



**An-Najah National University  
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**STUTTERING AND FEMALE AGENCY IN  
NAJWA BIN SHATWAN'S NOVEL *CONCERTO  
CORINNA EDUARDO* AND GHADA KHOURY'S  
NOVEL *GIRL OF THUNDER***

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## **Dedication**

“I dedicate this thesis to:

my superhero: My father, Imad may Allah bless him.

my mother: Marryam

my wife: Ruba

To all my family”

## **Acknowledgement**

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Almighty for guiding me through this journey.

All this work would have been easy without the great, kind guidance, insightful comments and ideas of my supervisor, Prof. Abdel Karim Daragmeh. Many thanks.

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

### **STUTTERING AND FEMALE AGENCY IN NAJWA BIN SHATWAN'S NOVEL *CONCERTO CORINNA EDUARDO* AND GHADA KHOURY'S NOVEL *GIRL OF THUNDER***

I declare that the work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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**Ismael Imad Ismael Hosheya**

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**08/09/2025**

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**Abstract**

This study examines how Najwa Bin Shatwan's novel *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Ghada Khoury's novel *Girl of Thunder* addresses female stuttering as form of resistance in post-colonial Arab narratives. In this study, stuttering is not seen as a defect or a linguistics disability, however, it has been noticed as a subversive form of agency, an act of female resistance, a tool of protest, a state of disequilibrium which destabilizes the language boundaries. Drawing on Spivak's notion of epistemic violence (1998) and Derrida's Phallogocentric speech, Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialization, as well as Cixous & Clement' (1976) writing on female oppression, this study examines stuttering as a phenomenon of female exclusion in a patriarchal context. In addition, this study demonstrates how the structure of masculine language silences the female voices where it reduces the female hesitation or their broken speech to a sign of deficiency. Furthermore, the study reveals that the act of stuttering marks as a form of resistance and reclamation of female identity. The two main female characters in both novels Reem and Helena, challenge the structure of the patriarchal society through out transforming their stuttering into a mode of resistance, subjectivity. This study claims that female stutterers in post-colonial Arab narratives disrupt the masculine discourse where their stuttering stands as a new form for calming female agency and identity.

**Keywords:** Stuttering, Resistance, Agency, Female, Post-colonial Narratives, Hesitation, Fragmented Speech, *Concerto Corinna Eduardo*, *Girl of Thunder*

# Chapter One

## Introduction Literature Review

### 1.1 Introduction

Henri-Jacques Stiker's *History of Disability* (1999), a pioneering work that has established a comprehensive approach for examining disability throughout different societies and historical eras, presents the evolution of Western cultural attitudes towards disability. Stiker (1999) uses an analytical methodology to demonstrate how civilizations might uncover their attitudes toward disability in unforeseen ways. These attitudes are based on cultural, religious, and social frameworks. Stiker (1999) has shown that in the past civilizations viewed disabilities as defects, an attitude which led to exclusion and marginalization. According to Waldschmidt Berressem, & Ingwersen (2017), Stiker examines a significant concern in the current Western conversations on disability, namely the cultural presumption that individuals in a society consistently seek equality, acceptance, and resemblance. Stiker emphasizes the repercussions of such thought, demonstrating the lack of acceptance and/or understanding of difference and individualism that may result from prioritizing equality and social conformity.

From his perspective, diversity have to be prioritized as it implies recognizing and embracing the multifaceted nature of disability within a society. Over the years, disability has evolved into an interdisciplinary field of studies. Ferguson & Nusbaum (2012) define disability studies as “the interdisciplinary study and representation of the concepts, cultures, and personal experiences of disability in all its variations” (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012, p. 71).

This definition points to the fact that disability studies contain the collaborative investigation and characterization of disability within multiple disciplines, concepts, cultures, and perspectives. At another more global level, Ferguson & Nusbaum (2012) argue that “disability studies as a field of study have particular salience for those

interested in the development of research and policy in support of people with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities” (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012, p. 70).

It is commonly the case that the social environment affects the extent to which the person will experience a disabling condition as a disability. A report by the World Health Organization (2001) concludes that “disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the societal environment” (p. 28).

Accordingly, a person's relationship with their societal and physical conditions defines disability as relational. The presence of a potentially disabling condition significantly affects a person's perception of their own place in relation to others. In addition, the amount of actual disability a person experiences for any limitation depends on whether the environment is positive and enabling (compensates for the condition, ameliorates the restriction, and facilitates functional activities) or harmful and disabling (suppressive, silencing, and indifferent).

As the record of human life, society, and social systems, literature has been regarded as a rich domain for exploring the consequences of various kinds of disability. If we focus on the representation of stuttering as one linguistic disability, which is the main topic of this thesis work, we will soon realize that scholars have argued that stuttering has been mistakenly perceived as a type of language disability. Some critics suggest that stuttering is a phenomenon that is social, physical, and psychological, all at once. López (2022) states that “stuttering is a concept that gets used widely: medically, sociologically, anthropologically, linguistically, literarily, musically, and philosophically” (López, 2022, p. 19). Deleuze (1997) concludes that stuttering does not refer to a passive reflection of linguistic abilities but to an active use of the linguistic aspects and social improvement.

In this sense, stuttering can be seen as a mode of active resistance. Stutterers, especially female characters, are portrayed in literature as silenced voices who, at one turning point in their life, and to the surprise of everyone around them, will find their way to express themselves and to make their own choices. Deleuze (1997) emphasized that women who navigate disability had a role in creating minor literature in a society that has a more widely used language, where this functions as an outstanding form of expression in that bigger culture. Under these circumstances, stuttering is seen as a form of rebellion; in other words, it becomes a featured mode of self-expression where it puts itself as a challenging notion against societal norms and demonstrates women's struggle against hegemonic cultural practices. In addition, the concept of stuttering is somehow connected to silence and insecurity. Shell points out that "writing is the best way for the stutterer to escape his prison house of silence" (Shell, 2005, p. 39). López argues that "stutters would be a map of breaks, silences, interruptions, 'failures,' variables, instability, and movement" (López, 2022, p. 18). In the same vein, Deleuze (1997) suggests that "when a language is so strained that it starts to stutter or to murmur, then language in its entirety reaches the limit that marks it out and makes it confront silence" (p. 113). The complex connection between stuttering and silence marks stuttered language as a representation of interruptions, periods of silence, and a point where language meets with silence. Additionally, it illustrates how writing, in addition to many other physical forms of expression, would provide multiple pathways to liberate oneself from the limitations of silence.

## **1.2 Research Purpose**

In light of this scholarship on the significance of stuttering as a sign of exclusion and resistance, the present research addresses the agency of female stutterers in the influential work of two Arab female authors. The study addresses stuttering female characters in Najwa Bin Shatwan's novel *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Ghada Khoury's novel *Girl of Thunder*. In Bin Shatwan's novel *Concert Corinna Eduardo*, the protagonist is Reem who is a young woman who suffers from stuttering, as she

was born with it. In relation to her, stuttering turns out to be a distinguished kind of expression that stands against various societal norms and manifests the struggles of silenced women who resist the speech of the dominant other, i.e., masculine speech. Even though she is unable to communicate verbally, is a representation of the agency that challenges the dominant perspective, deny it and create a different mode of expression which crucially damage societal norms. In the same vein, *Girl of Thunder* of Khoury tackles a stuttering woman. She is Helana. Helana's stuttering becomes a cover for reality and it hides well-known facts such as the death of Warda, her sister-in-law, in a fire and the drowning of her mother. Helana's stuttering explains the ignorance and blindness of such well-known and appreciated facts. The novel of Khoury deals with the psychological effect of stuttering, that may lead to anxiety, low self-esteem and social stigma as a result of the difficulties of communication and the derogatory reactions of others. The two novels tackle stuttering as a challenge. Thus, stuttering is deemed as a form of rebellion against societal norms. In both cases, stuttering gradually transforms into creative resistance, defying the notion that silence is the only remedy for stuttering. The female characters could escape societal gendered constructs, inferior views of the female roles, and the stigma attached to stuttering women in the Arab patriarchal cultural system. They show a distinctive ability to elegantly use language to articulate independent, confident, female roles and identities. These instances of linguistic deficiency, linguistic violence, and linguistic masculine hegemony will provide the basis for comparisons between the ways the two female Arab authors present liberationist attitudes towards women with linguistic disability. As we address the symbolism of female stuttering in the context of the Arab culture, we argue that the hesitant speech of the female characters repeatedly directs us to instances of female agency and subjectivity. We initially emphasize the linguistic, epistemic violence and the consequences of linguistic colonization on the female characters. We then address instances of resistance to the masculine linguistic hegemony often coming as acts of rebellion against the linguistic and non-linguistic barriers which obstruct female use of language. Here, the study demonstrates stutters'

modes of resistance to the prevailing beliefs, disproving them and establishing an alternative framework to the language constructs which disadvantage women.

Finally, with its broken speech, grammatical imperfections, and phonological inconsistencies, stuttering becomes a means of self-expression in post-colonial Arab women narratives.

### **1.3 Research Questions and Topics**

This study aims to look at the symbolism of female stuttering in two novels, Najwa Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Ghada Khoury's novel *Girl of Thunder*, which are postcolonial Arab women narratives. Hence, the current study investigates how stuttering turned to be a form of resistance against societal norms. Besides, the study examines the linguistic as well as the cultural challenges encountered by the main characters, where it will outline how stuttering damages masculine linguistic dominance, which in its turn assists women to have their identities redefined. By comparatively analysing the two novels, the study aims at fulfilling the following research questions:

1. In which ways do the epistemic violence embedded in the phallogentric language use impact the attitude of stuttering women towards themselves and their social environments? This question will reveal important insights on how social attitudes towards female stutterers impact their self-perception.
2. How do the two women writers treat female stuttering as a form of resistance in post-colonial Arab women narratives? This question will allow us to identify the acts of resistance enacted by the female stutterers in the two novels.

