnic literature. This same fact, which was referred to previously, is pinpointed by Nico Israel:

In any case, glancing back at the last fifteen years, the contemporary books that literature students in US and UK universities tend to read come from a significantly wider geographical area than formerly, even if those books are largely written by a handful of Western-educated Anglophone authors.25

As it was stated in chapter two, according to a general consent and by definition, translation aims, at least, at two important tasks: transmitting texts across boundaries and communicating across languages and more significantly building a part of social, cultural, literary, political and economic existence in a community. Emphasizing on the strategic role of translation, Mishra maintains that historical processes such as colonialism, the Cold War, and globalization “were not what Goethe had in mind when he first spoke of ‘world literature’ to Eckermann. In fact, Goethe said nothing about how a world literature might come into being; he merely hoped that there would be more translations – and this is worth noting – into European languages from non-European ones.”26 And as a professional writer who is quite well-acquainted with the functions of translation, Pankaj Mishra truly recognizes the big picture as well:

Globalization, the quickening of communication and commerce, has meant that texts move across frontiers with relative ease. A literary novelist like García Márquez is read more in the English-speaking world than any writer from England and America; and many more people read him in translation than in Spanish. Paul Auster has a French reputation greater than his American one. Indeed, there are writers, such as Indian writers in English, whose major audience exists outside their country of origin. For the first
time in literary history, a writer in England or America can expect to write a novel and hope for it to be translated into several European languages within two years. Indeed, some literary novels originally written in English are first published in Holland, before they reach readers in the UK or US.27

Pankaj Mishra also refers to the fact that there is an imbalance in translation traffic of literature and that despite a promising market of translation outside the English-speaking world, still the Anglo-American publishing centers in the English-speaking world have the complete authority in shaping the world literature by “publishing only those foreign works that reflect to some extent the already existing images within America and Britain of the foreign cultures they originate in.”28 Moreover, Mishra draws attention to a number of key elements in defining the world literature such as domination of market realism in determining the availability of non-Western texts in the West, the ideological contexts of production and consumption, political and economic conditions. He also shares the idea with Shashi Deshpande on the continuation of the existence of national and local literature side by side with global literature:

For this globalized literature responds to a global market and just as a world market for consumer goods dominates national economies but does not replace them, so globalized literature will continue to have a world market but will not replace local and national literatures.29
5.1.2. Milan Kundera’s selected works

Milan Kundera’s fiction and essays profoundly deal with the interlacing of aesthetics and politics, of personal and social issues in modern era which he sees as vanishing by pressures to conform. Such issues are reflected on in his works through his specific unique style. For instance, commenting upon his idea of novel as an investigation of human life in the world (which is itself considered as a trap), Kundera avers that as a major event the First World War should be viewed differently:

Wrongly “world.” It involved only Europe, and not all of Europe at that. But the adjective “world” expresses all the more eloquently the sense of horror before the fact that, henceforward, nothing that occurs on the planet will be a merely local matter, that all catastrophes concern the entire world, and that consequently we are more and more determined by external conditions, by situations that no one can escape and that more and more make us resemble one another.30

As it can be inferred from the above quotation, Milan Kundera quite skillfully refers to different points in a wide range from the semantic significance of the words to the concepts such as interconnectedness of the world orders and so on. This is the specific style of Milan Kundera. Indeed, it is well known that most of Kundera’s thought on art and politics is the object of literary experimentation in his novels, either in the thematic structure of the novels themselves, or in self-standing reflections and digressions formulated by the characters or the narrator. Furthermore, Kundera’s attempts to view the big picture have always been remarkably intertwined with the lines of his stories in the selected novels of this study. His mature work declares a warning about the fact that human beings are actually unable to find true and accurate interpretations of reality as human perception is imperfect. “The primary impulse for this cognitive skepticism is undoubtedly Kundera’s traumatic experience of his younger years when he uncritically supported communist ideology.”31 In this way, Kundera’s works take multiple registers. Once, they represent the writer’s personal responses to his surrounding milieu and take the shape of individual revelations; they
examine intellectual issues and concepts too. Or at another time they become landmarks for hypothesizing about various methods which may lead to the real truth of man’s life. Not surprising, a variety of vital themes and issues are dealt with in Kundera’s novels which boost his charisma. As Olga Carlisle maintains Kundera “has brought Eastern Europe to the attention of the Western reading public, and he has done so with insights that are universal in their appeal. His call for truth and the inner freedom without which truth cannot be recognized, his realization that in seeking truth we must be prepared to come to terms with death – these are the themes that have earned him critical acclaim, […]” 

No doubt, Kundera speaks via a world-conquering voice for a broad audience but what’s more, the appealing quality of his works is derived from their universality in scope:

Kundera constantly speaks up for the particular values related to Central European culture, but at the same time he “universalizes” his fiction by erasing the “regional” qualities that may have rooted it in its specific local environment. He can thus be said to attempt a blurring of the work’s local inflection in order to make it more translocally mobile.

Even so, finding a direct and straight reference to a phenomenon like globalization in Kundera’s selected works seems a rare case. Instead, we find various registers which are one way or another relevant to the social, political, cultural and literary principles most counted on in the same process of globalization. This is to say that as a portion of literature and literary studies, Milan Kundera’s selected works and their relevant reviews or criticisms are developed into a platform for evoking, supporting and interpreting different social, political, literary, and cultural concepts within and relevant to the realm of globalization (e.g. world literature, postmodernism and translation studies). Also one good example of this situation is found in Kundera’s allusions to the problem of nation-state while he makes references to Communism, and Russian invasion.

