UNIT 10: BERTRAND RUSSELL: "THE IMPULSE TO POWER"

UNIT STRUCTURE

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10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss Russell's life and works in sufficient detail
- outline Russell's philosophy on the concept of power
- summarise the basic intellectual preoccupations of Russell
- trace Russell's development as a major intellectual of the twentieth century
- appreciate the lucid and logical style of his writing

10.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the last unit of the course. In this unit, you will get an opportunity to read the essay "The Impulse to Power" written by the Nobel winning author and scientist Bertrand Russell. Russell was born on May 18, 1872, at Trelleck, Monmouthshire, England. His full name was Bertrand Arthur William Russell.

He was an English logician and philosopher and was known more for his social and political campaigns supporting both pacifism and nuclear disarmament. Russell received the Nobel prize for literature in 1950. Known mostly for his campaigning for peace, he spent his life as a popular writer on social, political, philosophical and moral subjects. During his lifetime, he published more than 70 books and about 2,000 articles, married four times, became involved in innumerable public controversies, and was honoured and disliked in almost equal measure throughout the world. In the essay "The Impulse to Power" Russell is primarily concerned with the concept of power. He believes that all the major courses of human history have been the result of power. While others talk of economic or military forces, for Russell, all these forces are but elements of that larger whole—power. He firmly believes in the need to understand both the concept and the role of power. For the social sciences, understanding this is a must. He also traces the roots of power to the human imagination which knows no barriers and distinguishes man from animals on the basis of this. Whereas animals are happy to merely live and reproduce, man's capacity for imagination makes him dissatisfied. He longs for whatever his imagination can think of. This is the basis for his hankering after power.

10.3 BERTRAND RUSSELL: THE ESSAYIST

Let us discuss the interesting life and words of this great philosopher Bertrand Russell before we go on to explore the text of the prescribed essay.

10.3.1 His Life and Works

Bertrand Russell was born on 18 May, 1872 at Ravenscroft (now Cleddon Hall), Trellech, Monmouthshire, in Wales. His paternal grandfather, John Russell, 1st Earl Russell, was the second son of John Russell, 6th Duke of Bedford. Queen Victoria had wanted Russell's grandfather to form a government, serving her as Prime

Minister in the 1840s and, later, in the 1860s. Such was the prominence of the family. In fact, the Russells had come to power and had been raised to the level of the aristocracy many centuries earlier, when England had been ruled by the Tudor dynasty. They were one of Britain's leading Whig (Liberal) families, participating in great political events such as the Dissolution of Monasteries in 1536-40, the Glorious Revolution in 1688-89, and the Great Reform Act in 1832.

Russell's mother was Katherine Louisa (1844 - 1874). She was the daughter of Edward Stanley, 2nd Baron Stanley of Alderley, and the sister of Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle. In defiance of the strict moral codes of the age, Russell's father, Viscount Amberley, was an atheist. His mother had an affair with Douglas Spalding, the biologist, with her husband's consent. Both advocated birth control at a time when this was considered taboo. Russell's godfather was John Stuart Mill who died the following year Mill's writings had a great effect upon Russell's life. Frank, Russell's brother was about seven years older than him, and his sister, Rachel, was four years older. Russell's mother died of diphtheria in 1874. Soon after, Rachel, too, passed away. In January 1876, Russell's father died of bronchitis following a long period of depression. Frank and Bertrand came to stay with their grandparents, who lived at Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park. John Russell, 1st Earl Russell, his grandfather, died in 1878. As a result, his widow, the Countess Russell (née Lady Frances Elliot) dominated Russell's childhood and youth.

Conservative in her views on religion, the countess did not want her grandsons to grow up as agnostics as was stipulated in Amberley's will. She petitioned a British court and had that clause set aside. In other areas, however, she held progressive views and accepted Darwinism and supported Irish Home Rule. She had a great influence on Bertrand Russell's outlook on social justice. Perhaps it was this that made him stand up for his principles, without

compromise, in his later life. Her favourite Bible verse, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil' (Exodus 23:2) was to be his guiding spirit, too. The childhood of Frank and Bertrand, however, was not totally free of complications. The emotional repression and formality of Pembroke Lodge caused Frank to rebel, but the young Bertrand learned to hide his feelings.