## 1.4 Literature Review

In this part of the study, the researcher presents the rich and diverse body of scholarship surrounding the study of stuttering and female agency, such as the internal and external reality of stuttering. In addition, women stutterers and their sense of self are the markers of difference and the stutterer's sense of self and negotiating stuttering. It should be noted at the outset that since this study compares the treatment of stuttering in two post-colonial novels which have been recently published, Najwa Bin Shatwan's Novel *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* (2023) and Ghada Khoury's Novel *Girl of Thunder* (2023), there are no studies about these two novels to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Accordingly, this section presents the main social constructs around stuttering and the limitations these constructs place on persons who suffer from a stuttering disorder.

Tichenor & Yaruss (2019) define the term stuttering as a constellation of experiences beyond the observable speech disfluency behaviours that are typically defined as stuttering by listeners (p. 1). Their work marks the stutterer's internal experiences of the external social realities. The authors conclude that stuttering may start with a sense of losing control of something or getting stuck and this sense leads the speaker to stutter, in which stuttering becomes a reaction to certain constraints and limitations.

The stuttering psychological condition that talks about the individual's inner experiences is formed of a combination of factors such as the cognitive, emotional and physiological factors. When talking about cognitive factors, we deal with speech planning problems, anxiety and the mental efforts which can be increased and interact with some other emotional experiences related to fear of frustration and evaluation concerning speech. Such factors, i.e., emotional and cognitive have a deal with physiological factors which in their turn are related to the production of speech and this involves difficulties related to muscle tension and neural processing. All of these factors lead to stuttering or the interrupted stretches of language (Bloodstein & Ratner, 2008).

In the case of female stutterer specifically, the topic of women who stutter is still under researched. Nang, Hersh, Milton, & Lau (2018) examine the experiences of a small group of women who stutter, with a particular focus on how gender may have influenced their experiences with stuttering. According to the researchers, three themes can be understood from the gendered sense of self in society. The study covers three important aspects, namely attitudes towards the self, the impact of stuttering on relationships and social connections with others (relationships with family, peers, colleagues, and intimate partners), and the management of stuttering (internal coping, motivations, and experiences with external support). The researchers concluded that stuttering led to a prevalent influence on women's lives and impacted how women see themselves, their relationships, their expectations of their careers, and their attitudes toward how others view them. The women who participated in the study had negative self-attitudes. They believed that their stuttering negatively influenced their quality of life. On the other hand, a broader context of perceived sociocultural expectations of females in society, such as communication skills, social behaviour, appearance, and presentation. These sociocultural expectations are forming the experiences of these women.

The study of Kathard, Pillay, Samuel, & Reddy (2004) highlights the markers of difference and the stutterer's sense of self, include resulting the negative social reactions of stuttering, which lead to shaping the stutterer's self-identity as "DisOther". The sense of self is affected by the critical incidents in different contexts, which leads to a feeling of vulnerability and self-judgment. In addition, the research sheds light on the stuttering experience of seven South African adults from different racial, social, and economic backgrounds. The participants testified that the social markers of difference were established in the immediate home, school, and work context based on different processes such as labeling, norming, judging, and teasing. The personal processes encompass finding differences via critical events, repeated reinforcement of differences, self-judgment, and temporal strain. Moreover, the study investigated the

participants' actions when negotiating stuttering. Findings indicate that such stutters develop a sort of the self as the DisOther. This term talks about the perception of individuals themselves as being different because of being stutterers. Moreover, this term is consisted of 'Other' which is about the feeling of being less important in the society and 'Dis' which shows a feeling of difference.

Kathard (2003) uses self-identity formation to examine how five stutterers from South African KwaZulu-Natal community negotiate stuttering. The research considers stuttering in relation to the factors of empathy, power, positioning, and quality. It traces self-identity as DisOther and Able/Potential over time where the term Able/Potential refers to the self-identities as “okay”, “normal”, “capable”, “with ability and future potential”. The multiplicities, fluidity and complexities discussed in relation to DisOther also apply. Nevertheless, there was evidence of self-identity formation as DisOther across cases in school years. On the other hand, Able/Potential self-identity was shown to be necessary. Stutters may develop certain strategies when expressing their communication as regards challenges and interactions as regards the environment they are in. The strategies which stuttering people can develop can be classified into connection strategies and disconnection strategies. As for connection strategies, we can talk of voluntary stuttering, which deals with people who intentionally stutter in their speech in a way to minimize their stuttering. In addition, we might talk about speech therapy techniques where for instance pausing and prolongation of speech can be played. Social support is another strategy that helps in fact reducing stuttering (Plexico, Manning, & Levitt, 2009). Concerning disconnection strategies, we can focus on substitution where a difficult word is replaced by an easy one (Guitar, 2013). Besides, avoidance behavior is where the speaker tries to avoid some words due to which the speaker may stutter. The speaker or the individual might also withdraw from some interactions by keeping silent (Bricker-Katz, Lincoln, & Cumming, 2013). Specifically, the researcher successfully discussed the strategies for stuttering.

To sum up, we addressed the rich and diverse body of scholarship surrounding the main topic being stuttering and female agency. The previous studies that we provided highlight the following, the internal and external reality of stuttering. Furthermore, women stutterers and their sense of self are the markers of difference and the stutterer's sense of self and negotiating stuttering have been highlighted.

#### **1.4.1 Hesitant Speeches, the Metaphorical Aspects of Stuttering**

Here we take up the nuances of language disequilibrium. Guattari (1995) remarks that “a stuttering of language operates to produce what I would term an affective event that in itself can produce mutant nuclei of subjectification and thus the possibility of resingularisation” (p.18). Considering this, one can say that the distributions and irregularities in language, such as stuttering, can have the ability to establish emotional experience. Particularly, the term “mutant nuclei of subjectification” expresses the appearance of new perspectives or identities. As for “resingularisation”, this term emphasizes the process of coming back to a singular or a unique state. In fact, the ideas of Guattari (1995) generate a great background to understand stuttering, which is described not only as a linguistic limitation but also as a catalyst for emotional and transformative events within the individual and, likely, within society as a whole. Talking about the emotional and transformative events that occur in oneself, those who suffer from stuttering or those who stutter experience great emotional reactions like anger, shame, guilt, worry, etc. Such emotions differ from one person into another and develop over time (Tichenor & Yaruss, 2018). This reflects Guattari's (1995) argument that stuttering involves greater and deeper aspects of human subjectivity and societal interactions. Then, the irregularities of language, such as stuttering, result in a more complex language that then needs a great repertoire of vocabulary and larger syntactic forms. Thus, language turns to be so sophisticated for those who stutter (Peters & Starkweather, 1990).

According to Shell, “the term stuttering is used metaphorically to refer to something other than the actual speech impediment” (Shell, 2005, p. 39). Shell (2005) considers

stuttering from a metaphorical point of view to demonstrate that it has no relations with speech impediment. Thus, stuttering is considered as a figure of speech that is employed to transfer some other sorts of interpretation. In addition, Deleuze (1997) seems to use stuttering as metaphor when he says “as if the language were stretched along an abstract and infinitely varied line...as if the entire language started to roll from right to left, and to pitch backward and forward...” (pp. 109-110). Furthermore, in the words of López “a stutter can be a metaphor” (López, 2022, p. 19). Thus, Lopez tries to state that “stuttering could refer to something broader than what is seen as immediate manifestation of a speech disorder” (López, 2022, p. 19). In his essay “He Stuttered”, Deleuze (1997) makes significant contributions to the importance of linguistic diversity and innovation as regards critical thinking and creative writing. Thus, he writes that “creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle. Like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree that puts language in perpetual disequilibrium” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 111). Deleuze (1997) considers stuttering variations as powerful influences that lead language beyond mere structures, stimulating its natural development similar to an enormous rhizome. Some other writers like Walden et al. (2012) indicate that “stuttering is how the presence/absence split in language shows itself” (p.15). According to this, stuttering is considered a case in which language is found and not found, or there and not there. This confirms that there is a complicated interaction between the expression and its occurrence. In addition, Walden et al. (2012) explain that stuttering reveals the split or division found between the presence of thought and the fluent expression absence. Thus, stuttering confirms the complexity of the way language functions, suggesting that challenges such as gaps in the cognitive-expressive, and cultural misunderstandings which are found in the communication process.

In actuality, women who stutter are said to be nervous, fearful, shy and insecure (Silverman, 1982). Those, women with stuttering are stereotyped with these traits due to the societal norms they are living in. These stereotypes have an impact on the life

of the stutterer. According to Betz, Blood, & Blood, (2008), people who suffer from stuttering may find excuses to not be in the social situation. Add to that, not only stuttering women or people are stereotyped with the aforementioned traits, but also, they can face challenges on the occupational, academic and financial levels (Franic, Bothe, & Bramlett, 2012). This is confirmed by Ramzan, Ahmed, Saeed, Yaqoob, & Faridi (2023) who stated that stutters, especially women, have a feeling that their case of stutter has an impact on their academic achievement. They also mention that stuttering shows a great influence on the identity of the woman. Samson (2022) seems to support this idea when she says that a great number of men and women who stutter feel that stuttering results in a negative effect on their life. Nang, Hersh, Milton, & Lau (2018) considers that stuttering shows a pervasive influence on women's life and impacts the way women see themselves, their relationships, their career and how others see them in society. Klompas & Ross (2004) suggest that stuttering can have an effect on people's academic performance at school and on the relationships with teachers and classmates. However, despite the fact that stuttering was not considered as having an impact on people's establishing friendships, generally, stuttering is negatively viewed by people.

