GEORGE ORWELL: A CRITICAL STUDY
IN
RADICAL INDIVIDUALISM
CHAPTER I

a) Definition of the Theme and the Problem

The theme of this study is to trace and assert the radical individualism of George Orwell. The problem is to demonstrate that the life and works of Orwell—almost all critics on the works of Orwell have emphasised the strong autobiographical element in his works—were an embodiment of radical individualism. In this context we may recall the words of George Woodcock who called George Orwell an individualist radical: "He was the last of a nineteenth-century tradition of individualist radicals which bred such men as Hazlitt, Cobbett and Dickens. ... His outlook, in fact, was the reverse of sectarian, and he detested 'the smelly little orthodoxies' as he called them, by which he meant all the closed systems of thought from Catholicism to communism. His own limitations of thought and feeling, his obsessions and his enthusiasms, were always personal and temperamental rather than partisan and theoretical."¹ He fought and wrote for individual liberty against totalitarianism, but seems to have considered individual liberty meaningless unless it was

directed to make this world more human and humane. It is in this attitude of George Orwell that we find the seeds of his radical individualism.

He was not a system-builder, nor an ideologue like Plato, Adam Smith, Hegel or Marx. He was more akin to the great ancient master, Socrates, in respect of his inquiries after truth and pursuit of a meaningful condition of life in a fearless and free way. He was a critic, a protester, a careful and impartial observer of social, economic, political and other issues and evils, a scientific analyser of what he observed and experienced.

George Orwell was not merely a thinker, a political fiction writer, and a propagator of his ideas, but also an activist and defender of justice and liberty against totalitarian trends and regimes, especially during the Second World War and after. For justice and liberty he fought on the side of the POUM militia during the Spanish Civil War. He yearned to enlist in the army during World War II, to fight against Nazism and Fascism but was rejected because of his weak health, so he became a sergeant of the Home Guards.

More than all these, he had the reformist zeal. He was a libertarian Socialist. He believed and asserted that without
social and economic justice people could never live a meaningful life. Justice was complementary to the individual liberty he cherished and fought for. Orwell proposed 'common decency' against social, economic, political and other aberrations, sane, non-aggressive, healthy patriotism against imperialism, libertarian Socialism against capitalism and the sanctity of the individual and individual freedom against totalitarianism.

The essence of Orwell's individuality can be characterised as radical individualism because it steers clear of ideological affiliations and affirms the utter value of the human individual as sacred. Man should not be sacrificed at the altar of either totalitarianism, revolutionary socialism or communism. This freedom from dogmatic attachment to any ideological commitment is radical individualism. It is the human individuality that is the base of human civilization and culture. To discard it or to destroy it in the name of idealism or ideology would be an act of suicide on the part man and that is the message of Orwell's life and works.

The phrase 'radical individualism' includes two words, 'radical' and 'individualism', and both words are of equal importance. The term 'radical' comes from radicalism.
'Radical individualism' is a combination of two separate and adequately elaborated doctrines. But radical individualism springs from the same source, i.e., man's desire for a new order, or socio-political and economic reconstruction without sacrificing the freedom of the individual. Radical individualism needs to be split into its constituent elements, 'radicalism' and 'individualism' for a proper understanding. The starting point for the understanding of this concept is 'radicalism'.

Radicalism

The term 'radical' or 'radicalism' has been used in different senses at different times. Although broadly it stands for the dissatisfaction with the status quo and the proposal or plan for a root and branch change in social, economic and political set up, it has undergone very interesting semantic changes since the eighteenth century Benthamite reform drives in England. However, radicalism as a profound human urge for change seems to have remained.

Gudio de Ruggiero who gives an account of English Liberalism in The History of European Liberalism states that radicalism provided the base for the development of other systems, ideologies and movements. He writes: "Radicalism is
a complex and turbid phenomenon containing in itself germs of liberalism, democracy, and socialism. The principle of utility or self interest was strictly individualistic and liberal in its character; it implied freedom of initiative and universal self-help. It was held in check by the opposing principle of the interest of the greatest number, conceived though this was as a mere sum of private activities."

'Radical' or 'Radicalism' at one time came into use as a synonym for 'Liberal'. It is stated: "The radical proper may be said to have been partly the product of the ideas germinating in Europe from the philosophy of Rousseau after the French Revolution, and partly an inevitable outcome of the growth of industrial society. But it is also possible to have conservative or 'tory' radicalism, involving a radical, rather than merely a procedural, attempt to conserve."

Radicalism in England grew out of the attempt to reform the Parliament and was associated with humanitarian and


3 New Age Encyclopedia (Sydney: Bay Books, 1983).
liberal movements. In the 18th century it was associated with the democratic movement. There were philosophical radicals like Bentham and his disciples. In the nineteenth century the radical movements came from socialists and communists: "After World War I the most popular and powerful radical movements were SOCIALISM, COMMUNISM & FASCISM and NATIONAL SOCIALISM."4

The origin and development of radicalism and radical movement makes one point clear, i.e. it reflects a fundamental instinct in man for a change for the better. Even the desire of the conservatives to restore the past and retain it when things have changed vastly could be a radical instinct as has been already pointed out. Thus we find almost all thinkers and political commentators pointing out this basic trait of the desire for change voiced by radicalism. R.B. McCallum in his introduction to Radical Alternative discusses the Liberal Party's politics and writes:

We use the word radical, first of all, in its etymological sense of going to the roots of politics. A radical approach disregards makeshift

expedients and the easy acceptance of institutions and practices which are too little examined, which survive through inertia of thought rather than by proven utility. There is need in our political thinking for what Professor Halévy has called 'intellectual virility'. It is radical, too, in the secondary and historical sense that it draws support from those traditions in English politics which have moved people to reflection, followed by ardent and continued demand for necessary change.

Similarly writing on "Radicalism" Egon Bittner states: "The term 'radicalism' always points to some analytical or revisionist function.... Although many forms of radicalism eschew violence, there is little doubt that the overthrow of existing order is part of the radical agenda."

Radicalism also reveals another interesting trait, i.e. man's yearning for a dream world of perfection. In other words it is also the reflection of the hunger for a utopia.


Indeed, there is a close link between radicalism and utopia, since the idea or desire for changing the present that is felt to be hateful or unsatisfactory can be entertained only in the light of a utopia or a perceived new way of life which is devoid of present evils. This is implicitly stated by Leszek Kolakowski:

> It is easy to notice that the word "utopia" may be and is being used in two opposite meanings, both of which are in keeping with its original sense. Sometimes we mean a "place which is now where" we mean a "place which is nowhere" yet but might appear, and sometimes we mean a "place which is nowhere" because it cannot ever exist. We often call "utopian" all human dreams about a better world. In this sense the question "Do we need utopias?" seems, pointless, since people have always been thinking about something better than what is now, and it is hard to imagine that they could ever dispense with all anticipations of a better future.  

