Bishnu Dey has made himself known as the most Eliot-conscious poet among the moderns. This he has done by his expressed interest in Eliot as poet and critic. Besides, he translated a collection of Eliot’s poems under the title ‘Elioter Kabita’. He wrote about Eliot on different occasions drawing attention of the writers and readers of Bengal to the important aspects of Eliot’s poetry and criticism. The poet himself told the present writer that he became deeply interested in Eliot when he came across a copy of the ‘Criteron’ along with the essay “Tradition and the Individual talent”. To him it became a conviction that Eliot had come to the present generation with a promise to release the literature of the age from the shackles of the old and worn out literary order. So he writes:

“He widened and at the same time deepend our vision of literature, which is creative work. In an odd way he did in literature what Marx had done in the broader sphere of social and political life”.

The releasing force came mainly through two channels: firstly, the self-consciousness of the poet; and secondly, the traditionalism in poetry. Bishnu Dey, therefore, writes:

“The most important debt of the Bengali poets to Eliot is in this field of self-consciousness. Self consciousness has come to take a concrete form in the ideal of poets.”

1. Bishnu Dey; Mr. Eliot among the Arjunas op.cit. p.96.
2. Bishnu Dey; Elioter Kabita (introduction), p.11.
Through his poetry and poetics Eliot made the modern Bengali poets self-conscious because he himself was self-conscious as a poet. "That is why" writes Bishnu Dey. We see in Eliot's poetry the poetic and conscious expressions of our doubts and uncertainties, the agony of the civilised mind due to the historic incompleteness of the modern life; and the incomprehensiveness of life itself. For this reason, his poetry and honest criticism to improve the power of appreciation of poetry, make those alien wayfarers in troubled lands and self searching poets of far off countries obliged to him. In the process of attaining this self consciousness in poetry there emanates the force of release. The poet is not only conscious of his role in the present situation but he is now conscious of his past and future also. He is now conscious of his strength and weakness as well. He is also conscious of his destiny as a poet. Self-consciousness, thus, frees him from the bondage of conventionalism, doubts and uncertainties about himself.

The other force of release is the doctrine of traditionalism in poetry as enunciated by Eliot. Eliot wants that a poet should know his own tradition and then proceed to add his contribution to the existing tradition. In doing so he will ultimately be able to find out his own place in the creative sphere of literary activity, which is in the true line of the growth of tradition. Bishnu Dey believed that the modern Bengali poets could come out of the labyrinth of Rabindra-cult by a conscious application of the theory. However, this should be done with necessary precautions. About Bishnu Dey's traditionalism Prof. Analendu Bose, therefore, writes:

"He learned from Eliot the need for affirming one's heritage but the affirmation has to be achieved by one's own effort rather than received as a magic spell from a maestro and the heritage of an Eliot need not necessarily be that of Bishnu Dey. From Eliot he has learnt the urgency of treading a road of one's own but the road has to be sought out made and trodden by one's own self."4

The application of the doctrine of tradition in Bengali poetry makes Bishnu Dey conscious about a few things which hitherto were not clearly understood by the poets of Bengal. Firstly, he realised that Rabindranath is a poet in whose poetry has entered a great deal of the tradition of the Bengali poetry. Yet, there is little doubt that in his poetry he has not taken every aspect of Bengali poetic tradition into consideration. Some important sides of the Bengali literary tradition such as the folk or the people's literature is left out in his poetry.*

Secondly, tradition is to be sought for not only in Rabindranath alone but in the literature before and after him as well. One is to move from the Vedas to the present time to know the tradition of Bengali poetry.

Lastly, the search for tradition should not necessarily be confined to one's own nation. It may be extended to other nations and races if there is any historical, cultural or any other form of relation with them. Further, the existing tradition anticipates future development; and may help to read the future in the present. Thus, most of the literary

4. Amalendu Bose; Bishnu Dey, Water My Roots, p.54.
* This aspect of peoples tradition or folk tradition is discussed by D.P. Upadhaya in 'Lokayata', Ashutosh Battacharjee also made an elaborate study of the subject, in his book 'Banglar Loka Sahitya'. 
works which are in a process of creation can be traditional even in the formative stage. Tradition can be created by a conscious poet; atleast a rebuilding of tradition in a new perspective is possible. In one of his poem Bishnu Dey writes:

"In one line of the present
Unite the three times
Not in the conservation only
But in the creation
Of tradition in every moment."

(Kaler Rakhal Sishu; Nam Rakhechi
Kamal Gandhar)

Bishnu Dey learnt from Eliot that the search for tradition is not a matter of academic interest only; it itself is a creative process. One can find himself growing and learning even when he has yet to prepare a track for his own journey. In that way Eliot is a great help to a poet who is pioneering a new movement. Bishnu Dey is quick to realise this fact and explores territories neither-to unfrequented by any other Bengali poets. So,we see that one aspect of Bishnu Dey's traditionalism is to find out the main stream of the poetic tradition of Bengal; and for that reason he is ready to go to the earliest period of our tradition as well as to the latest additions to it. That is why,he looks at the modernity of Eliot's poetry with great interest.
Bishnu Dey thinks that a poet should not only be conscious of the tradition but also be equally interested in realities of life around him. In the background there should be always the consciousness about tradition but in the foreground the life in its vivid colours must be present. Consciousness of the part is equally important as the consciousness of the whole; and this can be seen in Eliot’s poetry. The modernity in Eliot’s poetry, therefore, is not merely the depiction of the life as such but an attempt to select such aspects of our life that have a bearing in the creation of new tradition of poetry. Apart from this, Bishnu Dey saw a situational parallelism between The Waste Land (along with the poems of the 20s) and the social, economic and political conditions of Bengal of the time. He saw the society as an artificial structure, worn out and practically useless. Men were hollow inside and stuffed. While Eliot saw Europe in the grip of spiritual sterility Bishnu Dey saw Bengal suffering from intellectual sterility. Besides, the common people were kept out of picture and the society of the aristocrats was a structure without base. Cut off from the simplicity of the villages and country-sides, the towns and cities have turned into lifeless deserts. So, when Eliot says that the desert is not far off, it is just outside the door step, he sounds like a prophet. Eliot describes the modern man as a ‘hollow man’ with his head piece filled with straw. He is a shape without form. This description of

* Cf. "Such complete realisation of the 'part-consciousness' and its perfect poetic expression..... is the contribution of Eliot in poetry "Sahityer Bhaviswat" : B.Dey, pp.115-116."
modern man appears to be a real assessment to the modern Bengali poets. In the present age religious practices are observed simply because one has developed the habit of observing them. Love has lost its significance and broader meaning. It is also a habit, rather a biological exercise. The great theme of love is, therefore, treated with contempt. In his early poems Bishnu Dey shows little regard for love as a subject matter of poetry. Love was a kind of 'conditioned reflex'. He tried to induce a casual tone in his love poems. He wanted to reduce love to a day-to-day affair which hardly needed any special treatment in poetry.

"Alaka tells me
Have no fear in expressing your mind
Many trusted these ears.
Besides, I pluck flowers of love
After careful consideration."

(Purba Ranga; Srestha Kabita)

In a bold attempt to shatter the existing Victorian idea of love in Bengali poetry, he looked at love as a habit. One loves because one has to. Hence, we see in his poems lines like these;

"It is a habit Lily, only a habit
That I come to your warm happy love - den."

(Conditioned Reflex; Srestha Kabita).

This casual tone invariably reminds a reader of the love scenes in The Waste Land.
"The time is now propitious, as he guesses
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired.
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once
Exploring hands encounter no defence,
His vanity requires no response.
And makes a welcome of indifference."

There are other poems of Bishnu Dey where we see similar ideas;

"Alaka, here you are,
Who can remain melancholy in your company?"
(Janmastami; Srestha Kabita)*

Or
"Suresh comes every evening I presume;
As you say, the colour of your *Sari*
introxicates me". (Do)

Or
"Have you read Lening's letters
Remark -
able in -
teresting". (Do)

There is also description of day-to-day matters of fact life.

In a business like manner the poet says:

* One may trace influence of Auden or Cummings in such examples; but when we remember that Bishnu Dey's modernism has a bearing on tradition, we believe that they are more Eliotem than Audenesque in character.
"After this there are tea and cards
Let us play the bridge or say flash,
With excitement, smokes, slangs and laugh,
And then return to our flats -
To remember again the abdominal pain and cold
and cough,
Noise, congestion, smoke and chile burning tough."

(Inamastami; Do)

In the same manner he writes elsewhere:

"We suppress dividend and start panic in the market,
And bring a welcome change after days of inactivity.
Release 'under sale' carefully -
The shareholder shudders in fear and runs away
We are four directors - Hari, Ram, Shyan and I".

(Do)

One feels inclined to compare these lines with Eliot's Lines from the 'Difficulties of a Statesman':

"Arthur Edward Cyril Parker is appointed
Telephone operator
At a salary of one Pound - ten a week
Rising by annual increase -
ments of five shillings,
Two pound ten a week, with a bonus of thirty
Shillings at Christmas,
And one weeks leave a year."
Besides, there are lines from Bishnu Dey's poems which not for any particular reason, but for a general affinity of taste, style and tone are typically Eliotean in character. For example:

"We in our homes, we also are a various crowd
We sing our part songs quietly
Or we do not sing at all but shake our
heads, heads by the
Threats and the cajoling
Now and then some of us perhaps gasp in despair
In this death in life or life in death broken
Futile."

(Water My Roots)

Though there is no direct reference, one remembers the lines from "The Hollow Men"

"We are the Hollow Men
We are the Hollow Men
Leaning together
Head piece filled with straw Alas I
Whisper together......."

Other lines from the poem 'Water My Roots' bring in our mind images from The Waste Land. For example:

"Their beginning was in spring
In one sense of course, late winter
Or earlier still
Last year or the year before
Year by year, in the long progress of Nature's work or law. In the "Waste Land" Eliot speaks of the sterility of the modern life. He expresses the barrenness of the modern life by the symbol of desert and cactus. In the choruses from the Rock he writes:

"The desert is not remote in the southern tropics
The desert is not only around the corner,
The desert is squeezed in the tube train next to you
The desert is in the heart of your brother."

Bishnu Dey, in the post war decadent social order of Bengal saw the same sterility and barrenness. India, at that time was the greatest of the colonies of England and as such the English desert was found naturally extended to her colony. In fact, the intellectual minds of Bengal were found to be very susceptible to changes in England and Europe. It was not surprising that in Bengal too the desert was found to be existing in the heart of your brothers." Awareness of the existence of desert was, therefore, not surprising among the modern Bengali poets. For a Bengali poet the use of desert as a symbol is more significant for there is not a single desert in Bengal which is known in fact, as a land of rivers. Sudhindranath used the desert symbol in his poetry. Bishnu Dey, instead of using the desert symbol directly, generally used such symbol as the 'sand-banks' or the 'sand-dunes'.

* Cf. "There are Waste Land all around
Not the fashionable western one, but really barren primitive
Death, in excess to what the hollow men could collect/Beats
dram in a ghostly dance".

(Anritya Chaitanye : Itihase Tragic Ullase, By B.Dey).
"The barren sandy - banks in the noon light
Here no hony-moon takes place."

(Chorabali; Chorabali)
or
"My heart is in a journey to the other side
Of the 'Baitarani',
There is no boat man and the eyes dazzle
By sandy land stretching to the horizon".

(Cressida, Srestha Kabita).

There can also be seen the cactus image in Bishnu Dey's Poems:

"Dreams are only cactus land".

(Panoha mukh; Chorabali)
or
"That is a strange country -
Neither a village nor a town,
...........................................
But there are dead rivers,
With banks covered by black hard stony mounds,
And there are serpentine roads out - lined by
The best cactus, brought by some one
In large quantity from Arijona."

