CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters are an attempt to show how Orwell's life and works embody his radical individualism. This endeavour made it necessary to define and interpret radical individualism in the first chapter. The concept of radical individualism appears as a sane and satisfactory basis for socio-political and economic engineering. It is a synthesis of radicalism and individualism. Such a synthesis is what humanity needs in reshaping socio-political and economic structure. Radicalism without individualism is dangerous, and individualism without radicalism is absurd. In respect of socio-political and economic rejuvenation radicalism is a half truth; individualism is a half truth. These two half truths need to be combined. Herein we have radical individualism which Orwell represents. Radical individualism emphasises both the need for changing the present unsatisfactory social, economic and political conditions, and also the need for upholding the sanctity of the individual. Orwell's life and works show how he tried to meet these two needs by his radical individualism.
Orwell lived in an age dominated by politics. It was an age of capitalism, industrialism, imprisonment and execution without trial, concentration camps and atom bomb. These formidable factors influenced the way of thinking and writing of Orwell. Apart from these, his boyhood experiences, his experiences as an imperial police officer in Burma, his experiences of poverty, his journey to Wigan and Spain and the other varied experiences that he had, shaped his way of writing and vision. Orwell’s life, in fact, is a story of great interest. He lived the life of a radical individualist. He proposed his version of Socialism against the evils of his time, but at the same time defended liberty of the individual.

Orwell’s radical individualism is evident in his analyses of and views on the problems and issues concerning society, economy, politics, culture and literature. His approach to the social evils of his time evinces his radical individualism. He was not a sociologist in an academic sense. But he was a keen observer, and student of society in his own fashion. He offers memorable pictures of the tiny imperialist society in Burma, the unemployed and underemployed hotel workers and slum-dwellers in Paris, tramps, beggars in London, and coal miners in Wigan and other industrial towns. He
analyses the class structure of the English society and offers democratic Socialism as a cure for social evils. His methods of analysing the social evils of his time is very human and humane. His description of the society of his period evokes love for life and compassion for ordinary people. In his sociological analysis Orwell is, in some respects, nearer Marx, but he reached quite different conclusions.

Orwell's writings reveal his radical individualism in the sphere of economy. It is an understanding of the economy which starts from his humiliation on the basis of his parental income at St. Cyprian's, the preparatory school, and which ends with the analysis of the highly centralised economy of the totalitarian regimes. Poverty is the starting point for the understanding of economy as Orwell perceived it. Poverty, the miseries of tramps, beggars, hotel workers, unemployment and underemployment of the coal miners, evils of imperialist and totalitarian economies are treated in an impressive way. He presented his own brand of Socialist economy as a cure. He did not argue for absolute equality, nor for abolition of private possessions, but pleaded that gross inequality should not exist. He did not embrace Communism and then come out totally frustrated like some of his celebrated contemporaries did. At the same time he did not accept capitalism. He was
trying to find out his own remedies against the economic evils of his time. And his solution was democratic Socialism as he understood it.

Orwell was a political writer. He declared that he wrote for democratic Socialism and against totalitarianism. This profound commitment started since his participation in the Spanish Civil War. Imperialism, Spanish Civil War, Fascism, Nazism, Socialism, Soviet Communism, post-totalitarian oligarchic collectivism, revolutions, wars etc., appear as subjects of analyses in his works. Besides being a writer, Orwell emerges as a political thinker. His response to the formidable civilizational and political crisis of his time is profound and memorable. His political insights are very amazing. He realised and pointed out that Soviet Communism had similarities with Nazism; that Soviet Communism was not Socialism; that the Communist Party of Spain and the Soviet Communists acted as the counter-revolutionary force in Spain; that Soviet Communism was a form of oligarchic collectivism. As a shrewd political observer he could foresee Cold War and even the fall of the Soviet Communist regime as it existed in his time. He was not a political philosopher, nor a political thinker in a usual sense. He was primarily a literary artist.
who chose literary forms to express his political experiences, observations and thoughts. This approach exhibits his radicalism in politics.

Orwell upholds a sane and healthy culture against perversions. Poverty, indecency, inequality, injustice, lies, oppression are all cultural distortions. Decency, equality, justice, brotherhood, truth, liberty are the cultural ideals Orwell defends in his works. He makes many interesting comments on popular culture. An interesting aspect of Orwell's conception of culture is his condemnation of machine-civilization. He denounced glorification of the machine and pointed out that the machine eliminated the chance of living. The essence of Orwell's idea of culture is the concept of the sanctity of the individual. Culture as a whole way of life loses its meaning if there is poverty, inequality and denial of liberty. Culture as a guarantor of freedom of survival, and freedom of choice for the individual as to what he should do and what he should become, should not be dominated by only a part of it. In his own period Orwell saw how culture was dominated by politics which is a part of culture. He defended culture by showing how it is perverted by totalitarianism. He considered the sanctity of the individual as the fruit of culture, and directed all his energy to defend it against
totalitarian onslaughts. His understanding and interpretation of culture is another indicator of his radical individualism.