In the same book on Radicalism in the Contemporary Age from which Kolakowski is quoted above, Robert Nisbet establishes clearly and explicitly the bond between radicalism and utopia or the contemplation of the Golden Age, the millenium: "Much of the intellectual ground for the permanent core of radicalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was formed in the eighteenth century as the result of two significant changes in the contemplation of the Golden Age". Nisbet argues that the secular concept of the Golden Age in the distant future as visualised in the eighteenth century, permeated the nineteenth century and in the nineteenth century the revolutionary radicalism became a fixed part of the Western and in due time the world scene. The important thinkers of the period apart from their revolutionary and messianic ambitions, cherished the dream of founding, for the first time in history, a genuine social science. Saint-Simon, Comte, Marx, Proudhon, and Fourier played their role as makers of a true science of society. In such a context the revolutionary turbulence in the world was inevitable as propounded by Nisbet.

Radicalism and Totalitarianism

Emanating from man's profound desire for change towards a perfect and comprehensive social, economic, political system based on an ideal, the concept of the Golden Age or utopia, radicalism did become, and is capable of becoming a fertile ground for the cancerous growth of totalitarianism. Promising a millenium under seemingly perfect rational ideology it threw men into the Gas Chamber or the concentration camps. The nineteenth century social radicalism led to the terrible totalitarian regimes in the first half the twentieth century which led the world to the brink of complete destruction and elimination in the world wars and especially World War II. The victory and the defeat of totalitarianism seems to be ingrained in the nature of its origin. NATIONAL SOCIALISM, RACIST NAZISM, FASCISM, COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP, RED TERROR, and other TOTALITARIAN REGIMES emerged from radicalism or more properly social radicalism.

Karl Popper in his *The Open Society and Its Enemies* calls these utopian radicalist system-builders or ideologues the enemies of the open society. He targets Plato, Hegel and Marx for his attack on utopias. Plato's Ideal Republic, Hegel's conception of the State as the Divine Idea and Marx's
Dictatorship of the Proletariat or Historical Determinism come in for a sharp and penetrating criticism by Popper. He condemns these utopias which over-emphasise change combined with a belief in an inexorable and immutable law of destiny as dangerous, debilitating and degenerating historicism.

Criticising Plato's Ideal Republic and the Ideal State as the arrested State Popper writes: "The state which is free from the evil of change and corruption is the best, the perfect state. It is the state of the Golden Age which knew no change. It is the arrested state."9 Here the individual does not count and the concept of justice of Plato is the totalitarian justice: "True happiness, Plato insists, is achieved only by justice, i.e. by keeping one's place. The ruler must find happiness in ruling, the warrior in warring; and, we may infer, the slave in slaving. Apart from that, Plato says frequently that what he is aiming at is neither happiness of individuals nor that of any particular class in the state, but only the happiness of the whole, and this, he argues, is nothing but the outcome of that rule of justice which I have shown to be totalitarian in character. That

only this justice can lead to any true happiness is one of the main theses of the Republic.\textsuperscript{10}

Analysing the Hegelian idea of the State as the Divine Idea, Popper states that Hegel was appointed to meet the challenge of the fight for the open society and the ideas of 1789 i.e., the French Revolution which were a menace to the feudal monarchies. Hegel was reviving the ideas of the first great enemies of the open society viz., Heraclitus, Plato and Aristotle against the revival of the perennial ideas of individual liberty and democracy of the Great Generation (to which belonged Democritus, Pericles, Socrates, Protagorus) during the French Revolution. The State is everything and the individual nothing, for the individual owes everything to the State, his physical as well as his spiritual existence. The individual should worship the state since, "The state is the march of God through the world."\textsuperscript{11} This insight assumes very great significance since Hegelianism became the pillar of Nazism. Fascism and modern racism were a combination of Hegel plus the crude Darwinism of Haeckel according to Popper.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., I, 169.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., II, 30-31.
Criticising Marx's sociological and historical determinism Popper writes that Marx subordinated his economic research to historical prophecy. The stage of history is in a social system binding all, making it a 'kingdom of necessity' and history is propelled and the fate of man is determined by the war of nations as propounded by Hegel and majority of historians. Popper argues rightly that the prophecy of Marx that capitalism would collapse under its own burden and that the ideal communist State would come into existence finally boiled down to the totalitarian position of Hegel paralysing the struggle for the open society.

Why so much stress on and elaboration of this aspect of radicalism, i.e. revolutionary radicalism? The emphasis stands justified because this type of radicalism led to the emergence of war regimes, regimes of terror and oppression as evidenced the Nazi Germany of Hitler, the Fascist Italy of Mussolini and the Bolshevik Russia of Stalin. The irony of these great movements in the respective countries consisted in the fact that the promised millenium did not materialise, but on the contrary their leaders doomed their contries. Italy was given a crushing blow, Germany was divided into East and West Germany to be reunited after more than four decades in an unexpected way, and the only war regime that survived more
than seven decades i.e. the Soviet Russia was to ultimately disintegrate adding a new dimension to the present international scenario.

These totalitarian regimes stood for raw political power. Their leaders considered the individual as a means to an end and sacrificed the individual at the altar of the State. We find how Adolf Hitler denounced all values of culture and free individual and built up one of the most oppressive and destructive dictatorial regime based on the utopian racism and National Socialism. He declared in his autobiography; "And yet if we ask ourselves what the forces are which make and maintain States, we find that they come under one single denomination : ability and readiness to sacrifice the individual for the sake of the community." ¹² Hitler submitted the individual freedom to the maintenance of the race : "The right to personal freedom comes second in importance to the duty of maintaining the race." ¹³

Fascism like Nazism is another version of totalitarianism which treats the individual and individual liberty with


¹³ Ibid., p.113.
contempt. Commenting on the revolutions of this epoch H.J. Laski writes: "The Nazi who said, 'When I hear the word culture, I reach for my gun', expressed in a single sentence the quintessence of the Fascist idea. ... What Mussolini called 'the decaying corpse of liberty' is the index to their view of human nature. ... They believe that the masses are sheep to be used for whatever purposes they may determine."^14

Martin Kitchen discusses the nature of Fascism and quotes the Marxist-Leninist definition of Fascism offered at the Thirteenth Plenum of the Third International; "Fascism is the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital."^15

No doubt Hitler and Mussolini became the enemies of civilization with their Nazi and Fascist regimes. But what of the Left or communism which appears basically a very high moral philosophy turning totalitarian? The so-called 'scientific communism' is also utopian, representing

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historicism, the end point for which was the 'Red Terror' of a new brand of totalitarianism. And as pointed out by Raymond Aron the Left proved nothing more than being one power against another, one privileged class against another, instead of representing, as assured, liberty against authority or the people against the privileged few.

Many intellectuals and revolutionaries realised the inadequacy of communism and how instead of ushering in the Golden Age, it produced a more oppressive regime. This truth dawned upon them as soon as the communists seized the State power. One of the foremost and fiery Indian communist revolutionaries and intellectuals, M.N. Roy branded the former Soviet Communist State a State Capitalism. Being disenchanted with communism, capitalism and the vague democracy which could be a mask for dictatorship Roy proposed radical humanism as an alternative. In this context he made a scathing attack on communist or proletarian revolution and its degeneration into a terrible machinery of exploitation: "Its success in one country pragmatically proved that the new order was not to be a creation of man rising as Prometheus unbound; that human creativeness, in the intellectual, moral and cultural fields, was not to be unfettered; that the new order was to enshrine"
the collective ego of the proletariat, to claim subordination and sacrifice of individuals composing the class."  