For a prominent intellectual who is firmly grounded in the tradition of Central European literature, Kundera’s themes relate to the dominant mainstreams in debates
of literary globalization as well as social, cultural and political spheres and thus add more to the globality of his works. Some of these themes relate to disciplines like world literature (and hence comparative literature), modern and postmodern literary surveys, and translation studies. Of course, due to Kundera’s wide range of interest (music, film, history, art, philosophy…), then his developed themes transcend a narrow literary framework. Hence, through his fictional oeuvre, Kundera develops themes of love and sex, sexuality and women’s status in society, hatred and revenge, politics and government, a nation in transition, tradition and modernization, displacement, migration, exile and mobility, kitsch, folk music, the personal and cultural identity, cultural politics of identity, man’s relationship to history, and many others. Also it can be added that the fate of the individual in modern society, especially in modern Communist society becomes a major thematic focus for Kundera’s fiction, from The Joke through The Unbearable Lightness of Being. This concern mostly originates in Kundera’s appreciation for the wisdom of the novel as “a counter to the leveling influence of modern society. In the midst of an environment hostile to private life and the integrity of the individual, the novel appears as a sanctuary where the precious essence of European individualism is held safe as in a treasure chest.”

Undoubtedly, Kundera’s selected novels have earned him much international critical acclaim. He has always been appreciated for juxtaposing biographical and fictitious elements in his novels and for simultaneously exploring various motifs. Atkinson and Silverman believe that “the construction of selves, through the relationship between the personal and the political, is precisely Kundera’s topic. In The Joke, a couple makes a sense of their relationship in the context of Eastern European version of Kitsch. In The Unbearable Lightness of Being, the alternating desire for personal lightness (no commitments) and weight (being committed) is played out by selves who emerge within a cultural order.” However, even though many critics have focused on the political disillusionment that is perceived in Kundera’s works, Kundera has claimed that putting too much emphasis on the politics of his novels is a great mistake, and that he especially dislikes being classified as a dissident writer.
Some critics have admired Kundera’s style, focusing on his use of humor and his sense of play in narration, particularly in terms of the liveliness of his erotic themes, while a number of critics have criticized his narrative techniques as disorienting, usually because of his disjointed plotting, episodic characterizations, and authorial intrusions. However, prevalent in his selected novels is Kundera’s fascination with sexual relationships and especially with representation of women. This is a major motif for him which at the same time has been focused on in many critiques. While it is believed that by looking at people through the prism of erotic relationships, Kundera tries to reveal much about human nature, yet his preoccupation with sexuality in his works, almost to the point of obsession, suggests a debatable complexity and ambiguity of his works as well. Even so, for Kundera, sex and lovemaking is an important instrument which enables him to delve into the minds of his characters in all his mature works:

His flashiness here becomes an asset, however, blending nicely with his fictive strategy, which is to separate the splendid and various experiences of sex – the area of lightness and the will, conquest, curiosity and enterprise – from the heavy, fated and involuntary area of love. Love shapes the novel, sex provides the commentary: a facile arrangement, perhaps, but effective.36

Correspondingly, almost two different critical approaches have been implemented in reading sexuality in Kundera’s novels. The first approach focuses on a feminist interpretation and suggests that Kundera’s female characters are usually perceived through the eyes of men, who seldom see women as more than sexual beings. Kundera almost never describes the inner world of his female characters but is mainly preoccupied with their appearance. Followers of this approach believe that if men are represented as complex characters, Kundera deemphasizes their physical appearance and, rather, explores their inner life. Women are mainly represented like dolls, deprived of all depth and complexity, and as a result, are treated by men accordingly. But in the second approach which is quite opposed to the earlier view of Kundera, women gain superiority as the majority of men are represented as weak, cowardly, violent, dishonest people, often lacking any capacity for any inner growth,
whereas Kundera’s female characters are much more human, more honest, more intelligent, often more independent and capable of inner development.

As a major postmodernist writer who has succeeded in communicating the East European experience of life under totalitarian communism to a large worldwide public, Milan Kundera has faced varied judgments regarding his migration to France in 1975, and henceforth his dual Franco-Czech status and his writing in French. Although he was recognized as an important literary figure in his homeland early in his career, a series of critical attacks on his writings from Czech quarters have been augmenting since he left, particularly for what has been perceived as his abandonment of his Czech heritage for the adoration of Western European and American readers and critics. But at the same time some other critics make out this posture of Kundera very differently and of course, more positively:

Most recently, he has used his experience of life both in the East and in the West for commenting on contemporary Western civilization. Milan Kundera’s knowledge of life in Czechoslovakia under Soviet rule has led him to important insights regarding the human condition of people living both in the East and in the West. […] In Czechoslovakia after World War II, Kundera was a member of the young, idealist communist generation who were trying to bring about a “paradise on Earth,” a communist utopia. It was not until their middle age that they realized that the communist regime had abused their idealism and that they had brought their nation into subjugation. This realization resulted in a feeling of guilt which Milan Kundera has been trying to exorcise by his literary work in which, especially after leaving for the West, he has been able, by contrasting the Western and the East European experience, to elucidate important aspects of contemporary human existence.

37

The Joke has been variously labeled as realistic, political, ideological, and psychological in type or genre by different reviewers, even though Kundera simply calls his novel only a love story. Such discrepancy in assessing the novel could
mistakenly be interpreted on the surface as a paradox in critics’ views since at the same time many critics truly believe that much beyond such delimiting tags Kundera has passed the regional qualities for a novel and has thus conquered a universal domain. But in a closer look these different labels converge and hence indicate more power and talent of its writer. It could be claimed that while *The Joke* acknowledges all the above-mentioned tags, it isn’t confined to a local world and reaches out much beyond its setting. However, reflecting the spiritual and political history of a post-war country, this cult book tells the story of Communism in Czechoslovakia between the years 1948 to 1965 and traces the loss of idealism and the desperate reliance on hollow images, through the experiences of its characters. The novel deals with folk culture and prehistory in an absurd environment. Strangely enough, the character who remains inwardly most loyal to Communist ideals also values the folk traditions of the country’s past. Even though the novel immediately became a bestseller and was translated into different languages, it resulted in Kundera’s expulsion from Czechoslovakia and his emigration to France.