LET US KNOW

Russell's *Autobiography* tells us how lonely he was and how he often contemplated suicide. But for his interest in Euclid—a contribution of Frank who introduced him to the work—and his grandfather's vast library, Russell had little to occupy his fertile mind. His major interests, he tells us, were religion and mathematics, and he claims that it was his passion for mathematics that kept him away from committing suicide.

A scholarship for the Mathematics Tripos at Trinity College, took him to Cambridge in 1890. Here, he befriended G. E. Moore and came under the influence of Alfred North Whitehead. Through the latter he gained admittance to the Cambridge Apostles. He soon displayed his brilliance, graduating with a B.A. in mathematics in 1893 and adding a fellowship in philosophy in 1895. He also met the American Quaker, Alys Pearsall Smith, when he was seventeen years old and soon became a friend of the family. He travelled with them to the continent and visited the Paris exhibition of 1899 besides visiting the Eiffel Tower after its completion. Falling in love with Alys, he married her on 13 December, 1894, much against the wishes of his grandmother.

Alys was a graduate of Bryn Mawr College near Philadelphia. Soon after, in 1901, Russell tells us how, while he was out on his bicycle, it struck him that he no longer loved her. When she actually asked him if he loved her, he replied that he didn't. Russell also disliked Alys's mother whom he found controlling and cruel. The marriage began to fall apart and they finally divorced in 1921, after a lengthy period of separation. During this period, Russell had passionate (and often simultaneous) affairs with a number of women, including Lady Ottoline Morrell and the actress Lady Constance Malleson.

During the First World War, Russell engaged in pacifist activities. Convicted under the Defence of the Realm Act, Russell was dismissed from Trinity College in 1916. A later conviction resulted in six months' imprisonment in Brixton prison. He was released in September 1918. He traveled to Russia as part of an official delegation in August 1920. The delegation had been sent by the British government to investigate the effects of the Russian Revolution. Here he met Lenin and had an hour-long conversation with him, but, as he says in his autobiography, he found Lenin rather disappointing and he sensed an "impish cruelty" in him. He also cruised down the Volga on a steam-ship. Russell's lover Dora Black also visited Russia around the same time. She was very enthusiastic about the revolution, but Russell's experiences destroyed whatever little support he had for it earlier.

Soon after, Russell went to Beijing to lecture on philosophy for one year, accompanied by Dora. In China, Russell fell ill with pneumonia, and the Japanese press released incorrect reports of his death. Later, when Russell and Dora visited Japan on their return journey, Dora notified the world that "Mr. Bertrand Russell, having died according to the Japanese press, is unable to give interviews to Japanese journalists." This, of course, did not find much favour with the Japanese press who did not appreciate the sarcasm. Back in England by 26 August, 1921, with Dora six months pregnant, Russell had to arrange a quick divorce from Alys. He married Dora six days after the divorce was finalised, on 27 September, 1921. Two children were born to them—John Conrad Russell, 4th Earl Russell, born on 16 November, 1921 and Katherine Jane Russell (afterwards Lady Katharine Tait) born on 29 December, 1923. During this period Russell found himself writing popular books, explaining matters of physics, ethics, and education to the layman. There were rumours around this time that he was also having an affair with Vivien Eliot, who was T. S. Eliot's wife. He also founded the experimental Beacon Hill School in 1927 with Dora, who continued it until 1943. Russell had left it in 1932.



LET US KNOW

In 1931, Russell became the 3rd Earl Russell, following the death of his brother, Frank He once said that his title was primarily useful for securing hotel rooms.

