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Nomadic Subjectivity and the Modern Self in Tagore's "Atithi": Mobility, Identity, and the Crisis of Belonging

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Abstract:

This paper examines Rabindranath Tagore's short story "Atithi" ("The Guest") as an early articulation of nomadic subjectivity, foregrounding the tension between emergent modern individualism and the moral order of colonial Bengal. Through the figure of Tarapada—the adolescent wanderer who persistently resists domestication—Tagore envisions a form of selfhood defined by mobility, impermanence, and resistance to fixed identity. Drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari's theory of nomadology and Zygmunt Bauman's notion of liquid modernity, the study argues that Tagore anticipates a proto-modern consciousness characterised by fluidity and perpetual becoming. Tarapada's restless movement emerges not as escapism but as a philosophical critique of bourgeois modernity's ideals of stability, productivity, and belonging. By situating Tagore within a transnational modernist discourse, this paper reinterprets "Atithi" as a meditation on the ethics of movement and impermanence, revealing how Tagore reconfigures the modern self as a dynamic process rather than a bounded identity.

Keywords: Atithi, Nomadology, Liquid Modernity, Rabindranath Tagore, Modern Self

1. Introduction

Late nineteenth-century Bengal was a crucible of social transformation, witnessing the emergence of a new cultural and moral order shaped by colonial modernity. The *bhadralok*—the Western-educated Bengali middle class—occupied the paradoxical position of being both the agents and the subjects of modernity's discipline. As Partha Chatterjee observes, "the home became the principal site where the spiritual superiority of the East could be defended against the material aggression of the West" (120). Domesticity, then, became the ideological locus of moral virtue and national identity, and the settled household a metaphor for civilisation itself. Within this spatial and ethical framework, the ideal modern subject was one who conformed to the bourgeois virtues of productivity, respectability, and familial rootedness. Rabindranath Tagore, writing within this context, was both a beneficiary and a critic of such modernity. His engagement with colonial education and cosmopolitan humanism produced an ambivalent vision of progress—one that sought the expansion of consciousness rather than its mechanization. In his essay "Society and State," Tagore warns against

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the totalising tendencies of modern civilisation, asserting that "the machine makes man its servant in the name of progress" (*The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, 210). For Tagore, the danger of modernity lay in its reduction of human freedom to instrumental rationality, in its substitution of spiritual self-realisation with social conformity. This ambivalence underwrites his fiction, which repeatedly dramatises the tension between the individual's longing for freedom and the community's demand for order.

In "Atithi" (*The Guest*, 1895), this dialectic assumes its most poignant form. The protagonist, Tarapada, is an adolescent wanderer whose refusal to remain confined within the domestic space marks him as a disruptive presence. The household that seeks to adopt him represents the ordered, moral world of the *bhadralok*—a "striated space," to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, structured by hierarchy, propriety, and containment. Tarapada's decision to leave this space enacts what they call a "line of flight," the movement by which the subject "deterritorializes the assemblage" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 9). His wandering is not an act of rebellion in the moral sense, but a philosophical gesture toward an alternative mode of being—one that privileges motion, openness, and impermanence over fixity. Tagore's articulation of this mobile selfhood anticipates the condition that Zygmunt Bauman describes as "liquid modernity," in which "to be modern means to be perpetually becoming" (Bauman 8). Tarapada's restlessness is thus emblematic of a proto-modern consciousness that rejects the bourgeois ideal of settlement. Tagore's critique of modernity is not a nostalgic return to tradition, but a radical reimagining of freedom as movement. As he affirms in *The Religion of Man*, "the true freedom of man is found not in the passive acceptance of law but in the active realization of the infinite within him" (Tagore 47). Through Tarapada's wandering, Tagore transforms impermanence into an ethical and aesthetic principle, positioning motion itself as a form of spiritual resistance to the stasis of modern civilization.

