



Sacred Paternal Devotion and Filial Intimacy in *Kiswahili Classical Poetry*: An Electra Complex Reading of the Prophet Muhammad-Fatuma Relationship in *Utenzi wa Fatuma*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the representation of the father-daughter relationship between Prophet Muhammad and Fatuma Bint Muhammad as depicted in the Kiswahili classical poem *Utenzi wa Fatuma*, attributed to Binti Said Amin bin Uthman of Lamu (1800-1900). While existing studies are primarily focused on religious, moral, and gendered dimensions of the text, limited attention has been paid to the affective and psychological dynamics underpinning the Prophet Muhammad-Fatuma bond. Drawing on an Electra complex reading as a critical and interpretive framework, this paper interrogates how the poem constructs and amplifies paternal devotion and filial intimacy within a sacred Islamic context. The study purposively sampled episodes and poetic expressions that foreground the interaction between Prophet Muhammad and Fatuma within the poem. Using textual analysis, the paper explores key narrative moments, including the Prophet's care and protection of Fatuma, his involvement in her marriage preparations, his prayers for her well-being, and his affection for her children. Data were analysed thematically through close reading and interpretive textual examination, and the findings are presented descriptively in relation to the major themes emerging from the poem. These elements are analysed not as literal psychological claims, but as discursive strategies that elevate Fatuma's moral, spiritual, and symbolic status within the poem. The paper argues that *Utenzi wa Fatuma* mobilizes sacred paternal imagery to construct an idealized model of filial intimacy that operates at the intersection of religion, gender, and literary aesthetics. Ultimately, this paper contributes to Kiswahili literary scholarship by offering a nuanced, interdisciplinary reading that bridges psychoanalytic theory and Islamic literary traditions, while also foregrounding the role of affect in the construction of female sanctity and authority in Kiswahili classical poetry.

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Key Words: Electra Complex, Father-Daughter Relationship, Filial Intimacy, Kiswahili Islamic poetry, Paternal Devotion

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1.0 Introduction

The representation of family relationships in religious and literary texts plays a central role in shaping moral values, gender roles, and social expectations (Barlas, 2023). In Islamic tradition, the relationship between Prophet Muhammad and his daughter Fatuma Bint Muhammad is widely regarded as a model of deep affection, care, and spiritual closeness. This bond is not only historical but also symbolic, offering an idealized framework for understanding family, love, and moral responsibility within Muslim societies (Ahmed, 2022; Badran, 2022; Seedat, 2023).

Swahili classical poetry, particularly the *utenzi* tradition, occupies a central place in the literary and cultural history of the East African coast. Characterized by elaborate poetic structure, Islamic philosophical influence, and didactic orientation, Swahili classical poetry has historically functioned as a medium for preserving communal memory, transmitting religious teachings, and articulating social values (Mulokozi, 2017; Knappert, 1979). Many classical *tenzi* foreground themes such as morality, heroism, kinship, faith, and gender relations, thereby providing important insights into the social and emotional worlds of Swahili Muslim communities. Within this tradition, literary texts do not merely entertain but also construct symbolic models of ideal behaviour and interpersonal relations.

In Kiswahili classical literature, *Utenzi wa Fatuma*, attributed to Binti Said Amin bin Uthman of Lamu (1800-1900), provides a rich poetic representation of this relationship. The poem foregrounds Fatuma as a central figure whose identity is shaped through her close association with Prophet Muhammad, who is her biological father. Existing scholarship on the text has largely focused on its religious teachings, moral instruction, and construction of ideal Islamic womanhood, emphasizing virtues such as obedience, humility, and piety (Maina, 2011; Vutagwa, 2013; Mutiso, 2014). While these studies are important, they tend to privilege normative and doctrinal readings at the expense of the emotional and relational dynamics embedded in the narrative.