Regarded as Milan Kundera’s finest achievement by many critics, this early novel takes a grand place in his writer’s literary career. Viki Adams believes that *The Joke* seems “to embody his [Kundera’s] later themes of history as myth and, at the same time, to provide the rationale for proclaiming Kundera as a modern humanist.”38 Craig Cravens observes Kundera’s position in this novel outstandingly different from his other works:

In a sense, *The Joke* is a quintessentially modernist novel – a large, labyrinthine edifice that creates the impression of a single, overarching consciousness controlling and arranging the characters and events of the fictional world. One of the themes this novelistic consciousness emphasizes, however, is the impossibility of such grand, monologic, narrative structures or consciousnesses to engage and make sense of the world. This is the point at which we first glimpse the postmodernist Kundera to come. In *The Joke*, characters approach the psychologically mimetic, but in his later novels Kundera will subordinate his characters to the quasi-
authorial, philosophically ruminative voice of the narrator. Kundera’s novels become a place where, as the author himself states, “man thinks, God laughs” (Kundera 1986, 158). In this first novel, Kundera’s God is still silent.39

David Lodge believes that *The Joke* is an exemplary case of modernist novel which is “generally characterized by a radical rearrangement of the spatio-temporal continuity of the narrative line.”40 He further adds that as manifestly a “modern” novel while reading *The Joke*, we feel “an overwhelming sense of a creative mind behind the text, its “implied author,” who constructed its labyrinth of meanings with love and dedication and immense skill over a long period of time, during which the design of the whole must have been present to his consciousness.”41

Among different impressive elements leading to the high degree of magnetism of the novel, two factors are usually referred to in major reviews. One of these significant constituents of the novel is undoubtedly its structural design. Implementing techniques of multiple narrations and polyphony composition are among structural devices in the novel which have been noticeably lingered upon by most readers and reviewers. As Søren Frank posits “Kundera’s first novel, *The Joke*, changed the literary landscape in Czechoslovakia, on the one hand because of its polyphonic form and stream of consciousness technique, on the other hand because of its critique of Marxist politics and its erasure of the Czech nation’s folkloristic traditions.”42 Furthermore, Søren Frank adds that “in spite of the nonlinear, a-chronological, and polyphonic structure of the novel, the underlying story line still occupies a central role in the novel. The polyphony is a polyphony of perspectives on the story and the events that constitute it, and one of the reader’s main tasks is to reconstruct what happened.”43 As it was mentioned in chapter two, the story of novel has four distinct narrators, and it is through the interwoven first-person narratives that we receive the same events and characters treated from several points of view. Through this pluralist and polyphonic structure of the novel the author compares and contrasts the testimonies of a number of different protagonists, thus forcing the reader to come to the conclusion that *reality is unknowable*; the warning that it is impossible to understand and control reality becomes a dominant theme stressed upon later by Kundera in many of his works. It is then believed that this skeptical attitude is
evidently linked with the history of Kundera’s own personal disillusionment with communism.

Such connection between theme and structure brings us to another incredible feature in Kundera’s style. As Søren Frank notifies, the quality and merit of Kundera’s themes with their political, social and cultural implications are quite remarkable. Accordingly, developing various attractive themes in The Joke and following a task of forming a chain of thematic unity in his literary career is the second important element acting as the attraction force for Milan Kundera and the vast reception of his novels. Through this thematic unity, which shapes an integrated nature for Kundera’s works, we identify different subject matters. In fact, thematic unity is the continuity which forms Milan Kundera’s opus or oeuvre. Kundera’s perpetual readers perceive a technique of repetition of ideas, themes and motifs within each one of his novels including The Joke and all through his oeuvre as well. Thematic unity, Francois Ricard states, causes theme to appear openly in the novel and gives a key role to theme in the process of creation of a novel so that making theme “the most visible, the most immediate, and the most “constraining” element of the novelistic structure.” Ricard further adds that thematic unity, in short, is what frames and makes polyphonic proliferation possible; it organizes it and offers it room to open out; without it polyphony would only be cacophony.

Whether worked out steadily within and by the story or developed on their own and outside the story (digressions), the themes of The Joke play a major role in acquiring a high rank in modern literature hierarchy with few precedents or parallels. Kundera featured many great themes in The Joke: Life being a giant joke, perpetrated on members of the human race, is one of the main themes. The theme of this divine joke, which history or God, or fate, perpetrates on mankind is prevalent from the early pages of the story until the end. Dealing with the outcomes of an ever-evolving joke played upon one’s life also makes the destiny of the protagonist of the novel more attractive to the readers. This theme is at times mingled with the themes of revenge, forgetting and identity in The Joke. In fact, these are among the rampant themes from the very beginning until the end of the story. Other theme-words such as nationalism and totalitarianism (in its different shapes from everyday life to government dominance) can be found in the novel, too. All major themes of the novel are often
linked to another theme-word, i.e., identity, which itself works in close connection with the characters in the novel. The identity of a character, a group of people, or even a nation is configured in any scene of the novel which is related to the major themes already mentioned. The search for identity finds its manifestation in characterizations of Ludvik, Helena, Lucie, Jaroslav, and Kostka. Such appearances on one hand remind the readers about man’s lifestyle in the modern globalized era, while on the other hand they cause a feeling of sympathy with any of these characters. And yet all three parts of Barbara Day’s proposition seem quite applicable to *The Joke*:

The predominant theme in Kundera’s writing is that of identity: not simply the identity of the inner self, but with whom and with what a person identifies his or her self. In the work Kundera completed while living in Czechoslovakia this theme has three strands: identification with (or commitment to) an ideology; identification with (or desire for) an idealized self-image; and identification with a history and a tradition.46