(Ekjan Duswapna, Namrekechi Kamal Gandhar)

Eliot finds the Waste Land a place with:

"A heap of broken images, where the sun beats
And the dead tree gives no shelter the cricket no relief,

*In the symbol of 'sand -bank' we see a protest against the romantic tradition. Bishnu Dey believes that no romantic attitude is possible in the present condition of Bengal.
And the dry stone no sound of water,"
And Bishnu Dey discovers:
"What a cursed country is this, a barren Desert under the bitter sun beams
In the consciousness also there is an uncertain Formless dedicated hate."
(Rabindranath; Smriti Satta Bhaviswath).
Or
"In the privacy of my mind, I have a burnt field,
Which is my own self
And there I go on ploughing and sowing."
(Amito - to; Smriti Satta Bhaviswath)

There is little doubt that he considers the present day society as an unproductive and sterile institution:

"But do you know why in the sand-bank of Sandwip I search for the bee-queen in its dangerous void?
In this decayed country's sterile society - in its crippled space,
Why I want to become rich by trading in heart?"
(Barang Janoy Smriti Satta Bhaviswath)

In The Waste Land Eliot writes:

"April is the cruellest month, breeding Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing Memory and desire, stirring Dull roots with spring rain Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers."

In the winter water is frozen into the ice and there is no free water to stir the dull roots. In the absence of the life giving water it is death or rather death in life that reigns supreme during the winter. Bishnu Dey also finds in water a symbol of life, for life is incapable of maintaining itself out of water.

"There is no rain and no storm
No water is there for the untimely seeds,
In the season of stealthy death
Roots beneath the soil get choked
And the plants feel death within their mind and soul".

(The māra; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat)

To the image of rain Eliot ascribes the hope for revival of life. Rain brings water, the most essential condition of life. Rain brings life to the barren dead land. Water is the cradle of life; and it contained in it life for thousands of years till life could maintain itself out of it, with of course, generous supply of water. In The Waste Land we see Eliot in search of this life giving water:

"Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water."
And again,

"Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gather for distant..........."

Bishnu Deb also finds rain life-giving:

"Cloud gathered in the sky that day
In storm and thunder came down the summer rain,
0; what a down pour
Like a stream of vigorous life."

(Baromashya; Namrekechi Kamal Gandhar)

Or

"This is good
Let the new dark summer cloud soothe the dry fields
Of mother earth and those thousands of deserts
With its rain water."

(Aei vale; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat).

Hence, in this particular image we see not only the rain but also the desert image associated with it; and it is not just a simple and conventional rain image; it speaks of thousands of deserts which represent the minds of men. Rain contains the nectar that will revive life in the dead waste land - our civilisation of the present day. So, the poet waits for the rain:

"I am also hungry, not only my eyes
But also my heart and soul feel the hunger,
The burnt soil lamenting
Brings into my nerves a dying famine"

(Ami to; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat).
In The Waste Land, the rain is yet to come; though there is the sound of
thunder. In Bishnu Dey’s poetry, however, we see rain coming down now
and then, and the land is not as sterile as that of the Waste Land:

"And then the rain - drops fell on the ground
Smelling sweet.
The drops fell on the mind waiting
For the rain so long".

(Sarbojaya Sukhada barada; Smriti Satta....)

Or

"Now and then comes the storm, the hail storm,
Rain falls; and complete consciousness returns
To the body of soothing dense shadow."

(Charak, Easter, Ider Puja; Smriti Satta....)

But there is no certainty of this rain. There may be a long period of
drought intervening the periods of occasional rains.

"All are barren land be it a village or
A town, Rain never visits these place
In time, Neither the soil nor the soul"

(do)

And when there is no rain and therefore no water the land turns barren
and sterile;

"There is no civilization here
The heart is a dried up lake
And intelligence a silted canal".

(Smriti Satta Bhavishwat; Do).
But to Bishnu Dey, the rain is not the only source of water. There are rivers flowing perennially the water from melting ice of the glaciers. There may not be always rain water but there are the rivers, the eternal source of the vital force of life. The river reminds him of the eternal flow of life. This flow is unceasing. The river may change its course; one place may become desert but another will be full of life. Life as a whole is never in mortal danger of total annihilation:

"Your flowing is endless, it seems, in ebb and flood
In this country and that, the unnecessary surge of waves
Breaking and building banks on shores in many a rally
and long march
In the desperate battle of the flood some times in an under
ground
Stream or in a still small lake
Some times in the self-contained grace of the quiet
silent garden

I live in your beloved
On the trees beside your own ghats
I bring to blossom flowers that are your in
Your garden

Water my roots"

(Water my roots; Water my roots)

In Bishnu Dey's poetry we come across some other images that take one directly to Eliot's poetry for reference. Eliot used Hyacinth image which recalls to our mind a violent but sad death:
"You gave me Hyacinth first a year ago
They called me Hyacinth girl,
Yet when we came back, late from the Hyacinth garden.
Yours arms full and your hair wet, I could not
Speak and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead."

(The Waste Land)

And Bishnu Dey writes:

"Who is that young hyacinth lying on the dust
Blood from his dark head turning the lane red?"

(Cassandra; Namrekhechi Kamal Gandhar)

In the smoke image also there is a remarkable similarity between the two poets:

"The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains
Let fall upon its back the shoot that falls from Chimneys
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap.
And seeing that it was a soft October night
Curled once about the house and fell asleep."

(The love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock)

From the same poem again:
"Shall I say I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watch the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of window".

(Do)

And Bishnu Dey writes:

"The clever first of the evening smoke
Goes up suffocating the place
With a sponge, smelling steam, in its hands."

(Janmastami; Purballekh)

In the Four Quartets Eliot used some images of his personal world.
One is a garden image, taken probably from the Alice in the wonder land:

"Go said the bird, for the leaves are full of children
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter."  

(Burnt Norton: Four quartet)

And Bishnu Dey writes:

"Amongst the Jarul flower children play
Without a moment's rest."

(Surjyasta Belae; Smriti Satta)

In the Waste Land we see that Tiresias, the old, bisexual blind seer
is the witness of the sexual act between the typist girl and the 'Young
man carbuncular':

"I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between
two lives.

Old man with wrinkled female breasts can see.

(And I tiresias have fore suffered all
Enacted on this same divan or bed
I who have sat by the Thebes bellow the wall)

Tiresias of Bishnu Dey also sees the past, present and future with same indifferent attitude;

"Both my eyes are blind
But I see the past and the present,
The memories and all that is told
All in its nakedness"

(Tiresias; Samiti Satta Bhaviswat)

His Tiresias is the witness of the decayed society that keeps an innocent face in the public;

"In the night of course, he returns home
And alights from the car unaided
He has not suffered from gonorrhoea or syphilis as yet
So far as I know....
What harm is there if he laughs every night in a cabaret
Or goes to the cinema every evening?"

(Do)

Tiresia knows the history of all times - past, present and future.
He is best placed for recording such events which are connected with sexual as well as spiritual crisis of mankind:

"I know the history, I tiresias,
Both my eyes are blind
And I see the darkness, the dusts of the past
And the vast waste of the future -
The silted pond, the silt of life,
Where man never comes to live.
There is no current flowing
And there is no fish
Old mind, sand and dead frogs roasting under the sun
I have seen you, you have no way to escape".

(Tiresias; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat).

One can not but mark the use of the word 'fish' here. The fish symbol
stands for fertility and hope for a new life. The idea, in all probability,
is taken from Eliot who used this fish- image in his poems.*

Psychologists believe in dual or even
multiple personalities in one person. Eliot's protagonists often reveal
more than one personality in them. Critics believe that the 'you' and
'I' of Prufrock are nothing but the manifestation of different personali-
* ties in Prufrock. One view is that the 'you' stands for self created
6 memories and imagination. Elizabeth Drew, on the other hand holds that
the 'you' and 'I' of the soliloquy are the impulses to murder and create
or "to be or not to be, concluding neither in suicide nor in the release
of the chosen action but in death in life of the abdication of the will...
The natural spontaneous rhythmical life is what the 'I' of Prufrock yearns
for and will never achieve. All that is 'We' has done is to capitulate".7

6. Cf. T.S. Eliot; Northrop Meye, p.44.
This division of the self, which is very much different from the division of the self into good and bad, is seen also in his verse plays. In Bishnu Dey's poetry we see the awareness of such subtle division of the self of an individual. Besides, Bishnu Dey believes that the principle of dialectics operates also in the self of an individual. So he writes:

"Whose heart is that? Yours or mine?
Sirdarias? Amudarias?
The two streams of the heart shudders in fear
In the grip of the sand-banks of life
on both sides."

(Swandiper Char : Bachar Panchis).

But Bishnu Dey, at the same time believes in the ultimate unity of the divided soul. They are the different manifestations of the one. There is always a synthesis; the two often unite to create a new self;

"We are different, yourself and myself,
Yet we are the same".

(Bahu Baraba 1946-47; Namrekhechi-Kamal Gandhar).

Then there is also the idea of 'Inferno' which Eliot takes from Dante. Eliot's world is haunted by the persistent presence of a hell in life.

Cattaui, therefore, writes:

"The whole of puritan adolescence had been concerned with death and the desire of the flesh; he had been obsessed by the awareness of sin. Eliot is always aware of the death in life. He quotes Hulme to say that Man is essentially had in nature:

9. T.S.Eliot; George Cattaui, p.46
"In the light of those absolute values man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect. He is endowed with the original sin, while he can occasionally accomplish acts which partake of perfection, he can never himself be perfect.\textsuperscript{10} It is from this awareness that Eliot writes:

"Life you may evade, but death you shall not
You shall not deny the stranger"

(Choruses from the Rock)

Or

"Now that we talk of dying
And should I have the right to smile".

(Portrait of Lady)

In the Waste Land Eliot sees the living dead walking; Echoing from the Divine Comedy,\textsuperscript{10} he says:

"Under the brown fog of a winter's dawn
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many
I had not thought death had undone so many."

Bishnu Dey is also aware of the presence of hell in life.

In his poem 'Anwista', he observed that the hell is very much a part of our life on this earth:

"Not in dream, but this is written after
My return from the hell,
Where I have seen enough of sins, crimes losses
and apparitions..................

How thousands of life minds are crushed,
By habits growing in geometrical progression,
Thousands of my own self has seen it
suffered from it;

\textsuperscript{10}, T.S.Eliot, Selected Essays, P430.
I have gone to the hell with the smell of haven
Still on me,
And sniffed the smell of decomposed food
of vultures and jackals
We have many picture of the Hell
And this is written after my return from there".*

(Anwista)

On many occasion he has seen the hell. Like the desert it is everywhere, if one can recognise it;

"In the cold darkness of the hell
Among the pale looking frost,
I passed my time, many days, many years,
In different walk of my heart........
This cremation ghat has no limit,
This is not a blazingly lighted cremation ghat
by the bank of a river,
The sky has no speck of light here -
In the terrible darkness of sin
March the wolves in a procession".

(Rahu baraba 1946-47 : Namrekhechi Kamal).

The picture of the decaying middle class appears to be hopeless to him. There is for him no hope of a resurrection. There is not even a 'purgatorio' from which the sinners will come out clean from their sins :

* The sin mentioned here is, however, not the original sin of man. The expression 'enough of sins' itself shows that this is used to mean the sinful acts which people meet in ordinary life.
"It seems -
There is no hope, no life, in this hell,.....
There is epidemic all the time
There, in the rainless sky sounds of cries are
Monotony does not touch the heart,
There the tear is dead, for there is no hope or
So little is the hope that there is no despair."

(Smriti Satta Bhaviswat;)

Do.

There is no fire to purge the sin in this hell because;

"We are all in the hell
Without the knowledge that we are always there."

