Introduction

Milan Kundera's background is well known. He is a Czech-French novelist and essayist. He is born in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1929. Right from his teens he was under the spell of communist party and joined in 1947. He also welcomed the communist take over in 1948. However he was expelled from the party in 1950 for saying something he "would better have left unsaid" again he was admitted in the party in 1956.

He was a teacher at the Prague Institute for cinematographic studies. He wrote his first novel 'The Joke' of which the protagonist is not nearly a passing resemblance to Kundera. This novel was delayed by censors but got published in 1967. The novel became "a cult book" of the Prague Spring (The reformist movement) of 1968 but soon this reformist government came to an tragic end. Kundera was deprived of his "privilege to work" - a fate shared with many of his characters and he emigrated to France in 1975 where he has been living and thriving as an author ever since.

Right from Kundera's joining communist party in 1947 his whole life has been directly or indirectly affected by politics and the political stand he has taken from time to time. His getting emigrated to France and leaving there for the last 42 years away from his motherland is also one of the many results of his political position. Even his books were banned in his own country.

He has been an outspoken critic of the communist regime in his native country which is freely reflected in his early novels.
As a result he is mostly regarded as a political writer. Kundera protests very strongly against this description of himself and his novels.

He says in his collection of essays "Testament Betrayed" - "I have always, deeply, violently, detested those who look for a position (political, philosophical, religious whatever) in a work of Art (novels)"

On the other hand he expects the leaders and the critics to look for this or that aspect of 'reality'. When Kundera takes such a contradictory stand one feels like asking "is not politics one of the important aspects of reality?" In fact politics occupies so important a place in our lives that it needs to be unmasked and penetrated in a work of art (novels).

In this contexts Fred Missurella rightly comments "Kundera passed 20 long years in a country (communist Czechoslovakia where any human problem, large or small, was considered only in the political contest and now he wanted to concentrate on other things"

In such a situation when Kundera takes a contradictory stands about his being regarded as a political writer, there is an immense need of a research "A POLITICAL READING OF KUNDERA'S EARLY NOVELS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL VIEWS AND ATTITUDES THROUGH THE THEMES, CHARACTERS, AND NARRATORS"

This research has great importance in realising how individual lives are influenced and affected by politics. It will also through light on certain cases where individual fates are decided by politics. It will also
stress "The connections between the individual consciousness and shifting currents of history and politics."