#### **1.4.2 Stuttering as a Mode of Rebellion**

Deleuze (1997) states that stuttering is "line of flight" (p.15). This illustrates the way individuals resist the controlling ideologies. If we refer back to the two novels under study and link them with rebellion as a mode of resistance, we can say that Reem and Helana, the two protagonists in the novels that we working on, show rebellion in their rejection of the unexpected societal norms and accepting themselves and their way of speech as a form of resistance against those societal norms. Stuttering in the two novels can be seen as a mode of minor literature where according to Deleuze & Guattari (1986), minor literature has three essential features. Firstly, "minor literature does not come from a minor language, it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 16-17), so that, in minor

literature, “language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). With regards to the second feature, Deleuze & Guattari (1987) write that “everything in them is political”, more precisely, minor literature’s “cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics”. As for the third feature, it is “that in it everything takes on a collective value”, because “talent isn’t abundant in a minor literature, there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that ‘master’ and that could be separated from a collective enunciation” (p.17).

Deleuze & Guattari (1987) state that minor literature is not a particular case to less-spoken languages; rather it is seen by minority of speakers within a dominant language. Thus, it works on two scales. One of them is less spoken languages and the other is related to a minority of speakers within a dominant language. In relation to minority within a dominant language, stuttering serves as a unique expression within a broader cultural context. Stuttering thus it turns to be a mode of rebellion where the minority we mentioned about tend to form their creative language within the dominant language. Nevertheless, López argues that “the Image of thought produces an image of language” (López, 2022, p. 7). This goes hand in hand with the idea that talks about minor literature.

In one of the novels under study, the phrase mentioned by the protagonist Reem such as “I can't”, “Do not dare”, and “Why don't you speak?”, shows that stuttering explains her struggle in expressing her thoughts, that helps in the creation of a unique linguistic identity in the dominant language. On the other hand, having repetitions in the novel like phrases such as “I nodded yes” and “Yes” is deemed a linguistic creativity in the major language, underpinning the concept of minor literature.

## 1.5 Theoretical Framework

The main line of argument in chapter 2 draws mainly on Derrida's 'Phallogocentric language use' and Spivak's concept of 'epistemic violence' to illustrate the ways in which Bin Shatwan and Ghada Khoury redraw the gendered language boundaries in the Arab society. Spivak (1988) uses epistemic violence in a relation to the colonial domination and the ways in which "meaning/knowledge intersects with power" (Spivak, 1985, p. 255). The systematic exclusion of marginalized subjects helps to build the colonized "other" and "the other text,". Othering is part of the violence where the subjects are forcefully placed in the place of epistemic, which will be object of the "controlling one ". Therefore, the one with the power will rebuild the world of those who are subjected to this epistemic violence. In simple terms, the colonizer built his own world, which, through various coercive tools, will become the world of the colonized subjects. To clarify, Spivak (1985) defines epistemic violence as the systematic injustice and distortion of the knowledge and history of the colonized subjects through the imperial projects. Such violence is centered on the imposition of Western European cultures, ideologies, and systems of belief upon non-European indigenous peoples and the denial of their presence and agency. Pérez explains that epistemic violence represents "the different ways in which violence is exercised in relation to the production, circulation and recognition of knowledge: the denial of epistemic agency for certain subjects, the unacknowledged exploitation of their epistemic resources, their objectification, among many others" (Pérez, 2019, p. 1).

Derrida (1981) uses the term Phallogocentrism to undermine the binary thinking imposed in patriarchal context. According to Derrida (1981) Phallogocentric language aims to "establish a self-sufficient foundation or transcendental signified" (p.11). Derrida (1981) suggests that the concept of phallogocentrism helps people to think in binaries as it supports the idea that "the sign always implies within itself the distinction between signifier and signified" (p. 11). In simple terms, Derrida (1981) says that Phallogocentrism pushes people to think along binary where the masculine language

is often prioritized over its opposite, the female voice. Derrida concludes that men often associated with positive attitudes while women are associated with negativity and absence.

Chapter Two demonstrates many ways in which the female subjectivities are curtailed through invitations to silence and minimal speech in the public sphere. Phallogocentric speech emerges as the dominant language, which, through the power and weight of a long tradition of exclusion, turns female language into hesitant, incoherent instances of language use.

The second part of the study, focuses on the stuttering females' acts of resistance and resilience in the two novels, draws heavily on Kafka and Beckett's discursive logic which is constructed around the use of fragmented language as a protest tool. Hesitation predominates Kafka's Diaries, "Listened to myself outside of myself, it sounded like the whimpering of a young cat". Here, the writer uses this metaphor to express some challenges wherein he explains about self-consciousness and individuals attempt to have a clear speech. In other words, draws on the internal difficulties and challenges of oneself like stuttering that is important in accepting one's identity and voice.

Hesitation becomes a stutter at the end, an idea which aligns with Deleuze's (1997) argument that "it is no longer the character who stutters in speech but the writer who becomes a stutterer in language. He makes the language as such a stutter: an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks" (p. 107). Thus, a stuttering character signals a stuttering author. Deleuze declares at the conclusion of his article, "Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature" that, in more than one sense, Kafka Stuttered. According to Deleuze, writers like Beckett and Kafka "invent a minor use of the major language within which express themselves entirely; they minorize this language, much as in music, where the minor mode refers to dynamic combinations in perpetual disequilibriums" (P.109). Here Deleuze introduces the

concepts of disequilibrium which refers to the inequality of authority in the structures of language. Here, stuttering resonates with and works as a reflection of this imbalance. Authors like Kafka use this technique as a tool to challenge the linguistic inequality and to challenge linguistic norms which allowed it. This minorization, is based on Deleuze (1997), “makes the language take flight, they send it racing along a witch's line, ceaselessly placing it in a state of disequilibrium (P.109). While doing so, this push language to its limit, and this state, according to Deleuze, (1997) will make "stuttering language the poetic or linguistic power par excellence” (P.111).

In both novels, the main characters try to free themselves from naturalized patriarchal notions. This refers to the cultural and societal beliefs that present patriarchal ideas as something natural instead of taking them as socially constructed ideologies. It also leads to legitimizing women's inequalities and male dominance (Greene & Kahn, 2020). Both characters in both novels are stutterers, and their stuttering serves as a kind of rebellion. Women in patriarchal societies are usually expected to talk in a certain linguistics norm such as talking in a clear way, not rising their voice, and submissive to the male control. However, stuttering disrupts all these expectations which serve to act as a form of resistance against the "naturalized" norms of communication which align with the patriarchal notions.

Drawing on these theories, the chapter on female stutter acts of rebellion will highlight the instances of disequilibrium in the two novels to argue that the two female authors undermine Arabic language inequalities and linguistic norms.

## **1.6 Chapter Breakdown**

### **Chapter One: Introduction and Background**

The present study outlines the background needed for the topic of the study. Additionally, it gives a glance at the novel. Besides, it offers a brief explanation of the three elements which will be worked on by the researcher.

## **Chapter Two: Hesitant Voices and Epistemic Violence**

This chapter addresses the various ways in which linguistic violence is practiced to curtail female subjectivity in the Arab culture. Derrida and Kristeva provide the theoretical grounding for illustrating the factors which cause the hesitant female voices in the two novels. In this chapter we will bring in some examples from the two novels that tackle the idea of epistemic violence and we will compare between the ways in which the two authors draw the connection between masculine language dominance and women hesitant use of language to explain how a particular language (male language) that is being enforced as the standard language, causes marginalization, suppression and/or exemption of women, minority or original language.

## **Chapter Three: Instances of Female Stutterer Resistance**

Chapter 3 traces the acts and instances of resistance in both novels to the state of male linguistic dominance in the Arabic language. Here stuttering is viewed as an act of female resistance, a tool of protest, a state of disequilibrium which destabilizes the language boundaries. Authors like Beckett and Kafka use stuttering to produce disconnected prose, thus keeping it “endlessly in a state of disequilibrium” (Deleuze, 2000, p. 23). Such state of disequilibrium practically means that males are vocal, loud, and confident while females lack all these attributes associated with language use. Deleuze (1997) maintains that Kafka is a “foreigner in his language: he does not mix another language with his language” (P.110). Deleuze argues that authors such as Kafka make “language [...] stutter” (p.107). Authors use stuttering as a sign of “poetic or linguistic power par excellence” (Tajiri, 2007, p. 111), pushing language to its limit, the limit of which is silence, as a metaphor for writing since writing is a silent form of speech.

These uses of fragmented speech and stuttering speakers resonate well with the linguistic marginalization of female characters in the works of Arab women writers.

Bin Shatwan and Ghada Khoury use female stutterers to deconstruct this masculine language dominance. Their works expose and challenge the practice of language dominance and its implications in postcolonial Arab societies. Both writers examine how language, as a tool of dominance, can silence women's voices, emphasizing to reclaim women control over their language and their subjectivity. Using specific evidence from the novels, I demonstrate that Bin Shatwan and Ghada Khoury push language to its limits where stuttering emerges as a sign of strain, indicating that language itself confronts its boundaries, eventually reaching a point where it faces the silence beyond these limits.

#### **Chapter Four: Conclusion**

This chapter provides the conclusion of the study. It provides the findings on the ways two Arab female authors use stuttering as a sign of agency, a reclamation of the female voice. Stuttering in both novels is thus seen as a mode of resistance against the violence of the masculine linguistic dominance.