(Smriti Satta Bhaviswat)

He, therefore, wants the fire of hell to blaze and raise us from the
half-conscious and un-conscious slumber of hell in life. This way it may
be possible for man to come out of the dimly lighted hell to the clear
sun light of the earth:

"Yet, all these are poor un-conscious or
Half-conscious cartoon picture of the hell
A distortion of the death itself,
Of the death in life
Burn us with the fire of hell, of dissatisfaction....
Let the twilight of the life and death be lighted."

Do

Yet, Bishnu Dey is basically not a pessimist. He is hopeful of a new life,
though it is not the hope of revival through religious faith. He has an
unflinching faith in the humanity of man and in the immortality of the great flow of life.

III

In matters of style and technique also Bishnu Dey has much in common with Eliot. In poetry Eliot has created a style of his own. About Bishnu Dey's style Amalendu Bose writes:

"... a certain quality of surprise.... Juxtaposition of imagery derived eclectically from various sources, the use of hard, concentrated and therefore - precise images; linked mottos; the sequence of the beautiful and the lovely the conventionally pretty and rudely realistic, mocking comments in parenthesis; sudden allusions to well known lines and phrases chiefly from Tagore." It appears, as if the critic is speaking of Eliot and not of Bishnu Dey. In this, one almost hears an appreciation of Eliot's style and technique. The verse form developed by Eliot is not an improvement upon any of the existing form or style. About this Helen Gardner writes:

"It is at once apparent that it is not an attempt to employ a traditional verse form more flexibly, by bringing it nearer to the rhythms of contemporary speech. Mr. Eliot has abandoned the method of putting new content into the old verse forms for the opposite method of finding what is the verse form for the new content."

11. Amalendu Bose; T.S. Eliot, a symposium, p.228
"What he did was to use a kind of most unpromising, clipped, inexpressive and stale speech in poetry, as he did is Sweemy, and see whether there can be music in it to suit its application in poetry. Mr. Eliot tries to discover whether by stressing the characteristic rhythms of this speech we arrive at some thing that can be called verse.\(^{13}\)

Thus, gradually he developed a verse form retaining the newly discovered rhythm in natural conversation, "building his music on an emphatic stress or beat."\(^{14}\)

We see that Bishnu Dey's early poems have a tendency to use conversational speech-form in the manner in which Eliot used it in his poems:

"These ideas made people think deeply
Believe me, I am telling you the truth
In no way the mind could come to a resolution,
There only burns the tremendous fire of poisonous
thought."

(Adhi Daibik Partyadesh; Chorabali)

Again, "Police officer
What a good news, he is transferred
With one paisa
He used to buy the chicken and the eggs
Who else but our Police officer
Buy - clothes at one paisa
In the market."

(Chattis gari gan; Chorabali)

13. Ibid., p.25
14. Ibid., p.27
Besides this conversationalism there is also the music of poetry. Eliot finds it mainly in the words and the meaning. "The music of poetry is the harmony of the ordered significances of words. It is not something that exists apart from meaning." 15

And from where the music of the word come? "The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection; it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context, and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all other meanings which it has in other context, to its greater or less wealth of association." 16

It is not the metre or rhyme where one should look for the music. It is the musical phrases that contain music within them.

"No prosodic system ever invented can teach one to write good English verse. It is, as Mr. Pound has so often remarked, the musical phrase that matters." 17

The music of poetry, thus, can be found in the musical phrases and in the ordered significances of words. Bishnu Dey did not suffer much difficulty to become musical that way, because the Bengali language is itself musical. But music is also there in the recurrent use of themes and in Bishnu Dey's poetry we see the presence of such music.

"With Bishnu Dey the slant is different; his is the way of dialectics; 'the poet knows, the artists being lovers they know the agony of dialectics'. (The Dialectics of words and metre : Anwista); music is conceived thus the contrapuntal finds fulfilment through an

15. T.S.Eliot; On poetry and Poets, p.29.
16. Ibid., pp 32-33.
exceeding chord/Point and counter point blend in a firm ‘rig’ of diapason,”
(In Art Rather than in life, Itihase tragic Ullase); the music appears in
the need to portray discord or dialectics. The similarity here is rather
with Eliot who in his Essay ‘The Music of Poetry’ says ‘The use of recur-
rent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities
of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a sym-
phony or a quartet, there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement
of subject matter.’ 18

Inspite of his genuine desire to use in his poetry the language
people use in their speech, Bishnu Dey shows a tendency to become lyrical.
His irresistible inclination towards music may be the cause for this.
Another reason is that the normal speech of a Bengalee has a touch of
lyric in it. However, Bishnu Dey is careful not to fall a victim to the
conventional language of the Bengali poetry. For this, he often brings
contrasting words and ideas side by side, and speeches in prose-order at
the end of a lyrical stanza and vice-versa:

For example:  "The evening brings its clear silent wings down

On the bloodless face of the city appears

A pale flash of emotion

In the crowded theatre-hall lurks the blue

Shade of darkness.

Lights are shaded, In the silence we both are calm and

quiet...........

I know, I know that is why the doors of the
Corporation are shut."

(Sapta padi; Sreatha Kabita)

18. Sutapa Bhattacharjee; Music is Dialectical; Water My Root, p.51.
Sometimes he does the reverse by following up unromantic and matter-of-fact descriptions by beautiful lyrical lines:

"Among the countless processions
Of aimless pedestrians, trams, buses and cars,
In the rotten air full of smells from sweat
And foul smelling breaths,
Descends evening with eyes full of slumber
Her golden hair - do dishavelled
In the utterly crowded city
Of the city of dreams".

(Janmastami; Sreath Kabita)

One finds similar technique in Eliot's poetry. The juxtaposition of contrasting ideas and expressions are common in Eliot's poetry. However, in Eliot's poetry the difficult and precarious balance between the conversational and the musical poetry is always maintained. Once in The Music of Poetry he said that the speech-form in the poetry was different from that of the prose. In poetry the conversationalism must be of the kind that a listener or a reader could say; 'That is how I should talk if I could talk poetry'. In such case only we see a happy union of music with natural speech. In Bishnu Dey's poetry, though one finds a genuine attempt to be conversational, one feels that he is essentially a poet of verse. There is, however, no real contradiction in this, so far as Bishnu Dey is concerned. Bishnu Dey believes that speech in the verse-form is the natural language of people. So he writes: "For just as poetry was the fundamental and natural medium of expression in the simple primitive society, so
prose has become the dominant vehicle of communication in the class society of the contemporary capitalistic phase.\textsuperscript{19}

It can be seen that Bishnu Dey gradually shifts towards the music of sound rather than to that of meaning. Occasionally, however, he follows Eliot's practice of breaking a word into two and distributing it between two lines to achieve greater emphasis or stress on the last word of the line:

"Have you read Lenin's letters?

Remark -

able interesting"

(Janmastami; Srestha Kabita)

Or,

"In the known hours, there comes

The swift crowd of organised

Ghost -

ly hours".

(Janmastami; do)

Many lines from Eliot can be quoted to illustrate such technique:

"In the place of Mrs. Philaces, at Professor Channing

Cheetas"

(Mr. Apallinax)

Or,

"Over even a very good dinner, but sudden Illumination"

(Dry Salvages; Four Quartets)

Or,

"and I concentrated my attention with careful subtlety"

(Hystaria)

\textsuperscript{19} Bishnu Dey's letter to S. Mukhopadhyya; Water My Roots, op. cit. p. 10.
Or, "of drouth, spitting from the mouth the withered apple-
seed".

(Ash Wednesday Day)

It may be noted here that Eliot's early poems accommodate new ideas and
new mode of speech in regularly rhyming verse.

For example:

"Let us go then you and I
When the evening is sparsed out against the sky"

(Prufrock)

Or, "Oh I do not ask 'what is it?'
Let us go and make our visit.
In the room women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

(Do)

Or, "Defunctive music under
Passed seaward with the passing bell
Slowly; the God Harcules
Had left him, that had loved him well".

(Burbank)

Or, "Observing that hysteria
Might easily be misunderstood
Mr. Turner intimates
It does the house no sort of good."

(Sweeny Erst)
Such fine example may convince Bishnu Dey that the normal speech of the day also can be accommodated in rhyming verse and if some care is taken then some sort of rigidity may even be maintained in respect of the metre too. As a reader of the Bengali poetry is ordinerily shocked by the absence of rhyme in poetry, Bishnu Dey preferred to retain this and introduce the conversational language within the frame work of rhyme scheme. One must admit that he shows great skill in this:

"I love you, do you know?
Your brown eyes, though you are a Bengalee,
Are disturbing me from the wednesday repeatedly,
What people say love, do you accept?
Do you attract me through your eyes knowing the fact?

(Purbaranga, Garhastasram; Sreatha Kabita).

Or,

"After this there are tea and cards
Let us play the bridge or say flash,
With excitement, smokes, slangs and laugh
and then return to our flats
To remember again the abdominal pain and cold and cough,
Noise congestion smoke and chile burning tough."

(Jamnastami, Do)

There can be seen no real change in Bishnu Dey's out look regarding this matter in his later poems, though occasionally he experiments with variations. In Eliot's poetry we see a gradual development and his 'Four Quartets' is different from his earlier poetry not only from the point of view of spiritual development but also from the point of style and technique.
About the Four Quartets, Helen Gardner writes:

"When we read Four Quartets attentive to this *music of meaning which arises at the Point of Intersection*, where word relates to word, phrase to phrase and image to image, we realise that though Mr. Eliot has given to other poets a form they can use for their own purposes and though his treatment of the image and word may suggest to his successors methods of developing poetic themes, The 'Four Quartets' is unique and essentially inimitable. In it the form is the perfect expression of the subject, so much so that one can hardly in the end distinguish the subject from the form."

Bishnu Dey has a ear for music and one may expect him to create a kind of music like that of the music of meaning of the Four Quartets, in his own poetry. But we see that there is no such remarkable change in his poetry. His poems of the sixties and the seventees are not very much different from his earlier poetry. We see the same pattern of rhyme in his later poems;

"I return to the old lovely cottage known,
By the side of the hillocks three,
May be those two snipes even now dance in the dawn
In the shoal and then start twitting in a spree".

(Abar eseche; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat).

The revisit of the old place, though it reminds us of the hour of coming of the Four Quartets, is not actually so. However, there may be one similarity, the old form is not abandoned and the poet returns to it again and again. In his poems we even see the use of such conventional rhyming as that of the use of 'nisir' (night) to rhyme it with 'sisir' (dew drops).”

Another thing that attracts our attention in this connection, is the use of allusions by the same poet. We know that Eliot uses allusions in his poems very frequently. Bishnu Dey is also very fond of using allusions in his poems. Rabindranath considered this as one of the bad habits of Bishnu Dey. However, Bishnu Dey used allusions in his poetry to get the effect that is provoked by the memory and associations of the allusions in the mind of a reader. About the significance of the use of allusions especially from the classics and important poets and writers, Helen Gardner writes:

"Some thing read stays in the memory, provokes a train of thought, stimulates a rhythm. Sometimes this influence is so compelling that the poet has to imitate and finds to some extent his own voice through anothers".21

Eliot has used the method extensively in his poetry. He makes this type of conscious use of another's writings as a part of his new technique and no one calls it imitation or borrowing. Examples are so many that they hardly require any citation. Besides, there are also epigraphs and subtitles from classical writings and other masters of the past, used at the beginning of a poem in order to add more meaning to the title and the poem.

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21 Helen Gardner; The Art of T.S. Eliot, p.69.
In Bishnu Dey's poetry we find the similar use of literary allusions. For example:

"We sought comfort in a simile
O usa ba Ashwasya Medhasya Siba".

(Bahubaraba; Namrekhechi Kamal Gandhar).

Or,

"Let there be one, the oneness of many,
Sehakamayata Dwitiya Se Atma Jayeteti".

(Do)

He also takes lines from Kalidasa which have in the mind of a Bengalee reader double association of memories and images because of the use of the lines by the Bengali novelist Bankimchandra in his novel Kapal Kundala.

