

# Abandonment and Identity: A Jungian Exploration of the Orphan Archetype in Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book*

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**Abstract**—Fairy Tales are written adaptations derived from folk tales that have created a great impact on the readers. Loss, Survival, and Belonging are some of the themes associated with the Orphan Archetype. The Orphan Archetype is a cognitive universal concept that is not confined to any particular culture. This paper emphasizes that Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book* reinforces the archetypal orphan's resonance of the 19<sup>th</sup> century anxieties about family and society while also emphasizing the anguish and restoration of identity caused by abandonment through Jungian archetypal framework. *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889) is the first volume in Andrew Lang's series of twelve coloured fairy books. The recurring figure, orphan in many of the tales often appear as hero or heroines. Being deprived of parental care they often undergo transformation. Based on Carl Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, the orphan archetype emerges as a universal psychological pattern that represents common human anxieties of loss, alienation, and quest for belonging. The Orphan figures not only face abandonment but also a fragmented identity that is eventually rebuilt through challenges, moral growth, and acknowledgement. The orphan's transition from marginalization to recognition reflects both the struggle for survival and human longing for family and community bonds. Characters like Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Aladdin, Beauty and the Goose-girl represented how loss and pain become turning point for one's personal development, moral evaluation and re-entry to societal life. Due to the loss of parental care, these characters are exposed to abandonment, abuse and coldness. They themselves evolve to bring about change and eventual acceptance within society or family. Through individuation, the characters transform their grief into triumph by establishing themselves and obtaining psychological wholeness and social equilibrium. Thus, identity in these

stories is not inherited, but rather deliberately sought through perseverance, virtue, and reinvention. The orphan's transformation shows that one's true identity and belonging are not inherited but achieved through bravery, virtue and action.

**Index Terms**—Abandonment, Fairy tales, Identity transformation, Jungian Archetype, Orphan archetype.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fairy tales are an important genre in children's literature. They blend entertainment with tradition, ethics, and psychological insights. Bruno Bettelheim, a psychologist, stated that fairy tales nurture creativity and imagination in both children and adults, enabling them to explore potential futures beyond ordinary life. Fairy tales are transmitted across generations and reflect values such as obedience, humility, and perseverance of their particular time. The orphan archetype is a part of the psyche that bears the wound of abandonment, alienation, and the subsequent journey towards restoring a sense of belonging. In addition to this, it depicts an identity crisis in which loss destabilizes self and must be restored with experience, effort, and gratitude. This transition from a fragmented identity to an individuation is central to the orphan tales. It is the orphan's lifelong quest to find where they truly belong and to discover who they are. According to Carl Jung, a cultural complex consists of unconscious beliefs, feelings, and attitudes that are embedded within a society (Jung, 1964). Within this perspective, the orphan archetype reflects a universal psychological pattern in which abandonment leads to

the process of individuation in which identity formation occurs gradually through confrontation with obstacles, guidance, and transformation. Andrew Lang (1844-1912) was a nineteenth-century Scottish poet, novelist, scholar and anthologist who was active during the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras. He also served as a link between academic work and popular culture as well as ancient and the modern. The Blue Fairy Book (1889) is the first of Andrew and Leonora Lang's twelve coloured Fairy Book within the larger 25- volume fairy book series. It is ground breaking because it was the first affordable collection made available for the Victorian middle class. Leonora and Andrew Lang functioned as anthologists and retailers shaping, existing narratives through translation and literary refinement. The Blue fairy book consists of 37 stories like "The Yellow Dwarf", "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Sleeping Beauty In The Wood", "Cinderella"; "Or The Little Glass Slipper", "Aladdin And The Wonderful Lamp", "Rumpelstilzkin", "Beauty And The Beast", "The White Cat", "Little Thumb", "Hansel And Grettel", "Snow-White and Red-Rose", "The Goose Girl", and "Blue Beard". Many of these tales originate from the European traditions shaped by writers like Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and the Madame d'Aulnoy. Even when the cultural origins of these tales are diverse, the collection frames them for Victorian children emphasizing morality, resilience, and social harmony. This became immensely popular and is considered a classic in Children's Literature. "Cinderella; Or the Little Glass Slipper", "Snow-White and Rose-Red", "Aladdin and The Wonderful Lamp", and "Beauty and The Beast" are few tales chosen. Aladdin, Snow white, Rose Red, and Beauty begin their transformative journey from a position of orphan hood, be it literal, psychological, or societal. By relying on integrity, resourcefulness or supernatural intervention they overcome their alienation and secure a place of belonging. Loss, Survival, and Belonging are the three stages they pass through, each of which contributes to the disintegration, negotiation, and final reconstruction of identity. Loss is the initial stage of the journey in which the orphan suffers due to the absence of parents, either by death or separation. The orphan experiences a deep sense of insecurity and instability. Survival is the second stage in which the orphan learns to sustain hardships and grow in independence. At this stage,