*The Unbearable Lightness of Being* also functions on many different levels as it follows Kundera’s law of thematic unity and hence provides the readers or critics a multitude of literary theoretical frameworks for their discussions. This may also add some degrees of complexity to the task of reading. The novel can be seen as a love story, a detailed study of kitsch, a psychological study, a political commentary and a dramatic account of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, or a philosophical study starting with Kundera’s fascination with Fredriech Nietzsche and Parmenides. Also many reviewers find the binary oppositions in the novel worthy of close attention. Still other literary critics pinpoint the novel’s structure in that it follows a musical composition the same as a symphony, with its introduction and reintroduction of themes and events. Many of the themes in the novel are introduced only to reappear later in a different key in this musical composition. Yet, at its most fundamental level, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is about the equivocacy and paradoxes of human existence, as each person oscillates between lightness and weight; between Nietzsche’s concept of life as an ever-disappearing phenomenon and the belief that all
is eternal return; and specifically between dream and reality. In this way, the structure of the novel intertwines with its themes through a new style:

In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, a work which was hailed in the West as a masterpiece, Kundera’s preoccupations with insufficiencies of perception, lyricism, privacy and misunderstanding are re-examined in a polyphonic structure with a more traditional narrative line.\(^{47}\)

This different style of Kundera’s novels written in France is what has often been noticed by many reviewers. Barbara Day believes that in these novels (including *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*) Kundera “abandons continuous narrative for a structure which resembles film collage. He juxtaposes one narrative with another, moves backward and forward in time, fictionalizes historical characters, and treats fictional characters as real by bringing them into dialogue with the author-narrator.”\(^{48}\) She further asserts that the fate of two exiles, Tereza and Sabina are contrasted in the novel, where one is drawn back to her homeland till she dies and the other drifts to America. Mazes of unexpected encounters, uncertainties, and betrayals, both political and personal have also drawn the attention of this critic in the novel.

The motif of perpetual transition is also another point being distinguished in Milan Kundera’s career. During an interview with Kundera, Jane Kramer says: “Your characters are rarely at home. They are always in some sort of moral or philosophical transit, when they are not actually going somewhere. Your ideas chase each other around. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is like a chase in which Nietzsche’s “heaviest of burdens,” his idea of eternal return, is chasing Parmenides’ idea of “lightness” around the world.” And Kundera responds: “You know, I started this chase, this novel, 25 years ago. The idea was there, but I messed it up completely, ridiculously. All I was left with were two characters – the girl Tereza and the man Tomas – and one scene of Tomas looking out of a window and saying to himself *Einmal ist keinmal*. Meaning “one time is no time.” *Once is not enough.* Meaning that man, living his one life, is condemned to that one fatal experience. He can never know if he was a good man or a bad man, if he loved anyone or if he had only the illusion of
love. He gets older and older, entering each new moment of his life equally innocent, and then one day he is old without ever knowing what old age is. His old age is merely his newest experience. He enters it as stupid as he entered the world. *Einmal ist keinmal.* That is the idea that haunted me for 25 years.”

Just as it has been elaborated in chapter four, many important devices have been systematically utilized in the structure of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Setting is one of those fundamental instruments to give more coherence to the work. Kundera uses his setting for at least two important reasons if not for many others. As we know the novel is set during the 1960s in Czechoslovakia. The fact that Kundera himself experiences the Prague Spring as well as the Soviet invasion makes a real scene of pathos out of the story. The novel then turns to a love story which juxtaposes the love affairs of its four main characters with the upheaval of the Russian invasion. In this way, the issues of love come into sharp contrast with the issues of hate. Moreover, it is the setting that allows Kundera to use his novel as a vehicle for a reflection on the effects of the totalitarian regime on the creation of art and, by extension, on the creation of life itself. In addition, the setting provides the basis for the writer to make greater explorations on the topic of nation-state. This is done quite implicitly in the light of allusions to Totalitarianism, Communism, and Russian invasion and its relevant consequences.

Another important device in configuration of Milan Kundera’s style in the novel is the vital role of the narrator. Very early at the beginning of the book, a narrative voice undertakes a meditation on the ideas of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and classical Greek philosopher Parmenides. This voice *creates* and *participates* in the story while remaining somehow outside the story. Later in the story, the narrator tells the reader that he has “been thinking about Tomas for many years,” (p.5) implying it is the author-as-narrator who has given Tomas his fictional existence. However, while it may be easy to make the assumption that the “I” in the story is Kundera, it is also possible to consider the narrator as yet another character in the story itself, somehow a part of Kundera yet also separate from him. One reason Kundera may choose to create a narrator is as a device to frequently remind the readers that what they are reading is fiction, not reality. In fact, authorial intrusions made through this narrator have two effects. While on one hand they place the story in
the realm of fiction, at the same time, they make the author seem more present to the reader. Accordingly, the author is speaking directly to the reader in a kind of conversation. As another effect, it can be claimed that Kundera’s narrator also serves the function of constructing the philosophical structure of the novel. Since he is separate from the story, he has the ability to comment on each of the characters beyond their knowledge. This distance allows the reader to share privileged knowledge with the narrator that is hidden from the characters. It also leads the reader to trust that the narrator is reliable.

However, as referred to in chapter four, Hana Pichova believes that there are narrator’s dual functions of directing and creating which most clearly relate to the theme of freedom in the story. In addition, by adopting these two functions the narrator of The Unbearable Lightness of Being makes himself visible in the story, controls his fictional personae and their world, and alters the conventions of the Socialist Realist novel or any other novel that is totalitarian in its presentation. Such a standpoint against totalitarianism comes into close connection with the structure of the novel as well. In this regard, Yvon Grenier maintains “understandably, Kundera conceives the novel as intrinsically incompatible with authoritarianism, especially in its most radical form: totalitarianism. In The Unbearable Lightness of Being, the narrator proclaims: “In the realm of totalitarian kitsch, all answers are given in advance and preclude any questions. It follows, then, that the true opponent of totalitarian kitsch is the person who asks questions.”50 And the “person who asks questions” is, par excellence, the novelist, the writer, the artist, and this because they are not longing for final solutions.”51 It is through exposing certain digressions or even theme-words such as “kitsch” that Kundera follows his task of asking questions.