"Very near yet far off indistinct
Duradayaschakra nivasya tanni".

(Prachamana Swadesh; Namrekhechi Kamal....)

Again, from a patriotic song:

"Consider your country
'Sujala sufala this malaya sitalas'
My mother country".

(Samrita Satta Bhaviswat; Do)

Other prose writings of importance were also not excluded;

"Empire is a bubble, Sarthaka Janama Mago
Rustams whims are queer" Buro saliker ghare roa."

(Tiresias; Namrekhechi Kamal Gandhar)

Another from a patriotic poet of Bengal:

"After the journey I have arrived
At your country Danadhanye Puspe Vara
But most of his quotations are from Rabindranath, whose poetry Bishnu Dey genuinely believes, to be very near to the heart of a reader of Bengali poetry. Allusions to Rabindranath’s poetry serves double purposes; on the one hand it creates an immediate impulse in the mind of the reader, bringing memories and associations in a train starting from Rabindranath and going back to the sources from which Rabindranath himself drew, and on the other maintains a contact with the elder poet and establishes a link with the tradition. Quotations from and allusions to Rabindranath are innumerable and need no illustrations. It can be seen that he uses lines and words from Rabindranath in a way that these become one with his own poetry. Besides, he also contrasts Rabindranath’s lines with those of his own, placing them side by side. This is done to achieve some sort of juxtaposition of contrasting ideas which we often see in Eliot. There are also quotations from classics and other great works, at the beginning of a poem, which reminds one of Eliot’s partiality for such quotations serving as epigraphs and subtitles. No other Bengali poet is found so much as much fond of using the epigraphs, as Bishnu Dey is found to be. These epigraphs are collected from a very wide variety of literary works ranging from the classics sanskrit to the latest foreign literature. Another point of interest is the use of symbols and images by Bishnu Dey in a manner that reminds one of Eliot’s use of symbols and images in poetry. About Eliot’s use of symbols and images in poetry

Sean Lucy writes:
"Eliot has helped to introduce or to reintroduce in an invigorated form into English literary tradition four important poetic modes or methods. The method of symbolism working by implication and mood; the method of myth, which is closely allied to symbolism; the method of pure realism, which works by direct reporting combined with acute sensibility and lastly the method of parallel and contrast, which works by simultaneous evocation and juxtaposition of moods or situations which are at once like and unlike in order to sharpen effects by ironic comparison."  

We see almost all these characteristics in Bishnu Dey's poetry, particularly the use of the symbols. Like Eliot, he often associates the symbols with myths. River is one of the symbols he frequently uses. The river generally stands for the synthesis of a dialectic that exists between the two opposing banks. Generally river banks are considered to be opposites of one another when one creates the other destroys. The river in its stream of water unites the opposing banks. Bishnu Dey, therefore, writes:

"The symbol is certainly there in river
Both the banks are eloquent in one stream
Leaving the white frost behind it moves
Towards the salty blue
Stretching out in sands silts and tides
Calling every port and leaving behind
Sand - banks here and there
Here is a music of dialectics."

(Anwista; Anwista)

The river unites not only the banks, but in course of its flow towards
the sea it touches everything and carries off with it all the opposites
in single stream to the end.

"It is a different life transformed into different form
Yet, essentially the same
Connected with one another as the river,
In separation as well as in union".

(Nadir utsa jdi jana thake; Namrekhechi....)

On the other hand the river is not only a symbol of synthesis; it is
also the symbol of life— the flow of life that is endless. He differs
from Eliot in this respect. If water is the symbol of life then there is
not only the rain water but also the rivers which have glaciers and
melting ice as their perennial sources. Rivers, therefore, represent a
steady flow of life. It is independent of the vagary or caprice of weather
which makes the availability of the water uncertain. In other words the
drought and the barrenness are regional and temporary in nature. Life as
an entity does not depend totally on the rain water. Thus sterility or
decadence in society or civilization is a temporary phenomenon. It is
also limited by time and place. When one knows that rivers are there,
one is not unnecessarily concerned about the periodical or occasional
droughts. He is assured and he is even hopeful. In his poem Jal Dao, we
see that the poet is hopeful that the river will water the roots of life
and life in exchange will give the earth flowers and fruits.

Another symbol Bishnu Dey uses is the symbol of darkness.
Darkness to Bishnu Dey, is not a void or blank space.* It is not also the darkness of hell. Once, however, he thought darkness as hellish but even then he had doubts in his mind.

"I know many dark crematorium grounds
There is darkness in my heart residing for many years,
I have heard the music of the void many nights......
But do not know this terrible vast burnt darkness".

(Bahubara 1946-47; Namrekhechi Kamal...) In general, however, he is fond of darkness. It is nothing but the other side of light itself;

"Night is the time of his birth
He is therefore fearless in the night
Night is like his mother
He was born at the moment when life and death had met,
That is what makes him so confindent."

(Se o Ora, Sariti Satta Bhaviswat)

In the darkness of night the conscious part of our mind spreads out its tendrils feeling those things which in the light can not be felt. Light obstructs our feelings, but darkness gives it freedom;

"Day is fearsome
Only night has free moments
In the darkness the conscious opens its eyes
There in the field is slumber, in the blue sky,

*Cf. "Waste and Void
Waste and Void, And darkness was upon the face of the deep."
The Choruses from "The Rock", Part VII.
Where times fiesta goes on and the children
Play with sleep."

(Ratri Stomang No Jigushe; Smriti.....)

In the light as well as in the darkness, in the morning and in the evening, he observes the same oppositions and union which exist between the man and women. Here is another dialectics and the process goes on in an unending cycle.

"In nature light and darkness remain united
Moving in an unending cycle
Beyond the known and the unknown
As the man and woman are united
Both are in fact one".

(Bahubaraba; Nam rekhechi Kamal Gandhar)

Or is it the same eternal cycle of life and death? For the poet finds in it the same eternity and movement, as he finds in the cycle of life:

"Traversing the great distance of life and death
From the moment of the oldest darkness
He calls the morning and the evening,
Passing the day and the night year after year
He takes his place in the enlightened sphere
Of ancient patience."

(Se O Ora; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat)

From this he takes his symbol of morning and the evening, the opposi-
tions, moving one after another from time unknown to the time that will never perhaps be known. Though the chain of darkness is never really
broken by the interfering morning or the evening, it is cut into pieces
or rather punctuated by the light of the morning and the evening. To him
darkness is the mysterious span of a creative sphere. Sun is the reality
that comes in the morning to suppress the mystery of life till in the even­
ing the darkness re­asserts itself;

"Darkness is wanted
Darkness is to be consumed in this long life,
By cutting it into pieces by the evening and
the morning -

The swords of Sunlight".

(Charak, Easter, Idor Roja; Smriti......)

In the present condition of life men does not always see the creative
darkness, the mysterious life containing darkness. They even miss the
mystery of the dawn and the twilight. What they always see is the blazing
sun, the reality which is everywhere - in front of them, at their back,
above them and below them;

"We do not have the morning or the evening
We have only the hope...........
We have the sun everywhere
In front of us at our back............"

(Lucia Prakriti O Amra; Smriti Satta......)

He also took legendary figures like 'Wakhus', 'Kangsa' or 'Bibhis'an' as
symbols representing classes and traits in our society. But they are used
topically and with limited meaning. Personal symbols, concrete or nubul­
cous, used by the poet as vehicles of his own ideas in germination or in
growth are few in number. But they are used most effectively and exten­sively. In his case, the use of symbols of the inner most world of the poet is restricted by a self imposed responsibility as a poet of the people. From the beginning his aim was to revitalise the people's poetry which was left in disregard and disuse by the educated classes of our country. That is why, inspite of his interest in Eliot he never could effort to become a truly symbolist or imagist in his poetry.

There are also parallel and contrast in Bishnu Dey's poetry, drawn in a way to have the effect of sudden shock, surprise. In the first place he balances an emotional expression with a rudely realistic speech or expression placed side by side. For example:

"The twilight brought its wings down
   of silence clean,
In the face of city appeared flashes of emotion
   Devoid of colours.
The crowded auditorium is shrouded by a blue light
   Coming from darkness,
Lights are shaded with covers
In the silence both are motionless
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
I know, I know the corporation has its doors
   closed for that reason".
   (Sapta Padi; Sreasta Kabata)

Or,
"What have you done, O Yogi !=
Burning him with your fire of rage
You have made a feast of him throughout the world
The air is full of his appetising smell
But Suresh only drinks glucose."

(Kathakatha; Chorabali)

Again, "Music of twenty two spring in a train
Throbs in my heart
Like a taxi waiting at the door."

(Pratham Part: Chorabali)

Another specialty of Bishnu Dey is the use of classic and modern allusions side by side, to make this appear parodic and ridiculous:

"Ulysses has no knowledge of Mohan Began
In the island for the braves
Full of flowery groves
No one knows what fun is missed by Hector"

(Janmastami; Sresta Kabita)

Some times he brings contrasting pictures side by side or draws a kind of morbid simile, exposing the inherent irony of our present day situation:

"Small pieces of clouds in train
Stand still like thousand white cows
And not follow the music of any piper,

Like Gopinies without self control
Move the pale clouds"
As if a begger woman hungry in Calcutta street,/Rushes for the food offered by a charitable organisation,/At the heels of her begger husband".

(Sandhya Ratrir Bhor; Namrekhechi Kamal......)

IV

All these are, however, semblance of a surface relation between Eliot and Bishnu Dey as poets. In a sense, those are of little importance or significance so far as a poet's relation with another is concerned. Prof. Amalendu Bose aptly remarks:

"There were several other things, mostly details of the artefact, that Bishnu Dey learnt from Eliot but it was the basic concepts that set him firmly on his own road to poetic self fulfilment;"25

Eliot's influence can be traced deep inside the poetry of Bishnu Dey. When the question of influence comes, one remembers Eliot's observation in this connection.

"Immature poets imitate, mature poets steal, bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into some thing better or atleast something different. The good poet welds his theft into whole of feelings which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws into something which has no cohesion."24 When we know that influence may find expression in something "unique", "utterly different from that from which it was torn", our search naturally extends beyond the scope of obvious similarities.

25. Amalendu Bose; Water My Roots, p.35.
About one aspect of T.S. Eliot's influence on Bengali poetry

Bishnu Dey writes: "The impersonal outlook is a contribution of Eliot to the world of poetry. If this contribution is ignored then the source of the freedom of poetry after Eliot can not be understood." Against he observes: "The most important debt of the Bengali poets to Eliot is in this realm of self-consciousness."

Prof. Amalendu Bose finds Bishnu Dey self conscious as a poet; "Bishnu Dey's self-consciousness as far as I can see, has moved steadily and constantly in the direction of this self-awareness, of a knowledge of his true poetic self." So, according to Bishnu Dey, two major contribution of Eliot to the modern Bengali poetry are: a) self-consciousness, and b) impersonality in poetry. As we have already noted, Bishnu Dey is a self-conscious poet. He is conscious about the role of a poet in society and in literature. He is also conscious of the tradition of poetry. He has a perspective that includes the past, present and the future in one comprehensive view. He has seen the poet as a seer, philosopher, legislator, disinterested observer, reporter and a catalytic agent. All these make him undoubtedly a self-conscious poet. But these are not all. Bishnu Dey is a marxist and a humanist. As a marxist, he knows that it is not enough to interpret the past and remain a passive viewer of the present with a hope for the best in the future. A marxist must always endeavour to change the world to realise the social and economic justice for all. As a humanist, he wants the best possible expression of human qualities in a repression-free social and economic

26. Bishnu Dey; Elioter Kabita, p. 11.
27. A. Bose; Bishnu Dey, Water My Roots, p. 32.
order. He wants all flowers to bloom; all opposites and contrasts to
flourish, so that ultimately the best can be achieved in a synthesis.
This is of course a mission, and all conscious poets have missions of
their own. Writing at a critical period of Bengali poetry, Bishnu Dey
realised that it was most important for a poet in his place to follow cons­
ciously an ideal. Otherwise, it would not be possible for him to become an
important poet. Only conscious effort could prepare the road to success.
Again, by simply reporting what he sees, a poet can hardly say anything
new. He must be a discoverer of a new world, if not a creator of the
same. Reporting and creative activity must go hand in hand. The Marxism
and humanism, which ultimately became one in his poetry, suited him best
as ideals. Marxism is a dynamic principle, and humanism, we know, creates
an insatiable urge to know the man-in-universe. As ideals, particularly
for one who wants to travel a long road ahead, these are quite satisfac­
tory. Self-consciousness, thus, helped him to find out his objective for
writing poetry and trace out the way to success. Its importance in build­
ing his poetic career could hardly be over estimated.

