

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53032/tvcr/PP/2026.v8n1.07>

Between Rescue and Rule: Anandan's Identity Crisis in Anandabhadram

Malavika K.S.

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Chalakudy

Abstract

This paper examines the character Anandan in the Malayalam film *Anandabhadram* as a figure caught in an acute identity crisis, functioning simultaneously as a savior and a colonizer within a postcolonial cultural landscape. While Anandan is narratively positioned as a reformist hero who rescues the oppressed and restores moral order, this study argues that his savior role is inseparable from the internalization of colonial power structures. His authority is derived not merely from compassion but from rationalism, education and epistemic superiority traits historically aligned with colonial dominance. This paper is trying to analyse the character "Anandan" in *Anandabhadram* who is having a hybrid identity and he is in an unconscious search for his single identity. According to Homi K Bhabha, if an individual is living in between two cultures, it is the result of hybridity and ambivalence. It can happen to both colonizer and colonized. In this film, the manifestation of both orient and occident culture culminates in an single individual which make him a victim of hybridity and ambivalence. The protagonist of this film fluctuates between two different worlds and this victimizes him. Frantz Fanon, a Postcolonial critic in his work *Black Skin and White Mask* says that, "In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself, and what left for an individual is his fragmented self". The same thing happens in the life of Anandan, and what remains is his fragmented self. Anandan is a migrant, who is in an unconscious search for his identity. He is brought up as a hybrid person in foreign land. At the beginning of the film Gayatri Devi, Anandan's mother is telling stories about her homeland to Anandan.

Keywords: Identity crisis, Hybridity, White Saviour Complex, Colonizer

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

Introduction

The unending quest for identity and home is always a major focal point in postcolonial studies. The amalgamation of different cultures, beliefs and mindset forces a person to live a life of amphibian, and this also compels him to look for his single identity, and his home. In postcolonial context, identity is like our past or childhood, if we lost it once it is impossible to get it back. The desire to regain his identity and separate him from other culture and land creates a never-ending battle in an individual. The amalgamation of two different cultures result in hybrid identity, and this identity paves a path for life-long identity crisis in one's life. This same thing happens in the life of Anandan the major in the Malayalam film *Anandabhadram*.

Anandan who is fascinated by the stories told by his mother nurtures a desire to go to Sivapuram. The US and Other Mentality is clearly visible in the first scene of the film itself. He is hearing something that is entirely different from his universe. In the first scene, Gayatri Devi has lightened up the lamps in the hall and in between the lamps a toy train is running. The train symbolises the western culture, it is the colonizer who first invented the train. From the first scene itself it is clear that, he is being brought up as a hybrid person. Sivapuram became his private universe that he wants to possess. Sivapuram is like Utopia, until the arrival of Anandan. People of the village lived a peaceful life, following their day-to-day routines. Sivapuram is the only land, where they are unaffected by colonization just like Manomajra in *Train to Pakistan*. The peaceful life of Manomajra is destroyed by the arrival of ghost trains. Just like Manomajra, the peaceful existence of Sivapuram is broken by the arrival of Anandan. The place becomes a battle field after his arrival. Anandan is the one who brought western ideals to Sivapuram. He led half of his life as a westerner, after hearing the stories from his mother the concept of other started to originate in his mind. For him the stories are like fairy tales that are entirely different from him.

The US and other mentality in him is evident in the beginning scene where his mother tells him about light talking with each other. For Anandan, everything about Sivapuram is mysterious, from his mother's account he is hearing something that is entirely different from his world, lights talking with each other, the tale of *Nagamanikyam* (Magical Jewel) all these things he only sees in folktales. Everything about Sivapuram excites him. The colonizer mentality to possess things that excites him is evident in his dialogue "After completing my education in America we will go to Sivapuram and I will light thousands of lamps in Sivakavu" (*Anandabhadram* 00:06:43/02:13:57). Anandan constructs a mental picture of Sivapuram, it is filled with images of his mother's ancestral family, Sivakavu (A sacred place where people light lamps) The beginning scene of the film shows a significant part of his identity formation which was characterised through the folktales his mother told him about her homeland, his identity is fragmented in his early childhood. He is unable to locate himself fully to the western land and his mother's land. He is unable to locate his home. For Anandan, foreign land forms the physical reality and his mother's land remains as an imagined construct or the Third Space. Gayatri carves a world of mystery for