Russell was famous all across the world by now, even outside academic circles. He wrote frequently for magazines and newspapers—and was as frequently written about. Often his views on wide ranging subjects were solicited, and he found himself speaking in programmes broadcast by the BBC. In 1948, while he was on his way to Trondheim to deliver a lecture, his plane crashed. Of a total of 43 passengers, 24 survived—and Russell was one of them. In the King's Birthday Honours of 9 June 1949, Russell was awarded the Order of Merit. The following year he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. At the time of bestowing the Order of Merit, King George VI was somewhat embarrassed because had been in jail. He said, "You have sometimes behaved in a manner that would not do if otherwise adopted." Russell merely smiled. Later on he claimed that he almost replied, "That's right, just like your brother"!

Meanwhile, his marriage to had proven to be a very unhappy affair and, in 1952, the two were finally divorced. This resulted in an estrangement from Conrad, his son by Peter. It was only in 1968 that Conrad decided to meet his father again—a decision that led to a permanent rift in his relations with his mother. On 15 December 1952, Russell married for the fourth time. This time the lady was Edith Finch, who had been a teacher of English literature at Bryn Mawr College and whom he had known since 1925. Edith remained with him until his death. This one time, at least, the marriage seems to have been a happy one. Proof of this can be found in an unlikely fact. John, Russell's son by Dora, was ill mentally, and so was his wife, Susan. Dora had frequent disputes with her erstwhile husband over this. Later on, two of the three daughters of John and Susan were also diagnosed with schizophrenia. Notwithstanding such unpleasantness, Edith and Russell

became the legal guardians of the three girls. This would argue a close, understanding, trusting and supportive relationship between the two.

Political causes, primarily related to nuclear disarmament and the Vietnam War, occupied Russell during much of the 1950s and 1960s.. The Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 1955 was a document calling for nuclear disarmament and was signed by 11 of the prominent nuclear physicists and intellectuals of the time. Many world leaders also received letters from him during this period. Lionel Rogosin's anti-war film *Good Times, Wonderful Times* had his unstinted approval and Russell was constantly in touch with Rogosin during the making of the film. To many of the youthful members of the New Left, Russell was a hero. America's aggressive policies in the 1960s met with Russell's stern disapproval and he became increasingly vocal in his criticism of American policy. In 1963 he became the very first recipient of the Jerusalem Prize, an award honouring writers who were concerned with the freedom of the individual in society. In 1965 he tore up his Labour Party card when he felt that the party was going to send soldiers to support the Vietnam War.

The three volumes of Russell's *Autobiography* were published in the years 1967, 1968, and 1969. Although he became frail, yet he remained lucid and clear thinking till the day he died. On 23 November, 1969 he wrote to the *Times* newspaper stating his 'alarm' over the preparation for show trials in Czechoslovakia. That month itself, he wrote an appeal to the Secretary General of the United Nations, U. Thant, to support an international war crimes commission to investigate allegations of "torture and genocide" by the Americans in South Vietnam. Then, a month later, he lodged his protest with Alexei Kosygin over the expulsion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn from the Writers Union.

On 31 January, 1970, Russell issued a statement condemning Israel's aggression in the Middle East and asked Israel to withdraw from territory it had occupied in 1967. This is what he said:

"The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was "given" by a foreign power to another people for the creation of a new state. The result was that many hundreds of thousands of innocent people were

made permanently homeless. With every new conflict their numbers increased. How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty? It is abundantly clear that the refugees have every right to the homeland from which they were driven, and the denial of this right is at the heart of the continuing conflict. No people anywhere in the world would accept being expelled en masse from their own country; how can anyone require the people of Palestine to accept a punishment which nobody else would tolerate? A permanent just settlement of the refugees in their homeland is an essential ingredient of any genuine settlement in the Middle East. We are frequently told that we must sympathise with Israel because of the suffering of the Jews in Europe at the hands of the Nazis. […] What Israel is doing today cannot be condoned, and to invoke the horrors of the past to justify those of the present is gross hypocrisy."

This was to be Russell's final political statement. It was read out a day after his death at the International Conference of Parliamentarians in Cairo on 3 February, 1970. The next day, 1 February, at his home, Plas Penrhyn, in Penrhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire, Wales, Russell spent a quiet time. However, on the morning of 2 February Russell claimed he felt unwell and remained in bed until almost noon. That evening, while he was reading, he suddenly fell ill. His wife and nurse called his doctor, got him to bed and gave him oxygen, but it was too late. Russell died of influenza before the doctor arrived. Upon his death, his peerage descended on his eldest son, John, Viscount Amberley, who became the fourth Earl. Russell was cremated at Colwyn Bay on 5 February, 1970. According to his wishes mentioned in his will, there was no religious ceremony. His ashes were scattered over the Welsh mountains.