On the other hand, the doctrine of impersonality in poetry or
in other words, depersonalisation of poetry, also helped Bishnu Dey immen­
sely. The idea of 'Depersonalisation' in poetry is mainly taken from
Eliot's essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent.' However, despite
Eliot's near scientific observation regarding the depersonalisation in
poetry, there is found difference of opinion among the critics of the
doctrine. In fact, the question that how far Eliot's poetry is really
impersonal is frequently debated by critics. His poetry bears the mark
of his personality so distinctly that one wonders where actually lies the line of demarkation between personal and impersonal poetry. Besides, the structure of his poetry depends on a philosophy which is his own. This can hardly be said to be the manifestation of self developing poetry, though there may be impersonal fusion between feelings and emotions outside the mind of the poet which remains a nutritive catalytic agent. Thus, whether there can be really impersonal poetry based on 'objective correlative etc.' remains still an open question. About the impersonality in poetry Eliot himself says:

"There are two forms of impersonality, that which is natural to the more skilful craftsman and that which is more and more achieved by the maturing artist. The first is that of what I called the 'anthology piece' of a lyric by Lovelace or Suckling or of Campion, a finer poet than either. The second impersonality is that of the poet who, out of intense and personal experience, is able to express the general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol." Again on the same subject Gertrude Patterson remarks:

"This 'impersonality' needs careful definition. However, C.K. Stead for example, put it as the poet's escape from the self into a deeper self of the soul." Many believe that impersonality in poetry, in fact, admits the role of a different personality in poetry without which no poetry can be written. Be that as it may, to Bishnu Dey and some other Bengali poets the theory of impersonality appears to mean

something concerning the objective lesson for a poet in the making and a
basis for literary speculation. It stands somewhere in between the two
types of impersonality Eliot refers to:

One aspect of the impersonality can be proved by a simple test: whether it is necessary to know the life of a poet in details to under­stand his poetry? If the answer is in the negative then the poetry of such a poet can be said to be impersonal. The other form of impersonality can be found in the generalisation of individual poet's personal experi­ence in his poetry. So far as Bishnu Dey's poetry is concerned, the second interpretation appears to suit it more than the first. Here, it can be seen that the term 'personality' can be replaced by the word 'individual'. Poetry, that bears the mark of personality of the poet is the poetry of an individual. Impersonality brings some sort of universality in poetry. A poet who writes from the stand point of not an individual but of all or many, can be said to be an impersonal poet. No where, however, Bishnu Dey tells us anything like this about impersonality in poetry. But when one attaches due importance to his interest in the theory of impersonality and then goes through his poetry to find out where the impersonality is exercised or rather, the personality is withdrawn, one can see that his self-consciousness or self-awareness makes him to prepare an objective basis for impersonality in poetry. The impersonality of a conscious poet will, however, remain an intriguing question for a critic or a reader of poetry.

When we look at Bishnu Dey's poetry we see that there is almost no example where a positively personal feeling or emotion is given expre-
ssion to. Whenever we see the use of 'I' or 'you' in his poems we also see that there are more than one answers to that question: Who is this 'I' or 'You'? Often poems are of a symbolic nature and the protagonist, if any, stands for some ideas rather than for persons. Let us examine a few examples:

"I am sufficiently old

My pensioned life itself is of twenty five years,

Now I understand that all labours are useless

I served only to save me from starvation

I have nothing to be proud of

Only there is one consolation

That I have not taken bribes or gratifications".

(Isayar Khed; Sresta Kabita)

This may be picture of any one who has crossed twenty five years or so after the retirement. He represent a class of people, and probably the middle class, as his morality shows, and like Prufrock the personal affairs of such a man is not quite personal. Similar picture can be seen elsewhere:

"My wife! she is incorrigible,

Look, her obstinacy has not left her

After all these years.

But at the age we attained

Impositions of restrictions look rediculous

I have been always deceived

Now think it again,
She should be brought under control by any means”.

(Tiresias; Namrekhechi Kamal Gandhar)

Here also, we can not definitely say who is speaking about whom. The dramatic form makes the question unnecessary. The whole questions has become impersonal. The speech is not ascribed to any known protagonist. It is applicable to any character of the type. Thus, we see that Bishnu Dey is always careful not to express his personality in his poetry. As we have seen, he uses a dramatic style whenever necessary to maintain impersonality in poetry. His poetry is an example of impersonal poetry written in Bengali, so much so, that it is not only difficult to find out the personality behind the poetry but also to trace the progress of the mind at work. Personal views never strike head lines in his poetry. Whenever total impersonality is found impossible to be attained, it is expressed in a camouflaged way so that it may not distract the reader by an obvious exposé of personal emotions. For example:

"Do they knock at the doors, those ruffians?

Vadra! your Partha is helpless, crippled,
The bow he carried so long
Has now become too heavy for him."

(Pada dvani; Pursulekh)

The way to be impersonal, as we have already mentioned, is the use of dramatic form. K. Smidt writes:

"But there are other ways of making personal experience impersonal which any body can understand and which Eliot obviously must have known. One simple way is that of treating a lyrical theme in a more or
less dramatic way as seems to have been done, for instance in the love song and Portrait of a Lady."

What is this dramatic way in poetry? About this F.O. Mathiessen says:

"The dramatic element in poetry lies in its power to communicate a sense of the immediate present - that is, of the full quality of a moment as it is actually felt to consist."

About dramatic poetry Helen Gardner remarks: "A situation is incipiently dramatic if it is on the point of change and we feel 'something must happen'. It is fully dramatic when we feel 'something is happening that is changing everything for those concerned. 'And the drama had been completed when we reach a situation where we feel something has happened; everything is now different'. Attitude can thus incipiently be dramatic or they can be the result of a drama; and a change of attitude can give us drama though it is not expressed in action or not the cause of action the drama will be of a rather rarified kind."

Example of similar uses of dramatic method, where the theme develops from one stage to another, can be seen in Bishnu Dey's poetry. Poems like 'Saptapadi', 'Janmastami' or 'Ghorswar' have incipient dramatic situations within the folds of thematic development and variations. Frequent change of attitudes also mark the poem. The other way, is to treat a lyrical theme in a dramatic way can also be seen in his poetry. But it is the dramatic intensity of feeling which makes his poetry almost

51. F.O. Mathiessen; The Achievement of T.S. Eliot, p.66.
52. H. Gardner, op.cit., p.151.
30. X. Smidt, op.cit., p. 41
always dramatic. Examples are many, but poems like 'Janmastami', 'Alekhya',
"Lucia Prakrit O Ams'; may be cited here. In Eliot's Prufrock this type of
dramatic intensity is traced by Helen Gardner:

"The originality, however, lies in the blend of this oblique
manner with a highly passionate and dramatic style which constantly
escapes from the region of wit, irony and sensibility into a dramatic
intensity of feeling." Thus, we can see that in Bishnu Dey's poetry the
depersonalisation is attained mainly through the use of dramatic method
in poetry. This way he could be more impersonal as a poet than his con-
temporaries. Buddhadev Bose writes poetry which makes no claim of im-
personality. Inspite of realism in his poetry he is in the romantic tradi-
tion of the Bengali poetry. Sudhindranath's poetry bears the distinct
mark of the loneliness of the poet. He is intensely conscious of himself
as an individual in an alien society. Besides, his sense of responsibility,
genuine desire to be reasonable in poetry, the intense anguish springing
out of the fear of an unknown death, the pain of the unbearable life etc.
make it difficult for him to be totally impersonal in poetry. Bishnu
Dey, however, endeavours to remain scrupulously impersonal in poetry.
That is why his poetry is liable to appear to be devoid of the charm
that comes from the involvement of personality in poetry. Whatever be the
validity of the definition of impersonality in poetry, for Bishnu Dey it
was a means for carving out a different path for himself in the thickest
of intensely personal and romantic poetry of his time.

33. Ibid., p.71.

"So Buddhadev Bose is also a romantic and as such a poet of the external
The other note in Bishnu Dey's poetry which stands out very prominent, is a keen desire to find out the tradition of Bengali poetry and link up his own poetry with that tradition. We have already noted that Bishnu Dey believes self-consciousness as one of the major contribution of Eliot to Bengali poetry. This consciousness leads a poet not only to be conscious about himself but also to be conscious of his place in time. As a conscious poet he must develop a sense of history and time in which he is to find out a place for his own creative activity. As such, he should be a traditionalist and a good poet is always traditionalist in this sense. Eliot, therefore, insisted on the conscious effort of a poet to follow the tradition.

About this Eliot says: "A tradition is rather a way of feeling and acting which characterises a group throughout generation; and it must largely be..... or many of the elements in it must be unconscious. Where as the maintenance of orthodoxy is a matter which calls for the exercise of all our conscious intelligence." 34

Bishnu Dey is found to be interested to maintain this orthodoxy. Writing at a critical period when the mantle of a whole generation has fallen upon the shoulders of a few, the modern poets had to prove their worth apropos of the poets of the past decades, great or small. As such, Bishnu Dey could not be indifferent to the importance of tradition.

*Cf. "Although literary tradition is largely an unconscious growth Eliot always insisted on a conscious effort by the writer to maintain it and to belong to it." (Sean Lucy; T.S. Eliot & the Idea of tradition, p.15.
34. T.S. Eliot; After Strange Gods, p.29.
Besides, the doctrine of tradition has other implications so far as Bishnu Dey is concerned. Firstly, The concept of tradition helped him to investigate the nature of Rabindranath's poetry from a new perspective, which was very essential for a poet of his time. It helped him to sort out those parts of Bengali tradition which were not used by Rabindranath. The idea that Rabindranath has used up all possible material of Bengali poetry and left nothing for the next generation of poets, thus, proved wrong. He pointed out that Rabindranath did not follow the tradition created by the common people of Bengal. However, it should be noted here that Bishnu Dey has not taken up the people's tradition as his sole ideal of poetry. He understood it quite well that in the present situation it was not feasible to reintroduce the folk tradition in Bengali poetry as a major line of development. But a poet should at the same time take care that the intellectualism in poetry and must maintain a reasonable relation with popular poetic sensibilities.**

Secondly, the theory of tradition allows new interpretation of the existing tradition; thus, enabling a poet to use the already used up material in a new way. This gives a poet wider field of operation. Thirdly, the theory also accepts new creative activities as a part of the existing tradition. This encourages a poet to experiment with new material in poetry.

Lastly, traditionalism is found to be a means to solve the problem of communication in poetry. In the absence of a common code for the

** Cf. "You have taken up the folk tune. This tune was raised in the 'Kallal Yuga' and touched the minds of many. A sweet tune indeed; but too short living and cannot be enjoyed for a long time. No song of big rhythm can be accommodated in it." (B. Bose 'Letter to Assaf Siddiki' Desh, 30th Nov., 1975.)
writer as well as the reader the meaning of a poem, a word or an expression differs from man to man and even becomes obscure. It needs often a specialist's job to decipher the meaning of a poem or a poetic expression. The result is often a break of contact between the poet and his readers. A common code can develop only from a common poetic sensibility and that again from a common poetic tradition. Without the order and basis of a common tradition this struggle for meaning becomes an impossibility and the literary world tends to break up into isolated individual world of small groups with separate artistic creeds which are almost like private code. When this happens, a writer obviously loses almost all social significance. This also means the loss of justification for writing.

