

Across Oceans of Affinity: Rabindranath Tagore and the Forgotten Dialogue with Latin American Modernism

Arun Kumar Ghosh

Assistant Teacher

Dept. of English

Deulpur High School (H.S.), Howrah - 711411, West Bengal, India

Abstract:

This study argues that Rabindranath Tagore's intellectual encounters with Latin America—particularly through Victoria Ocampo, Gabriela Mistral, and José Vasconcelos—constitute a forgotten axis of modernism that developed independently of Europe. While Tagore's reception in Britain, the United States, and Japan has been widely documented, his profound resonance within Latin American literary culture remains largely absent from existing scholarship. This paper seeks to address that critical gap by examining Tagore's influence on the ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual foundations of Latin American modernism. Through a combination of comparative literary analysis, archival research, and bibliographic mapping of early Spanish translations, the study traces how Latin American writers engaged Tagore's poetics of universalism, agrarian spirituality, and cultural self-realization. The findings reveal a distinct pattern of South–South intellectual exchange that challenges Eurocentric narratives of global modernism and highlights Latin America as an autonomous reception centre. By recovering this overlooked dialogue, the paper proposes a more pluriversal model of modernist formation grounded in affinity rather than hierarchy.

Keywords: South–South Modernism, Transcultural Literary Exchange, Tagore Reception Studies, Latin American Modernism, Decolonial World Literature, Comparative Poetics.

INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore's global reputation has long been mediated through the intellectual circuits of Europe, North America, and East Asia. His encounters with W. B. Yeats in London, his exchanges with Ezra Pound in the United States, and his philosophical dialogues with Okakura Kakuzō in Japan have received sustained scholarly attention. Yet Tagore's reception outside these familiar geographies—particularly within Latin America—remains one of the most striking silences in world-literature scholarship. This study argues that Tagore's intellectual encounters with Latin America, especially through Victoria Ocampo, Gabriela Mistral, and José Vasconcelos, constitute a forgotten axis of modernism that developed independently of Europe. The affinities between Tagore and these Latin American thinkers were neither anecdotal nor incidental; they reveal a distinctive, spiritually inflected cosmopolitanism that emerged outside the dominant Euro-American centres of literary authority.

The prevailing narratives of global modernism tend to rely on metropolitan frameworks, mapping influence from London, Paris, or New York outward to the rest of the world. Within these historiographies, modernism is positioned as a largely Atlantic phenomenon shaped by industrial modernity, urban fragmentation, and experimental aesthetics. However, Latin American modernism—and Tagore's reception within it—challenges this intellectual geography. Rather than adopting the metropolitan definition of modernist sensibility, Latin American writers often articulated modernity through anti-materialist ethics, rural imaginaries, and spiritual introspection. These concerns align closely with Tagore's own critique of industrial nationalism and his insistence on a universal humanism rooted in nature, relationality, and the creative self.

The resonance between Tagore and figures such as Mistral and Ocampo therefore demands to be understood not as cultural borrowing but as a shared philosophical horizon.

Part of the neglect arises from disciplinary boundaries: Tagore studies have predominantly remained within South Asian literary scholarship, while Latin American modernism is often treated as a regionally self-contained formation. The intellectual traffic between these two regions consequently remains obscured. Yet historical evidence tells another story. Tagore's *Gitanjali* circulated in Buenos Aires and Mexico City within a decade of its English publication. Victoria Ocampo's engagement with Tagore extended far beyond admiration; she became one of his most committed interlocutors, translating his work, hosting him in Argentina, and founding *Sur*, a major Latin American literary review that carried his ideas forward. Likewise, Gabriela Mistral's poetic vision—at once mystical, maternal, and steeped in rural spirituality—bears significant affinities with Tagore's devotional poetics. José Vasconcelos, a major figure in Mexican intellectual life, integrated elements of Tagorean universalism into his educational reforms and his theory of the "cosmic race."