Recent developments in literary and cultural studies have underscored the importance of affect, intimacy, and relationality in textual interpretation (Barlas, 2023). These perspectives suggest that literary texts do not only transmit moral values but also construct emotional worlds through which characters gain symbolic meaning. Despite this shift, the affective and psychological dimensions of the father-daughter relationship in *Utenzi wa Fatuma* remain underexplored. Little attention has been paid to how paternal devotion and filial intimacy are narratively constructed and

how they function within the broader religious and cultural framework of the poem.

This gap constitutes a significant problem in current study. By overlooking the emotional and symbolic depth of the Prophet Muhammad-Fatuma relationship, existing studies risk reducing the text to a purely moral or didactic artifact, thereby neglecting its literary complexity. Subsequently, there is need for a more nuanced approach that integrates emotional, symbolic, and theoretical perspectives in the analysis of the poem.

To address this gap, this paper adopts an Electra complex reading as a critical framework to examine how *Utenzi wa Fatuma* constructs and amplifies paternal devotion and filial intimacy. The Electra complex, when used metaphorically in literary analysis, provides a useful lens for exploring patterns of emotional attachment, admiration, and symbolic closeness in father-daughter relationships (Youvan, 2024). Guided by this perspective, the paper seeks to answer the following research question: **How does *Utenzi wa Fatuma* construct and represent sacred paternal devotion and filial intimacy in the relationship between Prophet Muhammad and her daughter Fatuma Bint Muhammad?**

By addressing this question, the paper contributes to Kiswahili literary scholarship by offering an interdisciplinary reading that highlights the role of affect and symbolism in the construction of gendered and religious identities.

2.0 Literature Review

Scholarly studies on Islamic texts and Kiswahili literature have consistently emphasized the role of narrative in constructing models of ideal gender, morality, and social order (Knappert, 1970). Within Islamic studies, recent works highlight how female figures are often represented through moral and spiritual excellence, positioning them as exemplars of proper conduct and piety (Ahmed, 2022; Badran, 2022). Such studies demonstrate that women in Islamic discourse are not merely passive figures but are symbolically elevated to convey religious values and communal ideals. Similarly, Seedat (2023) argues that interpretive traditions within Islam actively shape how gendered identities are constructed and understood, often privileging ethical and doctrinal readings.

In the context of Kiswahili literature, *Utenzi wa Fatuma* has attracted scholarly attention for its rich portrayal of Islamic values and its construction of ideal womanhood. Existing studies (e.g. Maina, 2011; Vutagwa, 2013; Mutiso, 2014) tend to foreground themes such as obedience, humility,

chastity, and devotion, presenting Fatuma as a woman whose identity is grounded in moral virtue and religious commitment. These readings are valuable in demonstrating how the poem functions as a didactic text aimed at reinforcing social and religious norms. However, they also tend to treat the text primarily as a vehicle for moral instruction, thereby limiting the scope of analysis to normative frameworks.

More recent developments in literary and cultural studies have shifted attention toward affect, relationality, and the emotional dimensions of texts. Scholars such as Barlas (2023) emphasize that meaning in literary and religious narratives is not only constructed through explicit teachings but also through the representation of relationships, emotions, and symbolic interactions. This perspective opens new possibilities for examining texts like *Utenzi wa Fatuma*, where interpersonal relationships, particularly between key figures, play a central role in shaping narrative meaning.

Despite these advancements, the father-daughter relationship between Prophet Muhammad and Fatuma Binti Muhammad in *Utenzi wa Fatuma* remains insufficiently explored from an affective and psychological perspective. Existing studies (e.g. Maina, 2011; Vutagwa, 2013; Mutiso, 2014) rarely interrogate how this relationship is constructed in the text, nor do they consider the implications of its emotional intensity and symbolic significance. Instead, the relationship is often taken for granted as part of the broader religious narrative, without critical engagement with its literary function or its role in elevating Fatuma's status.

Furthermore, there has been little attempt to apply interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks, such as psychoanalytic theory, to the analysis of Kiswahili classical poetry. While psychoanalytic approaches, particularly concepts like the Electra complex, have been widely used in other literary traditions to examine family dynamics and symbolic relationships, their application in Kiswahili literary studies remains limited. This represents a missed opportunity to deepen understanding of how emotional and relational structures operate within these texts.

