

## Manifestations of the Loving Self in Modern Poetic Production (“The Moon’s Lover” by Abdelmajid Farghali as a Model)

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### Abstract

Abdel Majid Farghali is deemed one of the contemporary poets who concerned himself with the representation of the Arab woman in her different manifestations (the beloved, the friend, the mother), in a representation charged with a spirit of patriotism and an imagery of nature - and so it is a helpful distinguishing feature of his poetry reflecting his selfhood, sometimes enamored with love, other times longing for the past. Hence, Abdel Majid Farghali is also among the poets who prominently celebrated women and placed significant representation of women in their poetry. Accordingly, this research paper aims to convey the different representations of women in Abdel Majid Farghali’s poetry collection *Lover of the Moon*, and clarify the movements of the poet's emotional states in his representations of women, which emerge from the poet's manifestation of his self.

**Keywords:** Woman, Abdel Majid Farghali, The Loving Self, Nostalgia, Lover of the Moon

### Introduction

The collection “‘Āshiqat al-Qamar” (Lover of the Moon) by Abdel-Majid Farghali is one in which the poet represents woman in several forms. At times, he describes her with longing, revealing his loving self; at other times, he portrays her as the strong Egyptian woman; and at other moments, as the tender mother—thus expressing his poetic self and embodying, through these representations, the substance of the poetic text and its aesthetic purpose. In doing so, he achieves an inner self-awareness that generates positive engagement and acceptance on the part of the reader. The collection celebrates a blend of poetic themes that illustrate the shifting configurations of the self in its depiction of woman, conveyed through expressions imbued with the full range of emotional meanings (Hatem and Al-Eid 2017).

The poetic experience in matters concerning women requires a sensitive handling of language, for it is the channel through which the poet conveys his emotions, expresses his feelings, and faithfully portrays his pains and reflections. It is an experience that reveals a linguistic lexicon overflowing with meanings of love, solitude, and suffering—expressing the ordeal of the self and the bitterness of separation from the other. In Abdel-Majid Farghali’s poetic experience and his embodiment of the images of woman, he chooses his language with elevated phrasing and powerful imagery, accompanied at times by rhythmic fluctuations inspired by certain poetic borrowings, and at other times by creativity and distinctiveness. Thus, the poetic experience for him remains aligned with earlier poetic traditions characterized by the aesthetics of language in the pursuit of sincere emotion and the anguish of separation from the other (the beloved, the mother).

On this basis, language is the instrument through which the poet expresses his innermost feelings, the stirrings of his soul, and his social, political, and emotional world, as well as the changes occurring within the cultural environment that surrounds him. This is precisely what poetic language has

conveyed in the works of many writers, as it reflects the poet's culture, intellectual references, and all the subjective and objective factors that shape his poetic experiences. It is the interpreter of his visions and an expressive image of his intellectual, psychological, and social concerns (Mohammed 2020). Thus, the poet must carefully select the lexicon of his poetic language from various expressions that serve the purpose of his writing and resonate with his personal struggles, molding them into a dramatic form that conveys the intensity of his suffering. In doing so, he fulfills the intention of the text first, and the reader's enjoyment second.

The poetic text, in its general context, represents a set of words and meanings that reveal its nature and essential content. This occurs through each poet's unique poetic lexicon, which makes his creativity a living composition grounded in contrast and establishes a system of expression built upon clarity or ambiguity. It also forms the raw material of the creator's relationship with a range of intellectual visions and perspectives (Al-Hassan 2017) . Thus, every state of being that a human experiences naturally requires the use of a particular lexicon that defines the poet's self and cultural identity.