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of nomadology provides a productive conceptual lens through which to understand Tarapada's subjectivity in Rabindranath Tagore's "Atithi". In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they distinguish between the "striated space" of the State apparatus—organized, hierarchical, and sedentary—and the "smooth space" traversed by the nomad, which is open, fluid, and indeterminate (Deleuze and Guattari 474). The nomad, they write, "does not move from one point to another; he is in perpetual movement, inhabiting movement itself" (Deleuze and Guattari 380). This notion of *being-in-movement* articulates a mode of existence that resists fixed identity and refuses territorial control. In Tagore's narrative, Tarapada epitomizes such a 'deterritorialised' subject. His repeated departures from domestic households and his inability to remain rooted within the moral and spatial order of colonial Bengal enact a literal and symbolic rejection of 'striated' social structures—

kinship, property, and patriarchal belonging. Tarapada's wandering, therefore, is not merely behavioral but ontological: it signifies what Deleuze and Guattari call a "line of flight," a movement that "deterritorializes the assemblage" and opens new possibilities of becoming (9). His restlessness is not a symptom of youthful instability but a philosophical gesture toward the infinite.

2. Tarapada as Proto-Modern Subject

Tagore's portrayal of Tarapada resonates with this Deleuzian sensibility, even though it predates it by several decades. Tagore's philosophical writings reveal a similar commitment to movement and openness as essential conditions of life. In *The Religion of Man*, he writes, "The true freedom of man is found not in the passive acceptance of law but in the active realization of the infinite within him" (Tagore 47). Tarapada's nomadism thus reflects an ethical stance—an aspiration toward spiritual self-realization through mobility and detachment. His refusal to be fixed within domestic and social coordinates aligns him with what Deleuze and Guattari call "the nomad who has no points, paths, or land, yet he occupies and holds the smooth space" (421). Tagore's narrative, in this sense, anticipates the poststructuralist understanding of identity as fluid, non-essential, and processual. The movement through which Tarapada defines himself challenges the colonial and bourgeois fixation on stability, maturity, and order. His journey, perpetually incomplete, becomes the enactment of an alternative ontology—one that locates meaning not in arrival but in becoming. While Deleuze and Guattari theorize nomadism as an ontological condition, Zygmunt Bauman's *Liquid Modernity* (2000) provides a sociological perspective on the modern subject's fluidity. Bauman argues that "liquid life is a life of constant mobility and change," where individuals are "doomed to live a life of continuous reinvention" (2). The "liquid modern" self, uprooted from traditional structures of family, nation, and faith, is compelled to adapt incessantly in a world where stability is obsolete.

Tarapada's existence in "Atithi" prefigures this liquid modern condition. His inability to be contained within the domestic, moral, or spatial boundaries of the community reflects a nascent form of modern subjectivity in colonial Bengal—a subject defined by motion rather than settlement. Yet, unlike Bauman's alienated, consumerist individual adrift in a postmodern world, Tarapada's liquidity possesses a distinctly spiritual dimension. His movement arises not from social dislocation or market-driven restlessness, but from a Tagorean quest for unmediated experience and existential freedom. Tarapada's liquidity is therefore paradoxical: it is both premodern, rooted in the ascetic and mystical traditions of detachment, and postmodern, resisting identity and fixity. Tagore's wanderer inhabits the threshold between these two modes—embodying the ethical ideal of 'becoming without belonging'. As Bauman writes, "in liquid modernity, to be modern means to be perpetually becoming" (8).

Tarapada's endless departures echo this condition, yet transcend it by investing movement with moral and spiritual purpose. Through him, Tagore transforms the liquid instability of modern life into a philosophical affirmation of freedom as continuous transformation.

Tarapada, the adolescent wanderer of Rabindranath Tagore's "Atithi", embodies the emergence of a proto-modern subjectivity within colonial Bengal—a consciousness that resists fixity, domesticity, and the moral codes of bourgeois respectability. His departure from his guardians is not an impulsive act of rebellion but an act of self-fashioning—a refusal to be absorbed into what Michel Foucault would call the "technologies of the self" imposed by social and familial institutions. By leaving the ordered world of paternal authority, Tarapada asserts an identity premised upon mobility and uncertainty, challenging the colonial ideal of maturity as stability. In the socio-cultural context of nineteenth-century Bengal, the home functioned as both moral anchor and disciplinary space. The *bhadralok* ideology associated virtue with settlement, marriage, and conformity to patriarchal duty. Tagore's fiction repeatedly questions this paradigm. As he writes in *Sādhanā: The Realisation of Life*, "Our bondage is of our own making; for we insist upon defining ourselves by the walls that separate" (Tagore 63). Tarapada's departure thus signifies a rejection of enclosure—not merely spatial but epistemic. His wandering becomes a philosophical act: a movement toward what Tagore calls "the realization of the infinite within man" (*The Religion of Man* 47).