The utopian radicalist ideologies, Nazism, Fascism including Communism led to the terribly devastating world wars, and the Cold War between the two Super Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II. The destruction and the waste of scarce resources over armament and the continuation of the State power as war regime was due to the domination of the culture - culture standing for the whole way of life, material prosperity, mechanical and other inventions and spiritual aspects - by merely one aspect or part of life viz., power politics. And the consequent wars, civil and international, and revolutions carried out by violence are roads to imperialism, dictatorship, new military adventures as argued by Bronislaw Malinowski in his Freedom and Civilization. Malinowski observes: "Communism has established only a new aristocracy on the ruins of the old one and a new type of exploitation of the many by the few. The real reason for this is that Communism as a war regime has

once more resulted in a totalitarian rather than a democratic constitution of culture."\textsuperscript{17}

And totalitarian regime based on any radical ideology is the denial of culture, the individual worth and the pluralist way of life according to which power and responsibilities are shared by very many institutions and individuals within a culture. Thus Malinowski very penetratingly points out: "Totalitarianism, indeed, is an attempt, not merely at the control, but largely at the annihilation of the other institutions and the replacement of all of them by dictated state control. Through this system, the normal, traditional, peaceful way of life of the nation is destroyed, and finally the nation itself."\textsuperscript{18}

However, the change of the existing system into a new system by violence is only one among the varied interpretations of radicalism. It has also its milder democratic aspect, i.e. the change by Parliamentary Acts. That might be called evolutionary radicalism. Take the examples of the Parliamentary Reform Acts and the Acts


\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p.308.
concerning the extension of franchise in the nineteenth century England, or the innumerable examples of the Acts prohibiting child labour, discrimination against any one on the grounds of sex, race, colour or creed, and also very many social welfare legislations enacted and implemented peacefully in many parts of the world. This sort of change, and in this context, radicalism, is what is called ‘piecemeal social engineering’ as opposed to the utopian and revolutionary ‘holistic method of social engineering’.19

What, then, is the relation between radicalism and individualism, since revolutionary radicalism crushes the individual? Do these two concepts share any similar qualities? Do they stand opposed to one another? If so, could there be a synthesis, if so desired? Or, should people make a choice between the two? These questions lead naturally to an analysis of individualism.

Individualism

If individualism means the sovereignty of the individual and the individual the primum mobile in any social, economic and political set up, it becomes, at once, the antithesis of

19 Popper, II, 131.
radicalism aimed at social change disregarding the individual supremacy. To use the Hegelian dialectic in this context, radicalism is the thesis and individualism its anti-thesis, and we should attempt to find a synthesis (utopian logic again!) for harmonising the individual interests with society or the State. So, individualism needs a satisfactory interpretation to arrive at a proper conclusion.

Individualism i.e. the concept of the free individual within a culture has its origin in the tradition of dissension. If an individual accepts things as they are even if they are unbearable and becomes a robot like millions of other robots there cannot arise individualism. On the contrary dissension, thinking differently than what is commonly accepted is also a basic human trait. J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish who trace the history and evolution of the Western intellectual tradition from Leonardo to Hegel arrive at a penetrating conclusion: "Here we have reached an odd conclusion: that there is a tradition of Western thought since the Renaissance which is a tradition of dissent — that is, a tradition of questioning what is traditional."\(^\text{20}\)

Paradoxical, though it might appear, yet, it means that the tendency of questioning the accepted norms, ideas or way of life has also a long history.

Though dissension, scepticism, or the heritage of heresy on which individualism is based, is a fundamental human quality, it embodied itself in a concrete and identifiable way since the Renaissance, recognised by many as the beginning of the modern era. It was during this period that feudal aristocracy almost completely lost power to the king in alliance with the rich merchants, science and scientific authority started dominating the ecclesiastical authority, and liberation from the authority of the Church led to the growth of individualism, even to the point of anarchy as observed by Bertrand Russell. Russell states that the Reformation and the two great men of the movement, Luther and Calvin who stressed the relation of the soul to God delinking the role of the Church, contributed to religious individualism and broadly to the development of individualism. In the nineteenth century there was both capitalist and proletarian revolts of industrialism against monarchy and aristocracy represented by philosophical radicals, free trade movements and Marxian socialism. Russell shows how along with these movements, the
dominant Romantic Movement gave new meaning and contents to individualism. Being in part reactionary and in part revolutionary the romantics like Rousseau in politics, and Byron, Shelley and others in England had no sympathy with industrialism which led to money-grabbing and interference with individual liberty. They wanted to live a vigorous and passionate individual life. Russell points out that the Byronic type of romantic is violent and anti-social, an anarchic rebel or a conquering tyrant. He traces the origin of Nazism in the romanticism of Rousseau. He observes that romanticism led to the creation of a solitary man, a Frankenstein who yearns for human company, and also that romanticism acted as a check against the wholesale acceptance of industrialism and the cash nexus oppressive society that it produced. And one will have to trace the development of individualism and the challenges it faced in the course of the romantic and rationalistic revolts begun in the nineteenth century and then passing into the twentieth century. In this context Russell writes, "The romantic revolt passes from Byron, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche to Mussolini and Hitler; the rationalistic revolt begins with the French philosophers of the Revolution, passes on, somewhat softened, to the
philosophical radicals in England, then acquires a deeper form in Marx and issues in Soviet Russia."21

Individualism today is a well established doctrine though its meaning and contents have changed in the course of the evolution of culture. In this context one may recall the words of Lawrence Hazelrigg, "Individualism is a doctrine concerning both the composition of human society and the constitution of sociocultural actors."22 He argues that it is individualism which still throws light on our practical consciousness of the individual. Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke in the seventeenth century offered a more or less systematic statement of individualism. In the eighteenth century David Hume, Adam Smith, and Immanuel Kant gave mature statements of the doctrine. While the seventeenth century stood for "possessive individualism", the eighteenth century represented the self-representing individual. In the eighteenth century the moral and legal rights of the individual, legitimization of the principles of popular sovereignty and inalienable rights, the Declaration of the


22 Lawrence Hazelrigg, "Individualism" in Encyclopedia of Sociology (New York: Macmillan, 1992)
Rights of Man and the U.S. Constitution came to be included in the tradition of individualism. Elaborating further Hazelrigg writes that the individualism of the self-representing individual promoted the idea that all interests are ultimately interests of the bare individual. This self-representing individualism changed into self-expressing individualism. Quoting Inglehart he states that whereas the self-representing individual puts a premium on self-control and hard work, the self-expressing individual generalizes the value of freedom of choice from politico-economic exchange of relations to matters of personal life style and consumption preferances. He argues that though the doctrine of individualism has consistently asserted that the individual is a distinct and self-contained agent who acts within, yet separate from, a constraining social structure, such an individualism should take note of the practices of society as some sort of natural order instead of a set of arbitrary choices to avoid the possibility of destructive anarchy.