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

her son Anandan through the stories of her native land Sivapuram. The homeland become an imagined reality for Anandan the 'Exact other' of the physical reality. The occident and orient culture culminates in Anandan. Anandan being brought up in America, is having the mindset of colonizer. Thus white saviour complex can be clearly seen in his character. People with this complex have the underlying belief that they know everything and they have the power to rescue those people who don't have skill solving the problem than the people who are impacted.

In this movie Anandan is having this complex, being brought up in America he is seeing the natives as inferior. Anandan throughout this film recurrently saying that "I am here to light up the lamps in Sivakavu". According to the natives in Sivapuram, they are troubled because of the evil activities of Digambaran, in order to end his evil practices it is necessary to light lamps in Sivakavu. The natives are not ready to do such things, because they are afraid of Digambaran. Anandan by lighting the lamps he want to become the saviour of the people. Through his act of lighting the lamps he is trying to prove the point that he is powerful and different from the natives in Sivapuram. The natives like Sreeni, Mannar Mathai and Bhadra are saying that "Anandan's arrival become a blow to Digambaran, now everyone is relived and we got some confidence to fight against him. Finally the lights are going to lit" (*Anandabhadram* 00:48:42/02:13:57). Even the natives are considering Anandan as other, a westernizer who is capable of doing anything, who can save themselves from the clutches of Digambaran. When Anandan and Sreeni's father visit Sivakavu, Anandan is planning to decorate that place with lights, planning to have a thullal programme (A Ritual Dance) there. Through this he is giving open challenge to Digambaran and by saying this he is re-assuring the natives that he is not a simple man like them he is powerful and different from the natives, Who is capable of risking his life to save them.

At the end of the film, Anandan is the one who succeeds in lighting the lamps in Sivakavu. Even though the natives like Chemban, Sivaram they are more powerful than Anandan, they are very much rooted in their culture but they are unable to defeat Digambaran. A person raised in the united states; Anandan finally succeeds in this act. The natives believed that they are in the darkness, only the Western people are capable of illuminating lights in their lives. Here too the years old notion is perfectly worked out, the western man finally illuminate light in their lives. In Jonah Goldberg's view, identity is not imposed on an individual, it is chosen. Here the identity Anandan have is a mixed one, and that identity is chosen by him. The diasporic individual, Anandan developed a Double Consciousness, he is perceiving the world through the consciousness of the colonizer. The double Consciousness of Anandan about his identity is evident in the train scene to Sivapuram. Anandan came to Sivapuram not because of his own desire but to fulfil his mother's last wish. During the train journey Anandan tells in his mind, "I will light up a thousand lamps for my mother and I will tell those lamps that Gayatri of Madampi by sitting on the other corner of the world dreamed alot about this temple full of lamps" (*Anandabhadram* 00:07:33/02:13:57). Anandan's chosen self perceives his return to Sivapuram as a journey to fulfil

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

his mother's dream. During the train journey he says to his co-passengers that he will return to America after placing his mother's ashes in Sivakavu. His unconscious desire to return to his roots is hidden here. The western upbringing put a veil over his dual self and he is considering himself as a product of America. In that train, he identifies himself with the foreigners on the train more than the natives. He is considering himself as a member among them, that's why he can relate more to the foreigners. His conversation with the stranger on the train is an example for that;

Stranger: Devils and spirits still wander around there in Sivakavu even now!

Anandan: I have heard my mother telling stories like this.

Stranger: Nobody dares to light lamps there for a long time!

Anandan: Why?

Stranger: Digambaran, the evil sorcerer performs his sorcery in that Stranger place.