He was undoubtedly the founder of Analytic philosophy and he had great influence on mathematical logic. Perhaps among his major contribution is his making language—or, at least, how we use language—a central part of philosophy. He had a lot of faith in science and, as such, made it one of the principal components of his philosophy. Indeed, his entire method of enquiry was scientific. It could be that this belief in science made Russell write a great deal on matters ethical and religious. He firmly believed that

established religion, with its inability to change with the times, posed as a barrier to knowledge and to progress. Undoubtedly Russell's influence on philosophy has been nothing if not major.

Besides this, Russell was vocal on many issues. He was a leading political activist, vocal, bold and severe in his criticism. At a time when the entire western hemisphere was totally involved in the war, Russell spoke out loud in favour of peace. His pacifism as well as his views on nuclear weapons is evident in a number of his essays. Indeed, the essay "The Impulse to Power" is one such example. Russell had great hopes on Communism, but his visit to Russia made him disillusioned with the experiment. As a member of the Fabian Society—a group that wanted to bring about socialism through parliamentary reform—Russell remained a staunch supporter of the socialist cause. He also wrote in favour of Women's suffrage and against racism. His views on sexuality outraged the prim and proper Victorian society. He, for instance, spoke in favour of trial partnerships before marriage, and of easy divorce in marriages where no children had been born. Such ideas may no longer be considered shocking in our own times, but to Russell's contemporaries they were outrageous and he had to suffer often for his views.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who was Russell's god father?

Q 2: What does Russell's *Autobiography* tell about him?

Q 3: How is Russell connected to Ludwig Wittgenstein?

Q 4: Which branch of philosophy is known by the name of Russell?

Q 5: Do you agree that Russell was a political activist who campaigned for peace? Discuss.

Let us begin with a clear understanding of the fact that it is impossible to write about Russell's work in just a page or two. So vast was the area of his activity that it would require volumes to just list his work.

In the previous section, you have already gained some ideas regarding the works of Russell. Russell began publishing his work in 1896 with *German Social Democracy*. This was to be the beginning of a lifelong interest in political and social theory. In 1896, he taught the German social democracy at the London School of Economics. In 1937 he also lectured on the science of power in the same institution. In 1902, the Fabian campaigners Sidney and Beatrice Webb had started the Coefficients dining club of social reformers. Russell, too, became a member.

He wrote the essay "On Denoting" in 1905 and it was published in the philosophical journal *Mind*. In 1908 Russell became a fellow of the Royal Society. The first of three volumes of *Principia Mathematica*, written with Whitehead, was published in 1910. Along with the earlier *The Principles of Mathematics*, this soon made Russell world famous in his field. In 1911, he became acquainted with the Austrian engineering student Ludwig Wittgenstein. In Wittgenstein Russell found a genius and he hoped that this brilliant man would continue his work on logic. Wittgenstein often suffered from various phobias and had frequent bouts of despair. Attending to these often drained Russell's energy, but he continued to be fascinated by him and encouraged his academic development. This constant care resulted in the publication of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* in 1922.

Russell's marriage to Dora was not destined to survive. Her having an affair with the American journalist, Griffin Barry—and the two children who resulted from the affair—caused the relationship to break apart. They separated in 1932 and finally divorced. Never able to remain single, four years later, Russell married his third wife, an Oxford undergraduate named Patricia ("Peter") Spence. She had been his children's governess since the summer of 1930. Russell and Peter had one son, Conrad Sebastian Robert Russell, 5th Earl Russell, who was to become a prominent historian and one of the leading figures in the Liberal Democrat party in his own turn.