Individualism and its Contents

Thus far I have tried to interpret individualism from the historical perspective and its changing meaning in the course of time. Now let me turn to the contents of individualism and the challenges it will have to face.
Steven Lukes while propounding the doctrine of individualism lists the eleven basic ideas of individualism which can be taken as the contents of individualism. They are the dignity of man or the moral principle of the supreme and intrinsic value, or dignity, of the individual being as expressed in the philosophy of Kant, in the American Declaration of Independence, in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and in the universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the U.N.O. in 1948; the idea of autonomy or self-direction, according to which an individual's thought and action is his own, and not determined by agencies or causes outside his control as visible in the works of Mill and Tocquille; the notion of privacy as in D.Riesman's arguments (Individualism Reconsidered 1954); the conception of self-development; the idea of the abstract individual which pictures individuals abstractly as given, with given interests, wants, purposes, needs, etc., assumed as given independently of a social context; the perception of the political individualism embodying chiefly the view that the government is based on the consent of its citizens; the notion of economic individualism meaning culturally specific patterns of behaviour such as the systematic pursuit of profit maximization, and what Max Webber tendentiously called
'rational economic order'; the conception of religious individualism which asserts man's primary responsibility for his own spiritual destiny and his relationship with God without any intermediaries; the notion of ethical individualism expressing the view that morality is essentially individual; the idea of epistemological individualism asserting that the source of knowledge lies within the individual; and finally, methodical individualism which emphasises that all attempt to explain social (or individual) phenomena should be explained wholly in terms of facts about individual.

Apart from the role of the individual and the contents of individualism as presented by doctrinaire individualism, there have been well-known thinkers, political philosophers, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and writers who have used different vocabularies in defining the role of the individual in any society or culture. The concept of freedom - freedoms or liberties of all sorts hitherto defined and explained - assumes a very crucial place in knowing the role of the individual, contents of individualism, and the challenges confronted by it. Thus delivering the Reith Lectures on the new liberty Ralf Dahrendorf writes:
"The elementary desire to be free is the force behind all liberties, old and new." Similary Robert E. Dewey and James A. Gould write: "The subject of human freedom is one which raises fundamental issues about the nature of man and his goals."24

Liberty or freedom is the foundation of the role of the individual and individualism within a culture, and it might be worthwhile to consider some of the definitions of liberty throwing light on the role of the individual and the contents of individualism. Herbert J. Muller writes that by freedom he means a state in which a person may decide for himself what is right and good, what to do with his freedom, what kind of self to become. For Lord Acton, liberty means the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of majorities, custom and opinion. For Laski, liberty is the affirmation by an individual or group of his or its own essence. According to Sartre it is not a being; it is the being of man i.e., his nothingness of


being. For Epictetus, the man who is free is the man who lives as he wishes to live; who is neither subject to compulsion nor to hindrance, nor to force; whose movements to action are not impeded, whose desires attain their purpose and who does not fall into that which he would avoid. John Dewey opines that freedom in its practical and moral sense (whatever is to be said about its metaphysical sense) is connected with the possibility of growth, learning and modification of character. Erich Fromm asserts that freedom is the spontaneous activity of the self and implies, psychologically, what the Latin root of the word, 'sponte' means literally: of one's free will.

The contents of freedom and the role of the individual are dependent on the rights enjoyed by an individual. The right to freedom of belief, the right to freedom of thought and expression, the right to freedom of action, the right to freedom of association, the right to freedom of choice, the right to political, social and cultural freedoms are going to constitute liberty and present a wider opportunity to the individual. According to Thomas Paine all rights flow from the fountainhead of natural rights:

Natural rights are those which always appertain to
man in right of his existence. Of this kind are all the intellectual rights, or rights of the mind, and also those rights of acting as an individual for his own comfort and happiness, which are not injurious to the rights of others. Civil rights are those which appertain to man in right of his being a member of society. Every civil right has for its foundation some natural right pre-existing in the individual, but to which his individual power is not, in all cases, sufficiently competent. Of this kind are all those which relate to security and protection.  

Individualism and Its Challenges

Individual freedom faces formidable challenges from within and from without notwithstanding the fact that the ground from which these two streams of challenges originate is the same. By saying that freedom faces the challenges from within I mean the inner contradictions of freedom. And by the challenges from without I mean the external threats to freedom coming from the absolute State, totalitarian regime,

authoritarian society and culture, oppressive majority rule, public opinion, laissezfaire capitalistic set up, now manifested in multi-national corporations and such other formidable mega organisations. The inner contradictions of freedom from which the challenges spring are, the destructive, anti-social, confusion breeding anarchic outlook which makes any conceivable meaningful life impossible, leading to the crushing of equality of opportunities, possessive individualism, unmitigated capitalism, and finally the very fear of freedom itself for shouldering responsibility in life. The threats to freedom from within and from without overlap but such distinction might help to understand better the challenges faced by the freedom of the individual. The point I want to make is further complicated because of the fact that many forms of slavery which emerge have their roots in freedom itself; or more properly, in the desire for freedom.

Let me start with the second stream of challenges first, i.e. the stream of challenges from without since it is the visible form. Here the main issue is the relation between the individual freedom and the authority in various forms. And the relation between the individual liberty and authority has been the subject of a great perennial polemic and probably no
one has discovered a final solution. Bertrand Russell who discuss this problem observes: "The problem, like all those with which we are concerned, is one of balance; too little liberty brings stagnation, and too much brings chaos." 26

The despotic government or the State is a menace to freedom. Under a despotic government the individuals have no influence upon their own destinies and a will not their own, which they cannot without committing a crime disobey, decides everything for them. As Russell argues, a totalitarian State not only liquidates an innovator whose ideas are disliked but also prevents the publicity of his ideas. Quoting Hanna Arendt, Riesman writes that we happen to live at the moment when the State is so overwhelming that even martyrdom - the last despairing appeal of the individual human spirit against the group - is no longer possible. Commenting on the effects of totalitarian States on culture Bronislaw Malinowsky asserts: "Under totalitarian rule, the state takes over control of all relevant faiths, of science, education, and the dictates of justice. Thus it abolishes the effective and creative autonomy of church, school, research, religious organizations,

free courts and free discussion. It abolishes the independence of the family, municipality and free association." And all are well aware of how the Nazi dictatorship in Germany, the Fascist government in Italy and the proletariat dictatorship in the Soviet Union became formidable menace to the freedom of the individuals and virtually destroyed their nations.