## Chapter Two

### Hesitant Female Voices and Epistemic Violence

#### 2.1 Introduction

Drawing on Spivak's notion of epistemic violence (1998) and Derrida's Phallogocentric speech, as well as Hélène Cixous' (1976) writing on female oppression, this chapter examines stuttering as a phenomenon of female exclusion in a patriarchal context in the two novels under study being Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Khoury's novel *Girl of Thunder*. Phallogocentrism is defined by Derrida as the masculine logic and speech dominance related to revealing and structuring the meaning. Alternative and other modes of expressions, particularly those of women are marginalized by the language system which is dominated by male. In this context, stuttering is perceived as a symbolic disruption as well as an embodied resistance against norms of patriarchal society. The phallogocentric assumption that meaning is stable, present, and accessible through rational language is deeply entwined within patriarchal structures, producing a system that marginalizes other forms of knowledge—particularly those associated with femininity, emotion, and silence. The feminine becomes the constitutive voice spaced outside this system, equivalent to the unspoken, irrational Other. Thus, analyzing language through a phallogocentric lens exposes the structural violence embedded in discourse and makes space for voices historically excluded from meaning-making.

Epistemic violence bespeak environment where female characters are ignored and marginalized. Spivak explains that “epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other” (Spivak, 1998, p. 76). This shows that this project, as Spivak (1998) points out, is “the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious subjectivity” (p. 76). In postcolonial countries, more specifically in the Arab world, patriarchal language structures play a crucial role in imposing linguistic limitations on women,

which, in many cases, leads to hesitant speech or stuttering. In the same vein, Dotson (2011) points out that “an epistemic side of colonialism is the devastating effect of the “disappearing” of knowledge, where local or provincial knowledge is dismissed due to privileging alternative, often Western, epistemic practices” (Dotson, 2011, p. 236).

Furthermore, Held (2020) argues that “the epistemic violence derives from two alleged mainstream tendencies: (a) omitting concepts/conceptions of othered peoples and (b) interpreting observed group differences to be caused by inherent inferiorities of othered peoples” (p. 2). In the words of Dotson (2011), epistemic violence can help distinguish how members of oppressed groups are silenced (p. 236). These arguments indicate that epistemic violence is a tool of exclusion that serves to distort marginalized voices. Hence, the practice of epistemic violence is systemic.

Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Khoury's novel *Girl of Thunder* depict linguistic violence against female characters. Such violence appears in how patriarchal language structures marginalize, silence, and oppress female stutterers in the two narratives. Bin Shatwan & Ghada Khoury portray this violence by addressing topics such as male-dominated linguistic norms, social marginalization, stuttering as a site of oppression, and silence as a response to epistemic violence. According to Ejiaso (2024), “Linguistic violence is an instance of covert violence. It refers to [...] hurtful words that humiliate, shame, and defame an individual or group by affecting their state of mind and social relations” (Ejiaso, 2024, p. 2). Linguistic violence is a term related to the humiliating language used against marginalized groups. This term is in consistence with the suffering of Reem and Helana, the protagonists in the two novels, where we have hesitant female voices, due to masculine speech. In Khoury's novel, the main character, Helana, is humiliated by other characters in school, where the narrator reveals that Helana's classmates say that "Helena, the stutterer... she never gets a word out... a-a-a... w-w-w... b-b-b...the stutterer Helana she never gets a word....” (p. 14). Similarly, in Bin Shatwan's novel *Reem*, the main character says, “Time is what I want to talk about myself” (Bin Shatwan, 2023, p. 165). In such a

context, social oppression inhibits female self-expression. In addition, stuttering marks her as a stranger to the male-dominated linguistic structures.

The present chapter investigates the way language in postcolonial Arab narratives shapes and demonstrates gender norms, stereotypes and dynamics of power, which have an effect on the way women consider themselves and how they are considered or perceived by others. Hence, we claim here that the depiction of women who stutter as seen in the novels of Bin Shatwan and Ghada Khoury embodies the complexities surrounding female subjectivity in postcolonial Arab societies.

We trace instances of violence in Masculine Speech to demonstrate how language shaped by patriarchal norms inflicts symbolic and epistemic violence on women, silencing their voices and defining them through perceived flaws like stuttering. Additionally, we will highlight that linguistic insecurities or hesitant female voices are symptoms of imposed silence, which prevents women from forming and expressing knowledge and reduces their hesitant voices to symbols of deficiency.

## **2.2 Instances of Violence in Masculine Speech**

This section focuses on portraying violence in masculine speech in *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* by Bin Shatwan and *Girl of Thunder* by Khoury. The two female characters were born in a patriarchal society where the male characters dominate language and suppress the female voices. According to Elshtain (1982) “language conveys a certain power” (Elshtain, 1982, p. 603). This indicates that language it’s not just a tool of communication but also it has some sort of power which has an effect worldwide. In the Arabic culture and society, which is a patriarchal society, women have been suppressed and are not allowed to talk. Arab men have a dominant discourse over women; they connect the voice of women with shamefulness. A proverb used in patriarchal Arab societies is “صوت المرأة عوره”, which means that “a woman's voice is 'awrah”. The word 'awrah refers to some parts of the body that should be covered in front of unrelated men. The previous proverb emphasizes that women in Arab society

should not talk in public, which indicates the denial of her agency. In addition, when males always go to a place where the talk is not interesting, they use a proverb that reflects the rejection of female speech as it is considered useless, such as (مثل حكي) (النسوان) "like women's talk." Male use this proverb in order to say that this speech is untrusted, unworthy, meaningless.

The main character in Bin Shatwan's novel, Reem, was born in the Libyan city of Benghazi during Gaddafi's regime. Similarly, Helen in *The Girl of Thunder* was born in a village called Derzova, a small conservative town in Lebanon. Helena grew up in an environment that restricted women's movements and voices and imposed strictly predefined social roles. Both characters experience similar patterns of psychological and linguistic violence. In a series of encounters, the two novels disclose how linguistic and societal structures impose male dominance, deny women subjecthood, and perpetuate epistemic violence. In this study, I will demonstrate how Bin Shatwan and Khoury symbolically employ stuttering to criticize the Masculine Language as the Dominant Standard Speech and outline the systemic oppression practiced upon women.

Reem, the main character in Bin Shatwan's novel, when she is talking with her grandfather when she went to visit him because he was sick during the discussion, her grandfather wishes her to get married before he dies because he very sick. Reem knows the harsh truth of the reality in her society and this clearly seen in her words when she response to her grandfather wishes: "Who will marry a stuttering, stumbling lady, and men always respond to the perfect wife I'm not perfect" (p.254). It can be observed here that stuttering is not merely a speech issue. In fact, it deals with a symbol of imperfection, where it in a direct way affects the self-perception of the protagonist and the societal view of herself. The internal perception of inferiority that Reem perceives causes her to feel afraid and ashamed, leading to emotional introversion and self-absorption. She thinks she does not deserve love and acceptance.

It turns out that this self-denial is a mechanism for adapting to prevailing parental expectations.

Therefore, these strict standards of women subjectivity, such as beauty, fluency, and softness, lead women to fear that they could not meet all these standards. This aligns with Cixous & Clement (1976) thoughts about female speech. Therefore, when a patriarchal society restricts the way how women should talk, appear, and behave, women, especially ones who do not like these norms, will resort to silence. In this light, Reem's stuttering in the novel may be understood as a speech impairment and a psychosomatic reaction towards an aggressive linguistic environment that represses the expression of females. Such standards make it clear that the language of men should be adhered to rigorously, and any deviation from this norm not only estranges women but also leads to violently physical subjugation. Consequently, women might exhibit disrupted or hesitant speech, not due to physical incapacity, but as a manifestation of epistemic and symbolic violence inflicted by male-centered discourse.

This condition is echoed clearly in the case of the main character in Khoury's novel, who has similarly been insulted by other people around her. Helana was walking into home when she saw her uncle's wife Maha who invited her to drink coffee, during the discussion Maha asked Helana about her coffee and Helana says "Thanks...thanks... bbb.... without coffee... kkk... kkk...how are you? my uncle's wife?" Maha replied, "You still talk like that" (p.13). Helana responds to the woman interlocutor with emotional turmoil, experiencing vulnerability and shame as if her body is "on fire." She longs to vanish—representing the wish to eliminate the self when words turn into a source of suffering and societal mockery. Khoury employs repetition and stammering to highlight Helena's social and linguistic marginalization. In addition to her emotional pain, the stuttering of Helana is seen as a severe flaw which decreases her chances to fulfill traditional roles, especially in when talk about a wife and mother. In the context of a society which appreciates women who are eloquent and are seen

as fluent and have perfection, linguistic faults are considered and perceived undesirable. The contradiction is that patriarchal society discourages women from speaking out and demands they remain silent and submissive. Women are forced to speak, but their speech must remain soft and calm, which creates a vicious cycle for them.

Therefore, Helana's stutter becomes more than just a speech issue—it symbolizes her absence in a world where 'presence' is tied to accepted forms of speech. In this incidence as well as elsewhere in the novel, Helena's attempt to articulate linguistically ideal femininity leads her speech to collapse. As such, the stutter of Helena is not merely a personal difficulty but also a marker of her subjugation in a patriarchal system which defines her through her perceived failure to meet masculine linguistic standards. Her reaction shows the aggressive psychological effect of linguistic norms on female expression. The two women's voices are ripped apart under societal pressure. Having repeated stutters will thus work and serve as a metaphor for silencing women who fail to comply with the linguistic norms dictated by patriarchal structures. Their voices, characterized by hesitation and inferiority, are unacceptable in the dominant linguistic framework.