As it has been discussed before, Kundera puts considerable energy into defining, describing, and investigating the role of the theme-word kitsch in a communist society. As a German word that loosely means sentimental, inferior, and/or vulgar art, Kitsch claims to have an aesthetic purpose but in reality it tends to simplify intricate thoughts and ideas into stereotypical and easily marketable figures. It easily appeals to the masses and to the lowest common denominator. For kitsch to be kitsch, it must be able to arouse an emotional response that according to the book “the multitudes can share.”52 Kitsch then becomes a necessary tool for the intellectual
and emotional control of a general public in a totalitarian culture. According to Kundera, in an order which always forces its members to feel the same way about a particular event or state of being, kitsch best works its magic. As he writes, “Those of us who live in a society where various political tendencies exist side by side and competing influences cancel or limit one another can manage more or less to escape the kitsch inquisition: the individual can preserve his individuality; the artists can create unusual works. But whenever a single political movement corners power, we find ourselves in the realm of totalitarian kitsch.” Kitsch, according to Kundera, is devoid of irony, since “in the realm of kitsch everything must be taken quite seriously.”

From another relevant perspective, Kundera believes that kitsch is the linking component behind all religions, credos and political parties that believe in the Grand March. According to him, most European credos, whether religious or political, claim that the world is good and human existence is positive: “categorical agreement with being” as Kundera calls it. He points out that something like shit, however, has no place in any of these doctrines. Instead, their aesthetic ideal is kitsch, which can be considered “the absolute denial of shit.” In other words, in order to present a consistent, idealized, and romantic view of the world, all of these credos wipe out whatever is uncomfortable to them, whatever does not fit. Such dishonest and neutered way of looking at the world results in the aesthetics of pale pastel paintings of family scenes, or photographs of identical laughing children with red Communist kerchiefs around their necks, to mention just some samples from the novel. Just as nothing inappropriate can be allowed in the aesthetic of kitsch, individuals cannot be allowed either. The Grand March, therefore, is based on people marching in step, screaming slogans together with one voice. Sabina points out that this “ideal” is actually much worse than any violent or imperfect totalitarian reality. Commenting upon Soviet films shown in Communist countries, the narrator asserts that:

The current conventional interpretation of these films is this: that they showed the Communist ideal, whereas Communist reality was worse.
Sabina always rebelled against that interpretation.
Whenever she imagined the world of Soviet kitsch
becoming a reality, she felt a shiver run down her back. She would unhesitatingly prefer life in a real Communist regime with all its persecution and meat queues. Life in the real Communist world was still livable. In the world of the Communist ideal made real, in that world of grinning idiots, she would have nothing to say, she would die of horror within a week.\textsuperscript{57}

Accordingly, understanding kitsch brings the reader to an understanding of Sabina: it is not Communism that fends her off; it is Communist kitsch such as the May Day parades and the art of social realism. And those who condemn kitsch, or for that matter call it kitsch, must be banned for life because it is the expression of individualism that highly threatens the totalitarian regime. Kundera concludes, “In this light, we can regard the gulag as a septic tank used by totalitarian kitsch to dispose of its refuse.”\textsuperscript{58}

It is then through such a skillfully-designed structure that Milan Kundera incorporates his grand themes into his integrated coherent novel. While on one hand these themes become an integral part of the story, on the other hand, they enhance their intrinsic qualities by going beyond the apparent setting or milieu. Commenting upon a passage from \textit{The Unbearable Lightness of Being}, Italo Calvino has concluded that Milan Kundera’s “manner of storytelling progresses by successive waves (most of the action develops within the first thirty pages; the conclusion is already announced halfway through; every story is completed and illuminated layer by layer) and by means of digressions and remarks that transform the private problem into a universal problem and, thereby, one that is ours.”\textsuperscript{59} In fact, Kundera makes us once again interrogate many of the taken-for-granted aspects of our own lives. This happens mostly when we delve into the core of his work; \textit{The Unbearable Lightness of Being} is driven by exactly what drives most people globally: inter-human relationships, love and obsession, desire and oppression and also exploration of concepts such as freedom, inexperience, pain, necessity, responsibility, weight, lightness and so on.

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Italo Calvino’s approach to Kundera’s style and particularly his focus on the structure of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* brings us to the discussion of newer or different forms of fiction which has been an area of concern for many critics and writers in contemporary debates of literature. Quite expectedly, a remarkable part of these discussions have been done in a context of globalization debates. In addition, as Nico Israel maintains the relationship between globalization and these very forms of contemporary literature bears a complex nature (as these two entities are intricate themselves), yet such association has been promising, as many writers have created newer forms of expression to represent and express humankind’s present-day situation.

Certainly, Milan Kundera is one of those writers who have utilized these ingenious newer forms of expression to depict humanity with all its dilemmas, ambiguities and complications in the existing era. Kundera’s “method has been to graft abstract philosophical ideas with fictional invention to create narrative cyborgs: intellectually speculative, formally experimental, intermittently essayistic, yet warm-blooded, grounded in human experience. His characters are not mere automatons, programmed with pure theory and set to shuffling: they are sophisticated neural networks that grow through those dilemmas of love, history, nation and politics the author obliges them to confront.”

Kundera’s selected works are alive with many creative devices. In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* he uses a seven-part narrative to implement musical variations on the themes of love, desire, innocence, history, and to show many other provocative images and unusual relationships and ideas. Through his philosophically complex fiction, Milan Kundera explores the conflicting forces of personal yearning, public and private ethics, and social rule. His writing here is characterized by its inquisitive tone, integration of dream, realism, and that abstract contemplation which is competently interpolated into an inventive narrative structure. In addition, as it has been mentioned before, in writing *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* Kundera dismisses most of the traditional novelistic structures and employs specific narrative devices like polyphony to illustrate his own aesthetic of the novel, which emphasizes parallel explorations of related themes, active philosophical contemplation, and the integration of dreams and fantasy with realistic analysis. This assimilation is best
manifested by Kundera. Though in the selected works under the study we do not experience the kind of magic realism employed in some other works of Kundera (as exemplified by David Lodge in passages from The Book of Laughter and Forgetting \textsuperscript{61}), Tereza’s dream-scenes in The Unbearable Lightness of Being mostly remind the readers about the possibility of such a device. A brilliant example of such dreams happens in Part Four, Soul and Body when the text suddenly shifts from the reality scene of chapter ten into dream-scenes in the following chapters and then returns to the reality scene again in chapter fifteen. These dreams are so beautifully intertwined into the mainstream of the events that one even may not notice their fantasy nature on the first reading.