Anandan: oh! Black magic, interesting. (*Anandabhadram*, 00:09:33 to 00:09:53)

Anandan, who had a western upbringing dismisses the account of the native, according to him it occurs only in fairy tales. His western upbringing force him to refuse these things, because in his view these people are inferior and uneducated.

Even in the twentieth century they are living by believing those superstitions. For Anandan, Maravi Mathai, the character played by Cochin Haneefa (Malayalam Actor) seems like a humorous character in books. Anandan looks at the natives through the occidental perspective, according to him they are devoid of individuality and they are inferior than him. During his walk on the forest, he encountered a man whom he mistook as a ghost. Anandan got scared by seeing Chemban, he had a weird feeling when he first met him. Chemban is from a lower class family and he is dark skinned. His interaction with Chemban clearly showcased colonizer's interaction with the natives, they are considering them as uneducated and ugly. Inferiority towards chemban in Anandan's eyes is very evident in his dubious expression when Maravimathai identifies Bhama as the sister of chemban. After hearing that Anandan says like this "Did you just say that she is his sister? And he answers, that is a big story. A beautiful mother..." (*Anandabhadram* 00:35:46/02:13:57).

Anandan perceives the cultural practice and beliefs of Sivapuram as mythical and superstitious, at the same time it fascinates him. Here the western man Anandan is unable to comprehend the culture of the east, to whom Sivapuram appears as a magical world. Anandan's repetitive use of the word "interesting" expresses his fascination towards everything not only the culture, beliefs and jewels, the westerners are also interested in the native girls. Anandan who identifies himself as a westerner also felt attraction towards Bhadra that is evident in the film. In the film it is shown that he is in love with Bhadra. The affection he feels for Bhadra is not true, he is actually pretending it. He knows that, according to the ritual of the family Bhadra is the next Devi (Goddess). She is the only one capable of taking the Nagamanikyam (Precious Jewel) from Manthrikapura (Sacred Place). So here his western mentality is working out. He is pretending that

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

he is in love with Bhadra through. He became successful in convincing her and all the people in sivapuram that he is in love with her. In the beginning of the film, there is a scene where he is exploring the village, he got amazed by everything in the village and also he got attracted towards Bhadra's bestfriend. Anandan's love for Bhadra and his fascination towards other girls and village can be considered as the aftermath of the western fascination for the splendour of the east. The director has showcased this aspect brilliantly through a song sequence where Bhadra dresses up in resemblance to three different paintings of Raja Ravi Varma. The song "Pinnakamano" which is happening in Anandan's imagination, when he sees Bhadra in the Manthrikapura. It reflects up on the occident fascination for the typical and traditional women.

In Stuart Hall's perspective "identity is not stable and fixed, it emerges as a kind of unsettled space for an unsettled space or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses". Here Anandan's subconscious mind is rooted in the accounts of Sivapuram which his mother told him. He dismisses his first encounter with Digambaran at night, where he was doing a Puja (Ceremonial worship) as mere imagination and he is considering it as an after effect of his mother's stories. His subconscious mind identify himself as a part of Sivapuram. The conflict between his identities begin from his first day in Sivapuram. This conflict get further simulated by the natives' reception of Anandan as the superior other. The natives of Sivapuram sees him as the next heir of Madampi, in their view he is more educated and cultured than them. The natives came to see Anandan as superior, when they came to know that he is from America, they asked him to take their photo , they asked him for alcohol and then the Vellichapadu (Revealer of god, who says oracles of god) request him to arrange a job for his son Sreeni. All these things can be seen as the eastern belief in the superiority of west. At the same time Nangeli Muthassi and Ravunni Nair is trying to imitate the western culture by using western products like laptop. All this things happen because of their misconception that the western culture is far better than the eastern culture. Anandan's identification of himself with the west gets stronger, when the natives received him as other or outsider in his homeland. Through his language, mindset and his Anglicized habits like jogging, he is unable to categorize him to the group of natives. The repressed desire for the sense of belongingness for a home, which was there in his subconscious mind. The villagers seen him daring enough to propose dreams of change, he is capable of doing things that the natives can't do. When Sreeni died, Mannar Mathai informs Anandan first, that makes clear that the natives started to recognise him as an important person in that village. Anandan trying to socialize with the natives can be seen as his unconscious reminder by his mind that his identity belong to the village Sivapuram.