Tarapada's subjectivity resonates with Stuart Hall's theorization of the "fragmented subject" in modernity. Hall contends that the modern self is "de-centered, composed not of a single, but of several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved identities" (277). Tarapada embodies this fragmentation; his identity is performative, provisional, and relational, constantly reconstituted through encounters and departures. Each act of leaving is a form of self-redefinition, a refusal of closure. In Deleuzian terms, he traces a "line of flight"—a deterritorializing gesture that opens possibilities of becoming rather than belonging (Deleuze and Guattari 9). Yet Tarapada's mobility is not nihilistic or alienated in the modernist sense. Unlike the alienated wanderer of European modernism—adrift in a world stripped of meaning—Tarapada's movement retains a moral and spiritual dimension. His restlessness is not an escape from meaning but a search for it, rooted in the Tagorean ideal of freedom as self-realization through detachment. As Tagore observes in *The English Writings*, "Man's true home is not in the house he builds, but in the movement that leads him beyond it" (213). The paradox of "Atithi" lies in the transformation of homelessness into transcendence—the recognition that impermanence is the condition of authenticity. From a Baumanian perspective, Tarapada anticipates the "liquid modern" individual, whose existence is characterised by perpetual motion and the impossibility of rooted identity. However, whereas Bauman's liquid modern subject is

often trapped in a cycle of anxious reinvention, Tarapada's liquidity bears a distinctly Tagorean spirituality. His freedom is not the product of consumerist instability but of ethical detachment—an embrace of uncertainty as a mode of being. In his refusal to settle, Tarapada embodies a form of ethical modernity that values openness over possession, impermanence over permanence. In this sense, Tarapada emerges as a proto-modern subject precisely because he inhabits the tension between tradition and modernity without resolving it. His wandering gestures toward an alternative modern selfhood—fluid, relational, and self-determining—that resists both colonial domestication and nihilistic individualism. Freedom, for Tarapada, is not the possession of space but detachment from place: the courage to exist in motion, to live in the interstices of belonging and departure. Tagore's "Atithi" thus prefigures a modernity grounded not in progress or settlement, but in becoming—a ceaseless negotiation between identity and movement, between the self and the world it refuses to inhabit fully.

3. The Home and the World: Social Containment vs. Fluid Self

In "Atithi", the domestic sphere operates as a microcosm of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari term the "striated space"—a terrain marked by hierarchy, regulation, and moral control. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they explain that striated space "is organized, stabilized, and hierarchized... in contrast to the smooth space of the nomad" (474). The home in Tagore's story, much like colonial Bengal's *bhadralok* household, embodies this structure of containment: a moral and spatial order where movement is disciplined and identity is fixed through social roles. Within this world, domestic virtue is measured by rootedness, obedience, and submission to patriarchal authority. Tarapada's presence within the household initially seems to promise incorporation into this moral order. The maternal figures who attempt to "adopt" him, offering affection and belonging, represent society's desire to translate mobility into stability—to domesticate the wanderer by assigning him a role within the symbolic structure of kinship. Yet Tarapada's eventual departure destabilizes this desire, transforming the household from a site of moral resolution into a site of ethical tension. His refusal to remain is not motivated by rebellion against affection but by a deeper spiritual necessity. It is, as Deleuze and Guattari might phrase it, a "line of flight"—a movement that "escapes the codes of the State apparatus" and opens new modes of becoming (9).

Tagore's representation of home thus operates dialectically: it is at once a space of love and of constraint, security and suffocation. In the world of colonial Bengal, the home was idealized as the sanctum of the "inner domain," where the authenticity of the nation's moral life could be preserved from the contamination of the colonial "outer world" (Chatterjee 120). Yet Tagore, unlike many of his

contemporaries, refuses to romanticize this space. In *Sādhanā*, he observes that "when the home becomes an end in itself, it imprisons the soul" (Tagore 78). This insight is dramatized in "Atithi": the home's moral order is revealed as a form of social containment, a network of expectations that curtails spiritual and existential freedom. Tarapada's final departure transforms what might otherwise appear a tragedy—the rejection of familial comfort—into a poetic affirmation of impermanence. Tagore's narrative refuses closure; the wanderer's exit leaves behind both absence and illumination. The story's emotional resonance lies in its revaluation of loss as a mode of insight. As Tagore writes elsewhere, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence" (*The Religion of Man* 82). In this light, Tarapada's journey embodies not alienation but harmony with impermanence itself. By refusing to internalize the logic of the domestic "striated space," Tarapada enacts an ethical refusal—a rejection of the colonial bourgeois equation of belonging with virtue. His exit exposes the home's moral structure as contingent, constructed, and ultimately insufficient. The mobility that unsettles this order is not an escape from meaning but an entry into a different ontology: the fluid, relational self that Tagore aligns with the infinite. In transforming the pain of departure into spiritual insight, "Atithi" redefines the meaning of home, suggesting that true belonging arises not from possession or permanence but from the capacity to move, to detach, and to continue becoming.