After the Second World War, Russell taught at the University of Chicago for some time, and then at the University of California, Los Angeles. He was appointed professor at the City College, New York in 1940. However,

a protest begun by the mother of a student of the college resulted in a public outcry. The protest was due to his views relating mainly to sexual morality, which he had written about ten years earlier in his *Marriage and Morals.* The matter went to court and Russell was judged to be 'morally unfit' to teach. His appointment was annulled Many intellectuals protested his treatment and Dewey and Horace M. Kallen edited a collection of articles on the CCNY affair in *The Bertrand Russell Case*. He soon joined the Barnes Foundation, lecturing to a varied audience on Russell soon began a series of lectures on the history of philosophy for the Barnes Foundation—a series that would turn out to be the basis for his phenomenal work, *A History of Western Philosophy*, which was published in 1945. This book became a bestseller and provided him with a steady income for the rest of his life. His relationship with the eccentric Albert C. Barnes, however, was an eccentric one. Russell soon discovered that it was impossible for him to get along with the man, and so he returned to Britain in 1944 to rejoin the faculty at Trinity College.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What were some of the works of Russell that had a profound effect on the study of various subjects?

10.4 READING "THE IMPULSE TO POWER"

10.4.1 Explanation of the Text

Men are different from animals both intellectually and emotionally. The major difference between man and other animals is that the actions of animals arise from hunger, fear or the need to reproduce. Some sleep and only wake up to feed. Others stay awake to feed or to escape from enemies. It is only man who experiences desire that are without limits. Most men have to work hard to earn a living and do not have any time for other activities. However, even

when men do not have to work for money, they still remain active. Russell cites examples from history to show that even when their livelihood was taken care of, men still carried out other activities ranging from conquering nations to writing scientific treatises, to founding religious orders. Most men have this trait. He cites a common example of women who want to look better than others or men who hanker for recognition – even in the form of a knighthood. Such desires are fuelled by the imagination and men go to great lengths to turn them into reality. It is because of imagination that we restlessly seek satisfaction—even though we know that perfect satisfaction is something that man can never have. Only God can have it because he has the ultimate in kingdom, power and glory. Men only have that which is transient. Nothing in the world of man is everlasting. Yet men still seek infinite power and glory in a finite existence.

Animals are content with living and reproducing. Man, on the other hand, wants all that his imagination can dream of—even to the extent of being God! Russell refers to John Milton's depiction of Satan in *Paradise Lost* and says that men too are similar in their desire for power and their refusal to acknowledge that there is a limit to what man can achieve. It is because of this that men wish to become all powerful. The problem with this is that when all men want to become all powerful there can be anarchy. This is why we need government, compromise, restraint, and at the same time we also have rebellion and violence. This is also why we need morality—for the sake of restraining one's own desire for power.

The foremost desire of man is power and glory. Although the two are different, usually power brings glory. Therefore they are pursued equally and, for this very reason, Russell is of the opinion that they may be treated as one. Whereas Karl Marx and other economists believed that man's basic need was for commodities and that these needs could be easily fulfilled, Russell believes that this is far from the truth. Man's desires are driven by his need for

power. This is seen in his quest to be a lawmaker or a collector of great paintings. Money, for Russell, is merely the means to power. Russell believes that only when we understand this central fact against the mistake of the economists that we shall be able to understand history in its proper perspective.

Russell states his intention of proving that 'power' is a fundamental concept just as 'energy' is in physics. He contends that power, like energy, can have many forms, and that each is interlinked with the rest. For instance wealth may result from military power; but it may just as well result in military power. The laws of social dynamics, says Russell, can only be stated in terms of power—not in terms of any individual fragment of power. The usual tendency is to look at either economic power or military power or even the power of propaganda as the only power that has created our history. Therein lies the error. Just as, in physics, one needs to understand that energy continually changes from one form to another, similarly, in the study of social sciences, it is important to understand that power, too, constantly changes from one form to another. Only then will we stop committing the same errors.

Different societies have different equations of power—in the sense that the power of the individual or the power of the government may be different under different forms of rule. Thus, for instance, hereditary monarchy, the needs of the church, democracy or war can produce four different kinds of eminent individuals.