When Reem was about to graduate from the University, she met her cousin Amal, who was asking her about what her future and when she will married and if she is in love with one of her classmate but Reem says that love is not a condition for marriage and also she know that no one will accept her and this is clearly seen in her reflection to Amal, Reem says “I doubt that there is a Libyan man whose family would agree to his marriage to a stutterer woman, or blind one, even if he himself was stutterer” (p. 231). Reem responses reveals her deep awareness of how patriarchal norms regulate female social value through linguistic performance. Her statement underscores how speech disorders, particularly stuttering, are framed not merely as individual impairment but as social constraints that hinder full female participation in culturally sanctioned roles, e.g. marriage. The fear of rejection tied to such “defects” illustrates

the broader cultural preference for women who are quiet, compliant, and rhetorically polite—traits closely aligned with silence and self-erasure. This dynamic is echoed in *Girl of Thunder*, where stuttering is viewed as a pathologically, hereditary flaw that stains the subject's entire life. Helana's marriage to Saleh, a man two decades her senior, is interpreted by a female family member as an act of charity, rather than an act of mutual consent: "This man, who accepted her as she is, does not deserve a son who inherits her defect" (p. 12). Here, stuttering functions as a gendered stigma, marking the woman's body and voice as biologically tainted, socially undesirable, and ultimately incompatible with the normative ideals of femininity and family lineage.

The patriarchal society considers masculine language the correct, logical, and authoritative form of language to which one must adhere. Any deviation from it, like stuttering and hesitation, is considered a flaw. In this context, the stuttering of the main character in Bin Shatwan's novel indicates her social inadequacy, not allowing others to see her as anything beyond that flaw. Her speech turns into a cause of exclusion and an obstacle to achieving potential gender roles like marriage and motherhood. Similarly, in *Girl of Thunder*, stuttering is seen as a personal flaw and genetic stigma, which men refuse and reject. This demonstrates that the social rejection of imperfect female speech is powerfully rooted, which enhances the idea that language is a gendered tool of control, where women ought to show flawless speech or remain silent. The two novels exhibit the suppression and rejection of female voices due to their lack of conformity to patriarchal ideals of perfect, obedient speech. Women are forced to speak flawlessly and idealistically but are also prevented from speaking.

### **2.3 Epistemic Violence**

In the novel of Khoury, Helana encounters societal expectation like marital suitability that attempt to not approve her rights. The narrator states that "Helana married Saleh, who is 20 years older than her, which is an irreplaceable opportunity since no one desires a girl like her because she stutters (p.14)". Here, emphasis is put on how

cognitive violence demonstrates itself using exclusion and stigma as regards Helana's identity which is defined by her merits and perceived deficiency. As a result, she is perceived as unworthy of desire or marriage because of her defective speech. Not only is her stutter a factor in her choices, but also the cultural narrative that associates femininity with linguistic perfection. The direct consequences of cognitive structures that silence and belittle women who deviate from established norms are social isolation, restricted agency, and inherent inferiority.

In the novel of Bin Shatwan, Reem's sister emphasizes that "Reem deserved to love, live, and meet her desires without concern [for] whatever views of others" (p. 215). Such words put a challenge to the current cultural discourse on women's silence and submission. Reem's marriage announcement is a reflection of cognitive violence, which restricts women's ability to express and define their own experiences. Reem's stuttering is not only hindering her, but it is also influencing her due to a social system that views women who stutter as incompetent, flawed, or unemotional. The system's limitations make it hard for her to communicate and make decisions, which leads her to conceal her true nature and marriage in fear of judgment or rejection. Reem is a victim of psychological abuse that causes her to question the validity of her voice and identity, resulting in self-censorship and emotional loneliness.

In *Girl of Thunder*, Helena manifests her desire for "a different kind of exile, a presence untainted by the notoriety of her defect" (p. 21). This shows a struggle internally rooted in the consequences of epistemic violence, showing that Helena wants to avoid stuttering and anything related to it. Her wish to remain untouched by any harm shows how women adjust to marginalization when their expressions fail to satisfy men's expectations of articulateness and precision. Helena's opposition is less overt than Reem's, yet she still contests the patriarchal story that perceives women's value through a male-centric perspective.

Cognitive violence frequently leads to hesitant or disrupted speech, particularly among female characters. The protagonists in both novels are confronted with linguistic uncertainty and silence because of systematic marginalization in their works. Stuttering is a struggle for self-worth and acknowledgement in societies that place male dominance at the forefront. The way you speak is a reflection not just of physical disability, but also of the internal silencing of women's voices, which are forced to diminish or fade due to patriarchal norms. The intrinsic effect of cognitive silencing is evidenced by intermittent speech, pauses, and language avoidance, not personal failure.

Although described as a pathological defect, Helena's stuttering serves as a survival tactic in the oppressive setting of *Girl of Thunder*. Her dependence on coughing to escape conversation illustrates how silence acts as a barrier, a protection against the embarrassment linked to women's speech: "Her cough often betrayed her—the one she relied on whenever a letter threatened to expose her. She could not always fake choking to be spared from answering. She needed a new trick" (p. 30). The effects of this quietness are intensified by societal admiration for inaction: "Her defect led her to deception, earning her mother-in-law's favor: 'A well-mannered girl—quiet and as beautiful as the moon'" (p. 16). These statements show how women are socially influenced to associate silence with goodness and approval.

Helena's inability to face her community without shame underscores the sentimental results of social judgment: "The people of her village, no matter how their names and faces differ, paralyze her ability to stand with her head held high" (p. 8). Such powerlessness is more than fear. It articulates the pivotal of epistemic violence, whereas societal norms work on hindering women from having the feeling of being deserving of presence or expression.

Reem's stutter in works expresses the silencing enforced by epistemic structures. Her admission— “It will cost me nothing, as I struggle with speech difficulties myself” (p. 19)—indicates how her voice has been devalued so thoroughly that speech turns out to be silly or unneeded. When she says, “I nodded yes; I was terrified to speak in case you noticed my stutter” (p. 56), it highlights the way women begin to oppress themselves because of patriarchal demands. Such things are not only responses. Instead, they are excellent outcomes due to a system that undermines the expression of women. Reem is aware of the cultural rules that demand women remain quiet to avoid punishment: where men in postcolonial countries prefer a silent female who only hears them, and if she speaks, they harass and pursue her for what causes a problem that requires her to remain silent or abstain from repeating the phenomenon of speaking. The present quote illustrates that female speech is penalized when it encounters male control, forcing many women into silence—not out of nature, but necessity.

Reem’s social and familial isolation further reveals the mental impact of epistemic violence. The narrator when he was talking about Reem at the beginning of the novel says: “The defect was not only with her words but also it accompanied her to school” (p. 17). Later, Reem confesses: “I was vulnerable, powerless, and bewildered when no one from my family was on my side, and I couldn't take a step without them” (p. 91). Her inaction and emotional disempowerment stem from feeling unheard and from lacking support, even within her intimate social circles. Reem says to herself when she takes her own decision to live and do whatever she wants, she says — “It was time for me to express myself, and everyone was being selfish” (p. 292)—indicates a tipping point when internalized silence becomes unbearable.

In the two novels, the identity of the main characters or protagonists is constructed based on the way others perceive their stuttering of them. *In Girl of Thunder*, the protagonist mentions, “Stuttering was an integral part of my identity in my presence, absence, and as a business card to others” (p. 259). This also appear in Khoury’s novel

where stuttering becomes a card identity to refer to Helana “The stutterer Helana... all words that she says are ... Aaaa... Woo... Bbbbb... Stutterer Helana. Helana does not have a word to say...” (p.19). This shows how society utilizes the stutter to define women by a perceived flaw.

In *Concerto Corinna Eduardo*, stuttering is a "business card." This business card is an indication of social labeling and exclusion. Additionally, this metaphor shows how others see Reem. They see her as a stuttering body, not as a whole subject. Her identity is reduced to one characteristic based on societal rejection and silence. Even she develops self-awareness, there is still an influence as regards her identity by others who perceive. Nevertheless,

While she gains self-awareness, her identity continues to be influenced by how others perceive her. Nevertheless, Reem's increasing awareness of her discourse as a representation of identity which suggests a potential transition from an inner sense of shame to self-acceptance. Despite the fact that Reem has been affected by not being accepted, her voice begins to assert itself. In the same vein, in Khoury's novel *Girl of Thunder*, the main character Helena's stuttering has been viewed as a symbol of marginalization rather than a passing flaw: "The flaw that stained her childhood will haunt her to the grave" (p. 14). This shows that the effects of cognitive violence are not temporary, but permanent. Besides, it is deeply rooted in women's sense of self.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

To conclude, *Concert Corinna Eduardo* and *Girl of Thunder* utilize the notion of stuttering for the purpose of explaining the association among gender, language and power in postcolonial Arab societies. Through a feminist and poststructuralist theory, the present chapter claims that hesitant female speech is not just a sign of personal conflict, but also a complex sign of structural oppression and the ability to influence. Helena and Reem's fragmented, muffled, and ultimately resisted voices demonstrate the importance of linguistic representation for women who are not represented well.

Stuttering is a sign of exclusion, but it also offers a radical opportunity to reimagine the female voice, identity, and cognitive existence.

## Chapter Three

### Instances of Female Stutterer Resistance

#### 3.1 Introduction

In case of female resistance occurring in an environment that man dominates at the linguistic and patriarchal levels, it is shaped as both subtle and resilient. Because of male dominance over language, laws, and cultural narratives, the options available to women for expression and agency are decreased. Regarding this limitation, female resistance is manifested not only through overt confrontation but also through adaptations and negotiations in the cracks of dominant frameworks. Other than reclaimed narratives and speech, acts of silence, and gentle and retreating challenge, women develop many other ways to prove their existence and protect their dependence. In fact, these acts may be seen secondary when we talk about the surface level. Nevertheless, collectively, they undermine the supposed stability of male power. This resistance formation and creation be it linguistic, cultural or symbolic show the continuous exclusion and erasure of women. Despite some women gaining access to official channels for change and advocacy, others are compelled to navigate through informal, limited, and even dangerous routes to contest marginalization. By gaining an understanding of female resistance, attention should be paid to both overt activism and the everyday, often clandestine, acts that women confront, redefine, and maneuver, depending on which systems they aim to challenge or silence. Under these circumstances, when male language dominates, resistance becomes an imperative to survive.