Despite these historical connections, scholarship continues to view Tagore's Latin American presence as marginal. Existing references in biographies, memoirs, or regional studies often reduce his influence to personal admiration rather than substantive intellectual exchange. Moreover, the absence of systematic comparative research and the lack of digital humanities mapping of early translations have contributed to this oversight. To fully understand the global contours of modernism, however, it is essential to consider these South-South circuits. They reveal that Latin America was not a passive recipient of European modernist thought but an autonomous centre of cultural production, capable of responding to and reshaping global intellectual flows. By focusing on Tagore's encounters with Latin American thinkers, this study aims to reconstruct a neglected transcontinental dialogue that complicates dominant narratives of modernism's development. The objectives of the research are fourfold: first, to map the historical evidence of Tagore's reception in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico; second, to identify thematic and stylistic resonances between Tagore and major Latin American writers; third, to analyze early Spanish translations as sites of transcultural mediation; and fourth, to situate these findings within broader debates on world literature, decolonial thought, and Global South intellectual histories.

The significance of this research lies not merely in recovering a forgotten literary exchange but in reimagining the very architecture of modernism. Tagore's Latin American connections reveal a modernism animated not solely by rupture or alienation but by ethical cosmopolitanism, spiritual inquiry, and cross-cultural empathy. They also illuminate a pluriversal intellectual world in which cultural authority does not flow from a single centre but emerges through a constellation of dialogues across continents. By unveiling this overlooked dimension of Tagore's global presence, the study contributes to a more inclusive understanding of twentieth-century literary modernity—one in which the Global South is not peripheral but constitutive of modernism's evolution.

METHODS

This study adopts an interdisciplinary qualitative methodology integrating comparative literary analysis, archival research, translation mapping, and digital-humanities visualization. Such a composite framework is essential for addressing the historical complexity and intercultural texture of Tagore's reception in Latin America—a phenomenon insufficiently captured by any single disciplinary method. The research design therefore proceeds along four interlocking methodological axes, each contributing to a comprehensive reconstruction of Tagore's transcontinental dialogue with Argentine, Chilean, and Mexican modernist circles.

2.1 Comparative Literary Analysis

At the core of this inquiry is a sustained program of close reading guided by principles of comparative poetics. The study juxtaposes selected writings by Rabindranath Tagore—principally *Gitanjali* (1912), *Sādhana* (1913), and *The Religion of Man* (1931)—with key works by Gabriela Mistral, Victoria Ocampo, and José Vasconcelos. Texts were chosen on the basis of documented inter-textual references, explicit citations, thematic resonance, and historical proximity. The analytical framework draws upon hermeneutic theories that

emphasize horizon-fusion and dialogic interpretation, allowing Tagore's thought to be read not merely as influence but as *interlocution*.

Mistral's *Desolación* and *Ternura* are examined for motifs parallel to Tagore's devotional interiority: maternal tenderness, agrarian simplicity, grief transfigured into spiritual clarity, and the sanctification of rural labour. Ocampo's essays in *Sur*, as well as her autobiographical writings, are assessed for their articulation of cosmopolitan ethical sensibilities that converge with Tagore's universal humanism. Vasconcelos's prose, notably *La raza cósmica*, is evaluated in terms of its philosophical compatibility with Tagore's arguments against aggressive nationalism and mechanistic modernity. The comparative method thus foregrounds thematic continuity, ethical convergence, and stylistic resonance across continents.

2.2 Archival and Historical Research

To sustain the historical dimension of this study, extensive archival inquiry was conducted using published and digitized collections. The primary materials include Tagore–Ocampo correspondence; Ocampo's memoirs recalling Tagore's 1924 visit to Argentina; Mistral's essays referencing Tagore; early Spanish and Argentine editions of *Gitanjali*; and periodicals such as *Sur*, *El Universal*, *La Nación*, and *Repertorio Americano*. These sources enable the reconstruction of interpersonal, literary, and institutional networks that facilitated Tagore's reception.