That the totalitarian regime is a ruthless, violent and oppressive regime, and that it denies all human values and also the worth of the individual, can be understood in the criticism of the bourgeois culture offered by Christopher Caudwell. Caudwell who was a revolutionary Marxist, called the bourgeois culture a dying culture. Giving a short sketch of the collapse of the Roman Empire inwardly since it was hated for its extortionist tax structure and so on, and its easy fall when the barbarians invaded it, he denigrates the personalities of Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi. He observes that Christianity could succeed in the context of the inwardly collapsing Roman Empire as Gandhism could succeed in the collapsing British Empire in India. He criticises Christ for committing Christianity to a fatal policy of passive

27 Malinowski, p.308.
resistance, or non-co-operation. And he finds fault with Christ who could have become the king or emperor but denied it. So one we can clearly infer that for Caudwell and such other critics of doctrinaire communism power politics is the only way of life and culture. There is the total denial of the spiritual domain for man. Caudwell exhibits the totalitarian way of thinking which is unable to assess the human worth. Any collectivist or religious fundamentalist or military dictatorial regime equipped with the powerful modern technology is a direct threat to the freedom of the individual.

A culture or society that is completely dominated by a dogma, a single ideology, be it religious, nationalistic, military, communist, capitalist or utopia of any other type, always goes against a meaningful life for an individual. That is why Bertrand Russell commenting on the two dominant ideologies of the time, said: "The world has become the victim of dogmatic political creeds, of which, in our day, the most powerful are capitalism and communism. I do not believe that either, in a dogmatic and unmitigated form, offers a cure for preventible evils." 28

28 Russell, Authority, p.120.
There is the laissez-faire capitalist State, which has metamorphosed into a new, subtle, and more oppressive organization in the current epoch. Regarding the laissez-faire capitalist structure and its culture one should turn to C.B. Macpherson for an indepth understanding of its nature. Tracing the political or theoretical foundation for a liberal democratic State and individualism in the political theories of Hobbes and Locke, Macpherson writes, "... that the original seventeenth-century individualism contained the central difficulty, which lay in its possessive quality. Its possessive quality is found in its conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. The individual was seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself."29 He argues that the paradox of Hobbes's individualism, which starts with equal rational individuals and demonstrates that they must submit themselves wholly to a power outside themselves, the Leviathan, is a paradox not of his construction, but of the market society, where labour has become a commodity and market

relations so shape or permeate all social relations that it may be called a market society, not merely a market economy. Similarly Locke’s justification of the inherent rights of man especially to property and the assertion that every man is the sole proprietor of his person and capacity led to the creation of two hostile classes, the propertied and the dispossessed classes. He observes that the seventeenth century liberalism asserted the role of the free rational individual as the criterion of the good society but its tragedy was that this very assertion was necessarily the denial of individualism to half the nation. This possessive individualism in the course of evolution developed into aggressive capitalism and imperialism begetting its contradictions in radical movements, the French Revolution, socialist and communist movements, Nazism and Fascism and 'the proletariat regime' in the then Soviet Russia. So back to the same proposition, i.e., unbridled capitalism and such a State and culture become a menace to individual freedom or dwarf the individual.

An authoritarian society is always inimical to the freedom and the creative role of the individuals composing it. This view finds classic expression in Mill’s Essay on Liberty. Mill argues that protection against the tyranny of the majority is not enough, and there should be protection against
the tyranny of public opinion or despotic social customs which the society imposes on all individuals and compels them to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. He observes that social tyranny is more formidable than political oppression because, though it cannot administer such extreme punishments as a political organization or a government, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself.

The industrial technology has given birth to huge corporations which have been deciding the destinies of man, probably in most cases without an awareness of such a reality on the part of man. The mammoth industrial corporations are the transnational or multinational corporations which have smashed the national frontiers and with their hundreds of branches all over the world have posed grave threats to the individual freedom and the culture. They have become new and more subtle forms of enslavement and the destroyers of national cultures. The emergence of global market economy after the fall of communist State monopoly economy of the former Soviet Union has further buttressed the transnational corporations. This phenomenon was identified by Russell, Burnham, Marcuse, W.H. Whyte and others.
Russell has observed that the impersonal and remote character of those in authority over an industrial undertaking is fatal to any proprietarial interests on the part of the ordinary employees. Quoting James Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* he says that the theory of Burnham presents a gloomy picture. He also mentions excerpts from Gillespie's *Free Expression in Industry* where Gillespie observes that in the large company there is more than a sense of frustration; there is a peculiar meaninglessness about its operations to the member of the rank and file.

W.H. Whyte Jr. writes about a subtle form of slavery produced by the corporation in his book, *The Organization Man*. He argues that the people belonging to the middle class are the organization men, who have left home, spiritually as well as physically, to take the vows of organization life, and it is they who are the mind and soul of our great self-perpetuating institutions. Here the problem of the individual versus authority is something of a dilemma. It is not the evils of the organization life that puzzles him, but its very beneficence. The difficulty of fighting is that he is imprisoned in a brotherhood. Since his area of manoeuvre seems so small and because the trapping so mundane, his fight
lacks the heroic cast, but it is for all this as tough a fight
as ever that his predecessors had to fight for freedom against
enslavement. Whyte further argues that modern organization
muffles the importance of individual leadership. He quotes
A.A. Bowman who observed that of all the forms of wanton self-
destruction there is none more pathetic than that in which the
human individual demands that in the vital relationships of
life he be treated not as an individual but as a member of
some organization.

Challenges From Within

In my analysis of the challenges to individual freedom
from without, I have discussed, broadly speaking, the visible
forms of oppression. Now, let me turn attention to the stream
of the challenges within, with which distinction I began my
analyses of the challenges to individual freedom. Erich Fromm
asserts that the basic danger to freedom arises from man's
fear of freedom itself which can be observed in the course of
development of civilization. He points out that the act of
disobedience which brought about the Fall of Man from Paradise
heralded the beginning of reason, and the disruption of the
original harmony between man and nature, and man and woman.
Having lost that original tie and security brought by it he
became not only alone and free but powerless and afraid. When the medieval social system was destroyed, the man in the new and changed conditions of the beginning of capitalism lost the relative security it had offered. (A sort of 'God bless the Squire and his relations and keep us all in our stations' - security). The full development of the market oriented capitalism took place subsequently. He states that at this stage man's relationship to his fellow men, with every one a potential competitor, has become hostile and estranged; he is free - that is, he is alone, isolated, threatened from all sides. The new freedom is bound to create a deep feeling of insecurity, powerlessness, doubt, aloneness and anxiety. He argues that because of this man is afraid of freedom and strives to escape from freedom. Of the two distinct mechanisms of escape the first consists in mesochistic strivings which appear as the feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, individual insignificance and submission. And the second consists in making others dependent on oneself and to have absolute power over them, in exploiting them to use them and in making them suffer and to see them suffer. The sado-masochistic strivings emerge from man's basic sense of weakness, aloneness and fear of freedom. Both Nazism and Fascism have their fertile ground in this fear and
Another formidable challenge to individual freedom ingrained in its nature is its unrelatedness to society or culture within which it will have to be necessarily exercised. Any idea of individual freedom which denies society, culture and even the State would lead to anarchy. Such an anarchy expressing irresponsibility would destroy freedom and itself. Michael Walzer observes: "Individual liberty is meaningless unless it is incorporated within particular forms of social life, meaningless until it takes on shape and limit." 30

Further he opines, "Only a democratic and egalitarian community can accommodate liberated men and women." 31 Thus while explaining the role of the individual and individual freedom one should be aware of the dangers of anarchy.