It is within this context that the present study positions itself. By adopting an Electra complex reading, this paper moves beyond purely moral and doctrinal interpretations to explore the affective and symbolic dimensions of the Prophet Muhammad-Fatuma relationship. It interrogates how paternal devotion and filial intimacy are constructed in the poem and how these elements function as literary strategies for elevating

Fatuma's moral, spiritual, and symbolic authority. In doing so, this study fills a critical gap in existing scholarship by:

1. Shifting the focus from normative moral readings to affective and relational analysis.
2. Introducing a psychoanalytic framework into the study of Kiswahili classical poetry.
3. Providing a nuanced interpretation of the father-daughter relationship as a central organizing principle in *Utenzi wa Fatuma*.

Ultimately, this approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the text by demonstrating that emotional and symbolic dynamics are not secondary, but fundamental to the construction of meaning in Kiswahili Islamic poetry.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The Electra complex is a psychoanalytic concept associated with Carl Jung, who introduced it as a female counterpart to Sigmund Freud's Oedipus complex (Youvan, 2024). It refers to a daughter's emotional attachment to her father, often expressed through admiration, closeness, and identification (Jung, 1913). In literary studies, however, the concept is not used in a strict clinical sense but as an interpretive framework for analysing representations of father-daughter relationships. Its key tenets such as emotional intensity, symbolic attachment, and the role of such relationships in shaping identity and gender, are therefore understood as narrative features rather than unconscious psychological processes (Nickerson, 2024). Recent scholars also emphasize that the theory is most useful when applied as a heuristic tool for interpreting meaning in texts, rather than as a direct explanation of human behaviour (Jarali, 2024).

In this study, the Electra complex is adapted to suit the analysis of a reciprocal father-daughter relationship in *Utenzi wa Fatuma*. While the theory traditionally focuses on the daughter's attachment to the father, this paper extends it to examine both filial attachment and paternal devotion as interconnected aspects of the relationship. The analysis therefore does not focus on unconscious desire, but on how the poem constructs emotional closeness, admiration, and symbolic importance within the Prophet Muhammad-Fatuma bond. In this way, the Prophet's care, protection, and spiritual concern for Fatuma are analysed alongside her attachment to him, allowing for a more balanced interpretation.

This adapted approach makes it possible to explore how intimacy is constructed and given meaning within a sacred Islamic context. It shows how paternal love and filial attachment function as literary strategies that elevate Fatuma's moral and spiritual status in the poem. At the same time, the study remains sensitive to the religious and cultural context by avoiding literal psychological claims and focusing instead on symbolic and emotional meanings. For this reason, the Electra complex is appropriate for this study as a flexible and effective tool for analysing father-daughter intimacy in classical Kiswahili Islamic poetry.

4.0 Methodology

This study is grounded in an interpretivist research paradigm, which assumes that meaning is socially and textually constructed and therefore best understood through subjective interpretation of texts (Creswell, 2022). In line with this paradigm, the study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is appropriate for exploring meanings, experiences, and symbolic representations within literary works (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Data for the study were generated through purposive textual selection, whereby relevant episodes from *Utenzi wa Fatuma* that depict paternal devotion and filial intimacy between Prophet Muhammad and Fatuma were identified and extracted. This study draws on the manuscript of *Utenzi wa Fatuma* presented by Dammann (1940) at the University of Hamburg, as it represents one of the earliest and most reliable reconstructed versions of the text. Dammann's work provides a credible and standardized source, making it suitable for scholarly analysis. The selection of *Utenzi wa Fatuma* is justified by its centrality in Kiswahili Islamic literature and its rich portrayal of familial, religious, and gendered relationships, making it a suitable text for examining paternal devotion and filial intimacy. For data analysis, the study employs qualitative textual analysis, specifically thematic and interpretive analysis, to identify patterns of emotional attachment, symbolic meaning, and relational dynamics within the poem (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The Electra complex is used as an analytical lens to guide the interpretation of these patterns, allowing the study to examine how intimacy and devotion are constructed at both affective and symbolic levels. This methodological approach enables a nuanced and context-sensitive understanding of the father-daughter relationship as represented in the text. The findings were presented thematically through a close reading and interpretive analysis of selected textual excerpts from *Utenzi wa Fatuma*.