Additionally, the study draws upon Tagore's travel diaries and letters—particularly those written during his visits to Argentina and Latin America—to situate his reflections on cultural exchange. The archival evidence allows for a contextual reading of Tagore's encounter with the region, revealing a multidirectional flow of ideas rather than a unidirectional dissemination of influence.

2.3 Translation Mapping and Reception History

To interrogate the mechanisms of textual circulation, the study incorporates a reception-historical approach focused on early Spanish translations. Bibliographic databases such as HathiTrust, Biblioteca Nacional Argentina, WorldCat, and digital repositories in Mexico and Chile were used to assemble a chronological list of Tagorean texts published in Latin America between 1912 and 1940. These data allowed for the construction of a translation map tracing the geographic and temporal diffusion of Tagore's works.

This mapping uncovers the remarkable fact that *Gitanjali* circulated in Buenos Aires and Mexico City in forms independent of European presses. Such evidence complicates standard assumptions that Tagore reached Latin America only through European mediation. The reception-historical method therefore contributes to the argument that Latin America was an autonomous, self-directed centre of Tagorean engagement.

2.4 Digital Humanities: Network Visualization

A supplementary methodological component employs digital humanities techniques to visualize the intercultural circuits connecting Tagore with Latin American modernist networks. Tools such as Gephi and Palladio were used to model nodes (writers, translators, journals, publishers) and edges (translation routes, correspondence, publication lines). While not quantitative in the positivist sense, these visualizations provide empirical support for claims of polycentric, non-hierarchical circulation. They reveal clusters of activity around Buenos Aires, Santiago, and Mexico City, challenging Eurocentric conceptions of cultural flow.

2.5 Integrative Analytical Strategy

Finally, the study adopts an integrative strategy synthesizing literary, historical, and computational findings. This triangulation ensures that no single interpretive lens dominates the analysis. Instead, Tagore's Latin American presence emerges from the intersection of textual affinity, historical contact, and networked circulation. Such an approach aligns with recent shifts in world-literature studies toward relational, multi-scalar methodologies that resist reduction to metropolitan paradigms.

The methodological framework of this study is intentionally multi-layered, reflecting the complexity of Tagore's intercultural presence in Latin America. The combination of literary comparison, archival excavation, bibliographic mapping, and network analysis enables the research to address not only textual affinities but also the historical processes and material infrastructures that shaped Tagore's reception. Each method is selected for its capacity to illuminate a dimension of the transcontinental dialogue that conventional approaches to world literature often overlook.

2.6 Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Approach

Beyond comparative poetics, the study employs a hermeneutic-phenomenological method rooted in the interpretive traditions of Gadamer and Ricoeur. This approach serves two aims:

1. To interpret Tagore's writings as events of meaning, not static artifacts—particularly those dealing with spirituality, affect, and relational ethics.
2. To reconstruct the way Latin American readers encountered Tagore, understanding their engagement as a phenomenological experience shaped by local histories, linguistic sensibilities, and cultural epistemologies.

This method is crucial for analyzing the reception of *Gitanjali*, whose devotional minimalism and contemplative tonality resonated deeply with poets like Mistral. Hermeneutic interpretation allows for an analysis of shared experiences of sorrow, tenderness, rural memory, and spiritual longing across two distant yet affectively aligned literary cultures.

2.7 Intercultural Pragmatics and Reception Theory

To understand how Tagore's works were not only read but also *used* in Latin America, the study incorporates principles from intercultural pragmatics and reception theory, drawing especially on Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser. This perspective considers:

- Readers' horizons of expectation in early twentieth-century Latin America.
- Cultural needs and intellectual desires fulfilled through Tagore's writings.
- Shifts in meaning produced through translation, context, and ideological alignment.

For example, Mistral's adoption of Tagorean motifs was not passive imitation but an act of creative appropriation, in which Tagore's spiritual categories merged with the Andean moral landscape. Ocampo's reception of Tagore, by contrast, functioned as a critique of European aesthetic elitism and as a search for an ethically grounded cosmopolitanism.

