There are certain things in Eliot's poetry which are likely to interest poets for years to come. One is the concept of 'tradition' in poetry which is discussed in previous chapters. In a critical hour of a poet's career or in a period of literary crisis of a nation the concept may become useful. Secondly, though there are people who believe that The Waste Land represents a social situation peculiar to a decadent age; in all probability, it represents a situation which exists in our mind. There is therefore, a probability that more than once and in more than one place, similar situation may arise in the future. Writers and readers in the future may have the occasion to recall the experience of the Waste Land. Thirdly, Eliot's poetry proves that success of a poet depends largely on some sort of faith of the poet, be it classicism, romanticism, realism, communism, humanism or any creed or belief, faith is indispensable in poetry, even though it may be a faith in faithlessness. In an age of faithlessness Eliot's poetry will be always a source of inspiration, inspite of the fact that Eliot's poetry can be enjoyed, like all good poetry, irrespective of the belief or faith it holds.

It is also to be noted that until now it is Eliot's poetics which interests the poets more than his poetry. Another generation of poets may find his poetry more interesting than his poetics. "Perhaps when a lengthened visit of time will round off, what seemed to the Eliot-readers of the inter-war period, the sharp novelties of a daring thinker and align Eliot with many thinkers of the European past, readers will be less dazzled by the poetics and more attracted to his actual, poetry." - The Moderns discussed Eliot

Z. Amalendu Bose - Water My Roots, p.54.
poet's more than his poetry. So, when they turned from his poetry they did not necessarily turn from his poetics. Admitting the fact that the influence of Eliot is having its limitation one may wonder whether modern Bengali poetry could attain so much of depth and breadth even in an experimental stage, if Eliot's poetics did not supply it with the vital inspiration for experimentation and sustain it with a firm belief in tradition. In a sense, therefore, Eliot's presence in the modern Bengali poetry does not cease with his conversion but continues to play an important role as a basic inspiration. Eliot was never interested in following blindly the rules of the game of poetry in order to elicit some hackneyed responses from the readers. His admirers do not prefer it either. Some sort of experimentalism and even departure from the norm are quite Eliotian, under certain circumstances, because an Eliotian always experiments within a definite frame of tradition. This is a device which holds a lot of conflicting forces together. Without such a principle at the background it would not be possible for the modern Bengali poets to carry on so much of experiments and yet retain a steady view of the ultimate objective of writing good poetry.

Without this sustained consciousness, the poetry of the moderns could have remained limited to mere experimentalism and would not have become more significant than the poetry of Mahatma, Najrul, Satyendranath, or Jatindranath Sengupta. Poetry of the moderns are read not because they have written something different from Rabindranath or his imitators but because they have written some good poetry and carried the mission of writing good poetry for more than fifty years.
However, there remains the question that how far Eliot's theory of tradition helped the modern Bengali poets to find out for their poetry a base in tradition of the Bengali poetry. It is evident that Eliot, in search of a common European tradition, found it in the Christian religious tradition of Europe. He had a great respect for that tradition and his poetry actually had its roots in that religious sensibility of the European people. In Bengal there was hardly any traditional base like that. Through the Buddhist-Tantrik philosophy and Buddhism itself, Bengal might have a indirect religious base in the Upanishads, the parent philosophy of Buddhism. The Brahma Samaj, in the 19th century revived the philosophy of Upanishads in their monistic religious creed. As a result of this, it became comparatively easy for Rabindranath to find out a religious tradition based on the Upanishads for his poetry. But for the moderns it was not as easy as that. In Bengal even what may be called the popular literature were in fact patronised, maintained and in most cases written, by the people from the upper strata of the society, including the princes, courtiers and landlords. Hence, it was difficult to find out a broad-based or even significant popular tradition which is secular in character and really different from the religious tradition found in Rabindranath's poetry.

Bishnu Dey, therefore, after a long search, had to turn to his marxist-humanism, the humanist part of which is directly indebted to the 19th century renaissance of Bengal and specially to Rabindranath. Sudhindranath's classicism and nihilism moved to the direction of the rediscovery and revival of a part of our old and lost tradition; but it was cut short by the untimely death of the poet. Jibanananda's search for a basic human tradition was not particularly Bengali or Indian in character and his romanticism was
a development of the Bengali poetry from Madhusudan to Rabindranath. Buddhadev Bose, a teacher of comparative literature, was more interested in a comparative study of different literatures. Only towards the end of his career, he took positive interest in the Indian tradition. Was it for this lack of a proper base in tradition that none of them, individually, could take a place in the Bengali poetry comparable to that of Eliot in the English poetry; and the Bengali poetry instead of becoming people's poetry in fact turned out to be more learned and critical in character?

Finally, the study of modern Bengali poetry in the perspective of Eliot's poetry and poetics may prompt a reader of Bengali poetry to review the whole concept of 'western influence in Bengali poetry'. A writer of social history of India will usually accept the profound changes wrought by the two-hundred years of British rule in India. In literature the impact cannot be less, and to explain all this in terms of Western Influence is liable to be inadequate or even incorrect. Rather, it looks like a union of two cultures and perhaps also traditions. If Madhusudan were not a Christian, if he did not marry a French and an English woman, if he had not visited Europe, then perhaps his poetry could be explained in terms of Milton's influence or something of the kind. But it was not so. Long before Madhusudan wrote his poetry, the absorption of British culture and through it elements of British tradition, started in the Bengali poetry. Again, the Brahma Samaj movement itself was influenced by the Christianity and it was the manifestation of the same cultural fusion in the Bengali society. In the Samaj movement a fusion of Hindu and Christian culture and traditions has, in all probability, taken place. It is natural that Rabindranath should inherit this new blend of
culture in its due course. As a result of this, critics saw the presence of a number of English and European poets in the poetry of Rabindranath. Yet, they could hardly show where in his poetry, the originality ended and influence started or the vice-versa. The assimilation was complete and successful. May be for this reason it will be worth-while to treat the influence of an English or European poet on Bengali poetry with this perspective in mind.

To a poet of Bengal of the 20's and 30's of this century, this idea of Western influence obviously had raised a big question. But for the doctrine of 'tradition' he could have faltered in his way and would have found it difficult to understand the poetry preceding him immediately. More important than this, he could have found the track before him indistinct and clumsy. But his position was made different by the 'consciousness' introduced by Eliot in Bengali poetry; as a conscious poet he could look into the past and the future with equal ease and confidence. For the generation of poets who are following the poets of this period, a tricky problem is thus solved; and a vast and almost uncultivated piece of territory is opened, as an undisputed inheritance. As a result of this, the horizon of the Bengali poetry is now much wider. Though they themselves, in one stage, suffered from acute shortage of the subject matters etc, the 'moderns' opened a store house of material for the next generation of poets. Eliot's *poetry and position*, thus, through a silent and subtle way, played an important role in the growth and development of the modern Bengali poetry.