Bishnu Dey, a careful observer of the problem of communication faced this particular obstacle of the poets of the time. At the outset, Bishnu Dey was not sure where to look for the tradition. Once he thought that the tradition was not always confined to a place or time. This could be found in remotely connected places or times if one is careful enough to trace its existence in unexpected places. To search for the tradition in his own country only was all the more difficult for him because his Marxist background had taught him not to accept the history of the country in the present form as the history of the people. In the available history of the Bengali literature also, he could not trace out a clear line of tradition indicating the growth of the popular tradition. So he had to look forward and interpret past with the help of the present. Yet, it can not be said

*Cf. "The history-consciousness of Bishnu Dey is different. Firstly according to him the tradition is not confined to any time or place". (Dipti Tripathi, op.cit., p.167).

"Born in this desert-land, one who is interested to know - the tradition of perfect art - must go oversea". Sudhindranath : Kabita - Asar 1365, p.380.
that Bishnu Dey's history-consciousness is only futurist in nature. How can one look forward to the future without any knowledge of the past? Not at least Bishnu Dey who considers the question of tradition so important for a poet. It may be that his history-consciousness is influenced by marxism. But marxism does not deny the past; it only interprets the past in its own way. Bishnu Dey finds that the Bengali literature has two different lines of development—the aristocratic or the bourgeois literature and the literature of the people. The 19th century English influence only helped to widen the gap between the two and in the 20th century the two lines have lost contact with each other. As a result, the bourgeois literature has become rootless. The literature of the people also suffers from stagnancy and no effort is made by the educated class to cultivate and revive this line of literature. About this Bishnu Dey writes:

"To-day, we have arrived at the end of the wrong line of the poetic experiment sponsored by the educated class. On the major edged summit of our society there is no room for social support for a poet. Yet, the desperate need of the society is knocking at the door of our individualism. So, the poet has to consider the feasibility of putting a bridge between the tradition and popular consciousness of Bengal." In his poems also, he criticised those poets who have lost all contact with the soil:

"Feeding on 'Mahuha' and clouds,
Indeed, that is the memory of the country
We have; All knots are torn.

+Cf. "The History-consciousness of Bishnu Dey is futurist in nature; it does never look back" (Dipti Tripathi, op. cit. 281).
35. Bishnu Dey; Sahityer Bhaviswat, p.38.
The office and the fields are two different things,
They are peasantry there, and here are gentle officials.

(Era-O-Ora; Sariti Setta Bhaviswat)

In fact, Bishnu Dey saw the dialectics extended to the life of the Indian people who are divided into two groups - the town people and the village people. Besides, the bourgeois class, influenced by the Sanskrit poetry, has devoured the Bengali poetry from its popular tradition of lyric and melody. Bishnu Dey wants to have a synthesis between the literature of the educated class and the uneducated masses of man, the town life and the village life, and the poetry and melody. It appears that, at the beginning, he was not convinced that Rabindranath had made a genuine attempt to reconcile all these trends of Bengali poetry. To him Rabindranath was a poet of the aristocracy only. Yet, he could recognise that this difference was essentially the outcome of an economic and social order which a poet could not change simply through literary means. The gulf between the two cannot be bridged by intellectual activities only. So, he writes:

"Time long enough is spent in the light air
High up from the soil,
All are resident of a world of imagination
In a bodiless tower in the air".

(Satbhai Champa)

Or "I am Cinna the poet, Cinna the poet"

(Epigraph, I am Cinna The Poet).
It is not even an ivory tower, the tower is bodiless and built in the air. But because of these contradictions one should not give up the hope of a synthesis. He takes the case of the towns and villages for this purpose. Towns in India, he thinks, are imported structures on a basically rural country. These are creations mainly of a colonial policy of a foreign power. In a sense, these are artificial and unreal. They have no roots in the soil. Often, they are like dustbins of the civilization:

"The source has dried up;
Dry is also the river for a long time,
Yet, this is not only a town, a capital.
Civilization has evacuated all its wastes here
And those
Unnecessary sufferings."

(Dinguli Ratguli; Namrekhechi......)

This country, which is village based, harboured towns at the cost of the villages. Towns are built on the ruins of the villages. They are formless and meaningless; they are like heads without bodies, isolated and often alien in the vast rural country:

"In this rural country, towns are made of villages,
Shifted to the slums.
And in eternal famine there is the last bodiless head
Of a village raiding town".

(October Dinguli; Namrekhechi......)

Towns are also like tigers escaped from the cage of a circus. It goes to the villages, now many times more clever than a wild tiger, to feed on
the villagers. The poet distrusts the town-psychology which looks at the
villages only as the source of food.

"It is a clever game of the ex-circus tiger
   of the town,
He does it partially for the hunger
And partially due to the degenerated habits."

(Circaser Bagh; Namrekhechi Kamal......)

The land in towns are hard. It takes time to strike roots there.

"In towns the land is hard
It takes many summers, rains and snows
To strike roots there".

(Basabari; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat)

But he believes that a synthesis is possible. Towns and villages can be
united to bring a revolutionary change in the life of this country. The
river, with a suggestion of synthesis in it, will perhaps help us to bring
the unity.

"If the source of the river is known,
And it is generally known;
Then it is found expanding day by day
From village to village, town to town
country to country,
From morning to evening, in the night and in the noon,
Catering fruits flowers and grains while turning
Towards the blue and surrendering the self to the sea
at the end."

(Nadir Utsaa Jadi Mane Thake; Namrekhechi......)
So, he goes to the village in the search for our roots - our inheritance.
The mind gets its natural environment there and expands, and grows into its fulfilment:

"So, I am leaving the town
To allow my soul freedom in a village field".

(Chaleoshi Desh Desantar; Smriti Satta....)

The synthesis should not be limited to mental attitude only or to the socio-cultural stance of the town and the village; it should be extended to the language, the medium that expresses the mind. So, he writes:

"Join the dance in a combination of
The old and the new rhythm - the town and the village
Then you will know the language of poetry".

(Bhasa; Smriti Satta Bhaviswat).

He believes that there in the village lives our real country, though perhaps unknown to us:

"See how strange is our life
For generations we are searching
Our own land
Though we are all the time living
In our own country".

(Avinna Swastite; Smriti Satta....)

The town is an artificial arrangement and nature will not tolerate this for long. It will take its revenge and villages will invade the tottering towns bringing them down to ruins. The only way out is to realise the danger of the contradiction present between the town and the village and to make an effort to overcome it:
"Let your alien mind be one with the
Smallest of the villages,
The revenge of nature will come to an end then,
Within this century.
The lifeless towns will be shadowed by
The mango groves, jack fruit and black berry trees.

(Avinna Sawastite, Do)

He feels that the search for our tradition outside our own country may
not become successful. For this, one is to turn to his own country and
that too to villages and not to the towns:

"Think, you are the village,
The country, the rural continent
Lakhs of villages together;
Admit that your country is uprooted
Hungry disrupted yet unperishable.
Hear the voices of the immortal crores
And say - I love you.
You are not an English man or a French
And have no chance of earning fame in the West".

(Sahaste Bajabe; Smriti Satta.....)

Many of our own people searched for our country through the eye of a foreigner and missed it. They also made unsuccessful attempt to discover our tradition in foreign literature. As a result, we gained nothing. We not only missed our tradition but we also lost our way to the villages, the centre of our culture and tradition:
"In foreign literature we searched
for our inheritance,
And directed our country man right and left,
Laboured hard to find our country in foreign books;
Occasionally we lost the book
Or round the bend we lost the way,
And thought of returning to the village
But where is that village my chief?

(Jaister Triolet Guchha; Namrekheschi.....)

Rediscovery of our country is, therefore, essential. Rethinking on and new
analysis of our tradition must be made to find out our real inheritance.
But unfortunately modern poets are still indifferent of the tradition of
the Bengali literature. He is still an alien in his own country:

"How long I am to go on
With the tent on my shoulder;
How long it will take for the outsider
To settle in his own land?"

(Prabas; Tumi Shudhu Fanchise Baisak)

Or, "I am an outsider since my birth,
My own land is unknown to me."

(Sariti Satta Bhaviswat; Do)

Or, "I looked for her a long time
And am searching her still now......
But she is not yet completely known,
Distant and unattainable -
She is still out of the reach".

(Prachhanna Swadesh; Namrekhechi......)

It remains still a distant picture - the view of our country, of which the poet now and then catches a glimpse or two. He knows it is there somewhere, true as the soil is to the plants, yet it never reveals the complete view of it to him.

There is also another problem; the sanctity of the villages as the centre of our culture and tradition is now questionable. Villages are polluted by town - atmosphere. They are now miniature towns. There is really no refuse for a poet there. Nature is not out of the bounds of human lust:

"It is a small room
But occupants are many;
Here the music does not connect
One with another
But where to go?
In the village there are towns decayed
Nature polluted with greed and lust;
To a dying man there is no difference
Between a village and a town".

(Sadhya Sadhe; Ananda Bazar, Puja Issue 1377).

Tradition remains a hidden treasure after a long search. Our inheritance is not yet completely known. But we see that in his eagerness to discover the life of the country in the green vitality of the villages, he often moves not to the villages but to nature:
"When in the Autumn - dawn
The heart of dew-drops melt
in the field,
When the 'Sefali' is about to wither
And the time of roses is nearer
The west wind murmurs and brings to my mind
The call of the peacock from the far off 'Sravana'.
The rain blowing from the east carries
The fragrance of 'Keya'.
There is also the incessant memory
Of pains and tears of young age
The agony that melts the ground."

(Hemanter Kane Kane; Smriti Satta.....)

Or,
"When in the west the symphony of the
Evening sky starts
Your face appears distinctly carved out
Its stopping glow touching in a starry festival
Each of the fragments of my heart."

(Sonnet; Smriti Satta.....)

He feels that at the bottom of his heart he loves nature. It was all along there, only he did not know. Now, in the tension between the town life and the village life the spell of intellectualism is broken and he discovers his love for nature:

"It has been known to me - all the time,
An advanced gift to my life -
It was there in my consciousness."

(Lucia Prakriti O Amra; Samiti Satta......)

Again, he quotes Wordsworth to say "And Oh the difference to me". He even finds a panacea of all the diseases of civilization in nature:

"The disease can be cured by
The sky, the earth, medicinal herbs, fields
Grass, mountains, rivers, dams
Including grazing grounds and nature
In healthy peaceful dream and in changes."

(Hold Pressure; Samiti Satta......)

His love of nature points out to another aspect of his poetry. We find him aligned with one of the characteristics of the Bengali poetic tradition. That is, its romanticism and its corollary the lyricism; though the drift, if it can be said so, is most possibly an unconscious one for a conscious poet. Otherwise, one faces difficulty to explain how a marxist, with a mind trained in the dialectic materialism arrives at the same conclusion at which Wordsworth had arrived much earlier. But as we have noted, this has brought him very near to the Bengali poetic tradition, if not to his marxist goal.

Eliot also, we know, is taken by many critics as a poet in the great romantic tradition of England.*

* Cf. "In practice, of course Sir Herbert's general principles are not so limited as applied with dogmatic literalness and without the safeguard of his fine sensibility, it might be. Poets, whose verse and criticism seem to him alive, like T.E. Hulme and Mr. Eliot, are for him really in the great romantic tradition though they consider themselves neoclassists". (G.S. Fraser; Vision and Rhetoric, p.19).