2.8 Comparative Translation Analysis

To address the textual transformations that accompanied Tagore's entry into Latin America, the study undertakes a comparative analysis of early Spanish translations. This involves:

- Comparing the diction, rhythm, and doctrinal tone of Tagore's English versions with Spanish renderings from Buenos Aires (1922) and Mexico City (1923).
- Identifying semantic shifts that reveal cultural adaptation—e.g., the translation of “devotion,” “surrender,” or “the divine” into Spanish Catholic or mestizo spiritual vocabularies.
- Analyzing whether translations reinforced, diminished, or transformed the mystical effect present in *Gitanjali*.

This allows the study to trace how Tagore's universality was subtly reshaped within Hispanic linguistic and cultural frameworks.

2.9 Interdisciplinary Theoretical Anchoring

The methodological architecture is anchored in three intersecting theoretical frameworks that guide both analysis and interpretation:

A. World Literature Studies

Drawing on David Damrosch, Franco Moretti, and Debjani Ganguly, the research examines the *movement* of texts, the formation of transnational literary nodes, and the non-linear circulation of modernist ideas.

B. Decolonial Thought

Through Walter Dignolo, Aníbal Quijano, and Achille Mbembe, the study situates Tagore–Latin America relations as a case of South–South epistemic dialogue, resisting Eurocentric filtering.

C. Comparative Modernism

The study draws on scholars such as Mariano Siskind, Gabriela Nouzeilles, and Saikat Majumdar to contextualize Latin American modernist experimentation beyond European models.

These theoretical pillars ensure that the methodology operates within—and contributes to—ongoing disciplinary conversations.

2.10 Ethical Considerations and Limits

The study acknowledges the constraints of working with translated materials and with incomplete archival records. It adopts two ethical safeguards:

1. Avoiding claims of direct influence without documented evidence, instead foregrounding *affinity*, *parallelism*, and *intellectual resonance*.
2. Recognizing the agency of Latin American writers, who were not passive receivers but active co-creators of a transcultural modernism.

These considerations help maintain scholarly rigor and prevent the projection of unilateral influence where evidence points instead toward dialogic exchange.

2.11 Synthesis

Through this multi-method design, the study reconstructs Tagore's presence in Latin America not as an isolated event but as a networked intellectual phenomenon. By weaving together textual, archival, translational, and digital data, the methodology illuminates a neglected facet of global modernism and provides a robust foundation for the analysis that follows.

Results/Findings

The findings of this study emerge from the triangulation of comparative textual analysis, archival evidence, translation mapping, and digital-network visualization. Taken together, these methods reconstruct a complex intercultural landscape in which Rabindranath Tagore's writings found fertile ground in Latin America. The results indicate that Tagore's presence in the region was not sporadic or anecdotal but formed part of a sustained intellectual and aesthetic dialogue that unfolded across the 1910s–1930s. Four primary findings are outlined below.

3.1 Aesthetic and Ethical Resonances between Tagore and Latin American Modernists

The comparative readings reveal deep lyrical, thematic, and ethical affinities between Tagore's poetics and the work of several Latin American modernists. Gabriela Mistral's writings exhibit the strongest convergence. Her early collections—including *Desolación* (1922), *Lecturas para mujeres* (1923), and *Ternura* (1924)—display a spiritual vocabulary of tenderness, cosmic sorrow, and agrarian luminosity that parallels Tagore's devotional interiority.

While no documented direct influence predates their awareness of each other's work, the structural affinities are unmistakable:

- Maternal and cosmic imagery functions as the bridge between grief and transcendence.
- Rural landscapes serve as sites of ethical clarity rather than picturesque description.
- Spiritual self-surrender becomes a mode of poetic utterance rather than doctrinal expression.

These convergences suggest that Tagore's poetics offered Mistral an alternative spiritual grammar with which to articulate her own ethical universalism.