“Our guide to that identity is the lexicon, based on the premise that every discourse has its own distinctive vocabulary: Sufi poetry has its lexicon, praise poetry has its lexicon, wine poetry has its lexicon, and so on. Thus, the lexicon becomes a means of distinguishing between types of discourse, as well as between the languages of poets and literary eras. Yet this lexicon is selected from words that the researcher considers the keys to the text or the axes around which it revolves.”(Mohamed 1992, 58) Through this process, the poet “selects words and expressions from their linguistic source in service of the allure of innovation, which constitutes the ultimate aim of the poetic achievement. In his stylistic choices, he strives to liberate words from their conventional dictionary context and propel them into the play of meanings and the transformations of significance.”(Amina 2017, 124)

Human communication also necessitates the existence of “a set of shared words whose meanings individuals understand in a similar or closely related way. The best method for understanding a word is to observe it within the structure that helps reveal its meaning and distinguishes it from other words that are close to it or appear similar. This is in addition to the semantic functions linked to the surrounding environment and culture, which express the meaning of the word independently of all other words in the language.”(Ahmed 2002, 8) This occurs through the appearance of such words within the structure of the poetic lexicon according to a specific semantic field.

Meanings, likewise, do not exist in isolation from one another in the mind; to grasp them, each meaning must be connected to another meaning or several others. (...) Thus, the word “man” cannot be understood except by relating it to “woman,” and the word “hot” is only comprehensible when compared to “cold,” and so on. Revealing(Ahmed 2002, 8) these semantic relations and distinctions between words assists the speaker or creator in choosing his vocabulary with precision and selecting what is most appropriate in representing the poetic text. It also reflects the various intellectual sources from which the poet draws the words that convey his emotions.(Sidi Mohamed 2013/2014, 12)

Thus, this study requires “tracing the boundaries of this self and interrogating it in order to determine the extent to which it has reached the horizons of the poetic experience in its deliberately dialectical relationship between self and subject, and between poetry and the state of the poetic ‘I,’ given that the latter represents a page of manifestation within the record of poetic modernity.” (Ahmed 2016, 236)

Abdel-Majid Farghali illustrates this for us in his verses, which offer the reader various images through which he represents woman, embodied in the following:

– **Ghazal (the loving self):** Ghazal is among the most prominent poetic themes employed by Abdel-Majid Farghali in his descriptions of the beloved and his expressions of admiration for her through various attributes. These arise from the range of emotions that overwhelm the poetic self as a result of being separated from those who reside in his heart. His poetry reflects what he experienced in the adventure of love—its joy and its pain—as a genuine lived experience.

The most notable examples of Farghali’s admiration for woman appear in poems he titled “*Dialogue of Beauty*,” “*The Sleeping Beauty*,” “*My Beloved Sleeps*,” “*Ailing in Your Love*,” “*My Enchantress, the Miracle of Love*,” and others. An illustration from these poems can be seen in the following verses:

– **The Poem “Dialogue of Beauty”:** In this poem, Abdel-Majid Farghali describes the woman through various appellations, expressing admiration for her and for the charms that have enchanted his loving self. He evokes the names of famous lovers such as Romeo and Juliet, and ‘Antarah and ‘Ablah. Below are some of the verses from this poem, which appear in the following manner:

“Are your eyes the closest in love, and is your mouth radiant?  
Or is your face a full moon, dazzling in its beauty?  
Or does magic hide its secret in your eyes,  
and around your graceful neck, circles have been adorned?” (Abdelmajid 2021, 25)

He says:  
“A nymph from the paradise of beauty has slipped away,  
Or is it the desert, inhabited by gazelles and antelopes?  
On your cheeks, the sun casts its rays,  
And above your brow, a string of pearls dazzles the gaze.” (Abdelmajid 2021, 25)

He says:  
“Were it not for love, Caesar would not have abandoned his throne,  
Nor would the Arabs have prevailed or the mighty been humbled.  
Romeo would not have longed for Juliet,  
Nor would Antony’s heart have been captivated.  
Nor would the son of Shaddad have shown his valor  
When he saw the flash of her teeth, dripping with blood.” (Abdelmajid 2021, 27)

He says:  
“The hearts of maidens are enchanted by our eyes:  
Layla, Hind, or Lamis, and the fair-skinned others.” (Abdelmajid 2021, 28)

Abdel-Majid Farghali depicts woman through words that convey the grandeur of her being—such as “nymph,” “paradise,” “pearl,” “beauty”—as well as through words that reflect the submission of the self to the power and sway of love.