Orwell is a unique literary artist. He is a voluminous and versatile writer. His writings evince a strong purpose. He succeeded in his desire of transforming political writing into an art. His triumph as a writer lies in the fusion of political purpose and aesthetic purpose into his literary creations. His documentaries, novels and essays demonstrate this. He employed the autobiographical and the negative techniques to project his views and vision. His documentaries, novels, and essays present the life of very ordinary people, but the ordinary becomes extraordinary because of the Orwellian style. The Orwellian style is characterised by colloquial freshness, picturesque description, power of minute description, precision, directness, satirical and suggestive elements. As a novelist of ideas Orwell holds a unique literary position. His famous and brilliant essays have added to his literary reputation. His essays evince a friendly informal and colloquial tone, educate the reader, and more importantly, provoke the reader to think. Orwell's radical individualism in literature is to be found in his being a political writer, a political novelist
and a political essayist. He enriched literature by embodying sociological, economic, political and cultural matters in his works. He insisted on a careful use of language for effective communication. This is precisely Orwell's radical individualism in literature.

Orwell's views on and observations concerning society, economy, politics, culture and literature are manifestations of his radical individualism. He represents the essence of the Western tradition of dissension and altruistic individualism. There is nothing egoistic or egotistic about Orwell's radical individualism. In fact, radical individualism by its nature, as has been defined at the beginning of this survey, is neither egoistic nor egotistic. It is a basic and profound human desire. Man wants change for better; he wants liberty or freedom. What picture of man, or what vision of humanity do we get after reading Orwell's life and works? The popular tendency is to infer too much from Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, the two great works of Orwell, and point out that Orwell lost hope.

It would be wrong to say that Orwell lost hope in life. It is appropriate to assert that in his last two great works mentioned above he sounds powerful warnings that man is in the
process of becoming an automaton and losing his individuality. The hope lies in this warning and setting our house in order. What remains ultimately after we have finished reading Orwell is a vision of the individual free of oppression, social, economic, political and cultural. It is the vision of the individual who is not oppressed by poverty, class, the machine, the State, totalitarianism and other chains. Compassion for the victims or sufferers and indignation against the oppressors or victimisers flow in his works, and burn the candle of conscience of the reader. What emerges from the works of Orwell is a profound reverence for life and the individual. The works of Orwell strengthen the urge for changing the present stifling conditions for better and a freer way of life.

Orwell's radical individualism in the domains of society, economy, politics, culture and literature should be a perennial source of inspiration to all those who are in search of a better and freer way of life. One of the primordial instincts of man is the pursuit of happiness; it is the instinct to change the unhappy present for a better situation; it may not be necessarily a Utopia, or a holistic design of an Ideal State. This primordial instinct for pursuit of happiness goes along with another primordial instinct for
freedom. How can there be change and pursuit of happiness without freedom? The answer lies in radical individualism as conceived and practised by Orwell. It is necessary that in the process of the pursuit of happiness man should not be enslaved or lose his freedom; it is also important that the pursuit of freedom should not deprive man of happiness. Once again Orwell's radical individualism shows a way out. It indicates how the individual should be held in high esteem, trusted and revered. The socio-political, economic and cultural super structure exists for the flowering of the individuality. It is by his radical individualism that Orwell upholds the sanctity of the individual, and shows the meaning of the life of the individual, and the role of the individual in society.

A scientific understanding of the reality, and a sincere attempt to change the undesirable reality in social, economic, political, cultural and literary spheres of the life without sacrificing the sanctity of the individual seems to be the message of Orwell's life and works. This, in brief, is Orwell's radical individualism. It should be added that Orwell's radical individualism finally remains a problem raised to solve a problem since Orwell does not show what kind
of radicalism and how much of it should be there to ensure the sanctity of the individual in a socio-political, economic and cultural super structure. Orwell's radical individualism is not a ready made solution. It makes the readers to think; it makes them responsible; it asserts that freedom is essential for happiness. It is a process committed to the sanctity of the individual according to which the individual should search and strive for meaning for himself and others. Every individual should search, choose and fight for a meaning in his life, and this process safeguards the sanctity of the individual. This is what is conveyed by Orwell's radical individualism. That is why radical individualism remains a problem which can help to solve a greater problem of engineering socio-political, economic and cultural changes without sacrificing liberty of the individual. Since radical individualism is a problem, every individual has a role to play in society in tackling this problem and facing a greater problem later. Orwell's life and works inspire the reader to find a meaning in his life, assure him that life is worth living, and reinforce his belief in the sanctity of the individual.