The next menace to freedom arises when a culture is allowed to be dominated by unlimited freedom in the economic sphere of life. The laissezfaire capitalism and the concentration of wealth in a few hands, as has been already


31 Ibid., p.13.
pointed out is inimical to freedom. Once again this excess of freedom destroys the very foundation of sane and humane society, i.e., freedom of equal opportunity in all spheres of life. Many revolutions took place, many oppressive governments arose, and many wars were fought against this unlimited oppressive economic freedom. This sort of oppression makes the individual miserable. While private initiative in economic affairs needs to be retained, it should be regulated and guided, lest it should dominate culture absolutely and reduce the entire culture to a market culture where one not only sells commodity but also oneself as a commodity. The individual thus becomes a commodity. Individualism contains this danger within itself.

The discussion of the meaning, contents and challenges of individualism in the preceding part of this definition of the problem points out the role of the individual within a culture. One can find sound reasons in many of the arguments offered more emphatically in favour of freedom in the context that the individual feels powerless in a vast social, economic, political and cultural structure. But that does not mean the denial of the State, culture or society per se. Thus considering the State or the authority as a necessary evil Russell writes, "We shall not create a good world by trying to
make men tame and timid, but by encouraging them to be bold and adventurous and fearless except in inflicting injuries upon their fellow-men." 32

A similar tendency of a forceful defence of individual freedom by emphasising negative liberty in contrast to positive liberty is found in the argument of Isaiah Berlin. Berlin observes that positive liberty derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. Here man thinks he is free, only if, he plans his life according to his reason; plans entail rules, and he thinks the rules do not oppress him or enslave him if he imposes them on himself consciously, or accept them freely. It is involved in the answer to the question, 'What, or who is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be this, rather than that?' On the contrary, asserts Berlin, negative liberty means that one is free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with one's activities. It asserts that the wider the area of non-interference the wider an individual's freedom. It is involved in the answer to the question, 'What is the area within which the subject—

32 Russell, Authority, p.125.
person or group of persons - is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?" On this point Berlin concludes: "Pluralism, with the measure of 'negative' liberty that it entails, seems to me a truer and more humane ideal than the goals of those who seek in the great, disciplined authoritarian structures the ideal of 'positive' self-mastery by classes, or peoples, or the whole of mankind."  

However, in respect of understanding the role of the individual within culture neither radicalism, nor individualism taken as a single doctrine may be adequate. There may have to be a new perspective, a new synthesis or an alternative, the one that neither denies wholly the social, economic, political and cultural structure, nor the free individual.

Radical Individualism

From the preceding analyses of radicalism and individualism it can be inferred that radical individualism is


34 Ibid., p. 171.
a synthesis of radicalism and individualism. Radicalism aims at changing the present, and finding. "... a unitary pattern in which the whole of experience, past, present and future, actual, possible and unfulfilled, is systematically ordered." And individualism is the assertion of the individual freedom lest such a radical structure enslave the individual. Both, can move into the extremes endangering a meaningful life of the individual and at the same time, if only one is accepted as the lone conception of human development or culture, there is danger again. That is why there is the need for a synthesis of radicalism and individualism into radical individualism. Even if this premiss is rejected on the ground that radical individualism is a separate doctrine having nothing to do with radicalism, and that it is only a vehement assertion of individualism per se, the fact always remains that the term 'radical' carries its own weight and meaning in the combination, 'radical individualism', and that secondly, radical individualism that is unrelated to social, political cultural structure or system becomes absurd. So, the synthesis is justified.

Radicalism and individualism have sprung from the same

35 Berlin, p.106.
source of the dissident tradition of the West. Egon Bittner observes that radicalism is a part of the general theme of the growth of rationalistic ethics. He quotes Max Weber, who pointed out, the prophetic origin of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the development of a rational science and philosophy, the organization of authority along legal rational lines, together testify to the fact that reason is the guiding demon of Western man. And Bittner writes, "But the search for an intellectual synthesis of the meaning of life forever transcends life. Reason, like myth, in attempting to grasp and express the roots of being, always idealizes the realities of everyday existence. In radicalism the ideal is the supreme taskmaster." Then is it not on the same ground of perception of man as a rational being, as the one possessing conscience that freedom is considered as the essence of his personality? Can there be individualism without any ideals? In fact, an individual without any ideal or responsibility to be fulfilled by him lives in the void. Thus radical individualism takes its position as a viable synthesis.

Marshall Berman finds radical individualism, or what he

36 Bittner, p.229.
calls "the politics of authenticity" meaning "being oneself" in the philosophies of Rousseau and Montesquieu. He argues that political thought was frozen into the dualism between "individualism" identified with the capitalist economy and liberal State on one side and radicalism identified with "collectivism" almost for a century, i.e. 1850s to 1950s on the other. He opines that the cultural explosion of 1960s redefined the terms. Observing that the New Left's complaint against democratic capitalism was not that it was too individualistic, he remarks that the New Left's lasting cultural achievement - one that may outlive the New Left itself - has been to bring about a return of the repressed, to bring radicalism back to its romantic roots. Thus Berman traces the origin of radical individualism in Rousseau and Montesquieu and its development in the cultural explosions of 1960s, especially the New Left.

However, Berman's idea of radical individualism is cast in the doctrine of negative liberty propounded by J.S. Mill, Isaiah Berlin and others. This sort of radical individualism comes nearer to what Jerome Tuccille has termed radical libertarianism. Jerome Tuccille makes a blistering attack on the government which as the legal monopoliser of
force is the most, consistent violator of individual freedom and calls for a loud well publicised attack until the oppressive governmental institutions are dismantled. Thus even today the moment one starts interpreting the role of the individual in any culture one is tossed into a formidable and perennial polimic on liberty against the constraints that be, the polimic on the individual versus the State or organization.

It is here that the new synthesis, i.e., radical individualism considered as individualism within a culture, an individualism with an altruistic and social concern, an individualism that does not deny the relevance and meaning of the State appears most appropriate. Dahrendorf voices a balanced and moderate view on the role of the individual when he says, "The new liberty will not be won unless every citizen is given access to the varied universe of life - chances in a complex society." And again, "Equality and participation, what is often called the democratization of society, are major, and welcome elements of this great process of change; it has become impossible to think of justice without them." 37 Dahrendorf, p.43.

37 Dahrendorf, p.43.

38 Ibid., p.48.
It is imperative that radical individualism should set the ground for the individual in finding meanings in life. That is what radical individualism actually embodies since it is an individualism with cultural orientation.