Cf. "Since the nineteenth twenties critics have been increasingly aware of the continuity of the English romantic tradition and Eliot's place in it." (M.Freyss; op.cit., p.98).
If an urban realist who slashed at romanticism and called himself a classicist can be truly in the romantic tradition of his country, then there can be little surprise in the discovery that Bishnu Dey is also a romantic poet.

"Eliot moves us so much by that speciality which comes from the ideas connected with the suffering and romantic agony of his poetry. And the emotion created by this pain turns his images into symbols."36

Bishnu Dey finds no contradiction in it. There is no reason why a realist cannot be a romantic at the same time. Even if there is contradiction this can be taken as another manifestation of the principle of dialectics that exists in the mind of a poet.

Bishnu Dey also possesses a fine sense of music. His poems are full of references to music. This shows how much he values the property of music in poetry. For example:

"In thunder sounds the 'Bina'
Tuned in 'Gandhar'"

(Panch Prahar; Namrekhechi.....)

Or, "All on a sudden starts the violin
Intoxicated by the pleasure of music
And deep pathos."

(Behalar Janmadin Pratidin; Do)

Or, "There 'Todi' is being played
In the concert of 'Agrahana'".

(Jaister Swapna; Smriti Satta......)

Or, "In the sunlight rings
The tune of 'Sarang'".

(Chayatal; Do)

For the same reason Jamini Roy's and Bishnu Dey's painting appeal. There is a music in Jamini Roy's paintings and Bishnu Dey, therefore, writes: "In the rhythm of three times you build up a 'Bhairabi'."

(Jamini Royer Ek Chabi; Bachar Panchis. Also see Itihase Tragic Illase).

Gradually he becomes convinced that music is our tradition. Our poetry was written to be sung. Our Charjayas, Mangal Kavayas, Padavalies, Bauls - all are in fact songs. There is hardly any poetry of indigenous origin which is not a song. Poetry free from lyric are there in Sanskrit but they are transformed into lyrics when Bengali poetry has adopted them. The traditional lyricism of the Bengali poetry, thus, has become a part of his poetry. So he writes:

"Final writings
In the tradition of devotional songs".

(30th January; Smriti Satta)

His study of Rabindranath makes it clear to him that Rabindranath is essentially a bard who makes the whole nation sing with him, and it is still singing though the conductor has left the stage:

"We are born in the age
Enlightened by Rabindranath,
So, we know that all creative arts
Find their perfection in song.
Through a process never clearly known
Song takes the seven rainbow of the heart by hand and
The finest of the emotions are taken
To the 'Kailas' where it sings to 'Hara-Gauri'

(Naisabda Eto Madhur; Smriti Satta.....)

The whole attitude is now different. Love was once nothing but an emotional manifestation of physical properties of human body. Now, there is a different meaning in love:

"Love in the suffering soul of a youth
Is not that of an individual
But of many
For the heart touches all."

(Dekheo Valo Lage; Smriti Satta......)

The shining eye of young boys and girls make him look back and remember the days of the past when he had a heart with a different desire:

"It gives me pleasure to look at them
They are the embodiment of my memories.
In search of the heart they bring a new life
In the all pervading decay."

(Do)

Not only that, love is also to be preserved from the heartless ferocity of the modern life.

"Preserve your love in a nest, pure like dream
In the depth of another forest.
Preserve it for the sake of your honour,
For the good of animals and plants and children
And for the good of men."
Preserve it in the songs of men and women".

(Chalechi Desh Desantar; Smriti Satta.....)

Or, "Love means the offering of your heart to others,
Accepting theirs in turn and to follow
This creed by heart and soul.
Give it and have it in your heart
And you should know what love means".

(Do)

He now loves beauty and even thinks that 'Our sweetest songs are those that tell of sadest thought, for he writes:

"There is no taste in joy
That is not sharpened and charged
With pain."

(Avinna Swastite; Smriti Satta.......

The sandy land is now partly fertile. The poet goes to his Sandwip island to collect honey:

"But do you know why in Sandwip Islet
In self destructive void
I search for the Bee queen."

(Barang Jano, Smriti Satta.......

The sandy land now grows grass, making the aging poet to dance with joy:

"In the shadows of the growing grass of the sand bank,
Dances a gray haired aged crane."

(The aged Crane. Do)
However, it can be seen that inspite of his search for the tradition in our own country he always maintains a broad outlook regarding the concept of tradition. His search for the meaning of rivers shows him that in the changing world there is one thing almost constant. That is the steady flow of life. Life in this planet is not an isolated, zonal or disconnected phenomenon. There exists deep and fundamental relationships in the whole of life's kingdom. People have their tradition; nations have their tradition, but they are not totally isolated or independent from the broader human tradition. True, national variations, created by geographical, economic, social, religious conditions etc. are there, but one should also feel beneath them the steady flow of the general human tradition. One must know his own tradition but at the same time he must be conscious of the traditions of other nations. So, in a poem written for Paul Eluard he writes:

"Therefore, accept the admission of a poet
The home and the world are one
And you are the housewife,
Make your home beloved, in the barraks
Which span the earth;
The gallows of Greece form the black cloth of your embrace,
And the eye of the people of my own country deepen."

(Poetry without split, For Paul Eluard).

Eliot has shown keen interest in different religious cultures of the world, which is Eliot's special gift to the modern poetic sensibility and which makes him a favourite to a wide range of readers throughout the world.

About Bishnu Dey's search for the tradition Amalendu Bose writes:
"His search for world tradition and further, his search for the Indian tradition, at both sophisticated and folk levels, has been strenuous and long but the strain and the time length have been fully worth while... The somewhat intricately personal symbolism of the earlier poems has now been replaced by concentrated imaged that have their roots and meaning in depth, in the poet's experience of the objective world of nature and man, the eternal sources of poetry." 37

Thus, his search takes him to the basic human tradition, the eternal source of poetry. In the vicissitude and confusion of the modern civilization his poetry shows the exceptional quality of being serene and calm, a gift of his firm faith in humanity.

VI

The concept of time has entered into the poetry of Bishnu Dey almost from the very beginning of his poetic career. His consciousness of time and the way he looks at it, makes one believe that the concept of time as such has been taken from Eliot, an exponent of the concept of time in poetry, Eliot believes that time, no matter in what way it moves - in a straight line or a cycle or floating like wind or is spread out as a sheet through out the space, is inherent in the concept of the creation itself. In the present we can see the past and future; in the past of present and future and so on because there is actually no dividing point in the continuous process that is time. In India this concept of time is not a new one. Rig veda considered the problem of time, Samkhya is found much engro-

37. A. Bose : Water My Roots, pp.35-36.
Mysticism is always present in the mind of an Indian; he speculates often on the nature of time, space etc. A revival of the question of time in the 19th and 20th century - Europe naturally interested the enlightened Indians. A modern Bengali poet's interest in the problem of time has, therefore, a traditional link with the ancient Indian philosophy. Yet, in Eliot one finds an extraordinary consciousness of time. His poetry has absorbed the essence of a wide range of thinking on time, starting from the Buddha and Heraclitus to Bergson and H.G.Wells. It is very likely that Eliot's interest in time has drawn the attention of Bishnu Dey who is a careful reader of his poetry. We find that Bishnu Dey also takes more than casual interest in the problem of time. In his poetry time is treated as a continuous movement where the past, present and future are connected with each other and can interchange their places or can telescope into one another. For example:

"Where the past is present in the future
There is only the momentary movement".

(Sesh Romantic; Sresta Kabita)

Time is also seen as a river moving in a continuous flow, where the past, present and future are in fact the same. Water at the source is the same water as it is at the end; the same drop moves from the beginning to the end. The same drop of water may represent past, present or future to a person depending on the point where he meets the drop of water. So, he writes:

"We have vast time at our disposal
And so our curiosity engulfs the whole world
There is only one symbol for that -

* Cf. Jadunath Sinha; History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.1, p.31.
The River, which flows eternally

In a single flow."

(Anvista; Anvista)

There is always a continuity in the flow of time. Time past present and future are inter-dependent. With the help of past we built our present and future:

"But we are on earth, we are man
From following our past we fashion our future
Between this shore and that of our present
Despite some residues in rain
or artisan water."

(Water My Roots)

Every day in our creative moment the past, present and future are being integrated into one single moment:

"In that all in one instant
In that peak moment
The songs of the past and the future grow contemporary
In the daily, in the day to-day routines
In the fertile silt, on all sides minds and body
Life in living."

(Water My Roots)

He often uses the word 'Satta', which means the existence or that which exists, in the sense of the term: present. His collection of poems 'Smriti Satta Bhavisvat' shows the use of the word in the same sense, because in the collection he gathers poems from his early writings with that of the
present ones with a hope to offer them to the future. Thus, the name stands for the past, present and future. Eliot believes that a poet in his poetry fuses the past, present and future. We see that the same idea is present in Bishnu Dey's poetry.

"I see you mixing with indifferent desire

All the time three

In one line of the present
Not in a cumulative account
But in building the tradition
Each time in a new appearance."

(Kaler Rakhal Sisu; Namrekhechi.....)

To the poet the past present and the future are one, though time as a whole moves in each fleeting moment;

"Your past and future are one
with the present,
Yet, the same passes every moment".

(Do)

From his experience he knows that life is connected with time, in fact time is spread through out life's span of past, present and future:

"Life has given me varied taste
So I see life's image
Extended from the remote past
To the far off future."

(Manab Loke Bhaviswate Chepe; Smriti.....)
But he feels that it is not necessary to go into a struggle to conquer time or to get redemption from it. Like Sudhindranath he knows that time is merciless, indifferent and cunning and leaves it at that.

"Alas!
The cunning time is
 Unseen yet cruel."

(Janmastami; Srestha Kabita)

The poet does not care so much for atonement or freedom from the cunning scheme of time. He has apparently other objectives to follow, objectives like an ideal human destiny, a resolution of most of the contradictions of human life, and is content to leave the problem of time alone. The enigma of time never puzzles him or even if he is puzzled there is no evidence of it in his poetry. He takes it for granted that time is there it will be there as it had been always there. He feels that time should remain in the background of our consciousness and shall not directly intervene in our creative activities:

"With the mind torn into pieces
You run after the time for nothing.
Go back to your home
And blow your bugle
Time will keep rhythm with you
Of its own accord."

(Sahaste Bazabe; Smriti Satta.....)
VII

As a whole Bishnu Dey's poetry shows a synthesis of tradition and experimentalism, something that can be seen in Eliot's poetry. There are good many collections of poems written by Bishnu Dey and he is still writing. Outwardly it appears that there is no plan or scheme behind these poetical works and it may be in a sense so. But these works are in no way unconnected or un-related manifestation of the poet's sporadic creative activities. These are connected by an inner development of the poet's mind, step by step, from one phase to another into an almost unperceptible pattern. From Chorabali to 'Namrekhechi Kamal Gandhar' there can be seen a development in the mind of the poet, starting from an expressed demand for a revolutionary change to an almost apocalyptic view of a new world where man can achieve a society free from all sorts of exploitation. In his collection of poems under the title 'Smriti Satta Bhavisvat' one phase of the development is rounded off. The pattern up to this reminds Dipti Tripathi of T.S. Eliot and his Four Quartets, though the poetry of these two poets moves on different levels and their objectives are also not the same.

Till this period and before the poet shows a sign of his preference for a kind of humanism which may be described as Marxist - Humanism, the development in the poet's mind appears to be the result of a process based on observation and analysis of the facts of the external world. Yet, the mind in creation did not only benefit from the visible world, it gained

also in the experience that grow from within, a development often untan-
gible and inexplicable. So, on the one hand when the poet was observing
the contradiction in our life and trying to effect a synthesis between
them, on the other he was groping his way—the way through which the
roots deep in the darkness of the soil for water—for a perennial source
for his poetry. A love for creation, love for mankind, faith in good,
truth (even if relative) etc. have served as good and faithful sources of
poetry in all ages and have found a permanent place in the literary tradi-
tions of all countries. Going for the deeper level Bishnu Dey's poetry
struck this basic source layer. So, we see in Bishnu Dey's poetry a co-
existence, if not a synthesis, of traditionalism and experimentalism. Thus,
in his poetry we find him interested in solving the conflict between the
individual and the community or the man and society, in establishing ulti-
mately a relationship between modernism and traditionalism. In Eliot's poe-
try also we see a synthesis between the modern city and the eternal city,
the temporal and the spiritual and the reality of time and timelessness.

