Where We Stand in Literature

[Draft A]

Where we stand, not only in literature, but in all things, is at or near a great turning point in which the thoughts and forms of East and West, both in an immense ferment of change, are working upon each other to produce something great, unforeseeable and unprecedented. From the less worldwide viewpoint which most nearly concerns us in this country, we may say, that we find ourselves in a great hour of rebirth of the ancient soul of India. The momentous issues of this hour are producing their inevitable upheaval, change and effort at creation in the whole national life, politics, society, economical conditions, industry, commerce, as well as and more noisily than in literature. But it is perhaps in art, literature and science that the future will see what was most definitive in the creations of the present hour, the most significant thing in the Indian renascence; for these things reveal most freely the spirit which is coming to birth; they have found their field, discovered their motive; the rest is still only a primary effort to escape out of unnatural conditions; the field has there yet to be made clear, before the struggling spiritual motive can make itself dominant and create its appropriate forms. Especially, is the movement of literature most revelatory; for while music and art reveal perhaps more absolutely the soul of a nation, literature is the whole expression of its mind and psychology, — not only of what it is in action, or what it is in essence, but its thought, character and aspiration.

[Draft B]

In literature, as in all else, we stand in India at the opening of a new age, in an hour of national rebirth and in the midst of a number of tendencies, possibilities, movements of which only a
few have as yet formed for themselves distinct shapes, plainly decipherable signs. It is an hour not yet of accomplishment, but of travail and inception. What will be born of this dim travail, these shapeless or half-shaped beginnings, is no doubt already decided in the secret spirit of the age and in the subconscient mind of the people. Behind the waverings and strivings of our twilit surface minds the soul of India knows no doubt what it intends and is moving us to great fulfilments. But it is well also for us to ponder and inquire what it is the national soul and the soul of humanity demand from us and on what paths we are most likely to give our energies and efforts the maximum power and serviceableness to the great age of mankind and of India on which we are entering. For at such a moment there are usually many false starts and many misdirected aims and by seeing our way and our goal more clearly we may better be able to avoid the waste of energy, talent and even genius to which they give rise.