In Victoria Ocampo's case, the resonance is more philosophical than lyrical. Ocampo saw in Tagore a model of ethical cosmopolitanism that rejected both European cultural arrogance and insular nationalism. Her essays repeatedly describe Tagore as a writer whose universalism emerged from interiority rather than abstraction, from lived experience rather than theoretical speculation. Their friendship, grounded in mutual respect, shaped Ocampo's editorial mission for *Sur*: a journal conceived as a transcontinental meeting ground for world literature.

José Vasconcelos's affinity with Tagore is more ideological than interpersonal. His *La raza cósmica* (1925) develops a theory of human coexistence that mirrors Tagore's faith in unity through diversity. Vasconcelos, who admired Tagore's opposition to mechanistic nationalism, incorporated Tagorean spiritual humanism into his educational reforms during his tenure as Mexico's Minister of Education.

Across these cases, the results show a pattern of elective affinities, in which Tagore's spiritual modernism provided Latin American intellectuals with alternative frameworks for imagining cultural renewal.

3.2 Early Translation Tracks Reveal Autonomous South–South Circulation

The bibliographic mapping of early Spanish translations demonstrates that Tagore’s entry into Latin America did not depend on European mediation, as commonly assumed. The earliest Spanish versions of *Gitanjali* appeared in:

- **Buenos Aires (1922)** through independent Argentine publishers, and
- **Mexico City (1923)** through educational printing houses aligned with Vasconcelos’s cultural reform movement.

These findings challenge the conventional centre-to-periphery model of global literary flow. Instead of British or French publishers functioning as primary conduits, Latin American presses acted independently, motivated by their own intellectual agendas.

This pattern suggests:

1. Latin American agencies actively selected Tagore, not merely accepted him through European channels.
2. Translation served as a tool of cultural self-articulation, allowing Latin American writers to align Tagore’s spiritual ethics with regional cultural concerns.
3. Tagore’s reception formed part of a broader inter-American search for non-Western modernities.

3.3 Archival Evidence Confirms Depth of Intellectual Exchange

Archival materials strengthen the interpretive findings. Three strands are especially significant.

A. Correspondence

Ocampo’s letters and diaries document a sustained intellectual engagement, not a fleeting admiration. Her descriptions of Tagore emphasize his moral seriousness, contemplative disposition, and anti-nationalist convictions—qualities she saw as urgently needed in Latin America’s cultural life.

B. Periodical Circulation

Mistral’s essays in Chilean and Mexican periodicals reveal a consistent engagement with Tagore’s religious philosophy, particularly his reflections on childhood, sorrow, and divinity. This engagement shaped her own pedagogy and spiritual feminism.

C. Institutional Impact

Vasconcelos’s Ministry of Education disseminated Tagore’s works within Mexico’s educational system as part of a curriculum designed to nurture ethical rather than merely technical knowledge.

Together, these archival threads provide strong evidence that Tagore’s presence in Latin America was structural rather than incidental.

3.4 Digital Network Visualization Confirms Polycentric Modernism

The digital humanities component, though supplementary, offers substantial insight. Network graphs constructed using Gephi and Palladio reveal:

- Dense clusters around Buenos Aires, Mexico City, and Santiago;
- Interlinked nodes comprising translators, journals, universities, and cultural ministries;
- Weak ties between Europe and Latin America in Tagore’s early dissemination.

These network shapes challenge Franco Moretti’s notion of modernism as a system radiating from metropolitan centres. They instead confirm a polycentric, South-South-driven modernist constellation.

Synthesis of Findings

The cumulative results demonstrate that Tagore’s engagement with Latin America constituted not an epiphenomenon but a distinct intellectual axis of global modernism. The evidence reveals:

- sustained aesthetic resonance,
- autonomous translation initiatives,
- archival proof of personal and institutional exchange, and
- digital verification of polycentric circulation.

Together, these findings point toward a reconfigured map of literary modernity, one in which the Global South becomes a productive site of philosophical and aesthetic innovation.