Anandan's repeated declaration to light lamps in Sivakavu, therefore to restore the old customs of the village can be seen as his desire for belongingness but he is unable to belong to one culture. At the same his anglicized behaviour and habits identify him as a part of western culture. He is unable to get rid of that. More than that the natives are always addressing him as outsider.

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

Mannar Mathai who always says that he has come from Sanfransico, his external behaviour assuring him that he is a westerner and his internal behaviour assuring him that he belongs to eastern culture. Actually he is trapped in this web and unable to find his real identity. Various scenes in the movie also contribute to Anandan's identification of this native self. For instance when Bhadra and Anandan visit Manthrikapura, Anandan expresses his desire to see Nagamanikyam, then Bhadra tells Anandan like this: "You might have come from America! That does not mean you could see the diamond soon" (*Anandabhadram* 00:58:02/02:13:57). When Anandan chants the mantra (A statement or slogan to worship god) Kunjootan (the little snake) allows both to see Nagamanikyam. His knowledge of the Nagamantra (slogan used to worship naga) and his reverence towards the serpent deities represent how he is unknowingly tied to the traditional legacy. This incident is a proof that, he is having an eastern roots. For a western man it is impossible to see the Nagamanikyam. He saw the Nagamanikyam because he is also a part of this village. Anandan's view of everything native as mere stories and myths but also ignite his subconscious about his own worthiness as a rightful son of Sivapuram. If he is a westerner, he would grab the jewel and he will return to America, but here he only expresses his desire to see that jewel he heard about this from his mother's account. His subconscious mind reminding him that he is the son of Sivapuram. His quest for Nagamanikyam as one to see not to conquer. When he recognises Maravi Mathai from his mother's tale and develops an affection while his identity immediately switches to the land where he grew (America) once he start conversing eagerly to the foreign passengers. The tradition, claiming its antiquity prohibits questioning and encourages its blind observation. Anandan thus have roots in America and his mother's home land. His habit of using English language, his anglicized habits, all these external qualities make him as a member of westerners. It is impossible to say that he belong to one culture. In reality he is linked to modernity, at the same time he is connected to Sivapuram through Gayatri.

In this film, Anandan as well as the anti-hero Digambaran trying to gain their identity by establishing legitimacy over Sivakavu. Digambaran symbolises everything dark, negative, cruel and death; the uncertainty associated with wilderness, he is a primitive man, he is fully immersed in his culture, beliefs. Where Anandan stands for truth, light, hope and refinement. The word Anandan traces its origin to "an-antha" meaning 'one without end', another name for Shesha (snake) the serpent associated with lord Vishnu who bears the universe upon his head. Anandan, the supposed 'bearer/guardian' of the universe. In world's point of view Europe or Westerner is considered as the guardian of entire universe, thus he became the guardian of Sivapuram by lighting the lamps. His relationship with his mother identify Sivapuram as his roots. Anandan, although influenced by mother's tales, is an educated modern man who sceptically challenges the superstition and he is not scared of anything, all these traits categorize him as a westerner. Gayatri and Bhadra, who is undoubtedly linked to Sivakkavu and Sivapuram thus stand as the representatives of tradition and serve as the modern Anandan's link to his roots. By juxtaposing

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

the nature and culture, the movie glorifies the tradition created by civilization through Anandan and condemns the natural / wild, Digambaran. Anandan by spreading light reclaims Sivakavu from Digambaran and reinstates the order and happiness once prevailed at Sivapuram which represents the victory of civilization over the primitive. The movie can also be consider as the duel between Good and Evil. In this film, the major factor which triggers Anandan's identity conflict and double consciousness is his encounter with the antagonist Digambaran, the evil black magician played by Manoj K Jayan. Digambaran's character development happens in the movie through the accounts of him by Gayatri and the natives. From his mother to the stranger in the train to the astrologer Raman speaks of Digambaran's dark deeds and warns Anandan about him. The natives are scared of him they are seeing him as the symbol of Yaman. He is the one who decides birth and death in their village Sivapuram.