5.0 Synopsis of *Utenzi wa Fatuma*

Utenzi wa Fatuma is a Kiswahili classical poem that was composed by Binti Said Amin bin Uthuman of Lamu in the nineteenth century. The poem narrates the marriage between Fatuma, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad and Khadija, and Ali ibn Talib within a richly spiritual and symbolic framework. Following Khadija's death, the Prophet assumes the responsibility of raising his children alone and expresses a strong desire to see Fatuma married, continually praying to Allah for a suitable husband. Fatuma is portrayed as exceptionally beautiful, virtuous, and deeply devoted to her father. Her reputation spread across regions from Arabia to Europe, attracting numerous suitors, including kings and even non-Muslims who converted to Islam hoping to marry her. However, the Prophet refrains from accepting any marriage proposals, awaiting divine guidance. Meanwhile, Ali Talib, though deeply in love with Fatuma, hesitates to propose due to his lack of wealth, but his sincere prayers are answered when Allah ordains their marriage in heaven through angel Jibril with other angels participating in the preparation and ceremony. The union is later revealed to the Prophet, who joyfully informs Fatuma; she consents to the marriage but declines material dowry. She chooses to be an intercessor for Muslim women on the Day of Judgment; a wish that is granted by Allah. The marriage is then celebrated on earth, after which Ali undertakes a journey in search of provision. He encounters divine intervention through angels in disguise, and ultimately returns with blessings that affirm the sacred nature of the union. The narrative concludes with acts of generosity and devotion, reinforcing themes of faith, sacrifice, divine will, and the elevated spiritual status of Fatuma.

6.0 Findings and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study in a systematic and thematic manner. Drawing on carefully selected excerpts from *Utenzi wa Fatuma*, the analysis demonstrates how the text constructs and represents sacred paternal devotion and filial intimacy between Prophet Muhammad and Fatuma through interconnected affective, symbolic, and religious dimensions. The discussion moves beyond descriptive interpretation to offer a critical reading of how these relational dynamics function as literary strategies that elevate Fatuma's moral and spiritual status within the poem. For clarity and coherence, the section is organized into the following subthemes: Paternal Care and Emotional Attachment, Prayers and Spiritual Connection, and Affection for Fatuma's Children.

5.1 Paternal Care and Emotional Attachment

The portrayal of Prophet Muhammad’s care for her daughter Fatuma in *Utenzi wa Fatuma* reflects a deeply affective and symbolically charged father-daughter relationship that goes beyond ordinary parental responsibility. The text consistently presents the Prophet as a figure who is not only protective but also emotionally invested in every aspect of Fatuma’s life. This heightened attentiveness suggests an idealized model of paternal devotion, where care is expressed through both action and emotional presence. For instance, the poem illustrates moments in which the Prophet closely monitors and safeguards Fatuma’s well-being, thereby constructing an image of intimacy grounded in continuous paternal concern. In the poem, the poet describes how the Prophet closely monitors her daughter’s ways of life to ensure she adheres to Islamic teachings. He ensures she goes to the mosque and participates in the daily Islamic prayers. The poet mentions that Prophet Mohammad cherished his daughter Fatuma so deeply that he would never leave her aside. He would go everywhere with her. Fatuma became the prophet’s companion. This is evident in this stanza:

Original Text (Kiamu)	Our Translation (English)
Na mtume niwambiye, Alina mahaba naye, Hakuweza penye yeye, Kabisa kumwondokea. (Ubeti, 97)	And the Prophet, I tell you, Had intense love for her, Could not, wherever she was, Leave her completely alone. (Stanza, 97)