*The Joke* also has its own specific configurations; though it “has the precise formal articulation and ironic bite of the two cycles of short stories that preceded it, the first two notebooks of Laughable Loves […] the imaginative scope here is much vaster, and the complex intellectual resonances sound poignantly lyrical, as seldom after again.”\textsuperscript{62} However, *The Joke* is mainly dominated in its structure by the plane of ideas; much of the narrative of the novel consists of flashbacks and the repeated inversion of jokes has made a lively rhythm for the novel. It is believed that, such inverted jokes together with folk culture best exhibit elements of a great tragedy. Moreover, this multiperspectival novel displays its author’s outstanding style of narration. Four first-person narrators and their internal monologues give an undisputable quality to the work. In one word, the techniques of multiple narration, polyphonic composition and the writer’s fascination with numbers (especially number 7) have been at the center of attention for a majority of readers and reviewers as structural devices in this novel. In this way Milan Kundera presents his own exclusive style in depicting life.

Italo Calvino’s attitude of Kundera’s style and more specifically the final phrase in his quote also brings us to the discussion of identification which has been an area of concern for many critics and writers. As Shashi Deshpande posits “identification is one of the major doorways through which a reader enters fiction.”\textsuperscript{63} Hence, many readers all around the globe enter the definite world of Kundera and his novels no matter even if the world created by him seems an unfamiliar one. While identifying with different characters in various settings, many readers share their own
emotions and feelings with those characters as they feel that their problems are similar; readers generalize themes and events of the novel to their own situations. Undoubtedly, this process signifies Kundera’s proficiency in characterizing the novel and its components as an artistic form; a genre like novel with its distinctive nature provides the fullest representation of society. Kundera best knows that the novel, with its bulk of detail, ideally provides an abridgment or crystallization of social life that registers both the objective conditions of society and the particular subjective reactions of individuals to those conditions during decisive moments of historical change.

Another methodological aspect of Milan Kundera’s selected novels is related to the way he puts certain points of reference in his writings. As Deshpande elaborates on this issue, the international frames of reference become an important and essential factor for the readership of a work. Making a comparison between two different novels, one more local and the other more global, Deshpande arrives at a conclusive formula for a better readership of a work, which necessitates keeping the exotic unfamiliar within the text and removing the unexplainable. Premeditated or no, this is exactly happening in Kundera’s sonorous novels. While there are many occasions introducing substantial parts of Czech customs, traditions, culture and social backgrounds or references to certain familiar names and titles, at the same time we can find descriptions of strange characters and their attitudes or citation about eccentric ideas and thoughts from the author-narrator which adds much to the attractions of the selected novels. On one hand, readers encounter bizarre occasions mostly created through Kundera’s special and rather unique viewpoints on the existence of human beings. On the other hand, there are many evidences from the events, actions, motifs, titles and themes of the selected novels that seem quite familiar and attractive for the current readers from all around the globe. Moravia and Moravian folk art, music and songs, Communist Party, May Day parade, Soviet film Court of Honor, Ride of the Kings, Julius Fucik, Lightness and Weight, Kitsch, The Grand March, Oedipus, Nietzsche and Parmenides, Exile and Migration, Einmal ist keinmal (one time is no time), Es muss sein (it must be so), Prague Spring and many other examples cover a part of those evidences.
As it was mentioned before, according to Shashi Deshpande the migration of writers, intellectuals and scholars from around the world to Western capitals and universities has always been considered as an important factor in the globalization of writing. Accordingly, Czech literature and particularly Milan Kundera’s writings have also been affected by and benefited from what Deshpande claims. Of course, such a phenomenon has its own exclusive patterns, stages and history which might not have any equivalent in other literatures. Czech literature, in fact, has experienced much turbulence in its history. In twentieth century, the relative freedom and experiments in Czech literary era, which reached its peak during the Prague Spring of 1968, came to a sudden end the same summer, with the Soviet invasion which reinstated the strict censorship of the 1950s, shut down most of the literary magazines and newspapers, and silenced authors who did not conform. As a result and during a new emigration wave, many authors fled to the U.S. and Canada (Josef Škvorecký), France (Milan Kundera), Germany (Peroutka), and Austria (Pavel Kohout). It is noteworthy that, there existed a relatively weak Czech émigré literary tradition in the West between 1948, the communist occupation of Czechoslovakia, and 1970. But the arrival of new dissident émigrés after 1968 encouraged Czech émigré cultural life a lot. Some writers in this post 1968 émigré community managed to set up publishing houses in the West in the early 1970s and from the late 1970s onwards Czech émigrés in the West collaborated with their dissident colleagues within Czechoslovakia very intensely. During these years and before the fall of Communism in 1989 Czech émigré literature became that kind of writing which attempted to compare and contrast life in Czechoslovakia to life in the West, to plan the process of psychological adjustment of people who left Czechoslovakia for the West, and to broaden the horizons of Czech literature, by enriching it with international experience. Now contemporary writers such as Ivan M. Jirous, Jáchym Topol, Miloš Urban, Petr Šabach, Patrik Ouředník, and Petra Hůlová are famous figures in Czech literature known to the world.