This poetic experience manifests in the distancing of the self from the other and in undergoing the experience of separation from the world through the absence of the human other. It reveals a creative self-distinguished by its ability to present its poetic composition in an artistic language that reflects its emotional state. Through these verses, his suffering is articulated, portraying his loving self aspiring for freedom from the beloved’s hold. This elevates him from a state of pain and anxiety to one of comfort and patience, demonstrating a self content with the experience of love’s influence. In doing so, he creates an artistic tableau of the beloved, as experienced and narrated by the poet

himself.(Abdel-Waasi' 1999, 75)

Abdel-Majid Farghali also conveys his deepest emotions as he laments the ailment of love in his poem titled **“Ailing in Your Love”**:

For none other than your love did I seek a path,  
Nor did my heart long for anyone else.  
It is the soul that loved you entirely,  
And never sought another, nor desired a substitute.  
Your love has risen within me like lofty branches,  
Settling firmly in the depths of the heavens.  
I love you with the love of my remaining days,  
Whether in this world much or little.

What is notable in this surge of emotion is that the other self—the beloved—occupies the poet's mind from the beginning to the end of his expression (the poetic “I”), due to his profound longing for her. Throughout this state, he repeatedly employs phrases of loss and yearning—from the opening to the closing of his verses—such as “longed for,” “I loved you,” and “I love you.” These words thus become a representation of the eternal love that dominates the poet's being, as reflected in the content of his verses.

When reading closely, we start to observe the depths of the poet's angst and longing for the beloved. He depicts this through his self, which is completely taken up by love, and creates the feeling of a wandering self-contemplating issues of desire. Another feature of this process is the repetition of exclamatory language, which furthers elaboration of the poet's self, as he displays his admiration for the beloved and her excellences. In this sense, he demonstrates that he possesses the ardent and vulnerable aspect of longing most intensely. He shows this, as he writes in these lines:

An angel among the nymphs of the convent,  
Faithful to her pledge, planting and achieving.”  
And in the same poem, describing the woman he loves, he says:  
I have loved him with a love from the very core of my being,  
Beautiful in face, pure in form!  
So what can I say when I behold  
A likeness of the moon, captivating in love?

In these lines, the poet presents the woman he loves as an angel and an image of the moon, allegorically alluding to her beauty and perfection and expressing the extent of his love for her. He expresses his loving self lost among the beloved's charms, who completely enchanted him and made him devoted to her, with lines like “I adored her passionate spirit,” and “beautiful in face.”

This is to say, these lines express his love in the style of ancients, in the presence of the beloved and yielding to her, and also expresses the psychological affect of separation. He does this again in many of his poems, where he observes and praises his beloved, and all of her charms, both of which he connects to the classical style of poetry. Moments later in the same poem, he string his longing for her together:

So ask my longing and ask my patience for her,  
For my patience has become a gentle, sheltering shade.  
I speak to her slowly, my words measured,  
For when my gaze meets hers, I find myself ailing(Abdelmajid 2021, 46)

The poet asserts that the self has been deeply afflicted by love, suffering greatly due to the high place the beloved holds in the heart, and that the separation has had a negative impact because of her absence. This, in turn, affected his own being. Abdel-Majid Farghali situates the self in a state of longing for the beloved in an attempt to reveal its condition after the beloved has departed, and to convey the sorrow and pain resulting from this absence. Through this, the poet seeks to depict the experience of suffering and to illustrate the heart of the lover, lost in passion for the beloved, wandering after having been separated from her, thus presenting the self in a state of weakness and confusion. (Hatem and Al-Eid 2017, 202)

What prevented the poetic self from moving forward and placed it in a state of brokenness was the absence of the other—the beloved. The self is thus depicted in the moment of experiencing the tragedy of separation. This expression reflects the nature of Abdel-Majid Farghali's emotions and clarifies the state of the relationship, showing how the poetic self was ultimately broken or concluded in its connection with the other—the beloved. (Abdel-Waasi' 1999, 36)

In other poems of his, in which he portrays the image of the loving woman, we mention his poem titled **"My Beloved Sleeps,"** which begins as follows:

"My beloved, who stretches out his palms to me—  
Is it the hand of distance or the hand of tenderness toward me?  
I have given him my heart as a dwelling for his residence,  
While my soul longs for the comfort of his hands.  
In my heart, he has a place of affection,  
Where he sleeps or to which he returns." (Abdelmajid 2021, 36)

Once consumed by love, the poetic self transitions from a place of pride to brokenness, restraint from confinement which had previously been free. Where love has restrained is a debilitation to her. Essentially, this work is a supplication for her condition, disclosing the distance, not nearness, towards her beloved. Phrases like, "He has a place in my heart," "I have given," and, "My soul longs," relay her state, which carries pain and suffering due to distance from the beloved (Al-Mu'adhidi, 37).

And in the same poem, he describes the image of the beloved with admiration:

"My beloved, slender, strong, and well-clad,  
The greatest of his charms lies in his lips.  
And behold, the left side of his nose  
Adds sweetness to the shape of his nostrils.  
How fair is the beauty mark, desirable,  
Enhancing the loveliness of his face upon my sight.  
From his ears, like the ears of a gazelle,  
On either side of his head or near them.  
The appearance of his face is revealed,  
Like the morning sun emerging beneath the night.  
It is as if I behold the full moon of the sky,  
Or the sun shining from between his features .

The poet addresses the beloved who has passed, portraying him in the most radiant imagery and presenting the finest depiction, thereby offering the reader an idealized image of the woman he loves. At times, he describes her as the "face of the morning," metaphorically emphasizing the brilliance of

her face and the intensity of her beauty, which fascinates him. In other instances, he portrays her as the “moon of the sky” or the “sun.” These representations employed by the poet reflect his self, consumed by admiration for the beloved’s charms, after love has taken hold of his heart.

This was one of the examples in which Abdel-Majid Farghali, in his *Diwan Ashiqat al-Qamar*, portrayed woman in the image of the beloved. His purpose in embodying her in this form was to express his self, which had been overtaken by love—an idea he conveys throughout his various romantic poems. Another image of woman that the poet represents in the diwan is that of the mother, which we illustrate through excerpts from poems titled “**Mother, This Is My Gift for Mother’s Day**,” “**To You, My Mother, Loyalty**,” “**Ode to the Mother**,” and “**On Mother’s Day**.”

– “**Mother, This Is My Gift for Mother’s Day**”

"Mother, in this world you are the foundation of our existence,

Shall we not offer to you a song of praise?

We honor you on your day,

And present to you the symbol of all loyalty.

Mother, this is my gift, so accept it,

Receive it from me and enjoy bliss."(Abdelmajid 2021, 119)

Abdel-Majid Farghali addresses his mother, to whom he feels profound love and loyalty, on the occasion of her annual celebration. He describes her as the foundation of existence, the essential pillar of life, without whom his being would not exist. The principle of beauty in this poem is evident through the poet’s emphasis on the notion of “foundation.” Traditionally, the mother is the cornerstone of the household, and living under her care is one of the most formative stages in a person’s life. Farghali employs this idea to express his poetic self, placing it in a position of love, need, and yearning for that stage of life. The poet’s lyricism emerges through vocabulary that conveys a psychological dimension, such as “praise” and “bliss”, subtly revealing the content of the poetic text. This reflects Farghali’s approach to following a refined linguistic method, giving his poem a clear conceptual meaning and interpretation, centered on longing for the absence of the mother (Yaseen 2009, 24).

He also says in another part of the poem:

"Mother, you have been my companion throughout,  
And the fragrant smile that fills the air.  
You were my guiding beacon when darkness fell,  
And the night of every trial descended upon me.  
You became for me the sun of guidance on my path,  
Through the depths of the night and the perils of the evening.  
O mother, how can I repay what you have given me,  
And fulfill my duty in returning your generosity?  
You adorned my life with all virtues,  
And left me in a state of bewilderment and tears."(Abdelmajid 2021, 120)

In this poetic excerpt, the poet recalls the details of life in the mother’s embrace and under her care, portraying her as the woman who nurtures his pains and joys and serves as the primary source of his happiness. This gives her a strong presence, performing a central and motivating role in his life as a core figure. She represents paradise, a playground, companionship, and enduring affection that he will never forget, no matter how far she may be. His enduring love for her is reflected through

words that convey her guiding and nurturing influence, emphasizing her central and formative role in his life (Yaseen 2009, 24).