Bishnu Dey believes that an individual can find his fulfilment
only in the masses of people. Though a romantic himself, he dis-favours
the romantic loneliness of a poet as much as he dislike the alienation of
an individual from society. In a poem 'Urbasi and Artemis' he expressed
his fear of loneliness:

"In the human wilderness I am a traveller
From the other world.....
Fear which is everywhere—in land and sea
Makes the body and mind shudder every moment."

(Sahabivettasmedakati Riveti).
He says how the creator himself felt lonely and divided himself first into two and then into many to overcome the loneliness. In a poem of 'Chorabali' (Ghorswar) we see him desperately trying to overcome the loneliness. He is lonely and, therefore, incapable of becoming productive - almost death itself, a surreptitious death, in the form of Chorabali. He wants to engulf the life of the mass people - the Ghorswar (The Rider within himself. This will bring him into communion with others, thus saving him from becoming a cunning killer of life:

"In the human sea the tide has come
But in my heart there is only sand banks
I am the quick sand;
My voice echoes in the horizon
Where is the rider?"

(Ghorswar; Chorabali)

There is one easy solution of the problem of loneliness; that is to accept love as a connecting force between the straying souls. But for a poet who once took love as a conditioned reflex it was not easy to arrive at a conclusion where love resolved one of the greatest of the problem of the human kind - the loneliness of man. Never-the-less, there is always the tension brought by the drift towards the shore of love:

"If my hallucination takes me
Across the river of death
To whom shall I offer
My futureless fatigue of darkness?"

(Cressida; Chorabali)
But the tension between the two situations - the mind which sees the reality of a barren and sterile life and the instinct which vibrates with the hope of fulfilment in love and companionship, has not created confusion in the mind of the poet because he has an unflinching faith in the ultimate victory of mankind as a whole. The society will be reconstructed and the common people will get place of importance in the society. Collective interest will prevail upon individual's love of power. Individual's isolation will be broken by the pressure of the new system:

"Greedy Beduins!
They come to plunder the houses of Dwarka
With assured confidence
They want lively wives and mothers
Rich in the wealth of life.
They want land for cultivation
Tanks, farm and mines dazzling with gold."

(Padadvani; Purbalekh)

It is better, therefore, that the individual should relinquish of his own accord the claim to retain the power of intellectual domination over the common people. It is useless for him to remain alone on a hill top of personal vanity, cut off from the vast and powerful mass life. He should leave his shelter of seclusion and come down to meet the sea of life:

"O! the perpetually frustrated one, hear me!
Leave that mountain - top recluse
Let the metaphor be destroyed,
Come flowing down the vales
Like a falls awakened,
Come to the sand - banks full of melons
Come with your sharp currents to the murmuring sea
Come to the lonely blue and meet the
Human sea at tides”.

(Chite Baisakhe; Sandweper Char)

But as a poet he is conscious that simply the merger of the individual with the community in a reformed society is not enough. The union between the two can take place only through the union of the individual with the individual:

"Let there be oneness, the oneness of many

... ... ... ... ...

What you told that day, in that oneness
Let there be a resolution of the conflict
Between the one and the many”.

(Bahu Baraba; Namrekhechi......)

Going for the union of individual with the individual and individual with the community he has been all the time moving towards a humanist view of life. Here, he breaks away from Eliot. Eliot moved to a spiritual end where the fire of lust is redeemed by the fire of love. Bishnu Dey goes for the best possible attainment of man as a man on the ordinary human level. It is not possible for all or many to attain the spiritual level mentioned by Eliot. Bishnu Dey as a poet with socialistic ideas wants the good to be shared by the majority of people; it should not be kept reserved for the initiated or the chosen few. So, he differs from Eliot here. Eliot has
never been an admirer of secular humanism.* To him humanism is an antithesis of the religious discipline of the middle ages. It bred chaos in the human society. Instead of bringing upliftment it led men to an unbridled way of self gratification. The result was utterly bad for the later ages. Humanism at its highest marked the lowest point of a curve of human achievement.

"The going up one started as the humanistic view, predominant from the sixth-seventeenth to the eighteenth century and implied in the title of Gibbon's Decline and Fall. This is an 'U' shaped parabola reaching its bottom with the 'triumph of barbarism and religion' in the dark ages, and moving upward with the revival of learning.......... The complementary or romantic view is an inverted 'U' rising to its highest in mediavel Gothic and falling off with the renaissance and is most articulate in Ruskin."

Eliot, according to Northrop Frye, subscribes to the latter view. Eliot, he says is "Uniformly opposed to theories of progress that invoke the authority of evolution and contemptuous of writings which attempt to popularise a progressive view, like H.G. Well's. The disintegration of Europe began soon after Dante's time; a dimmition of all aspects of culture was an age of progressive 'degeneration'; in the last fifty years evidences of decline are visible in every department of human activities."59

*Cf. "Humanism is either an alternative to religion or is ancillary to it. To my mind it always flourishes most when religion has been strong; and if you find examples of humanism which are not religious; or at least in opposition to the religious faith of the place of time, then such humanism is purely destructive, for it has never found anything to replace what is destroyed". (Selected Essay, p.478).

57. N.Frye; T.S. Eliot, p.7.
59. Ibid., p.8.
Hence, we see his indifference to all things which are 'inescapably human' as Ian Hamilton quotes, *The Waste Land* and observes:

"I could not

Speak and my eyes failed, I was neither

Living nor dead and I know nothing

Looking into the heart of light, the silence".

These are beautiful lines, and they are central to what they tell us of Eliot's distaste not just for casual sex, but in the *Waste Land*. For all behaviour that is inescapably human."\(^{40}\)

Eliot was writing with an objective which culminated in the *Little Gidding*. That objective he found imbedded in the tradition of England and in the wider tradition of Europe. He believed that during the time of Dante Europe was religiously much integrated; and perhaps in the *Four Quartets* this religious and cultural integrity was tried to be recaptured. Bishnu Dey also writes with the Indian tradition in mind; and this directs him to a different goal. The great tradition of humanism of India which is reflected in the Epics, Puranas, and in the preaching of the religious leaders, and which is revived in the *Renaissance of Bengal* of the 19th century and then carried to a dazzling height by Rabindranath, enters into the poetry of Bishnu Dey. After all, he is striving for the happiness for all, in a free society based on equality. As a poet, he can not ask for the good for the 'have-nots' only. He wants the good to be shared by all, each according to his desert. Hence, it comes to that the poet wants a better life for the mankind, not through

the equal distribution of wealth only, but also of air, water, sky, landscapes, mountains and all other gifts of nature.

In humanism he finds what he wanted. Here, in the love for all the union between the individual and the community, village and town, and words and melody is found possible:

"In the men I know
I found the music of words
The similarity of the same plane at the end,
My mind is now the blue sky of 'Amwin'
Here is a village - town quiet, healthy -
   a pleasure for the eyes."

(Anupras Antya Mil; Smriti........)

He also seems to think that by becoming one with the life of the masses of people one may be able to solve the problem of an individual through a broader view of human life. So he writes:

"Let us go, 0 churala!
To the bay of Bengal, to the deathless isle
Of Sandwip, to the Indian sea, Massallapuram,
Konarak, Cilka lake or Kokonad Rameswaram
Travancore, Hastigumpa Cambe or bay of the kach,
Java, Bali Martaban, Odessa, Astrakhan
Batum, Balkhas or Karkol, Aral -
Let us go some of us......
From the Himalayas to the sea
Every where to the planes or the waves
In the Ganges, Padma, Sind, Volga
To those waters of freedom —
Where moves the waves of life."

(Chaite Baisakhe; Sandwiper Char)

Loving man he comes to love life, the life with its anguish, pain and
toil. He finds in the struggle for freedom the ultimate success of life.
In the struggle for the better and higher life the mankind is most glorified. Success may evade an individual but not the community or the mankind as a whole. So, he is hopeful; he finds life worth living;

"Life, it appears, is a reality
This momentary existence is divine."

(Charak, Easter, Ider Roja; Smriti Satta...)

He feels that the human song is the greatest of all songs.

"Human song fill the soul up to the brim
And makes one believe that every thing is possible,

Every thing —
To make every body your dearest
To bridge the gulf of life and sing it in
an unbroken melody

In words spoken or not, the sound becomes
Real and meaningful in its profound freedom."

(Parke Apon Kare; Smriti Satta......)

His thirst for life is un-quenchable. He wants to be a son, grand son
and great grandson in order to see more, to feel more and to know more. He
is free from the nostalgia for the past. He does not like to look back and pine for what is lost. He looks forward in expectation, hope and joy. Here, he differs from most of the romantic poets.

"I have no repentance
And so I have desire to be the grandson
Or the great grand-son,
Curiosity is endless and deathless is our hope....
Grandson or great grand-son I, therefore,
Like to become, because love grows with time
Though in the daily struggle for existence
I also join the voice of the million of my country
And shout............ "Shame!"

(Manab loke Bhaviswat Chepe; Smriti.....)

He himself admits that he is an humanist. In unity, diversity, in struggle, in joy, in grief, in toil, in art - in every thing, he finds man holding the central position. He loves nature for the sake of his love for man and he remains faithful to his worship of the humanity of man:

"He lives on man - always,
So, he looks into the face of nature and human life
From that perspective in which mind finds every one
His dearest - no matter beautiful or miserable.....
That is why in towns or in villages
In telescope or in microscope
He builds the vastness of nature
In music, landscape, in universal human dance
In expanse, depth - in diversity
With his own and others
Nerves and consciousness
In one ritualistic dance of self surrender'.

(Snaute Chaitanye Mile Ek Mirajane; Desh Puja issue, 1379 B.S.)

In his attempt to know man he finds the level of deep calmness of mind where the feeling and emotions fuse into one. Here, in the eternal study of the mankind he retrieves his poetic self to a quiet and serene still point. His faith in the ultimate victory of mankind takes him to that point where the upward or downward, forward or backward movements are inconsequential; for the ultimate movement is free from all tension. Eliot found this still point on a different level. But one can not but mark the poise attained by these two poets in a world of vicissitudes. It is an experience to watch how steadily they progress as poets in a disturbing world. But that does not mean that as a poet Bishnu Dey has reached a static point. He is rather the opposite of it. A very dynamic poet, he never ceases from exploration of life and never stops his experiment with poetry. The result is that he is always a poet with a new face to offer. Through observation and experiment he always tries to find out his latest position vis-a-vis the changing world. In short, his works reminds one of Eliot's saying:

"The poets' progress is dual. There is the gradual accumulation of experience like a tantalus jar; it may be only once in five or ten

*Cf. "The endless cycle of idea and action Endless invention, Endless experiments Bring knowledge of motion, but not stillness" (The Book).
years that the experience accumulates to form a new whole and find its appropriate expression. But if the poet were content with nothing less than always his best, if he insisted on waiting for these unprofitable crystallization he would not be ready for them when they come. The development is largely unconscious, subterranean, so that we cannot gauge the progress but in the meantime the poet must be working; he must be experimenting and trying his techniques so that it will be ready, like well-oiled fire engine, when the moment comes to strain it to its utmost. The poet who wishes to write poetry must keep training; and must do this not by forcing his inspiration, but by good workmanship on a level possible for some hour's work every week of his life.  

41. T.S. Eliot; Introduction to Selected poems of Ezra Pound, p.18.