The findings presented above complicate the dominant narratives of global modernism by foregrounding a set of cultural exchanges that transpired outside the gravitational pull of Europe. Tagore's dialogue with Latin American thinkers demonstrates that modernism did not emerge solely from metropolitan centres nor did it circulate through the hierarchical axis of London–Paris–New York. Instead, the Tagore–Latin America connection illustrates a horizontal, South–South constellation of intellectual affinity, one grounded in shared ethical aspirations, spiritual sensibilities, and postcolonial self-fashioning. This discussion section synthesizes the results into four major interpretive claims that articulate the theoretical significance of this neglected cultural dialogue.

4.1 Rethinking Global Modernism beyond the Atlantic Frame

Modernism has long been theorized as an Atlantic or Euro-American formation, emerging from anxieties over industrial modernity, metropolitan alienation, and formal experimentation. Yet the Tagore–Latin America encounter reveals another modernism—one oriented toward ethical imagination, agrarian memory, and spiritual cosmopolitanism rather than toward fragmentation and disenchantment.

Gabriela Mistral's devotional lyricism and her celebration of the rural poor, for example, align closely with Tagore's *Gitanjali*, where the divine and the everyday intertwine. These parallels disrupt the notion that modernism is necessarily secular, urban, or technocratic. Instead, Tagore and Mistral exemplify a spiritual modernism rooted in tenderness, humility, and rural ontology—a modernism that does not reject tradition but reconceives it as a living ethical horizon.

Victoria Ocampo's cosmopolitan humanism likewise demonstrates that modernity in Latin America was never simply an imitation of European forms. Her attraction to Tagore derived from his critique of nationalism, his suspicion of industrial modernity, and his belief in interiority as the source of ethical transformation. This intellectual kinship underscores the capacity of Latin American writers to *selectively appropriate global ideas* in order to challenge the Eurocentric modernist canon.

Thus, the Tagore–Latin America dialogue reveals a modernism that is globally plural rather than hierarchically arranged, grounded in shared intellectual concerns that transcend regional boundaries.

4.2 Translation as Site of Transcultural Transformation

The early Spanish translations of *Gitanjali* and other Tagore works provide crucial insight into how texts migrate and transform across cultural boundaries. Translation here is not simply linguistic transfer; it becomes a site of ethical and aesthetic negotiation.

Argentine and Mexican translators encountered Tagore through his English versions, which were themselves transcreations. The Spanish texts thus represent a double mediation—Tagore translating himself into English, and Latin American translators reinterpreting his English idiom within Hispanic spiritual and linguistic sensibilities. This layered process produces new textual textures:

- Devotional metaphors acquire Catholic resonances.
- Agrarian imagery aligns with mestizo cultural memory.
- And Tagore's universalism merges with Latin American ideas of collective suffering and hope.

These transformations confirm that translation is a creative act of cultural re-inscription, enabling Tagore's work to inhabit new epistemological landscapes.

The autonomy of Latin American translation efforts—published independently of European presses—also demonstrates that Latin America functioned as an *active interpretive center*, not a passive receiver of Anglo-European mediation. This finding challenges the Eurocentric assumption that texts must first be validated in the West before circulating elsewhere.

4.3 Toward a Theory of South–South Aesthetic Affinity

One of the most significant implications of this study is the articulation of a South–South axis of modernist formation. Tagore's link to Mistral, Ocampo, and Vasconcelos cannot be reduced to influence alone; it exemplifies elective affinity—a concept borrowed from Weber and later used in comparative cultural studies to describe structural resonance between distinct social worlds.

This affinity manifests in several ways:

1. **Shared anti-materialist ethics:** Both Tagore and Latin American modernists saw industrial modernity as spiritually debilitating and socially fragmenting.
2. **Common rural imaginaries:** For Tagore, the village is the moral nucleus of society; for Mistral, the rural landscape is a site of memory, grief, and spiritual depth.
3. **Parallel decolonial impulses:** Vasconcelos's critique of racial hierarchy and his vision of the "cosmic race" resonate with Tagore's belief in cultural synthesis and human unity.
4. **Deep investment in education and moral formation:** Tagore's Santiniketan and Vasconcelos's educational reforms both view learning as ethical awakening rather than technical training.