The poet also notes that when the Prophet went to the mosque alone, he would long for his daughter Fatuma, so upon coming home from the mosque, he would search for her and embrace her. He would affectionately refer to her as the star, then Fatuma would pull herself toward him and rest against his chest. The prophet would subsequently beseech God to bestow grace upon Fatuma his daughter. This is clearly demonstrated in these stanzas:

Original Text (Kiamu)	Our Translation (English)
Endapo msikitini, Kisa kusali amini, Arudiapo nyumbani, Alikimlingania. (Ubeti, 98)	When he went to the mosque, To perform prayers of faith, Whenever he returned home, He would search for

	her. (Stanza, 98)
Endapo alikimwita, Niila ewe nyota, Fatuma akayivuta, Mbeleze akamwemea. (Ubeti, 99)	When he called her, You the precious star, Fatuma would draw near, And lean gently before him. (Stanza, 99)
Akisa kumtanazari, Mtume wethu bashiri, Akamwombea Jabari, Na razi kamuwea. (Ubeti, 100)	After speaking kindly and wisely to her, Our noble Prophet, Would beseech the Almighty, To grant her grace and favour. (Stanza, 100)

From the perspective of the Electra complex, this intense paternal care can be interpreted as reinforcing a strong emotional attachment between father and daughter (Nickerson, 2024). While the theory originates in psychoanalysis, its metaphorical application in literary analysis allows us to examine how such attachment is narratively constructed rather than psychologically assumed. In this case, the Prophet’s constant presence and protective role positions him as the central figure in Fatuma’s emotional world. This centrality is significant because it shapes her identity not only as a daughter but also as a symbolic figure within the poem. The emotional closeness depicted here reflects what the Electra framework identifies as admiration and attachment, where the father figure becomes a primary source of validation, authority, and affection (Youvan, 2024).

Moreover, the text uses this paternal devotion as a literary strategy to elevate Fatuma’s moral and spiritual status. The intensity of the Prophet’s care implicitly signals her exceptional value, both within the family and in the broader religious context. In other words, Fatuma’s significance is constructed through the depth of the Prophet’s attachment to her. This dynamic transforms a personal relationship into a symbolic one, where paternal love becomes a marker of divine favour and moral excellence. Critically, this suggests that the poem is not merely depicting a familial bond but is actively producing an idealized model of relational intimacy that serves religious and cultural purposes. Through this lens, the father-daughter relationship becomes a site where emotion, authority, and spirituality intersect, reinforcing Fatuma’s position as both a beloved daughter and a revered figure in Islamic and Kiswahili literary tradition.

One of the most striking features of *Utenzi wa Fatuma* is the Prophet's active involvement in Fatuma's marriage, where he assumes roles that go beyond conventional paternal duties. In the poem, the question regarding who will marry Fatuma greatly troubles the Prophet. He is very anxious to find out who his son-in-law will be. He hopes that God will provide Fatuma with a loving husband who will cherish her as much as he does. This is captured in the following stanzas:

Original Text (Kiamu)	Our Translation (English)
Fikira zakwe Tume, Alikimwaza mume; Alo mwema amwengeme, mwenye kumkhubia. (Ubeti, 107)	The mind of the Prophet, Was thinking about her husband to be, Who would be good to marry her, One who would speak to her. (Stanza, 107)
Hapo kazidi Rasuli, hamu khuu na shughuli Kwa mtana na leili, kula wakati na nia. (Ubeti, 109)	The Prophet continued, With deep concern and preoccupation, Day and night, At all times in thought and intention. (Stanza, 109)
Kitamani moyowe, kumtambua mkwewe. Na kungojeza ambiwe, na risala Jiburia. (Ubeti, 110)	His heart longed, To know his future son-in-law, He waited to be informed, Through divine message and prayer. (Stanza, 110)

Furthermore, the poem depicts the Prophet participating in intimate ritual processes associated with the wedding including adorning her, embellishing her, and personally escorting her to her spouse and presenting her to him. The poet asserts:

Original Text (Kiamu)	Our Translation (English)
Haya kukiwa ioni, Mtume wethu amini, Mwanawe kamzayini, Kwa libasi na hulia. (Ubeti, 317)	Without hesitation, Believe our noble Prophet, Adorned his daughter, With garments and ornaments. (Stanza, 317)
Na ijetezo na libu, Ndema mno ya ajabu,	With fine ornaments and adornments,

Na zabadi manzubu, Na mafuta sandalia. (Ubeti, 318)	Exceedingly beautiful and remarkable, With precious perfumes, And fragrant body oils. (Stanza, 318)
Mikisi na kafuri, Kaiyuza kwa iliri, Arufu ikakisiri, Kula mahala kwenea. (Ubeti, 319)	With perfumes such as mikisi and kafuri, He gently applied them, A sweet fragrance arose, And spread everywhere. (Stanza, 319)
Kisa kamfukiza, Udi, ambari kayaza, Na manginge kamwongeza, Shani lake likakuwa. (Ubeti, 320)	Then he perfumed her further, With udi and ambergris, Adding other fragrances, Enhancing her beauty. (Stanza, 320)
Ba'adaye nabiya, Mwanawe akampeka, Kwa mumewe kwa haraka, Na wenye kumfuwatia. (Ubeti, 321)	Thereafter, the Prophet, Took his daughter, Swiftly to her husband, Accompanied by others. (Stanza, 321)

The level of Prophet is involved in Fatuma's wedding is not merely procedural but is imbued with emotional depth and symbolic meaning, suggesting an intensified form of paternal devotion. From an Electra complex perspective, these acts can be interpreted as reinforcing a unique form of closeness between father and daughter, where the father figure remains central even at the moment of transition into marital life (Nickerson, 2024). Symbolically, the Prophet's presence in these intimate rituals may be read as an extension of his emotional authority and attachment, positioning him not only as a guardian but also as a key mediator in Fatuma's personal and social transformation. Rather than indicating any literal psychological dynamic, this reading highlights how the text constructs an idealized intimacy that sustains the father's centrality even as the daughter enters a new relational domain.

Critically, this ritual intimacy also functions as a literary strategy to elevate Fatuma's status within the poem. By foregrounding the Prophet's direct

involvement, the text underscores her exceptional value and purity, suggesting that her transition into marriage is not an ordinary social event but a sacred process overseen by prophetic authority. This portrayal reinforces cultural and religious ideals of family responsibility while simultaneously constructing a heightened emotional bond that blurs the boundary between personal affection and symbolic reverence. In this way, the poem uses marriage not only as a narrative event but also as a site for expressing and intensifying paternal devotion.

Prayers and Spiritual Connection

The Prophet’s prayers for Fatuma constitute another significant dimension of their relationship, revealing a deep spiritual connection that complements the emotional intimacy depicted in the poem. He is shown invoking divine protection, blessings for her marriage, and ultimately her place in paradise, thereby situating Fatuma within a framework of continuous spiritual care. These prayers extend paternal concern into the metaphysical realm, suggesting that his devotion transcends worldly boundaries. The poet says:

Original Text (Kiamu)	Our Translation (English)
Akisa kumtanazari, Mtume wethu bashiri, Akamwombea Jabari, Na razi kamuwea. (Ubeti, 100)	After speaking kindly and wisely to her, Our noble Prophet, Would beseech the Almighty, To grant her grace and favour. (Stanza, 100)

Through the lens of the Electra complex, these prayers can be understood as reinforcing the symbolic centrality of the father figure in the daughter’s life, even at the level of spiritual mediation (Youvan, 2024). The Prophet’s role as an intercessor between Fatuma and God positions him as both a paternal and sacred authority, deepening the emotional and symbolic intensity of their relationship. This dynamic reflects a form of attachment that is not limited to physical or social proximity but is extended into spiritual dependency and divine favor. Importantly, this interpretation remains metaphorical, focusing on how the text constructs meaning rather than making psychological claims.