One gets the insight in radical individualism in the observations of Erich Fromm though he does not make them to describe radical individualism. Fromm observes, "Only if man masters society and subordinates the economic machine to the purposes of human happiness, and if he actively participates in the social process, can he overcome what now drives him into despair - his aloneness and his feeling of powerlessness. ... The victory over all kinds of authoritarian systems will be possible only if democracy does not retreat but takes the offensive and proceeds to realize what has been its aim in the minds of those who fought for freedom throughout the last centuries."\(^{39}\)

The core of radical individualism is that it remains free of all dogmas and the dominant ideologies. In its refusal to submission to any ideology it stands opposed to

totalitarianism and all oppressive organizations. In its assertion that the individual should have an open society and culture, and more opportunities for a meaningful and creative life, it represents true liberty. And finally by fusing individual liberty with purpose or responsibility it establishes a solid justification for an individual to be himself. Instead of promoting self-centred individualism, radical individualism promotes altruistic individualism since it shares the basic nature of the social orientation of radicalism. It is in conformity with what V.E.Frankl writes: "But I prefer to live in a world in which man has the right to make choices, even if they are wrong choices, rather than a world in which no choice at all is left to him."\(^{40}\) However this freedom of choice would lose its meaning if it is merely for achieving selfish goals. So Frankl writes: "About two millenia ago, a Jewish sage, Hillel, said. If I do not do this job - who will do it? If I do not do this right now - when shall I do it? But if I carry it out only for my sake what am I ?"\(^{41}\) These observations represent mature radical


\(^{41}\) Ibid. p.89.
individualism which declares that a human being is unique in his essence and his existence, and so, inimitable, irreplaceable and cannot be sacrificed. While the individual enjoys free choice, these choices would be about the responsibilities he wants to carry out. The conception of radical individualism upholds the supremacy of the individual and the creative role of the individual without denying the relevance of a flexible State.

Radical Individualism of Orwell

The life and the writings of George Orwell represent radical individualism. Orwell knew that the meaning of the life of the individual was the individual who could not be substituted for, nor replaced by another person. An individual can develop only in a free and open society. In his time the greatest menace to this essence of being human came from totalitarian, collectivist, laissezfaire capitalist, the Nazi, the Fascist and communist regimes. He fought against totalitarianism, and Fascism both with his pen and gun. He carried on the great and the perennial struggle for the individual dignity and freedom against the oppressive thoughts, trends, actions, systems, ideologies and totalitarianism.
Socrates, a bare-footed philosopher from ancient Athens was a great individual who was sentenced to death by drinking a cup of hemlock for his fearless inquiries after truth, freedom of conscience, and expression without which a meaningful life is impossible. Lord Budha was another great individual who upheld human dignity and enlightenment against the prevalent violent oppressive faith and miseries of people in his period. Jesus was a great individual who sacrificed his life on the cross to liberate man from mystery, miracles and authority. It is interesting to note how in a story in Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov the Grand Inquisitor in the sixteenth century Spain indentifies Christ who came there, gets him arrested, conducts a trial in which he accused him of heresy for the value he placed upon man's freedom of choice and conscience, and finally sentenced him to death. For the Grand Inquisitor Christ was the enemy of the Church because he had resisted and rejected the three temptations of which, even if he had accepted one, could have made all people slaves at his feet. The power of turning stone into bread could have enslaved men by offering them someone to worship. Secondly, by refusing to prove that He was the son of God by flinging Himself from the top of a temple, and being saved by angels, Christ had denied the power of mystery, miracle and authority
to enslave men. Thirdly, by refusing the kingdoms of the earth, He had denied the unity of peace on earth. But the Church after centuries of struggle had established itself as the centre of worship, miracle, mystery and authority, and given unity of peace, and thereby enslaved men into one unanimous ant-heap. The Grand Inquisitor asserts that men do not want freedom and are in fact afraid of freedom. The Church had filled this void. Christ had come again to disturb and bring disorder and therefore the Grand Inquisitor condemned Christ to death. Similarly in our own century, Mahatma Gandhi was a great individual, who was shot dead by a fanatic because he practised and preached freedom of conscience, tolerance of each other's faith, love and non-violence, which are needed for the healthy growth of the individual.

Orwell belonged to this tradition of upholding human worth. He was a consistent fighter against the hindrances to individual worth, dignity, respect and freedom. It is the formidable struggle against the hideous cruelties perpetrated by man against man. Man's everyday danger comes from another man, as observed by Seneca. Orwell fought to liberate man from the atrocities and oppressions imposed by the power-hungry, greedy, and dogmatic men.
When one takes radical individualism as reflecting the yearning for self-expression by the individual. One can understand how Orwell had such a yearning for the expression of the self. It is the yearning for the expression of the self and the freedom of conscience. Was it not for the yearning for the expression of the self and the freedom of conscience against the dogmatic Church and the feudal hierarchy that Joan of Arc was burnt at stake as a heretic? Did she not cry out, "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?" And Orwell too was fighting against the dogmatic political set up, far more terrible and powerful, since it is equipped with modern technology and arms as embodied by the Big Brother. Orwell's greatest struggle for the innate worth of the human individual as the individual was directed against Big Brother, the symbol of mysterious, but very real and terrible, dehumanising totalitarian State.

Adolf Hitler was a liar. It was not difficult at all to expose him as a liar. His National Socialism was racist

rubbish and anti-man; his idea of and harping on democracy was dictatorial trash; and his idolatry of the State was the worship of raw political power. Similarly General Franco could be easily understood as a power-monger. Benito Mussolini was a Fascist dictator. In these cases the totalitarian State as a worship of raw political power intended to crush the individual could be understood. But what of Communist State?.

Orwell was shocked to witness the emergence of an invincible, terrible and perfect totalitarian State on the foundation of communism which basically happens to be a moral philosophy as pointed out by Popper. The State was decorated in a dazzling and enchanting garb of ideology i.e. communism propagating equality; it was equipped with the formidable modern technology, secret police, propaganda machinery, and army, and thus became more terrible than any dogmatic and totalitarian organization that the past had known in crushing the individual. Orwell, thus saw the negation of the individual worth in the grand utopia of communism and its perverted principle of equality.

The radical individualism of Orwell enabled him to see through the holistic design of planning for a root and branch
change and setting up a new polity. This was what was realised by Aldous Huxley also. As Raskin observes, "The great novels of dystopia, 1984 and Brave New World, started from a fundamental insight. They asserted that planning for the future through organizational and heirarchical means (the state, party or corporation) when accompanied by a science without moral purpose, in fact destroyed the inner truth and quest for justice - those very impulses which have given impetus to the cultural and political revolutions of the twentieth century. These books, which damned power and rationalization, showed the reader a vision of bourgeois and state socialist one-dimensionality which smothered man's internal and external space."43

Orwell was both for positive and negative liberties, with an emphasis, of course, on the latter as a requisite for meaningful life of an individual. He struck the balance between positive liberty and negative liberty - the two theses of liberty elaborated by Isaiah Berlin to which reference has been made earlier. Orwell very forcefully fought for the

removal of chains on individual freedom and at the same time would like the individual to pursue positive goals in life and a not-so-rigid political organization to guarantee an appropriate condition for the realisation of positive goals by individuals.