4. Cinematic Amplification: Tapan Sinha's "Atithi" (1966)

Tapan Sinha's 1966 film adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's "Atithi" extends the philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of the original story by translating Tagore's poetics of wandering into a cinematic ontology of motion. Through its visual language—open landscapes, river crossings, and dissolving horizons—the film reimagines Tarapada's nomadism as a sensory and spatial experience. Sinha's use of the camera transforms Tagore's literary meditation on detachment into an audiovisual embodiment of the Deleuzian "smooth space." In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari define "smooth space" as a realm of indeterminate movement, "occupied without being counted" and opposed to the "striated space" of order and enclosure (474). Sinha's visual composition mirrors this concept: wide shots of the Bengal countryside dissolve the boundaries between land, sky, and water, rendering space as fluid and continuous. The river—one of the film's recurring motifs—functions as the material metaphor of this fluidity, its currents embodying Tarapada's restless, uncontained spirit. Each river crossing signifies not a transition between fixed points but a dwelling in movement, an enactment of what Deleuze calls "being in perpetual motion, inhabiting movement itself" (380). The camera's mobility further intensifies this experience. Sinha frequently frames Tarapada from behind or in long tracking shots that follow his wandering figure through fields and

roads. This cinematographic strategy produces what scholars of Deleuzian cinema term 'kinetic subjectivity'—a mode of perception in which movement precedes identity. The viewer does not observe Tarapada from an external, stable perspective but is drawn into his perpetual becoming, experiencing the world as he does: as passage, transition, and unfolding. In this sense, Sinha's filmic gaze rejects the fixity of character psychology and aligns instead with Deleuze's assertion that in modern cinema "the movement-image gives way to the time-image," where time itself becomes fluid, liberated from linear causality (*Cinema 2: The Time-Image* 34).

Sinha's adaptation also modernises Tagore's spiritual nomadism by situating it within the medium's inherently temporal form. The film's pacing—its long takes, gradual dissolves, and cyclical rhythm—mirrors Tagore's philosophical conception of impermanence. The moment of Tarapada's departure at the film's end, framed against an expansive horizon, reaffirms what Tagore calls in *Sādhanā* "the freedom of the soul to move beyond the finite" (59). Sinha converts this metaphysical ideal into visual rhythm: the dissolution of form into landscape evokes transcendence not as transcendental vision but as cinematic affect. Importantly, Sinha's "Atithi" does not romanticise wandering as rebellion. Instead, it visualizes detachment as ethical freedom, consistent with Tagore's humanist sensibility. The mise-en-scène—unfurnished interiors, open thresholds, and dissolving backgrounds—creates a tension between containment and release, echoing Tagore's critique of the domestic "striated space." As the camera follows Tarapada into open terrain, the viewer encounters the ethical beauty of impermanence: the realization that freedom resides not in possession of space but in the act of continual departure. In transforming Tagore's narrative into a visual meditation on movement, Sinha anticipates what Deleuze later describes as the cinema's power to render "the thought of the unthought"—a philosophical experience through motion rather than through discourse (*Cinema 2* 168). The film's fluid aesthetic thus amplifies Tagore's text into a modern cinematic expression of nomadic subjectivity, where selfhood is neither spatially grounded nor temporally complete but endlessly in flux. Through Sinha's lens, "Atithi" becomes not merely a story of departure but an image of becoming—of life lived as motion, rhythm, and release.

