India had commercial relations with the countries of the West from time immemorial. And for this purpose two routes —— the well-known land-route across the North-west Frontier and the sea-route, were open to the foreigners to enter India. The Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English —— all were inspired and encouraged to undertake voyages to the Eastern Waters at first solely by commercial interest. However, the geographical discoveries of the last quarter of the 16th century deeply affected the commercial relations of the different countries and the opening of the sea-route to India had far-reaching repercussions on the civilised world. A bitter contest among these trading companies was inevitable as the object of their ambition was the same. Their designs of territorial expansion increased the bitterness of their commercial rivalry. There was a triangular contest during the first half of the 17th century —— between the Portuguese and the English, between the Portuguese and the Dutch, and between the Dutch and the English. However, the defeat at the battle of Bedara in A.D. 1759 finally destroyed the Dutch opposition to the growth of English influence in India. But the Anglo-French rivalry continued throughout the 19th century.

In the 18th and the early 19th centuries the East India Company in India was engaged in the "task of conquest" (1). Owing to various reasons, the prospects of the English East India

(1) "USET". No. 32. January / March, 1967.
Company's trade were not very bright during the first half of the 17th century, but they brightened considerably during the second half owing to changes in the policy of the Home Government. The Company's policy in India also changed during this period. A peaceful trading body was transformed into a power, eager to establish its own position by territorial aggrandisement, largely in view of the political disorders in the country. The long warfare between the imperial forces, inherited tangles among the rival claimants to the throne, the disturbance caused by the Malabar Pirates, the jaharatha raids on Surat in 1664 and 1670, and the consequent necessity of defence made the change inevitable (2). In fact, it was the time that required the British to manage their general commerce with the sword in hands.

The consolidation of the British power began first in Bengal. The overthrow of the Old regime was naturally followed by a period of disorder and it took the British several years to put things in order. By the end of the 18th century order had been established and the Government then had to face the problem of building up their administration on a sound and permanent basis. In order to administer a big country the Government had naturally to educate on their own lines, a new class of people who would be able to work more or less as their agents. But during the 17th and the 18th centuries there was hardly any organised education worth-mentioning in this vast sub-continent. However, the 19th century was a great

(2) An Advanced History Of India: by R.C. Majumdar. (pp. 608).
landmark in the evolution of a new culture and education of the Indian people as it witnessed their transition from the medieval to modern.

In fact, the British conquest of India was not solely a military conquest, it was a cultural conquest as well. Moreover, it was spontaneously recognized by the elite of the Indian society that the British conquest would be much better than the continuance of Muslim rule. The Mughal Empire was an empire by name only which had neither the capacity nor the desire to educate its people. The people in general were also not eager to be educated for education was not vocationally imperative and culturally attractive. Orthodoxy, seclusion, acceptance of fatality in the name of religion, and "an unutterable lethargy, at once physical, intellectual and spiritual, possessed the body and soul of the Indian people" (3).

Moreover, the Muslims had a fanatical conviction of their religion's superiority to all others and thought it was their duty to propagate it even by force. They were the first people in history to put forward the idea of an irreconcilable conflict between a particular way of life and all others, and the result was the escalation of discontent among the Hindus. Further, the two communities reacted in entirely different ways to the new force of the West. Large elements among the Hindus could accept Western teaching without any qualms. To large groups among the Muslims, the very existence of European power in

(3) Contemporary Indian Literature; Published by, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. (pp. 36).
in India was a constant reminder of their own defeat. This attitude of non-cooperation of the Muslims with everything British meant not only a denial of opportunities in service and commerce, but a failure to imbibe the science and knowledge of the West as well (4).

The British took the opportunity and gradually the elimination of Muslims from every position of vantage through state action started. In fact, Britain's supremacy in India brought peace, and India was certainly in need of peace after the troubles and misfortunes that followed the break-up of the Muslim rule. Peace is a precious commodity, necessary for any progress, and it was welcome when it came. India was already the meeting place of these cultures — the Western Asiatic Culture of Islam and the Eastern, her own product. And now a third and more powerful impulse came from further West, and India became a focal point and a battle ground for various old and new ideas (5). It was the British who first opened India's window to the West. Because, of the world outside India, and the great strides Europe had made since the Renaissance, Indians had little scope for knowledge. In matters of education and intellectual progress India was crawling through a period analogous to the Middle Ages in Europe.

But the revolutionary fervour of Ram Mohan and his associates, the unflinching determination of the intellectuals to exterminate the age-long superstition and unfounded faiths,

(4) Muslim Politics: Humayun Kabir. (pp. 14)
(5) An Autobiography: Jawaharlal Nehru. (pp. 433-454)
the spontaneous desire of the enlightened Indians to unite India with other civilised countries of the world, the foundation of the Anglo-Indian College (better known as Hindu College) in January 1817, the adoption by government in 1835 of Macaulay's scheme of modern education through the medium of 'English', and the memorable despatch of Sir Charles Wood, President to the Board of Control, dated July 1804, as good as set the pattern of Indian education and culture for at least a century to come. Moreover, there were few learned Europeans like Sir Charles Grant, Sir Edward Hinde East, David Hare, William Carey and others who genuinely wanted that the 'Light and Knowledge' of the West should be disseminated in India in order to liberate the people from medieval superstitions and thinking (6). The spirit of oriental institutions, it was held, was unfriendly to the vigorous expansion of thought. With this repugnance towards oriental society and culture, the reformers of the first half of the nineteenth century led by the Evangelicals and the utilitarians set about the task of reconstructing Indian society and institutions.