Furthermore, the spiritual dimension of this relationship elevates Fatuma’s status by associating her directly with divine concern and prophetic intercession. The prayers function as a

narrative device that legitimizes her moral and spiritual superiority, while also reinforcing the idea that paternal love is intertwined with religious devotion. In this sense, the poem transforms a personal relationship into a sacred model of intimacy, where emotional attachment, spiritual authority, and symbolic meaning converge. This not only strengthens the portrayal of Fatuma as a revered figure but also highlights how affective and religious elements work together to construct idealized identities in Kiswahili Islamic poetry.

Affection for Fatuma’s Children

The Prophet’s affection for Fatuma’s children, Hasani and Huseini, constitutes an important extension of the father-daughter relationship depicted in *Utenzi wa Fatuma*. The poem presents this love not merely as grandfatherly care, but as a continuation of the deep emotional bond between the Prophet and Fatuma. By embracing and showing special concern for her children, the Prophet reinforces the centrality of Fatuma within the familial structure, suggesting that his love for her naturally extends to her offspring. The poet asserts:

Original Text (Kiamu)	Our Translation (English)
Wakamzaa Hasani, Na mwanawe Huseini, Kula mthu ili shani, Mahabae sawasawa. (Ubeti, 410)	They gave birth to Hasani, And to his brother Huseini, Each of them was cherished, And received his love equally. (Stanza, 410)

From the perspective of the Electra complex, this intergenerational affection can be interpreted as strengthening the symbolic network of attachment surrounding the father-daughter relationship (Jarali, 2024). The father figure remains central not only in relation to the daughter but also in relation to her children, thereby extending his emotional influence across generations. This dynamic underscores the continuity of attachment, where Fatuma’s identity and significance are reaffirmed through the affection directed towards her lineage. In this sense, the Prophet’s love for Hasani and Huseini becomes an indirect affirmation of his enduring attachment to Fatuma herself.

Critically, this portrayal also serves a broader literary and ideological function. By highlighting the Prophet’s affection for Fatuma’s children, the poem constructs a sacred family lineage that

embodies both emotional unity and spiritual authority. The intergenerational bond reinforces the idea that Fatuma occupies a privileged position within a divinely favoured family structure. Thus, the affection for her children is not incidental but is strategically used to deepen the symbolic and emotional significance of the father-daughter relationship, further elevating Fatuma's status within the narrative.

7.0 Conclusion

This paper has examined the representation of sacred paternal devotion and filial intimacy in *Utenzi wa Fatuma* through an Electra complex reading of the Prophet Muhammad-Fatuma relationship. The analysis has shown that the poem constructs the father-daughter bond as deeply affective, spiritually charged, and symbolically elevated. Across different narrative moments, ranging from care and protection, marriage rituals, prayers, to affection for grandchildren, the Prophet is consistently portrayed as a central emotional and spiritual figure in Fatuma's life. These portrayals are not only descriptive but also performative, as they actively shape Fatuma's identity as a morally and spiritually exceptional figure.

Using the Electra complex as a metaphorical interpretive framework, the paper has demonstrated that the poem organizes intimacy, admiration, and devotion in ways that highlight the father's central role in constructing meaning and identity. However, this paper has also emphasized that such a reading does not imply a literal psychological diagnosis; rather, it reveals how emotional closeness is narratively and symbolically constructed within a sacred literary context. The father-daughter relationship therefore operates as a site where emotion, authority, and religious meaning intersect, producing an idealized model of familial devotion.

In general, the paper contributes to Kiswahili literary scholarship by showing that *Utenzi wa Fatuma* cannot be fully understood through moral or doctrinal readings alone. Instead, it requires attention to affective and symbolic dimensions that shape its narrative structure. By foregrounding emotional intimacy as a key analytical category, this paper demonstrates that classical Kiswahili Islamic poetry uses familial relationships not only to teach moral values but also to construct powerful symbolic meanings about gender, authority, and sanctity.

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