If there is no such system as a monarchy to limit the number of individuals who rise to power, then it is likely that the ones who desire power more than the others will generally attain it. Love of power is not the same in all individuals. For many other desires are more important than power. This is why the changes that come about in society are dictated by those who love power and, therefore, possess it. Since it is the business of the social sciences to study these changes, it must be well understood that the motive for power is chiefly responsible for these changes.

The laws of social dynamics, Russell contends, can only be stated in terms of various forms of power. Hence, all forms of power need to be classified, and the way in which organizations or individuals have gained control over other men need to be studied. In a bid to emerge out of the eighteenth and nineteenth century into the modern period, Russell proposes to introduce a different method of analysis than that of the economists. This, he believes, will make the present and the near future more intelligible. He stresses on the need to understand both ancient and medieval history—just as he stresses on the need to emerge from the mores of thought of the nineteenth century—for the sake of progress.

Thus, you will find that in this essay Russell is primarily concerned with the concept of power. He believes that all the major courses of human history have been the result of power. While others talk of economic or military forces, for Russell, all these forces are but elements of that larger whole—power. He firmly believes in the need to understand both the concept and the role of power. For the social sciences, understanding this is a must. He also traces the roots of power to the human imagination which knows no barriers and distinguishes man from animals on the basis of this. Whereas animals are happy to merely live and reproduce, man's capacity for imagination makes him dissatisfied. He longs for whatever his imagination can think of. This is the basis for his hankering for power.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: In what ways, does Russell contrasts men with animal?

Q 8: How does Russell views the idea of power?

10.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

His clear and logical style contributes to the lucidity of his prose. This capacity for clear and precise thought is also displayed in his division

of paragraphs. Each paragraph has one central idea that develops organically from what precedes. His vast knowledge makes it possible for him to glide effortlessly through different disciplines and to talk of a concept from one discipline to demonstrate another concept from a different discipline. A case in point is his use of the concept of 'energy' from Physics to illustrate the concept of 'power' from the social sciences. Moreover his language is also simple and fluid—resulting in the eminent readability of his writing. Considering all this, it is not difficult to understand why Russell is considered to be one of the greatest thinkers in the world.

Russell himself comments that a style is not accepted unless it is an intimate and almost an involuntary expression of the personality of the writer. Russell's own prose style determines his own personality. Proper organisation of materials, the use of anecdotes, humorous use of language are some of his qualities as a prose writer. He likes to write in a simple and short sentences, his anecdotes add to a more 'informal' style and a sense of immediacy helps Russell in reconstructing the lives of his parents who died just after his birth. However, 'authenticity' is presented by their verification of written documents like letters written to and by his parents. This generates a believability in the representation and telling of the narrator.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: Comment on Russell's style of writing.

10.6 CRITICAL RECEPTION

You have learnt that Russell is generally recognised to be one of the important founders of Analytic Philosophy. At the beginning of the 20th century, alongside G. E. Moore, Russell was considered responsible for the British "revolt against Idealism". Russell was particularly critical of a doctrine of internal relations which held that in order to know any particular thing, we must know all of its relations. Russell's logical work with A. N. Whitehead continued this project. Russell's *Autobiography* exemplifies his intuitive nature

trying to reach at the core of the issues. His metaphysical idealism and scientific nature as expressed in the Autobiography and other writings invited critical attention. The last volume of Bertrand Russell's *Autobiography* received little attention when it first appeared, not long before his death. Yet it raised a number of questions and doubts which were relevant to the thinking of radicals and liberals in the United States and in Western Europe. His views regarding politics and religion are still valid and contextual in the contemporary world. A great deal of philosophical discussions in the contemporary English speaking world can be traced back to Russell. In fact, the works of Russell founded the basis of modern logic. Although his works were basically concerned with the principles of mathematics and logic, it implications could be visible in the world of philosophy in general. Thus Russell came to have an enormous influence on the twentieth century thought.