But, because of political troubles, financial difficulties and consequent reluctant attitude, the British administration had neither the leisure nor the inclination to apply themselves fully to the problem of social, administrative and educational reforms. However, in India, the Britishers

(6) Banglar Uchha Shiskha: Jogesh Ch. Bagal. (pp. 1 and 3).
Introduced the English language in the university system for training few low-paid clerks to do the routine job of running the government for them, as recruitment of the superior British race was not profitable either to the rulers or to their countrymen at home.

From that stage onwards the acceptance of the language began to be more and more liberal and its growth and development was never to be thwarted. In fact, the entire nineteenth century was a period of British colonialism and Victorian benevolence. The colonialists continued to reap the fruits of their colonial enterprise and the halo of pure Victorianism continued to enlighten certain dark phases of Indian life. The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, however, was a direct result of the British Rulers' mishandling of certain rebellion against oppression. But general Indian mass was oblivious of its significance; because India as an integrated whole was not yet a historical reality. The political turmoil was however followed by Queen Victoria's proclamation. And English education continued to develop at a progressive rate. Of course, one of the effects of the Mutiny cannot be ignored in this regard. The Queen's Proclamation gave a better status to the Indian people and more recognition to the Indian point of view was assured. The result was the growth of Indian consciousness which ultimately led to the birth of the desire for freedom.

Slowly but steadily the schools and colleges imparting education through the medium of English increased and within a generation or two a very considerable number of
Indians had been introduced to the infinite variety and riches of English literature and culture. For a time the partisans of English and indigenous education fought an exhausting wordy battle but the reformers won at last. The ideal of setting up a network of schools for teaching English was first mooted by Charles Grant, a civil servant of the company. He rightly held that the social abuses and the moral degradation of the people were "the results of dense and widespread ignorance, and could be removed only by education, first of all by education in English" (7). But his attempt failed. What Grant failed to do through government, the Christian missionaries accomplished in Madras and Bengal through their missionary work. Among these notable workers to whom India owes the beginning of English education, one name stands foremost, that of William Carey. Carey's example was followed by other missionaries and liberal Indians, the most notable among them were David Hare and Raja Ram Mohan Roy. They set up schools and colleges for education on western lines and established a School Book Society for selling English books. Further, the appointment of the famous missionary, Alexander Duff on the Committee of Public Instruction strengthened the hands of the English party and in 1834, the appointment of Lord Macaulay, the new law member, completed the discomfiture of the Orientalists. The cause of English education was still further advanced by the Council of Education, in which preference was given for the knowledge of English. Virtually

(7) Advanced History of India: Mazumdar, Dutt, & Roychoudhury. (pp. 816-18).
English education was made the only passport to higher appointments available to the Indians, and hence its popularity and rapid progress were equally assured. In Bombay, Madras and the North-Western provinces, English education developed on similar lines. The first university that of Calcutta was founded in 1857, and between 1857 and 1887 four new universities at Bombay, Madras, Lahore and Allahabad were added.

Many of the young men who got the blessings of the 'Light and Knowledge' of the dynamic western education, were at once excited with the desire to make their dumb country articulate. They decided that they should write in English so that they could easily compel the attention of their English masters and also reach their own countrymen in the different linguistic areas. Further, Indian regional languages being undeveloped, the intellectuals were naturally more concerned with English. Thus English became the only appropriate medium for expressing views on the socio-economic-cultural problems of the country.

It is quite natural that when India first decided that she should go for English education — the pioneers of this ideal would place greater emphasis upon non-fictional prose writings in English—socio-economic, political, philosophical and religious. Such non-fictional writings were meant to introduce India more to the dynamic, revolutionary and new western thought, spirit, and ideas than to Western way of life. The intellectuals who were born during the first of the 19th century became literate only because they had to perform social and cultural duties. The socio-cultural condition of India was then in decadence. It was against this background that they
wanted the Indians to gain a spirit of enquiry and thus discard blind beliefs, superstitions, negative customs, taboos, prejudices and other regressive influences. They did not want the cheap imitation of England. An intellectual and spiritual renaissance in India was their aim. They opened the gates of our conservatism to new ideas and progressive actions. They engrossed themselves in the immediacies of social upliftment, political argument, religious awakening, dissemination of modern enlightenment (through western 'Light and Knowledge'), and revaluation of the Indian spirit.

In the initial stage sundry Indians had to learn to speak or write in English for a little knowledge of this language was the only means to get a job under the East India Company. It was the age of new-born 'Babus' for whom service under the British was a matter of prestige as well as of profit. The prose that they used for petitioning, praising and possessing was simple, and devoid of any creative originality. The next stage was of prose literature. It was the creation resulting from the writings of Rammohan and his followers, who were concerned mainly with the polemical effectiveness of their English prose. Their writings were meant not for creative literature in English, but for projecting the causes of India's backwardness, for placing the needs—social, political, economic and religious—of the country, before the Britishers. It was the need of the hour of Indian history to which Rammohan and his followers had to respond and thus made the real beginning of Indian non-fictional writing in English prose.
Therefore, the Indian writing in English in the beginning was motivated by a practical purpose — an intention — a mission to perform a set task. Of course, such non-fictional prose writing had distinctive pattern, if not a conspicuous one, of its own. The pioneers and their followers gradually built up a tradition of writing — grammatically correct English but heavy in style as was common in prose writing of their time, impregnated with intellectual ideas and aspirations; and dealing with hard, serious subjects. But this writing being solely devoted to practical purpose could not muster an emotional flavour in a foreign language. Of course, we accepted English more in the context of logic and historical necessity than for any other need. So, a language not essentially subjective is bound to be different in style and form.