5. Nomadic Ethics and the Modern Condition

Rosi Braidotti's theory of nomadic ethics provides a vital philosophical lens through which to read Tarapada's journey in Rabindranath Tagore's "Atithi". Braidotti conceives of nomadism not as physical wandering, but as a critical mode of subjectivity—a "situated, accountable, and relational form of being that resists fixity and embraces becoming" (*Nomadic Subjects* 22). For Braidotti, the nomadic subject does not reject structure in favor of chaos; rather, it continually negotiates

transformation through movement and connection. This framework illuminates Tarapada's ethical orientation in "Atithi": his mobility is not aimless flight but a moral practice of openness, a refusal to ossify into the moral and social codes of colonial modernity. Tarapada's non-possession—of land, identity, or relational stability—serves as a profound critique of the bourgeois ethics of accumulation that dominated late nineteenth-century Bengal. The *bhadralok* ideal of virtue was inseparable from property, family, and reputation; to own was to be respectable, to be settled was to be moral. Against this backdrop, Tarapada's itinerant existence enacts what Braidotti calls "an ethics of sustainability based on mobility and relationality rather than ownership and domination" (*Transpositions* 36). His rejection of domestication and property is thus not a sign of immaturity, as his guardians presume, but a philosophical stance against a moral order that equates value with possession.

Tagore's ethical imagination aligns closely with this nomadic sensibility. In *The Religion of Man*, he writes, "The highest truth is that which can include and harmonize all differences" (Tagore 89). This cosmopolitan inclusivity—Tagore's insistence on the permeability of the self—finds embodiment in Tarapada's fluid subjectivity. He lives at the threshold of belonging and departure, embodying a form of ethical porousness that refuses to define the self through exclusion or containment. His openness to the world, his perpetual readiness to move, manifests what Tagore calls "freedom of the soul in its relation to the universal" (*Sādhanā* 62). In a colonial world obsessed with boundaries—geographical, moral, racial, and cultural—Tarapada's borderlessness becomes an act of resistance. His wandering through villages and rivers disrupts the spatial logic of colonial modernity, which sought to categorize, map, and domesticate both land and people. He is, in this sense, a decolonial nomad, whose very mobility defies the cartographic impulses of empire. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, "the nomad has a territory, but it is distributed across open space, not enclosed within it" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 421). Tarapada's relationship to the world mirrors this paradoxical possession-in-nonpossession: he inhabits space without owning it, lives among people without belonging to them, and finds meaning not in rootedness but in movement.

Braidotti's nomadic ethics also emphasizes affirmation over negation, proposing a subjectivity that "transcends reactive positions to become generative of new connections and modes of being" (*Nomadic Ethics* 10). Tagore's "Atithi" enacts precisely such an affirmative ethics. Tarapada's final departure, often read as melancholic, is in fact an act of creative renewal—a reaffirmation of impermanence as the ground of ethical life. The story's emotional depth lies in its transformation of loss into illumination, detachment into transcendence. Tagore's aesthetic of impermanence thereby converges with Braidotti's vision of "ethical sustainability through change," wherein life's transience becomes the very condition of its moral significance. In positioning Tarapada as a nomadic ethical

subject, Tagore anticipates a posthumanist understanding of the self as relational and non-binary. His ideal of spiritual humanism is not the fixed universalism of Enlightenment thought but a dynamic cosmopolitanism, grounded in empathy and openness to difference. As he writes in *Creative Unity*, "Life is a continual process of re-creation; it must pass beyond itself to remain true to itself" (117). Tarapada's ceaseless journey embodies this ethic of self-surpassing—a life lived in movement, attuned to the rhythms of the world rather than the boundaries of society. Thus, "Atithi" articulates what might be called Tagore's nomadic modernity: a moral vision in which freedom arises from detachment, belonging is redefined as connectedness-in-motion, and identity is conceived as an ongoing process of becoming. Through Tarapada, Tagore transforms the crisis of colonial modernity into a meditation on ethical fluidity, anticipating the nomadic ethics that Braidotti would later articulate. In a world increasingly defined by displacement and uncertainty, Tarapada's wandering emerges as a timeless allegory of the ethical potential of impermanence—an invitation to dwell in openness, to affirm the infinite within the transient.