Though the character development is in a negative light, the image of Digambaran grows in Anandan's mind in parallel to his romantic perception of his homeland. Digambaran becomes the legendary face of sivapuram through the stories. The conscious self of Anandan sees Digambaran as a criminal and murderer. He does not give any recognition to his power and knowledge. When he first met Digambaran, he says him like this:

Anandan: Mister Digambaran, if I tell you the truth the people all over the village have a bad opinion about you! I feel pity for you for that. Why don't you start a better life by not harassing people? By worshipping god, doing some puja and being helpful to others isn't it the right way to live. Mister Digambaran I am glad that I have met you.

Digambaran: See you next time. (*Anandabhadram* 00:41:35 to 00:41:58)

From this conversation it is clear that Anandan sees Digambaran as an ordinary man who is not capable of doing magic. The native people try to convince him by informing about the evil acts he did it in the past. From his arrival onwards the name that he is constantly hearing is that of Digambaran, everybody is talking about him, even his love interest Bhadra is scared of this man. Being a western man he doesn't believe in this magic, transmigration. According to him all these things are happend in stories. In his view a native man can't be powerful, he can't be a dominant person in that village. In his view he is an uneducated man, dark-skinned man who still believes in the superstitions. In comparison with Anandan, Anandan is more educated, handsome than Digambaran, he is superior to everyone. According to him everyone should talk about him, but that is not happening there, everyone is running behind Digambaran. Here the western mindset in Anandan is working, western people had a speciality that they want everyone to pay attention to him, they want the eastern people to consider them superior than others. After the murder of Sreeni, he tries to get Digambaran arrested by police. The White Saviour mentality in him and the belief in his own superiority in him leads him to take on the task of defeating Digambaran and thus save the village. He judges Digambaran on a moral plane. The colonial attitude where the native psyche is repeatedly represented as savage and attributing them bestiality and foulness are performed by

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

Anandan here. The name Digambaran, synonymous with Shiva (Hindu God) like shiva he is living close to nature his clothes, his accessories everything is closely related with him. The god Shiva is known as the destroyer likewise he too is trying to destroy the Madampi family. Through this he is actually paying for the death of his loved ones. Digambaran shares a strong relationship with Sivakavu, he is the one who is guarding the Sivakavu.

Apart from Anandan, Digambaran is a pure native, he belongs to Sivapuram. At the same time other natives like Nangeli Muthassi, Sreeni and other people are very happy when Anandan came to this places, their identity is intermingled when they came into contact with Anandan. The natives after mingling with Anandan forgot about their culture, beliefs. Digambaran is practicing the rituals that is related to their custom. He is the only pure native living in Sivapuram, it is explicit from the dress he wore, the place he lives. Actually he is the one who never touched the taste of modernity. Modernity has taken over the place, but Digambaran still remains the same. The best example for this is the steam engine train. The only way to reach Sivapuram is through engine train. The invention of radio, they are being informed about the matters of the world through radio. The Sivapuram that he witness is rather primitive, within few days he has succeeded in influencing people. He has controlled everyone in Sivapuram except Digambaran. The natives are considering him as a saviour. His encounter with Digambaran makes his quest for identity more complex.