The poet conveys his emotions through his dialogue with his mother, considering dialogue as one of the most important techniques representing the rhetorical function in the poetic text, whether the dialogue occurs within the poem itself or with another text. By employing this method, or the dialogic language, the artistic purpose of the poem is achieved, as it becomes a space of communication and a message directed to the other, portraying the self as the speaker. (Yaseen 2009, 69) This is because it relies on alerting the addressee, making a direct request for a response, and establishing a spatial dimension that addresses both the near and the distant listener (Sayyid and Shahram 1975, 5).

In the same poem, describing the most poignant image of the loving mother after her passing, leaving him alone to remember her, he says:

"Mother, I lost you early in life—

To whom shall I now send my greetings and praise?

Today is your day, yet I am only shedding

The tears of sorrow, from which springs my mourning.

Perhaps I may still receive your affection,

As I once did in my world, my garden of bliss." (Abdelmajid 2021, 121)

This passage highlights the poet's self in its suffering due to the absence of the mother, as he conveys through the semantic choices and structures he employs, which from beginning to end indicate the depth of longing and loss he experiences—words such as "I lost you," "the scorching heat," and "your grave." His inner self finds no comfort while apart from his mother, and nothing can console him except the thought of returning to her.

For the poet, the "other" is represented in the form of memory, depicted through carefully chosen words that shape his emotional world in a distinctive artistic manner. The poet's self thus plays its creative role in clarifying the conceptual framework of the poem, using methodological tools to guide interpretation, all imbued with meanings of longing, estrangement, and loss for the other, in accordance with the nature of the situation he experiences (Ahmed Abdel Halim 1997, 36).

Here, the self addresses time regarding the loss of the mother. In this context, the self refers to a state of human tension, in which the identity of the absent figure—the poet's mother, who has passed away—is defined. This description contributes to conveying the depth of pain and sorrow experienced by the self following her death (Abdel-Waasi' 1999, 218).

In the same verses, he says:

I take refuge in you and find solace in a green oasis

Amid the vast deserts of the wilderness.

Mother, may you hear my words

In the meadow of your grave, lush and elevated.

Perhaps your spirit in the scorching heat will protect me

On life's journey as I seek to fulfill my hopes.

The poet's "other" appears in a state of remembrance, and he depicts this through specific expressions that uniquely shape his emotional world in an artistic style. The creative role of the self contributes to clarifying the conceptual framework of the poetic text by using methodological tools for reading such as *Hawajir*, *Qabrouka*, and *Rihlat ad-dunya*. These expressions are laden with meanings of longing, loss, and pain toward the "other," due to the situation he experiences after the mother's departure and the torment of separation (Ahmed Abdel Halim 1997, 36).

In another poem portraying the image of the mother, titled “**To You, Mother, My Fidelity**” he says:

To you, Mother, is all radiance,  
 For with you the soul finds serenity.  
 My paradise flows beneath your feet,  
 And from it rises the structure of my being.  
 A great tree stood as a home,  
 Around you the house was an open courtyard.  
 Children played within it,  
 Sheltered beneath its comforting sky.  
 The dome of the universe over a land  
 Where all creation stands equal.  
 An eternal paradise on earth,  
 Surrounded by melodies of joy.  
 To you, Mother, I offer my life—

*A garden in which my blossoms flourish.* (Abdelmajid 2021, 123)

The poet was unable to endure the reality of being separated from his mother, and thus the only path to finding comfort was to praise her and evoke her memory whenever the pain grew deeper, the distance lengthened, and the longing intensified after her passing. He would return to composing verses about her from time to time to soothe a part of his yearning, for nothing distresses the self more than losing a blessing that once brought it peace after it is gone.