suffering is transformed to strength that helps the orphan to gain progress towards recovery. It is the connecting stage between loss and belonging. Belonging is the third stage in which the orphan finds fulfilment by finding love, acceptance and a sense of community, leading to renewed identity and restored connection. These three stages not only reveal the orphan's personal transformation from instability to belonging but also highlight the cultural values of strength, identity, and selfhood embedded in these selected tales. For Victorian children, the tales were not meant only for entertainment but also to act as a lens for emotional and moral development.

Loss, Survival and Belonging as The Orphan Archetype "Cinderella; Or the Little Glass Slipper" was modified and refined by Leonora and Andrew Lang for the Victorian readers. It was originally familiarised by Charles Perrault in seventeenth-century France. Cinderella is a kind-hearted young girl who is motherless and lives with her father, stepmother, and stepsisters. Her stepmother forces her to do household work and let her sleep among the ashes in rags. Without parental care, she is left without protection and subjected to cruelty and neglect. With her fairy godmother's magic, Cinderella attends the royal ball, where her beauty and grace captivate the prince. Cinderella undergoes three stages of transformation; loss, survival and belonging to find her worth and place in the world. Cinderella suffers from loss not only from her mother's death but also from her father's passiveness. She is mistreated by her stepmother and stepsisters and her father never protects or guides her.

"She could not bear the good qualities of this pretty girl, and the less because they made her own daughters appear the more odious. She employed her in the meanest work of the house: she scoured the dishes, tables, etc., and scrubbed madam's chamber and those of the misses, her daughters; she lay up in a sorry garret, upon a wretched straw bed." (Lang, 1905, p.66).

She experiences immense loneliness and longs for safety and love. Since Cinderella is kind and gentle, she has the patience to withstand hardships without losing her true self. Her patience and moral consistency mark the beginning of individuation, through which the self affirms its identity despite

hardship. Cinderella's circumstance exhibits a state of fragmented identity in which her social status as a servant contrasts her inner beauty. This contrast between her true self and her imposed social role is central to the orphan archetype. The fairy godmother uses her magic to change Cinderella's appearance and circumstances, paving the way for her transformation. This shows that survival is not only about personal strength but also about receiving help, support, and opportunities beyond oneself.

"They went to court, and Cinderella followed them with her eyes as long as she could, and when she had lost sight of them, she fell a-crying. Her godmother, who saw her all-in tears, asked her what was the matter. "I wish I could-I wish I could" She was not able to speak the rest, being interrupted by her tears and sobbing. This godmother of hers, who was a fairy, said to her: Thou wishest thou couldst go to the ball." (Lang, 1905, p.68).

After going through loss and survival, Cinderella attains a sense of belonging. The prince's acknowledgement restores both Cinderella's societal position and her inner self, bridging the gap between her true identity and external perception. At this stage, Cinderella recognizes her true worth. Her marriage restores her place of honor, and her journey as an orphan comes to an end. "She was conducted to the young prince, dressed as she was, and he thought her more charming than ever, and, a few days after, married her." (Lang, 1905, p.73-74).

"Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp" was retold by Leonora and Andrew Lang in *The Blue Fairy Book*. It was first introduced by Antoine Galland in the *Arabian Nights*. Aladdin, the son of a poor tailor, is tricked into retrieving a magic lamp from a hidden cave. By using the genie's power, he gains riches, wins the princess, and builds a magnificent palace. When the lamp is stolen, he nearly loses everything, but through courage, he restores his life. Aladdin is an orphan since he has no father, and his mother is powerless. He is lazy, idle, and a wanderer due to lack of protection and guidance. He becomes mentally and economically unstable. Without proper guidance, Aladdin develops an unstable sense of self, reflecting the psychological effects of abandonment. He is lured into by his uncle in disguise, and that is how he first survives; however,

eventually develops a crafty resourcefulness. Aladdin depends on the lamp in the deserted cave. Relying on wit and magic, Aladdin demonstrates how his identity is gradually rebuilt, with external factors contributing to the shaping of his previously fragmented identity. From that point on, his ability to survive rests on his cunning and ability to summon supernatural assistance. His ascent to power, wealth, and palaces is a result of his resourcefulness and the influence of magic.

The magician left Persia forever, which plainly showed that he was no uncle of Aladdin's, but a cunning magician, who had read in his magic books of a wonderful lamp which would make him the most powerful man in the world. He had picked the foolish Aladdin for this purpose, intending to get the lamp and kill him afterward. (Lang, 1905, p.76)

Aladdin finds recognition, acceptance, love, and the sense of belonging through his marriage to the Sultan's daughter. He is no longer defined by loss and vulnerability. His ascent to power reflects both material achievement and the formation of a stable identity, transforming him from a marginal existence to social recognition. "After this Aladdin and his wife lived in peace. He succeeded the sultan when he died and reigned for many years, leaving behind him a long line of kings." (Lang, 1905, p.88)

"Beauty and the Beast" was first introduced by Madame de Villeneuve in French. It was made available to the Victorian readers by Leonora and Andrew Lang in *The Blue Fairy Book*. "Beauty and the Beast" is a story about Beauty, through which the orphan archetype is illustrated. With the collapse of her family's fortune, Beauty faces deep feeling of loss and disorientation. Stripped of wealth and social standing, she represents the emotional orphan, lacking security and parental guidance, yet forced to find her own and identity. Beauty's move to the Beast's castle highlights the orphan's experience of abandonment. By accepting a life with someone she initially finds intimidating, she must confront her fears as she needs to adapt to an unfamiliar environment.

"Poor Beauty, much distressed, said to them: "I have indeed caused this misfortune, but I assure you I did it innocently. Who could have guessed that to ask for a

rose in the middle of summer would cause so much misery? But as I did the mischief it is only just that I should suffer for it. I will therefore go back with my father to keep his promise.” (Lang, 1905, p.109)

This shows how Beauty takes responsibility and faces the results of her actions her acceptance of responsibility and her bravery, important for her growth as an emotional orphan. In the castle she slowly builds her character through patience, kindness, and good judgement. Each night she responds to the Beast with gentleness rather than with fear. In Victorian cultural background, Beauty’s survival exemplifies virtues of calmness, self-mastery and inward strength which guide her toward belonging. She is rewarded with affection, stability and reintegration into society after accepting the Beast’s proposal. Her acceptance frees the Beast from the spell and restores his form as a prince. After marriage, she is no longer an emotional orphan. “Beauty found that he had disappeared, and in his place stood her long-loved prince!” (Lang,1905, p.122). From a Jungian perspective, Beauty’s evolution shows how the orphan archetype develops a deeper sense of self. Her early experiences of loss and social hardship challenge her sense of identity but her virtuous and compassionate choices help her regain control and find belonging. By accepting the Beast, she changes not only him but also her own situation by returning to society and overcoming her emotional orphan hood. In the end, her journey shows that experiences of abandonment can shape a strong and moral identity. Her sense of self develops through both loss and deliberate choices.