Such brief history of a part of Czech literature also brings us to other important and yet complicated web of publishing industry and western agents, marketing for literary productions, and the role of mass media in publicizing Kundera’s literary status. A part of this complication is related to Kundera’s permanent migration to France – which causes his closer dealings with western
publishers and agents – and also writing in both Czech and French languages which produces other important consequences (for example, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* was originally published in Czech by 68 Publishers, Toronto, 1985, but did not come out in the Czech Republic until the autumn of 2006, by Atlantis, Brno). Of course, a remarkable extent of such interactions is quite connected to Kundera’s own personal posturing toward social, cultural, political and literary events within and outside his home country. However, there is no doubt that Milan Kundera has been dealing with various difficulties during his interactions with these institutions of publishing. His complaint letter in *Times Literary Supplement*, which shows Kundera’s grievances about the first version of *The Joke* published in a reconstructed distorted manner in 1969 by Macdonald at London, might be considered as an example of these burdens. As it is already known Kundera eventually manages to publish a definitive version for *The Joke* just to get rid of his deep worries about this book.

There is no doubt that another important factor in broadcasting Kundera’s literary career is the great role of mass media. But it should also be noted that Kundera has always tried to play the game according to his own rules. This means that he has been very selective in his interactions with the media. The number of his interviews, then, is quite limited and he mostly keeps a safe distance with the current political trends. Once he justifies his tough pessimistic attitudes on this topic, which are by and large shared by some other writers as well:

INTerview: Cursed be the writer who first allowed a journalist to reproduce his remarks freely! He started the process that can only lead to the disappearance of the writer: he who is responsible for every one of his words. Yet I do very much like the *dialogue* (a major literary form), and I’ve been pleased with several such discussions that were mutually pondered, composed, and edited. Alas, the interview as it is generally practiced has nothing to do with a dialogue: (1) the interviewer asks questions of interest to him, of no interest to you; (2) of your responses, he uses only those that suit him; (3) he translates them into
his own vocabulary, his own manner of thought. In imitation of American journalism, he will not even deign to get your approval for what he has you say. The interview appears. You console yourself: people will quickly forget it! Not at all: people will quote it! Even the most scrupulous academics no longer distinguish between the words a writer has written and signed, and his remarks as reported. In July 1985, I made a firm decision: no more interviews. Except for dialogues co-edited by me, accompanied by my copyright, all my reported remarks since then are to be considered forgeries.\textsuperscript{64}

This is not of course the first or the last time for Kundera to scorn mass media. During an interview and while he wants to comment upon the so-called cycle of forgetting or what is called most people’s tendency towards personal and cultural amnesia as referred to in the criticism about his work \textit{The Book of Laughter and Forgetting}, Kundera shows his mistrust again and says “Television, the media, technology in general are the major instruments of forgetting. […]Paradoxically, in the mass of information that the technological age brings, memory is lost at ever greater rapidity. We’re bombarded by too much banal information that totally fails ever to remind us of our past.”\textsuperscript{65}

Despite such scornful approach towards media and modern technology and even though Kundera shies away from public or mass media, it is believed that this is a boon to have him alive to give such good and frank comments and to share viewpoints about his works and terminology. As a matter of fact, it is through the same media that Kundera’s attitudes and the news of his literary productions are conveyed. Yet it is obvious that Kundera imposes his own style in many businesses related to his works. As Deshpande reminds us, now-a-days most publishers and agents tend to use the author as part of the selling of their books. In fact, new methods of marketing have penetrated as an inevitable part of this business into process of selling books as well. Interviews, public worldwide readings, signing sessions, and TV appearances have become regular activities for marketing a book. “The author’s personality and looks are used to sell the book; the better the show-person the author
is, the greater the sales.” Though Kundera has co-operated with many big publishing companies such as Harper Perennial, Faber and Faber, Penguin, and Gallimard, for sure he has not taken part in such commercial promotions as his works owe their widespread readership to high quality of his writing rather than marketing methods. However Kundera has always been at the center of attention in mass media. It was after the big controversy caused by the accusations (of having collaborated with Czech police in his youth) published in Respekt magazine in 2008 that once again media spotlighted Kundera. It is believed that ironically “Kundera has become a victim of the very tendencies he denounces in his novels and essays: obsessive focus on the personal lives of authors, the over-politicization of art, and the public’s love of scandal, exacerbated by a media indifferent to the individual’s right to privacy.”

Although reminding the negative aspects of the impacts of mass media and literary institutions might seem quite agonizing, these tools still play a major role in the production and readership of a literary work. As spotlighted by Nico Israel, in recent years immense changes have occurred in these areas; there have been great progresses in consolidation of the publishing industry, with multinational conglomerates becoming more powerful. In addition, an exponential extension of the reach of literature has occurred due to the expansion of the World Wide Web and online bookselling. Kundera’s works also have experienced part of this consolidation. His selected novels have been published by Harper and its different imprints Harper Perennial, Harper Collins and Harper & Row. Also his works could be ordered online and they are available in electronic formats, too. Such modern developments in the publishing industry can also be related to Ernst Grabovszki’s discussion on the intensification of literary relations and communication. Grabovszki’s speculation about the role and function of literary institutions asserts the redundancy of traditional publishers in the new era. This idea comes from the point that the definition for text or the medium of book in the traditional perspective will no longer be prevalent in the modern process of production and consumption of literature. From this point we can make an improvement and claim that modern publishers indeed have already understood the new demands and therefore they are making huge advancements in selling electronic formats of the books as well. Moreover, Grabovszki’s analysis on the problematics of the development of electronic media makes useful clarifications to
propose principles on the ways and manners literature should be dealt with in its different manifestations while taking into consideration the content of various media:

The following questions can be posed: How is literature discussed? What rank does literature hold within the program of a radio or TV station or within literature-related sites on the World Wide Web? Which literature is discussed (high-brow, trivial literature, etc.)? Is there also foreign literature that receives attention or only literature in the national language(s) and if yes, is it dealt with in its original language or in translation? Especially radio or audio media allow to present literature in an authentic way. Audio books, for instance, may intensify the authenticity of literature by presenting a text read by its author in the original language.68

This contribution, in turn, can be interpreted as those essential steps which Kundera has always been wishing for to be observed in the world of media in order to establish more humane communications.