The subconscious self of Anandan cannot see Digambaran as a normal villain, who is taking revenge from Madampi family. But as a culminating image of everything fascinating about his motherland. Where his conscious self-views Digambaran as an ordinary man who is taking revenge from Madampifamily by sacrificing the lives of innocent people like Bhama, Sreeni, Raman Astrolger and so on. In his eyes he is a murderer, criminal and he is trying to arrest him by using the evidence but nobody is dared to arrest him. While his unconscious self which desires absolute belongingness with the homeland develops a fascination towards the evil black magician Digambaran whose image is painted in the psyche of every being of Sivapuram. Anandan through his life developed an unbreakable connection with his homeland through the stories and accounts of his mother. Each and everything about Sivapuram fascinated him just like a fairytale fascinates a kid. Just like Manthrikapura and Nagamanikyam, Digambaran also forms an important place in Anandan's psyche. He is someone beyond his comprehension, he creates curiosity in him, that's why after hearing so many evil deeds of Digambaran from the natives, he behaves with him properly in their first encounter. He addresses him as a simple ordinary man just like the natives in Sivapuram. His desire for home and dream of Sivapuram comprises a larger image of Digambaran in it. His fascination for the magical and mysterious things of Sivapuram thus extends from its people and towards Digambaran. The kind of dominance he shows on the natives fascinates him. The way he make people scared of him, the way he rules the village. All this traits made Anandan to adore him. His conscious self-hates him at the same time his subconscious self-adores him. The fearful adoration which the natives have for Digambaran subtly influences

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

Anandan and to secretly desire for an equivalent self for him, which solely belongs and carved to the land of Sivapuram. His subconscious self which make him a member of Sivapuram want to be just like Digambaran. Here his search for a single identity can be clearly seen.

The underlying deep desire to become powerful just like Digambaran finds a way of expression with the parakayapravesham (Transmigration). Anandan's subconscious desire to find a single identity, in his mother's homeland can be seen through the act of transmigration. In this movie, the transmigration scene is shown as a result of Digambaran's evil deeds. In this movie, it is shown that Digambaran is using Anandan's body to get the magical jewel Nagamanikyam. Actually here Anandan's desire to have a single identity is shown through the act of Transmigration. Anandan's long desire to have a single identity is fulfilled, but he is unable to keep that for a long time. His western self-came in to surface, thus he fails to find a single identity. It is not only Digambaran who chooses Anandan worthier to exchange his body with in order to complete his evil motives, but the act itself is the fulfilment of Anandan's secret desire to mirror Digambaran's self. Here Anandan is behaving just like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. Kurtz who is first fascinated by the culture of African people, end up being the ruler of that place and his identity crisis paved him a way for death. Just like Anandan, Kurtz is also having a psychological conflict in him, due to identity crisis, he end up being mad. Here in the character of Anandan, an element of madness is happening when his American self and native came in to contact. Just like Kurtz, Anandan also want to become a dominant person in the village called Sivapuram and he realizes that the place he wants was in the hands of Digambaran, the village is in his control. His subconscious mind began to see his self in him, he secretly started to adore the person.

The triggered hybrid identity and mental conflict in Anandan reach its peak after the act of transmigration. Anandan's stability of mind gets destroyed within the conflict. Through the act of transmigration, he is trying hard to belong to a single identity. But he is unable to have the life of a native person because of his western upbringing. He is unable to become a pure native or a pure westerner. These two cultures are embedded in him, if he tries to be a part of one culture, conflict arises in him. The idea of home becomes ambiguous and fluid to him. He became a postcolonial refugee, not being able to feel home even he is in his own home. After the act of transmigration, his mental stability destroys. At this point he hallucinates about his childhood is telling him to go home which is America. The childhood self of Anandan tell him like this, "Mother was right, it is better to go home than staying here. Come on" (*Anandabhadram* 01:19:05/02:13:57). This lines clearly shows the feelings of his conscious mind that is considering America as his home. The conscious self relates him to America, where he was brought up. At the same time his childhood self that he imagines prompts him to light the lamps in Sivakavu.