“Snow-white and Rose-Red” adapted by Andrew Lang in *The Blue Fairy Book*, has its origin in Grimm Brothers’ *Children and Household Tales*. Snow white and Rose Red were two kind and loveable sisters who lived with their widowed mother near the forest. They offer shelter to the bear during winter. Even though the dwarf never shows gratitude, they repeatedly help him. At last, their kindness is rewarded when the bear they helped is revealed as an enchanted prince. The home feels incomplete with the absence of their father. They depend on each other. Even though the sisters help the dwarf every time he is in trouble, he never shows gratitude. This signifies the loss of recognition for their goodness. Their experience signifies not merely physical abandonment but also a lack of recognition,

which leads to a subtle suppression of identity. The dwarf growled,

“I am stuck fast and I can't get away; and you silly, smooth-faced, milk-and-water girls just stand and laugh! Ugh! what wretches you are "Ugh! The children did all in their power, but they couldn't get the beard out; it was wedged in far too firmly.” (Lang,1905, p.267).

This captures the animosity orphans encounter in a society that devalues purity. The sisters' cooperation and compassion allow them to survive. Their unwavering moral conduct demonstrated a resilient inner identity in the face of adversity. Despite his lack of gratitude, they tried utmost everything to free the dwarf from the fish or the tree. Resilience as a survival strategy is demonstrated by their moral fortitude, which allows them to assist even when ridiculed. In this case, survival entails continuing to act morally in the face of abuse. When the dwarf dies and the sisters are reunited with the bear eventually turns out to be a magical prince, a sense of belonging is finally achieved. Recognition through marriage restores social identity while reinforcing their personal value.

“Snow-white married him and Rose-red his brother, and they divided the great treasure the dwarf had collected in his cave between them. The old mother lived for many years peacefully with her children; and she carried the two rose-trees with her, and they stood in front of her window, and every year they bore the finest red and white roses.” (Lang,1905, p.270)

They are rewarded for their consistency, which turns their marginalization into happiness for the group. The orphan archetype in “Snow-White and the Rose-Red” reflects that inner solitude is resolved through persistent virtue rather than physical loss.

Leonora and Andrew Lang included “The Goose Girl” in their collection *The Blue Fairy Book*, adapting the Grimm Brothers’ version. The Goose Girl is the story of a young princess who is betrayed by her maid on her way to meet her betrothed. She is made to live the life of a humble goose-tender until the truth is uncovered and her royal position is regained. Though tricked and stripped of her rightful status, she shows perseverance, dignity, and unwavering virtue. The Goose Girl is not an orphan by birth, but still she

experiences deep sense of isolation. Her role as a bride is seized by her maid. From the destiny of royal honour, she is cast down into the humble task of herding geese. She lost her companion, Falada, a loyal horse when the maid ordered him to be killed. This sudden change breaks her identity as her social status and personal identity are forcibly detached.

Early next morning, as she and Curdken were driving their flock through the gate, she said as she passed under,

“Oh! Falada, ‘tis you hang there;”  
and the head replied:  
Tis you; pass under, Princess fair:  
If your mother only knew,  
Her heart would surely break in two”  
(Lang,1905, p.274)

Her loneliness and sorrow are embodied in these ritualized words. Even after losing so much, she stays patient and true and holds on to her moral dignity. She withstands her hardship with grace, strength, and will, never allowing her suffering to break her spirit. though she has been Though she has been stripped of her title and treated as less than herself, she holds on to who she is. As a sign of her royal identity, her golden hair turns into a site of covert resistance. She chants and loosens her hair every day:

“Wind, wind, gently sway,  
Blow Curdken’s hat away;  
Let him chase o’er field and wold  
Till my locks of ruddy gold,  
Now astray and hanging down,  
Be combed and plaited in a crown.”  
(Lang,1905, p.275)

Her hidden story comes to light when the elderly king overhears her quietly speaking her sorrow.

“Here I sit, deserted by all the world, I who am a king's daughter, and a false waiting-maid has forced me to take off my own clothes and has taken my place: with my bridegroom, while I have to fulfil the lowly office of a goose-girl”. (Lang,1905, p. 277).