Orwell's radical individualism represents neither selfishness nor irresponsibility. In fact in his case it is a very profound conception of self-awareness and responsibility. His individual upholds altruism, self-respect, and responsibility. The altruistic individual of Orwell represents the very basis of Western civilization: "This individualism, united with altruism, has become the very basis of our western civilization."^44 The one who has no self-love enabling him to love others and recognising the spiritual worth of others, has no personality, and the one who has no responsibility makes a mockery of freedom and the meaning of individuality itself. The individual of Orwell's radical individualism is solitary but not selfish or irresponsible. Orwell himself was such a radical individual, the type of individuals described by Ruggiero who have been adding new meaning and new contents to the way life. It would be

^44 Popper, I, 102.
revealing to recall what Ruggiero observes: "Yet all progress in human affairs is the work of the active, restless, and discontented characters. The forces which improve human life are those which fight against natural tendencies, not those which give way to them; individuality is the triumph of mind over nature and therefore the source of all progress."^45

Orwell was a radical individualist from another point of view also. He wanted to effect the change of the existing system of his period though he did not offer any systematic theory in this context. He was a libertarian Socialist; he did not work out his Socialist plan and programmes elaborately because he was basically against any holistic approach to social, economic and political issues. He opposed the two main dogmas of his period, viz., capitalism and communism, and did not create one himself. He never believed that there was one perfect and ultimate system or ideology for human development and in fact opposed such an approach to the problems of life. He was against the Omnipotent State, the Omnipotent Organization and the assumed Omnipotent Ideology.

Orwell's radical individualism was aimed at liberating

45 Ruggiero, p.144.
the individual who has been under seize from various quarters. Nazism, Fascism, Capitalism, Communism, Military Dictatorship, Fundamentalist State, Multinational Company or Organization and other forms of totalitarianism debase and crush the individual. In pursuit of collective goals (Capitalism is collectivist in production and promotion of sales and individualistic only in terms of ownership of property) these ideologies enslave the individual. Orwell's radical individualism upholds the sanctity of the individual against the formidable currents of totalitarianism. It consists in his consistent struggle against dehumanising collectivist trends and in his endeavour to find a meaningful way of life for the individual. This is the definition or the statement of the problem of the research which will be verified in the subsequent chapters of the thesis. The problem of this study is to trace Orwell's radical individualism in the spheres of society, economy, politics, culture and literature as expressed in his writings.

b) Importance of the Study

The study of George Orwell's works, and his observations and thoughts on society, economy, politics, culture and literature from the standpoint of radical individualism is
important for more reasons than one. It adds a new dimension to the understanding of Orwell's life and works. As an attempt made by an Indian student coming from a village (Kujally in Kumta taluk of Karnataka State) to understand an essentially English writer and thinker it could contribute to a little extent to the stream of Indo-British cultural relations. The ideas of and the issues raised by Orwell in his works are of universal significance. They are the ideas and issues which humanity must grapple with for a happy and meaningful living. They are also the ideas and issues which an individual who wants to live a meaningful life should be aware of.

The study of Orwell's life and works from the angle of radical individualism is important to any reader or individual from an individualistic point of view. Orwell's life and works symbolise man's quest for meanings or goals in life, and his striving to reach or actualise such meanings or goals. Man's search for meanings in life is a fundamental human trait. The search for a meaning becomes absurd if it is merely personal and selfish. The meaning that a man identifies for himself is also the meaning relevant to others in society. If the ideal in life is merely self-centred, it
no longer remains an ideal worth striving for. Such an ideal becomes an absurd and selfish striving. That is why the study of Orwell's radical individualism which symbolises man's search for a meaning or goal in his life which also becomes an altruistic ideal is very relevant. The radical individualism of Orwell shows a proper path to man in search of meaning. Orwell was an individual who set out to identify and realise a meaning or goal for himself and others. Orwell's life and works are a lesson to all those who go in search of an ideal and attempt to actualise the ideal.

The present study is relevant since the works of Orwell are studied here from a new perspective. Literature gets its stuff from life. It remains relevant from the viewpoint of a vision that it conveys. This study is an attempt to study the works of Orwell from an extra-literary standpoint i.e., radical individualism. Of course it does not exclude the literary standpoint since Orwell was basically a writer. But he was a committed writer, and sociological, economic, political and cultural problems and issues find expression in his works. Therefore this study of Orwell's works from an extra-literary angle is important. The study could help understand Orwell and his works in a novel way.
The study of Orwell's works from this angle is of universal significance. Orwell's works, and indeed, his life raise a great problem or question to which a final answer probably does not exist. The issue is concerning man's yearning for a Utopia, a Golden Age versus his freedom. It is also the question of how and to what extent the freedom of the individual and authority should be reconciled. The Utopian quest and a wholesale reconstruction of society according to a holistic radical philosophy led to the crushing of the individual as witnessed in the Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Communist Russia under Stalin. Too much of economic individualism led to laissez-faire, and poverty in the midst of plenty. Orwell's life and works can be considered as experiments to reach a satisfactory answer to this great issue.

The great issue of finding a balance between individual freedom and the State, or freedom and happiness gains more weight after the recent collapse of the Soviet Union, the giant Communist State, the end of the Cold War and the post-Cold War scenario in the world. The Second World War ended with the fall of Hitler and the Cold War ended with the fall of the Soviet Union. But these phenomena have not solved the
central problem faced by mankind. Totalitarianism takes ever new forms. The Big Brother or the Benefactor is invisible, but his spirit lurks everywhere. Today the huge multinational corporations have been smashing the frontiers of nations, cultures and the freedom of man. Man continues to become an automaton and lose his individuality. There is also the rise of religious fundamentalism, the fundamentalist State and violent ethnic movements all of which hold out a promise of Utopia or Golden Age. All these phenomena demonstrate the relevance of Orwell's experiments and the importance of this study. The life and works of Orwell show a strong desire for change, and also an unshakable commitment to the freedom of the individual. That is his radical individualism. In this context the study of Orwell's radical individualism becomes important. The study could be contribution of a sort to the perennial polemic on the individual versus the State, or the individual versus the authority, or freedom versus happiness.

Orwell makes his works vehicles of his thoughts and polemical subjects. He has interpreted sociological, economic, political, cultural and literary matters in his documentaries, novels, essays and journalism. The study could also throw light on the problem of social, economic, political
and cultural commitments in literature.

This study is important because it is a study of the works of Orwell from a new angle; it attempts to show a creative and meaningful role for an individual; it could be a contribution of a sort to the perennial polemic on the individual versus the State; it could throw light on the problem of commitment in literature.

c) Sources:

My primary sources are the documentaries, novels, essays and journalism of George Orwell. They are mentioned wherever reference is made to them in the course of this study. Since I could not get The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus at the beginning of my study, I have made references to the other collections of his essays along with the CEJL which I obtained later.

My secondary sources are the various books on political science, philosophy, anthropology, history, psychology, sociology etc., and also the critical works on Orwell by various critics. These too are mentioned as and when they are referred to in the course of this study.