10.7 LET US SUM UP

By now, you must have gained sufficient ideas on the kind of a man Bertrand Russell is. Bertrand Russell is often recognised to be one of the important founders of Analytic Philosophy and a great thinker of the 2oth century. Besides being a philosopher, Russell was also a vocal and bold political activist. During World War I, he spoke out loudly in favour of peace. His pacifism as well as his views on nuclear weapons is evident in a number of his essays. The essay "The Impulse to Power" is one such example. In the essay "The Impulse to Power" Russell is primarily concerned with the concept of power. He believes that all the major courses of human history have been the result of a never-ending thrust for power. As a prose writer, Russell displays logical clarity—a style of writing that contributes to the lucidity of his prose.



10.8 FURTHER READING

1) Anderson, Linda. (2001). *Autobiography*. London: Routledge.

2) Clark, Ronald W. (1978). *The Life of Bertrand Russell*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

3) Monk, Ray. (1997). *Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude.* London: Vintage.

4) Moorhead, Caroline. (1992). *Bertrand Russell: A Life*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson.

5) Russell, Bertrand. (2004). *Power: A New Social Analysis*. London: Routledge.

6) *The New Encyclopedia Brittanica*. (Micropedia). Volume 10, 15th Edition, 2005.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Russell's godfather was John Stuart Mill. Mill's writings had a great impact upon Russell's life.

Ans to Q No 2: Russell's *Autobiography* tells us how lonely he was and how he often contemplated suicide. He was interested in Euclid and his grandfather's vast library. His major interests, he tells us, were sex, religion and mathematics, and he claims that it was his passion for mathematics that kept away him from committing suicide.

Ans to Q No 3: With *The Principles of Mathematics*, Russell became world famous in his field. In 1911, he became acquainted with the Austrian engineering student Ludwig Wittgenstein in whom he found a genius and he hoped that this brilliant man would continue his work on logic. But, Wittgenstein often suffered from various phobias and had frequent bouts of despair.

Ans to Q No 4: Russell was the founder of Analytic philosophy and he had great influence on mathematical logic. He had a lot of faith in science

and, as such, made it one of the principal components of his philosophy. Indeed, his entire method of enquiry was scientific.

Ans to Q No 5: Russell was a vocal and bold political activist. During World War I, Russell spoke out loud in favour of peace. His pacifism as well as his views on nuclear weapons is evident in a number of his essays. Indeed, the essay "The Impulse to Power" is one such example.

Ans to Q No 6: *Principia Mathematica, Marriage and Morals, Autobiography, A History of Western Philosophy*

Ans to Q No 7: The major difference between man and other animals is that the actions of animals arise from hunger, fear or the need to reproduce. It is only man who experiences desire that are without limits. Animals are content with living and reproducing. Man, on the other hand, wants all that his imagination can dream of—even to the extent of being God! The problem with this is that when all men want to become all powerful there can be anarchy. This is why we need government, compromise, restraint, and at the same time we also have rebellion and violence. This is also why we need morality—for the sake of restraining one's own desire for power.

Ans to Q No 8: Russell believes that all major courses of human history have been the result of power. While others talk of economic or military forces, for Russell, all these forces are but elements of that larger whole—power. He firmly believes in the need to understand both the concept and the role of power. Men long for whatever his imagination can think of. This is the basis for their hankering for power.

Ans to Q No 9: Russell is clear and logical in his style. He likes to write in simple and short sentences. Each paragraph has one central idea that develops organically from what precedes. However, his interest in maintaining 'authenticity' generates a believability in the representation and telling of the narrator.



10.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Describe the contributions of Bertrand Russell to the field of modern English prose.

Q2. "His clear and logical style contributes to the lucidity of his prose". — Discuss in relation to any of the prose pieces by Russell you have read.

Q3. What idea of power do you get after reading Russell's essay "The Impulse to Power"? Discuss.

Q4. Give a summary of the essay "The Impulse to Power" by Bertrand Russell in your own words.

Q5. Discuss the life and works of the famous essayist and mathematician, Betrand Russell.

Q6. Comment on the critical reception of Bertrand Russell as an essayist.

Q7. Attempt an analysis of Bertrand Russell as a political activist with reference to "The Impulse to Power".