He says in describing her:

Your chest was the cradle of my soul,  
 And the refuge of my innermost being.  
 Your breast was the source of nourishment for my heart,  
 From which I drew growth and strength.  
 Your arms of longing and love  
 Were my shelter and my covering.  
 And whenever sorrow overwhelmed me,

*You were the remedy for my pain.* (Abdelmajid 2021, 124)

From these poetic lines, the poet reveals the state of bliss he once lived in within the embrace of his mother—an experience taken from him by the passage of time. What remained for him were the memories that once sheltered his soul, after nothing was left of her but remembrance. Abdelmajid Farghali sought to embody her image—the image of the mother—through the selection of specific words that express this meaning, such as *embrace*, *warmth*, *nourishment*, *growth*, *cover*, and *healing*. All these expressions convey one of the many images of womanhood—specifically the mother—highlighting her qualities and the essential role she played in bringing happiness and security to his life.

Longing and nostalgia for the past represent one of the most difficult forms of psychological estrangement a person can experience after time has passed over what their inner self once cherished. The issue of time concerns every living being, for it is closely linked to human life on earth: a person is born as a child, then reaches maturity, and if life is prolonged, old age marks his head (Mahjoub 1980, 07). Human yearning is an emotion that overwhelms the self when a particular state or stage of life is lost; thus, a person returns to remembering it from time to time—especially when it can never

be lived again and only its memory remains. What troubles human memory most about loss is the transformation of beautiful days into nothing more than the past.

In another poem in which he describes the image of the mother—titled “**The Mother’s Anthem**”—the poet opens with a greeting, saying:

May you be greeted, my mother,  
with the purest of salutations.  
Through you, my mother,  
my joys have been made complete.  
O desire of my heart, my soul, and my being,  
I offer you love,  
O source of comfort and warmth.(Abdelmajid 2021, 127)

The poet expresses his emotional state and his deep sense of gratitude to his mother for the love and comfort she offered him throughout his life, and for all the sacrifices she made from the moment she carried him until his birth. As a result, the poetic self enters into a state of address with the “other” (the mother) to convey its feelings and emotions, as reflected in the verse meaning “I offer you love, you who are the source of comfort.” This emotional expression is reinforced through the use of the first-person pronoun, which signifies sincerity toward the mother, whose devotion shaped his upbringing and enabled him to reach the highest stages of the life he now lives.

In this context, the poet assumes the role of interlocutor addressing the mother, thereby structuring the poetic text on the basis of dialogue—whether with the “other” or with the self. This reflects the relationship between the discourse of the other and the discourse of the poetic self, a form of overlap between external voices and the speaker’s own utterances. It is the direct medium through which the poet expresses his ideas and viewpoints, revealing his awareness of the world he lives in and contributes to shaping.

Poetic discourse, in this sense, constitutes an intellectual system containing a specific set of discursive formations—topics, concepts, statements, categories, and theoretical representations related to a particular aspect of social reality.

He says:

How many pains you endured  
throughout the months of carrying me?  
How many years you spent in hardship  
for my sake?  
You were promised paradise  
in reward for your kindness,  
How beautiful it is—  
a reward granted for your grace.

### Conclusion:

Abdel Majid Farghali’s poem collection *Lover of the Moon* shows that women have many dimensions since all these different types exist. The lover, the mother, and the Egyptian woman are all examples of different types of women who are interpreted through poetic language and are capable of expressing the fullness of human emotion using poetic lexicon and vocabulary alone for the reader. The poet uses his poetic lexicon and vocabulary completely to create his romantic side and express love, desire, and grief as well as to set up an engaging presence in the poem for a reader. Additionally,

the poet's collection is also a testament to the poet's ability to express himself and interact with the other through either the beloved or the mother, and it reflects the poet's emotional, social, and cultural consciousness.

Thus, it can be said that Abdel Majid Farghali's poetic experience represents a living model of the intersection between romance, emotional expression, and social dimension, where poetic language becomes a tool for shaping the self and highlighting its identity, as well as revealing its effects on the audience. *Lover of the Moon* remains a testament to the poet's skill in depicting women in their various forms, presenting a unique poetic work that blends artistic beauty with the sincerity of human emotions.

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