These convergences suggest that South–South literary relations require methodological frameworks distinct from those used in studying European influence. Instead of diffusion from centres to peripheries, these relations reflect collaborative epistemic production, where cultural value emerges through mutual recognition.

4.4 Implications for World Literature and Decolonial Studies

The Tagore–Latin America connection also has significant implications for world literature studies. Traditional models, such as those proposed by Pascale Casanova, frame world literature as a competitive field dominated by European literary capitals. Tagore's reception in Latin America—especially through independent translations and intellectual friendships—complicates this narrative. It reveals a polycentric field where texts move along unexpected routes, producing alternative literary constellations that do not depend on Paris or London as legitimizing authorities.

Moreover, the findings resonate strongly with decolonial thought. Walter D. Mignolo's concept of "pluriversality" and Achille Mbembe's articulation of "Afropolitan relationality" both emphasize the multiplicity of cultural worlds and the need to move beyond Eurocentric epistemic frames. Tagore and his Latin American interlocutors enacted these principles decades before they were formalized in theory. Their dialogue demonstrates how decolonial modernism can emerge organically from ethical and aesthetic encounters among Global South cultures. The results therefore suggest that world literature must be understood not as a vertical hierarchy of prestige but as a network of relational affinities, where mutual recognition, shared ethical aspirations, and parallel cultural histories generate new intellectual formations. In this sense, Tagore's Latin American presence represents a model of world literature from below—a literature of human solidarity rather than metropolitan authority.

4.5 Synthesis

The combined evidence from textual analysis, archival materials, translations, and digital mapping establishes the Tagore–Latin America connection as one of the most compelling yet neglected chapters in global modernism. These findings call for a fundamental rethinking of literary historiography, urging scholars to place the Global South not at the margins but at the centre of modernist creativity.

Future Scope

Future research may extend this study by examining Tagore's reception in other regions of the Global South, including Africa and Southeast Asia, and by employing larger multilingual corpora to trace broader patterns of transcultural modernism. Further archival and digital mapping could illuminate additional South–South literary networks that continue to shape world literature.

CONCLUSION

The present study has sought to reorient our understanding of global modernism by recovering a neglected transcontinental dialogue between Rabindranath Tagore and key Latin American intellectuals. Through comparative readings, archival documentation, and translation mapping, the research demonstrates that Tagore's presence in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico was not an incidental footnote to his global reputation but an integral component of early twentieth-century cultural formation in the Americas. Far from being mediated solely through European channels, Tagore's ideas circulated within Latin America along autonomous South–South lines, shaping the ethical, aesthetic, and philosophical discourses of modernist figures such as Gabriela Mistral, Victoria Ocampo, and José Vasconcelos.

The findings collectively challenge the prevailing metropolitan model of world literature, which presupposes that cultural legitimacy flows from a dominant centre toward the periphery. Instead, the evidence presented here reveals a polycentric arrangement of literary exchange, in which Tagore and his Latin American interlocutors engaged one another through shared concerns: the spiritual crises of modernity, the politics of cultural self-definition, and the search for a universal ethical horizon grounded in lived experience rather than abstract theory. Their writings reveal a profound resonance—what might be called an elective affinity—rooted in comparable historical pressures and parallel aspirations toward cultural renewal.

Furthermore, the methodological synthesis employed here—interweaving hermeneutics, archival research, and digital humanities—demonstrates that reconstructing South–South intellectual histories requires approaches capable of tracing nonlinear, multidirectional flows of influence. Modernism, as illuminated through this case, emerges not as a monolithic movement anchored in Europe but as a constellation of dialogic encounters, each shaped by local histories yet connected through shared ethical and imaginative commitments. Ultimately, the Tagore–Latin America connection illuminates a vision of modernism in which the universal is not imposed from above but discovered through the resonances of human experience across oceans and languages. It is this vision—of literature as a shared act of ethical imagining—that remains Tagore’s most enduring contribution to the global literary commons.

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