Drawing on Deleuze's ideas of "making language stutter", this study demonstrates how stuttering can be a challenge to the dominant masculine discourse. About the broader philosophy of Deleuze & Guattari (1987), the stutter manifests a sort of deterritorialization, which can be defined as the removal of language from fixed structures that impose control and hierarchy. Nonetheless, it has been affirmed by

Deleuze & Guattari (1987) that deterritorialization assumes two crucial ideas. In this context, regardless of the fact that deterritorialization undermines proven structures, systems considered dominant such as the patriarchal system may reterritorialize them. In reality, the understanding of Deleuze & Guattari (1987) as regards Kafka (1983) is not solely based on specific ideas of Kafka, but also it is based on their broader exploration of concepts like deterritorialization since “it is not the literature of a minor language but the literature a minority makes in a major language. But the primary characteristic of minor literature involves how the language is affected by a strong coefficient of deterritorialization” (p.16). This may include the disruption of the dominant ideologies and norms through the use of fragmented speech and marginalized voices. As such, language becomes a territory that stuttering affects or disrupts, demonstrating how fluent and rational discourse is formed through patriarchal power. Besides, minor literature has many characteristics which are “the deterritorialization of the language, the connection of the individual and the political, the collective arrangement of utterance” (Deleuze, Guattari, & Brinkley, 1983, p. 18). Hence, to have an image for the speaker as the nomad, the immigrant, and the gypsy shows the way deterritorialized language functions; it does not accept being fixed, tamed, or owned.

Regarding the stuttering woman, hesitation is perceived as a form of resistance, i.e., she refuses to conform to patriarchal speech patterns. Additionally, this demonstrates how language can be expertized by marginalized voices, such as women who stutter and who revolutionize, while resisting dominant ideologies. Therefore, stuttering works as a linguistic and bodily act of resistance, leading to the creation of a 'non-smooth space' in the space made for ordered speech.

This is the basis of deterritorialization, which, as stated earlier, is related to uprooting and destabilizing language, identity, and the body, giving a space for the emergence of oppressed voices. Stuttering as a form of resistance aligns with Deleuze's concepts of deterritorialization, where the disruption of traditional language structures becomes

a tool to stand against dominant discourse. This explains how stuttering can disrupt the territory of fluent, patriarchal speech and challenge its expected order. As Deleuze, Guattari, & Brinkley (1983) write “the term [...] deterritorialization [...], which may be defined as 'the dissolution of that space" (p.28). In fact, the speaker’s body, words and identity are affected by such disintegration, where this causes a complete desertification as Deleuze demonstrated. Therefore, stuttering may cause disruption in speech flow, where this would lead to a difficulty in controlling language. As a result of this speech for, a fixed and a complex space may be transformed into a discontinuous space. In minor literature, Deleuze & Guattari examine this collapse through Kafka's characters, as noted, "Gregor's whine that blurs words, the mouse's whistling, the monkey's cough... the sound and the word which cross this new deterritorialization do not belong to a sensible language... they no longer need to be formed" (Deleuze, Guattari, & Brinkley, 1983, p. 21). A sort of resistance can be noticed in this type of disrupted sentence order. With regard to their explanation, Deleuze, Guattari, & Brinkley (1983) illustrate further that the main goal is “to make the sequence vibrate, to open the word to unheard-of inner intensities - in short, signifying, intensive use of language” (p. 22). In relation to that, stuttering functions as a deterritorialized tool of expression to resist linguistic norms, where it gives a space for the ones suppressed and who are not given permission to speak where they emerge through hesitation and rupture. In the same way as Kafka’s minor characters empty a primary language, stuttering women deterritorialize the discourse that men use though making cracks in speaking. Such resistant stuttering takes a rising mode in the two novels, with clear strategies being deployed by the female stutterers.

Cixous & Clement (1976) argues that female speech is deeply intertwined with the female body and experiences, challenging the traditional view of language as neutral and objective. Cixous & Clement (1976) points out that "A woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law,

with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and history – by her movement" (p. 875). In both novels, the stuttering of female characters write themselves in interrupted language. The broken speech in both novels disrupts the masculine language, creating a space for female characters to express their emotions and bodily experiences. This kind of symbolic resistance to masculine language aligns with Spivak's concept of epistemic violence, where the structures of language and thoughts actively erase and marginalize female and subaltern voices.

In this respect, the study outlines that Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Ghada Khoury's *Girl of Thunder* use female characters as a form of resistance, where such female stutterers face the prevailing discourse. Female stutterers are used to confront the dominant language structure and the domination resulted from masculine speech. Hence, examples of female resistance are provided which can be categorized into five interrelated kinds. These are stuttering as one type agency, stuttering as deterritorialized language, self-awareness, stuttering as agency and female to female Support. Using *écriture féminine* of Cixous and deterritorialization of Deleuze, this chapter aims at investigating how stuttering and fragmented speech is employed by the two female stutterers in the two novels in a way which leads to deconstruct masculine language dominance. Both novels lead to challenge as regards the practice of language structure dominance along with its connection and or effect on postcolonial Arab societies. Thus, the writers of the two novels show the way may be used to silence women's voices, indicating the significance for women reclaim control and dominance of their language and presence. To fulfill this goal, I will utilize evidence from the two novels. Besides, I claim that the two writers exploit language to its fullest extent, in which stuttering appears as a sign of strain, clarifying that the language itself poses a challenge to its boundaries.

### 3.2 Stuttering as one type of agency

Although stuttering is often viewed as a speech defect, it can also be seen as an intentional form of resistance. In patriarchal societies, male discourse is the dominant form of discourse. Nevertheless, female speech, which is considered fragmented, challenges the potential linguistic structures. In reality, we cannot describe this disruption as accidental; it carries symbolic potential. Regarding *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and *Girl of Thunder*, stuttering proves to be a form of expression that reshapes silence into presence. When she was talking with her father, Reem wanted to say something to her grandfather, but she stuttered as she stated, “ah...ah...ah... Stuttering: UMMMM / Then she stammered, 'Ah...ah...ah” (p.45). As can be noticed here, repeating and prolonging the syllables goes beyond having a mechanical difficulty in speech. This is understood as a kind of performative breakdown of the language fluency. Indeed, having a fragmented speech is a form of resistance against coherent masculine discourse, where this discourse is replaced with hesitation, vibration, and disruption.

Additionally, the repetition of “ah and UMMMM” (p.224) indicates an embodied speech act. In other words, this voice aims to be heard or insists on being recognized. Moreover, Reem continues with the self-choice she started and states “It was time for me to express myself, and everyone was being selfish” (p.254). Her saying of this shows the permission given to her by Eduardo when he allowed her to speak. About this, we see the desire and urgency of Reem's self-expression. From the phrase "a long time" refers a long postponement of vocal agency. As can be observed, speech here is meant to be uttered. Thus, Reem prepares herself to restore her linguistic presence, although in broken form. Such fragmented, incoherent moments of speech appear to be both a linguistic failure and a deliberate or unconscious technique of resistance. The stuttering of Reem and her delays disrupt the expected fluency of the dominant discourse in patriarchal society, providing an opportunity for embodied expression.

Even though *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* shows stuttering as a conscious form of resistance employing disruption and withdrawal from linguistic norms, *Girl of Thunder* presents a different dynamism one that demonstrates how broken speech and embodied silence turn out to be strategies for survival and manipulation in the patriarchal society, which considers the female voice as illegible. About this, Helana in Khoury's novel repeats herself many times, as we note when the narrator says, "She repeated to herself synonyms richer than the fields of Deir Zurfa. And yet, her speech remained sparse" (p.33). Here, we can observe a distinct split emerging between inner abundance and outer restriction. In reality, Helana has a great number of lexical repertoires. However, her speech is sparse. This confirms the abundance of language resources suppressed in women's bodies. However, this expected source of meaning is monitored even before it takes on an audible form. The scant speech is not a linguistic failure, but a strategy to withdraw from a language that does not include her. Thus, she refuses to imitate the language of males. Helana notices that he has a desire to touch her and approach her sexually; therefore, she exploits that to gain his love and obtain her mother-in-law's respect and acceptance. The narrator reveals that Helana's "disability trained her in deception; she won over her mother-in-law's approval— 'a well-raised, quiet girl" (p.16). Here, instead of resisting overtly, Helana begins to exploit her silence, portraying herself as a submissive girl to gain approval. Thus, silence is a privilege here and not a defeat. This is to say that Helana's silence is intentional and a strategy through which she exploits the cracks in dominant systems.

This shows that stuttering and silence are not merely related to marginalization, but also forms of rooted intelligence and resistance. Thus, the two authors provide a feminist counter-narrative. This should be understood as the broken language of women might break the inherited order.

### 3.4 Stuttering as a Deterritorialized Language

Stuttering appears to be more than a speech defect; it emerges as a deterritorialized form of language that avoids patriarchal control. Speech breaks away from fixed linguistic norms when it collapses. Additionally, it leads to new forms of expression. In Najwa Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna*, Eduardo and Ghada Khoury's *Girl of Thunder*, stuttering challenges the dominant discourse and establishes a base for different voices. This fragmented sort of language is expressed via silence, substitution, and rejection, where it resists the structure of the dominant discourse that defines female speech as something shameful and as useless. As noted, in Najwa Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* Reem went out with her cousin Amal and her fiancé Faisal many times as the family always wanted a family member to be with Amal and her fiancé when they would like to go out and hangout; Reem reports “...even if the witness is small and stuttering that will not disclose a word to interrogators” (p.18). Noting Reem's words, we understand how Reem's speech transforms from a perceived weakness into a technique of silence, which seems an intentional disruption of the potential language flow. Therefore, this can be seen as deterritorialization, where Reem's speech confuses the dominant linguistic expectations, which, in turn, leads to the disruption of male control.