6. Conclusion

Rabindranath Tagore's "Atithi" emerges as a strikingly prescient meditation on the conditions of modern subjectivity—its fluidity, uncertainty, and ethical ambivalence. Long before twentieth-century theorists of modernity such as Zygmunt Bauman, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, or Rosi Braidotti articulated their respective notions of liquidity, deterritorialization, and nomadic ethics, Tagore had already dramatized these ideas in narrative form. Through the figure of Tarapada—the adolescent wanderer who refuses domestication—Tagore stages a philosophical inquiry into what it means to be free in a world structured by colonial discipline, moral regulation, and the bourgeois cult of stability. "Atithi" thus anticipates the central preoccupations of modern and postmodern thought: the instability of identity, the fragility of belonging, and the possibility of an ethics grounded not in permanence but in movement. Tarapada's wandering, far from being an act of escapism, constitutes an ethical critique of both colonial and indigenous modes of containment. His refusal to remain within the domestic sphere challenges what Deleuze and Guattari call the "striated space" of the State apparatus—an ordered domain that fixes subjects through laws, hierarchies, and kinship structures (*A Thousand Plateaus* 474). By choosing the path of motion, Tarapada inhabits the "smooth space" of becoming, where the boundaries between self and world dissolve in the rhythm of perpetual movement. Tagore's narrative aligns this openness with moral and spiritual freedom. In *Sādhanā*, he writes, "Freedom does not mean absence of law, but the realization of the infinite within the finite" (Tagore 61). Tarapada's flight into the open, then, is not a renunciation of responsibility but an affirmation of ethical possibility—a movement toward realizing the infinite through detachment.

This ethos of movement also prefigures Bauman's diagnosis of modern liquidity. In *Liquid Modernity*, Bauman describes the late-modern self as one "perpetually becoming," compelled to adapt to an environment in which all structures melt into transience (8). Tarapada embodies this condition avant la lettre. His identity, neither stable nor assimilable, reflects the existential mobility that would come to define the modern psyche. Yet, unlike Bauman's alienated individual, whose fluidity results from social dislocation, Tarapada's motion remains spiritually charged. His detachment is voluntary and visionary, a search for harmony with what Tagore elsewhere calls "the universal flow of life" (*The Religion of Man* 87). Through this synthesis of spiritual humanism and ontological fluidity, Tagore transforms the anxiety of mobility into a creative moral principle. In Rosi Braidotti's terms, Tarapada exemplifies a nomadic ethical subject—a being defined not by possession but by relationality, not by closure but by transformation. Braidotti's "nomadic ethics" valorizes openness, multiplicity, and continuous becoming as affirmative modes of existence (*Transpositions* 36). Tarapada's non-possession—of land, identity, or kinship—embodies precisely this orientation. His movement critiques the colonial-bourgeois ethics of accumulation and permanence, replacing it with an ethics of impermanence and connection. In a world where colonial modernity sought to fix boundaries—geographical, moral, racial—Tagore's wanderer enacts borderlessness as resistance, refusing to be localized within any singular framework of identity. His departures gesture toward a cosmopolitan humanism that recognizes unity not in sameness but in the flux of being.

Tapan Sinha's cinematic adaptation of "Atithi" (1966) extends this ethical vision into a visual idiom. Through long takes, fluid camera movements, and expansive landscapes, Sinha transforms Tarapada's journey into what Deleuze would later describe as a "time-image"—a cinematic expression of thought in motion (*Cinema 2* 34). The film's recurring motifs of river crossings and dissolving horizons evoke Tagore's aesthetics of impermanence, rendering freedom as a kinetic and visual experience. The viewer is invited not merely to observe Tarapada's movement but to inhabit it—to experience being perpetually "en route." In doing so, Sinha translates Tagore's spiritual nomadism into a cinematic ontology of motion, reaffirming the philosophical continuity between Tagore's early modernism and postwar aesthetic theory. "Atithi" articulates what may be called Tagore's nomadic modernity—a vision of the modern self that reconciles movement with morality, impermanence with insight. In this vision, the crisis of modernity becomes a site of renewal rather than despair. Freedom is no longer tied to mastery or settlement but to the courage to live within transience, to affirm uncertainty as the texture of life itself. Tagore's wanderer, in his continual departures, embodies what Braidotti calls "the ethical sustainability of transformation" (*Nomadic Subjects* 23).

In combining Deleuzian nomadology, Bauman's liquidity, and Tagore's spiritual humanism, "Atithi" transcends both colonial modernity and traditional domestication. It envisions subjectivity as perpetual becoming—a ceaseless negotiation between attachment and release, self and world. The story's final gesture of departure does not signify loss but illumination: the recognition that to be human is to be in motion, that the self's truth lies not in rootedness but in rhythm. Through Tarapada, Tagore bequeaths to modernity an enduring ethical lesson—the grace of impermanence, the strength of detachment, and the beauty of becoming.

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