Anandan: It was mother's dream right! It was mother's dream to light lamps. If we don't fulfil that desire, mother's soul will wander around this place and she will never get

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

Salvation. Come on let's go to Sivakavu to lit the lamps Come let's go. (*Anandabhadram* 01:40:03 to 01:40:14)

Here in this lines, his subconscious urge to become a part of his mother's land is evident. In this movie the conflict between his American identity and his native identity began to come into surface after the transmigration scene. Whenever he tries to become a part of one culture this conflict will happen as a result, it will affect his mental stability. After the act of transmigration he is in the edge of madness. He is unable to find out what his mind wants. He is unable to find out who he is. The whole idea of mother's wish takes a different meaning at this point in the movie. Anandan unconsciously associates his mother with his motherland. His attachment with his mother gets in parallel to his attachment with his mother's land. The dream of lighting lamps in Sivakavu becomes the dream of his motherland. Anandan finds himself in deep dilemma of selfhood when his identity as a foreigner and identity as a native reaches its higher point of conflict. In the final fight with Digambaran in the Manthrikapura, Anandan assumes himself as the saviour of the land and willing to die for his mother's dream. At the same time, he is unable to kill Digambaran, as he reflects his own hidden inner desire of identity and belongingness. During the fight sequence with Digambaran both this identities came in to surface and they both are in conflict. His western identity tells him to kill that person and become the saviour of that village. So that instead of Digambaran he can be the dominant person of Sivapuram. His western ideology is working there, at the same time his subconscious is telling him to not to kill Digambaran, because Digambaran represents his fascination for his mother's land, his identity and his belongingness all that is represented through Digambaran. When he is about to kill Digambaran his unconscious mind came in to surface and that's why he leave him without killing. It is not Anandan who defeats Digambaran, it is Chemban, the native blind man who defeats Digambaran by cutting his hallux and by blinding him. The movie showcased the fighting sequence between Digambaran and Anandan, but the duel was not between the characters. The conflict happened between Anandan's conscious and unconscious mind where the former is telling him that he is an American where the latter identify himself to his native land. The conflict happened to know about his real identity.

Anandan's identity crisis in *Anandabhadram* is not merely psychological but profoundly cultural and ideological. His conflict between Western modernity and indigenous tradition manifests symbolically through shifts in costume, language, ritual practice, and behavioural codes. The transition from Western attire to the traditional *mundu*, along with his participation in ritual chanting, reflects not a stable transformation but an oscillation between competing cultural inheritances. The second half of the film intensifies this oscillation, foregrounding his fractured consciousness and the psychological strain produced by hybridity. His mental instability following the act of transmigration dramatizes the impossibility of attaining a singular, uncontested identity. Even when Sivakavu is illuminated and communal harmony appears restored, Anandan's internal conflict remains unresolved. The villagers continue to perceive him as an outsider, reinforcing his

The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 8 & Issue 1 (January-March 2026)

liminal status within the very homeland he seeks to reclaim. The film ultimately suggests that diasporic return does not guarantee reintegration; instead, it exposes the permanence of hybridity. Anandan's journey demonstrates that identity in the postcolonial world is neither pure nor recoverable but continuously negotiated within intersecting cultural frameworks. The desire for a singular origin or stable self proves illusory. By portraying the psychological, cultural, and symbolic tensions embedded in return migration, the film underscores that modern subjectivity is constituted through multiplicity rather than unity. Anandan's eventual acceptance of his dual consciousness signifies not resolution but survival—an acknowledgment that inhabiting the in-between is the inevitable condition of the diasporic self. Thus, the quest for a pure identity remains an unattainable ideal, while hybridity emerges as the enduring reality of contemporary existence.

Works Cited:

- Abraham, Saljijmol. "The Journey of Anandan as the Quest for Self of a Diasporic Individual in *Anandabhadram*." *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019.
- Anandabhadram. Directed by Santhosh Sivan, produced by Manian Pillai Raju, Kavya Film Company, 2005.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 1899. Penguin Classics, 2007.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann, Pluto Press, 2008.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, pp. 222–237.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1979.
- Young, Robert J. C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. Routledge, 1995.