Reem continues her silence when she goes out with Amal and her fiancé, and she is pleased, as she has visited many places and eaten lots of ice cream, saying, “That will not cost me anything as I am a stutterer anyway” (19). This illustrates a form of empowered detachment, where she states that her stuttering is both a limitation and a liberating condition. She exploits her stuttering to protect herself and fulfil her desires. In other words, this reflects a writing form inherent in the female body that conveys oppressed voices, standing in opposition to the structured norms of patriarchal language.

Similarly, in Khoury's novel, the main character, Helana, employs linguistic and identity techniques that counter patriarchal structures. Helana talks with her new neighbor, Mr. Nabeel, who gives her a lecture, saying that great authors stuttered like her. After that, Helana was looking for someone to escape the lesson and stated, "What others know about us... blocks the sun of a second birth... If people didn't know me... I would have reinvented myself without flaws... I would have claimed I didn't know Arabic..." (p.30). Here, Helana exhibits a desire for rebirth, as outlined through linguistic history. Such deep longing in refusing Arabic works as a metaphorical objection to patriarchal linguistics. This depicts a deterritorialized language since the speaker aims to remove her existence from inherited codes of meaning.

Besides, women have to have their voices back through giving up the language which historically dominated the. Following the conversation with Mr. Nabeel, Helana showed a desire and stated "I would have claimed I didn't know Arabic... so if I stuttered, they'd think I was fumbling with foreign words" (p.30). In this context, it is worth noting that her stuttering is intentionally employed. Helana's stuttering begins to serve as a kind of trick to undermine the dominant discourse. Relating her stutter to foreignness, Helana transforms hesitation into a minor disturbance, a minority perspective, where she fights against the already established dominant discourse and creates space for resistance. Helan knows the letters that are difficult to pronounce, and she insists on fighting it as the narrator reveals that "Whenever she felt a letter would fail, she wanted it dead—fighting its last breath—before she picked another, like a magician" (p 40). This additionally illustrates her linguistic transformation, where her speech is not only disrupted but also becomes a sort of embodied resistance. This is a clear indication of how the female voice handles failure brilliantly, utilizing improvisation to reclaim language. Thus, by deliberately using some letters over others, the patriarchal discourse is disrupted, allowing artful language to be established and used.

### 3.5 Self-Awareness

Self-awareness means to gain the knowledge independently. Besides, in our case we can say that self-awareness is a result of stuttering which means that characters gain their self-awareness due to their stuttering. Stuttering, often considered a speech disorder, is believed to be a profoundly personal experience that influences how individuals interact with language, identity, and self-perception. Although it may be viewed as a limitation of fluent communication, individuals who stutter often develop related strategies to overcome the challenges of verbal expression. Such a process involves self-awareness.

Furthermore, self-awareness helps individuals to recognize their strengths and needs, leading to intentional development. In doing so, individuals engage in self-awareness, developing personalized strategies to address and find solutions to obstacles that may arise, which help them to enrich their capabilities. In both novels, protagonists Reem and Helana's self-awareness becomes an important aspect of their resistance, which helps them to redefine their identities.

In Najwa Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna Eduardo*, the main character undergoes a transformation, which is reflected in the self-awareness she develops. In the novel, we can see how she develops self-awareness, which is a post-resistance mode. It comes as a result of looking for the right place that accepts her stuttering. This is evident in her words when she spoke with her sister. Reem says, "Stuttering is an integral part of my identity in my presence, absence, and as a business card to others" (p.263). The word uttered by Reem demonstrate a sort acknowledgment described as a deep one. Further, they show an acceptance of her stutter as an aspect that defines her identity. In fact, a new form of identity and empowerment is shaped through the words of Reem and this demonstrates the complexity she goes through. Furthermore, this illustrates not only a personal acceptance but also an outward declaration of how she perceives herself and how she expects others to perceive her. Additionally, this reveals a profound self-awareness that profoundly shapes her existence. Therefore, Reem is

repositioned as a core component of her individuality, which is a shift from viewing it as something shameful to embracing it as a unique way of speech that contributes to her distinctiveness. Bin Shatwan calls for an approach that is more flexible in relation to identity, where she motivates continuous assessment of the person by himself as a response to transforming inner desires and external conditions. Following the establishment of self-awareness, Reem starts self-awareness, which thus is seen as a form of female agency. Reem acquires techniques and strategies, such as silence, which is a form of self-improvement born out of the necessity of her situation. This represents a form of linguistic agency and a reclaiming of language that had previously excluded her.

In the novel, Faisal comes to visit his fiancée, Amal, who is Reem's cousin, and hugs her, putting his hand inside her T-shirt. Reem watches them. At that moment, Reem says that “It was something that bothered me since my childhood; I was wondering why the old people do these beautiful things and they say about it as something shameful” (p.18). Here, we can observe that Reem begins to establish a form of questioning, which is an indication of self-awareness. These questions that pop into her mind tell that she starts to show resistance against the patriarchal society that limits the thoughts around the body and the desires of women. Therefore, her self-awareness established an image inside Reem's mind about the concepts of 'shame' and 'beauty' that were no longer fixed in her mind. In a patriarchal society, males often seek perfection, and Reem's questioning leads her to reject the fixed standard of perfection, causing her to accept her stuttering and resist the dominant discourse of males.

Reem continues her questioning and states that “I did not comprehend why the old people used to do such shameful things and why children come from this shameful thing and why they are cherished” (p.18). Reem’s comprehension reflects her awareness, which demonstrates her analytical skills. She challenges the societal norms and knowledge about how patriarchal society treats sexuality and wonders if such a thing is the source of life, so why is it considered shameful and hidden, while people

feel happy doing it? In reality, this manifests her resistance in relation to accepting the rooted beliefs of her society, showing that her stuttering and silence turn to be a means of negotiations, resistance and rebellion in the face of the social structure and norms.

In the same vein, the first steps of Helana going toward self-awareness reflect her transformation. Although we notice fewer technical speech strategies in her words, her emotional and political literacy reflects a variety of self-directed awareness. Helana recognizes the material role as one that leads to resistance, not resemblance. As such, she moves stuttering from being a private struggle into a shared project of identity destruction.

Khoury's main character, Helana, a mother of a girl named Hiba, recognizes self-awareness from the beginning. That's why she is afraid that her newborn daughter will become a stutterer. Helana, in her own words, tries to redefine the Arab female destiny by acknowledging her stutter, which is often referred to by those around her as a sign of weakness. Nonetheless, she does not show acceptance for this rooted identity and tries to reshape her daughter's identity, which supports all Arab women. In (1997) Deleuze addressed the concept of "Becoming-other", that is related to the change and refusal of a rooted identity, leading the other to reshape their own identity. Helena reveals that "she will do her best to prevent her daughter from becoming like her, a plastic doll in the eyes of people" (p.10). The term "plastic doll" suggests a static, unchanging state, an object rather than a subject, where agency is denied—a protest against societal conceptions and the inability to change. Helena thinks about her daughter's way to avoid this fixed identity, and her approach indicates a desire for her daughter to engage in the process of becoming other, to transform beyond the predefined and limiting identities imposed by society.

Additionally, Helena is aware that others perceive her as a "plastic doll", a label that influences her self-image. She tries to reshape these perceptions to protect her daughter from similar influences. In other words, Helena's intention for her daughter

can develop a multi-dimensional self-awareness that isn't restricted by the simplistic and dominant ways society might view her.

Helena's words to her daughter (Hiba) are far from the fixed identity (plastic doll), which suggests an active use of agency. Helena demonstrates agency by purposefully influencing her daughter's prospective identities and encouraging her to lead a more independent and self-defined destiny. Here, Khoury demonstrates that female agency is not just a matter of making choices, but also about influencing and crafting one's continuous identity transformation—an essential aspect of Deleuze's concept of “becoming-other”.

Then, she begins to realize that she is not a plastic doll, which means she starts to learn how to avoid the fixed identity that shapes her. Helana sometimes uses her cough as a cover for her stuttering, but sometimes she fails in doing so. Because of that, she trains herself to pronounce some letters and words in the right way. One day, a new neighbor moved next to Helena's house, and Helena went to get to know them. Here, she met Afif, the new neighbor, and her husband, Professor Nabil, who was Helena's teacher. They exchanged conversation and thanked each other for the hospitality. Helena took a piece of candy, which could excuse her from talking, as the narrator reveals: “Table manners during meals always save her from the trap of talking” (p.28). To hide a stutter, the women behaved in ways that were socially acceptable for women; for example, some sat and smiled through their dates.

Helana, in some speeches to relatives and neighbors, uses tricks to overcome her stuttering. The narrator reveals that “the cough often betrayed her, which she relied on whenever a letter threatened her. She had learned which letters resisted her and replaced them with others” (p.33). Helan says “my mother-in-law instead of Om Saleh, After Tomorrow instead of Wednesday (p.33). This demonstrates the way the stuttering of Helana turns to be a form of self-awareness and resistance. Through realizing the letters which makes it difficult for her to speak and replace them with

others, she controls her speech. As such, this demonstrates an intentional adaptation which leads her to deal with social expectations at the same time of preserving her voice. Through the use of tactics such as coughing and word substitution, we see a subtle protest against society, which views her as a passive, plastic doll. As such, Helana works against fixed identities.