At last, the king discovers the maid’s trick and restores the princess to her loyal attire, revealing who she is. Having found herself, her journey of self-discovery is complete. The maid is sentenced to punishment for

her betrayal. She herself was condemned to be dragged in a spiked barrel, an end with her belonging guaranteed, her position restored, and her dignity upheld. The Goose Girl attains a sense of belonging by revealing the truth that her maid forced her to exchange roles. She finds a rightful place, restores her true identity, and finds acceptance.

## II. APPLICATION OF JUNGIAN ARCHETYPAL THEORY

According to Jung, archetypes are universal, inherited patterns embedded in the collective unconscious that shape human imagination, myths, and stories. In particular, the orphan archetype captures the fundamental human experience of loss, vulnerability, and the search for security and belonging. In these selected tales from *The Blue Fairy Book* the antagonists such as wicked stepmother, stepsisters, sinister sorcerer, envious siblings, and the false maid are portrayed as shadows with destructive instincts. They are the dark opposing forces that test the orphan’s resilience. They express the repressed fear and jealousy inside them. The protagonists such as Cinderella, Aladdin, Snow-White and Rose-Red, Beauty, and the Goose Girl, are orphans who represent the collective unconscious fear of alienation and loss of identity. They symbolize the light side of the archetype with childlike goodness, resilience, virtue and strength. Cinderella represents the forgotten child, lacking parental affection and facing mistreatment, yet her resilience and inherent kindness lead to her eventual transformation and acknowledgment. Likewise, the Goose-Girl, stripped of her royal identity and voice, endures servitude before reclaiming her rightful position, illustrating the orphan's journey from rejection to self-discovery. Although Aladdin is not literally an orphan, he starts as a lost and impoverished young man, representing the classic outsider whose development arises from facing challenges and uncovering hidden talents. The recurring figure of the orphan in Lang’s collection underscores the profound impacts of abandonment and survival as shared psychological experiences. For Jung, these stories embody the process of individuation: the orphaned self must confront its darker aspects, seek guidance from mentors, and strive for completeness by transforming loss into strength. Therefore, the orphan archetype in these tales not only

creates dramatic tension but also reflects the mental journey of advancing from rejection and fragility to empowerment and integration.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology used in this study is qualitative literary analysis. It centres on examining meaning, recurring themes, symbolic representations, and narrative patterns. It shows how identity is shaped and rebuilt through experiences of abandonment, trial, and resilience that helps individual to reconnect with family and society. A few tales like “Cinderella; Or, The Glass Slipper”, “Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp”, “Beauty and the Beast”, “Snow-white and the Rose-Red”, and “The Goose Girl” were chosen from Andrew Lang’s *The Blue Fairy Book* for the study. These tales are chosen because each of them draws attention to loss, survival, and belonging, portraying the orphan archetype. Jungian archetypal theory is used to view the orphan as both a psychological and a social figure.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Andrew Lang’s *The Blue Fairy Book* organizes varied tales under a consistent framework of moral progression. Through Cinderella, Aladdin, Snow White, the Goose Girl, and Beauty, the orphan archetype dramatizes humanity’s deepest anxieties about abandonment and its highest hopes for belonging. Each character’s archetypal journey highlights the timeless truth that hardships can be turned into a sense of belonging. Each story teaches that survival demands resilience and that belonging requires recognition by others, whether through magic, morality, or compassion. The endurance of these tales lies in their ability to translate private wounds into public myths, reminding readers that even those cast into ashes, exile, or bestial company may yet find home. Though they are drawn from different cultures, Andrew and Leonora Lang reframed the tales to bring out moral teachings admired by Victorian society. For young readers, the orphan archetype symbolizes both vulnerability and the capacity for resilience and renewal. These tales help children find echoes of their difficulties, allowing them to better understand and manage their emotions. The archetypes serve as a channel through which communities safeguard their

collective fears and hope, allowing the virtues of perseverance, virtue, and empathy to be transmitted across time. *The Blue Fairy Book* is not only an entertaining children narrative; it also expresses deep psychological truth that transcends inside them.

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