As it has already been noted, another important tool in the globalization of literature is the factor of language which is considered as a key parameter in the production process of Kundera’s novels as well. Though, along with many other scholars, Deshpande believes that English is the most suited language for the purpose of globalizing a novel, it seems that Kundera’s writing doesn’t necessarily follow any certain formula in this regard as he has written in both Czech and French. In fact originally, he wrote in Czech (e.g. *The Joke* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*) but from 1993 onwards, he has written his novels in French (e.g. *Slowness, Identity, Ignorance, and An Encounter*). While such a shift in the language of writing is an indication of Kundera’s lofty knowledge and awareness about various functions of language, at the same time it shows his adaptability in different phases of his personal and professional career. In a rare case, only once Kundera reveals “I write my essays in French, but my novels in Czech, because my life experiences and my imagination are anchored in Bohemia, in Prague.”69 However the factor of language plays its
significant role from a different perspective and in relation to another principle that is translation.

Translation has always been a vital and yet challenging process for Milan Kundera. Even after his books were banned in Czechoslovakia, Kundera continued to write in Czech language and became a bestselling international success only thanks to the wide-ranging translation of his novels. He admits that such a world-wide readership is a result of translation: “...And yet for me, because practically speaking I no longer have the Czech audience, translations are everything.” But this was only a rare case of his approval of translation. In fact, Kundera has been expecting to receive exact copies of his Czech originals rendered in the foreign languages; an ideal which never occurs, hence he reacts even more sensitively: “I once left a publisher for the sole reason that he tried to change my semicolons to periods.” And yet his negative reactions to the process abound: “The shock of The Joke’s translations [In 1968 and 1969] left a permanent scar on me.” He even tells one interviewer “Translation is my nightmare. [...] ‘I’ve lived horrors because of it.’” Although such confrontational attitudes regarding translation have been repeatedly stated many times by Kundera and this has invoked lots of criticism, he has remained determined on this stance.

Kundera’s concern about fidelity finally compels him to engage in the demanding task of reviewing and editing the translation of all his novels, the long history of which is even explained at the end of 2003 edition of The Joke. Kundera revises the French translations of all his Czech novels between 1985 and 1987 and declares them to be the authentic version of his body of work. In response to the fact that many translators attempted to translate from the French rather than the Czech versions, Kundera manages to verify the French translations with the purpose of creating new ‘originals’ from which translations into other languages could be made. Michelle Woods believes that “the process of revising the French translations not only addressed problems with the transference from one language (Czech) to another (French), but also allowed an opportunity for Kundera to rewrite the novels. In some cases, where the material was too culturally specific, Kundera deliberately altered the translation to make it more accessible to a French readership. In other cases, he dealt with elements of the novel – and not the translation – with which he felt dissatisfied by omitting, altering and adding material.” Michelle Woods further adds that
“Kundera has been criticized for his policy of fidelity on two counts: firstly, because he rewrites the translations and deliberately alters them so they do not necessarily correspond to the Czech ‘originals’; and, secondly, because ‘fidelity’ – in the traditional translation sense – is now widely regarded to be an impossibility.”

Moreover, the translation theorist Lawrence Venuti considers Kundera as an author who exploits translators, and believes that “Kundera seems unique not only in scrutinizing and correcting the foreign-language versions of his books, but also in asserting his preferred translation practice in wittily pointed essays and prefaces.” He further adds that “Kundera’s thinking about translating is remarkably naïve for a writer so finely attuned to stylistic effects.” The main reason for such a criticism, according to Venuti, is that Kundera apparently refuses to accept that a translation automatically incurs changes because of the cultural differences between languages; each language containing culturally untranslatable differences that need to be transformed in order to make the translation understandable, Venuti posits. Despite all these discussions (and accusations), Kundera still remains suspicious of translations which perform a work of domestication.
5.2. Notes and references:


4 Pankaj Mishra, op. cit., p.250.

5 Ibid., p.155.

6 Ibid., p.249.

7 Ibid., p.251.

8 Shashi Deshpande, op. cit., p.177.

9 See the explanations about *travel novel* in pages 32-33 and note 32 for the first chapter of Stephen M. Levin’s book, *The Contemporary Anglophone Travel Novel: The Aesthetics of Self-Fashioning in the Era of Globalization*, where he asserts that “the novel frequently presents a more multi-dimensional view of the motives and fantasies that sustain the adventure.” He also admits that “the idea that novelistic speech represents a form of “heterogeneous discourse” originates with Mikhail Bakhtin. Writing in *The Dialogical Imagination*, Bakhtin argues that a novel acquires thematic unity by connecting all of its compositional elements through a “social diversity of speech types.” These speech types include direct authorial narration, the stylized speech of individual characters, forms of oral everyday narration, and forms of “semiliterary” narration (such as a letter or diary). Bakhtin referred to this diversity of speech forms in the novel as “heteroglossia” (262–63).”


11 Ibid., p.155.

12 Ibid., p.134.


15 Ibid., pp.211-12.


Shashi Deshpande, op. cit., pp.176.


Ibid., p.11.

Ibid.

Ibid.


41 Ibid., pp.145-46.

42 Søren Frank, op. cit., p.201.


45 Ibid.


Milan Kundera, The Unbearable Lightness of Being, p. 244.

Ibid., p. 245.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 241.

Ibid., p. 242.

Ibid., p. 246.

Ibid., p. 245.


Shashi Deshpande, op. cit., p. 172.

Milan Kundera, The Art of the Novel, pp. 133-34.

66 Shashi Deshpande, op. cit., p.175.


68 Ernst Grabovszki, op. cit., p.48.

69 Olga Carlisle, op. cit.

70 Milan Kundera, The Art of the Novel, p.121.

71 Ibid., p.130.

72 Ibid., p.121.


75 Ibid.,p.4.


77 Ibid.