In the time Reem questions societal norms and embraces her stutter, Helana starts to adapt her speech employing strategies such as substitution and silence. Hence, this clear difference between reflection and resistance, and avoidance being the means to navigate social spaces, clarifies Reem's confrontation with subtlety of Helana in relation to resisting. Equally, self-awareness in the two cases leads to redefining stuttering as a source of agency.

### **3.6 Stuttering as Agency**

In patriarchal societies that view speech as power, female stuttering voices are neglected and considered unimportant. However, as we note in *Concerto Corrina Eduardo* and *Girl of Thunder*, stuttering turns out to be a sort of inner strength. Taking the interrupted language into consideration, the female stutterers regain their right in speaking, remaining silent or creating expressions that want. They are not ruled out because they are stutterers. Instead, their refusal to agree with the already established norms of patriarchal system is demonstrated. Thus, it can be mentioned that stuttering has developed into a form of presence, where the agency of the main characters is declared, causing the disruption of the norms of phallogocentrism. Thus, in *Concerto Corrina Eduardo*, when Reem was talking about her Husband Eduardo, she expresses her feelings to him as she says, "Eduardo has allowed me to speak, and he is aware that I am stuttering!" (p.272). Reem recognizes the permission given to her to speak in a place that acknowledges her difference. Thus, being a stutterer is not something that remained hidden. Instead, it is permitted to exist. Therefore, Eduardo's awareness of her stuttering opens the door for her inclusion. Then, we can note that by emphasizing that stuttering exists in a place where communication is already

established, it can be said that a deterritorialized form of language still functions and conveys meaning.

Additionally, saying this, Reem writes herself into language as she insists on her unsmooth form of language. On a different occasion, Reem says, “It was the time for me to express myself, and everyone was being selfish” (p.273). Emphasizing “it was the time” reflects how the character's subjectivity has evolved. Hence, she shows linguistic self-assertion. Furthermore, Reem drives this system to stop for a while, feels hesitation, and recomposes itself around her voice, even though it is a fragmented one. In reality, we can say that stuttering her words works as an affirmation through which female characters get their presence.

Stuttering and fragmented speech function both as a form of resistance and as a sign of subjectivity and agency. In the context of *Girl of Thunder*, we observe how minimal responses, particularly those expressed in sarcasm, anger, or defiance, function as rhetorical interruptions. Helana has noticed that she refuses to have a limited role, where she has to be silent and or a passive listener. She instead affirms herself through emotionally charged refusals that threaten the dominant society. Therefore, when she was asked, "Do you feel any pain?" Out of anger, she replied, "Take me home". Her answer here reveals physical discomfort and a refusal that allows her to try to let others measure her suffering. Here we see how the replay of Helana becomes an attempt to refuse and reject the patriarchal control of her voice and pain. Thus, she breaks the expected ordered speech. Helana was talking to Afaf about the people around them, and she said, “What can you change in a person who truly believes the flaw is always in others, not in himself!” (p. 263). This is a clear indication of the critical insight and clarity in Helana's speech. Thus, this reflects a new form of agency. This is referred to as linguistic clarity as a form of resistance. Using a rhetorical language is brilliant to convey her agency. She understands that her society or the males around her cannot change. Both novels reflect various forms of agency. However, these forms are

connected in some way; one of them deals with emotional refusal, and the other serves as a critique of dominant ideologies.

### **3.7 Female-to-Female Support**

In patriarchal societies, female characters are suppressed, but women's solidarity becomes a powerful counterbalance. Empathy, care, and encouragement that take place between maternal characters are considered a powerful form of resistance. In *Concerto Corinna*, *Eduardo*, and *Girl of Thunder*, we observe how women support themselves on both emotional and linguistic levels, paving the way for growth and healing. Reem's twin sister, at the beginning of the novel, taking about her sister Reem and she say that her family try many ways to Help Reem to talk and to come over her stuttering, Reem sister says that “I learned stuttering like her to eliminate the difference between us and protect her from bullies” (p.10). The words of Reem's sister reflect a sort of linguistic solidarity. On another occasion, Reem's cousin Amal was a kind girl who always motivated Reem to talk and not be afraid of anything. Reem says, “Amal always supports me to talk when she becomes familiar with my case, and she plays with me some games that might help me to talk” (p.15). Here, speech is reshaped not to be an obligation, but to be a form of play. This also demonstrates Amal's kindness, as her words redefine the tragic space of forced speech into a safe linguistic area, where language is learned with kindness. Besides, Reem says that “Amal always calls me to come and read for her” (p.170). In addition, “my twin and I give food to Amal, where my sister ends the speech on my behalf. Amal says: Let her speak. You're the reason she stays this way” (p.170). Reem adds, “Amal boosted my self-confidence, and my condition improved, and I became better in her presence” (p.170). Amal is seen as a guide who helps Reem speak. Thus, she is considered a guardian of speech—Amal attempts to fight against silencing forces, even within her own family. The support Amal gives to Reem enables Reem to break down the rooted sham, transforming silence into subjectivity. This support is additionally a clear example of feminine empowerment.

Besides the support given to Reem by her cousin, we also note that in *Girl of Thunder*, other forms of support are being provided. This is related to the support of friendships with neighbors and or teachers, which shows linguistic affirmation. Helana visited her new neighbor, Afaf, who supported her by saying, “Welcome, our beautiful woman” (p. 29). Afaf welcomes Reem warmly, disrupting Helena's judgment and directly contradicting the standard she set for herself. This marks the beginning of a trend in self-identification triggered by an external source of confidence, contrasting with the expected external judgment.

Afaf's husband, Nabil, is the new neighbor of Helana, and at the same time, he is Helana's teacher. Mr. Nabil supports Helena, and he says to her, “Do you know that the great writer was like your case, so what's the problem?” (p.29). The comments of Nabeel can be considered as normalization of stuttering. This is so said as this can be connected with the creativity and success while at the same time deconstructing speech differences stigma. By considering her stuttering as a strength, Nabeel leads to a deterritorialized path for Helana where stuttering is turning to be a possible source of originality and intensity. The response that he gives shows a different narrative in the face of the standard societal discourse, going hand in hand with the call of Spivak to hear and elevate the subaltern voice, instead of fixing it.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion

#### 4.1 Conclusion

This study has examined stuttering and female agency in Najwa Bin Shatwan's novel *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Ghada Khoury's novel *Girl of Thunder* as a kind of resistance in post-colonial Arab narratives. By offering a clear analysis of the hesitant voices, epistemic violence, and instances of female stutterer resistance in both novels, this thesis demonstrates how Bin Shatwan and Khoury adapt a new form of speech that resists the structure of the masculine speech and the patriarchal society.

The main focus of Bin Shatwan and Khoury narratives is the protagonists Reem and Helena, who are stuttering characters in a postcolonial Arab country, figures who suffer to be accepted in a society that seeks perfection, and their fragmented voices stand against the patriarchal structure. The two main characters are not just stutterers; they also, fracture the language deliberately, using hesitation, silence, and repetition, which is used as a tool of resistance against the social norms. The stuttering of the main characters in both novels is not a deficiency. Still, rather it is a reexamination the meaning, which refers to the embodied rejection of the patriarchal structure that excludes the female character. Reem and Helana, with their stuttering, reveal the marginalization and the violence against female characters in the patriarchal society, and at the same time, their stuttering refers to the way of reclaiming female agency.

Deleuze's theory of making language stutter offers a critical framework for understanding the suppressed female character and their limited role in both novels. The stuttering of the two main characters, Reem and Helana, not only refers to the speech defect, but it also becomes a kind of deterritorialized language the destabilize the patriarchal structure. Reem and Helana's silence, and repetition stand as a form of resistance against social norms and their resistance acts as a refusal of the masculine discourse that seeks to limit their roles.

The stuttering voices in Bin Shatwan's *Concerto Corinna Eduardo* and Khoury's *Girl of Thunder* enhance the symbol of female resistance in patriarchal Arab societies. In both novels, Reem and Helana, who were born in an environment that oppresses them due to their stuttering, symbolize generations of women split from linguistic authority and cultural agency. Through the several transformations in their stuttering, from silence to hesitation to acts of subtle rebellion, both women portray the increasing trajectory of female resistance, and such transformation is highlighted when the characters move from internalized shame to fragmented speech to a reassertion of presence. Both authors portray the unsettling and challenging transformation of hesitant and silenced voices into disruptive agents that challenge patriarchal authority. These women, who faced the marginalizing patriarchal system that cancelled their existence in the society, find that their fragmented speech is the only means through which they can express their pain, resilience, and determination for change.

Bin Shatwan and Khoury are reimagining stuttering as a source of agency by transforming a limiting condition into a mode of empowerment that is fit to the Arab experience. Despite the silence, hesitation, repetition, and improvisation that accompanied the characters as points of weakness, the authors succeed in turning them to critique phallogocentric dominance and epistemic violence as they create irony, defiance, and embodied resistance into the texture of their narratives. Thus, Bin Shatwan and Khoury expand the horizon of the feminist and postcolonial literature as they establish, through their stuttering characters, the forms of an emerging Arab feminist poetics of resistance. For readers navigating the ongoing weight of silencing, marginalization, and patriarchal control, these novels provide more than reflection—they offer solace, dignity, and a space for rebellion. The authors represent their feminist vision through Reem and Helana's hesitant but determined voice. In other words, the characters with their fragmented and hesitant language that might be interpreted as weakness, the authors transfer this weakness to a powerful revolution that demands freedom and equality for women, which goes along with their vision.

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كلية الدراسات العليا

التأتأة وكينونة الأنتى في رواية نجوى بن شتوان  
"كونشرتو كورينا إدواردو" ورواية غادة خوري "طفلة الرعد"

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قدمت هذه الرسالة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في الأدب المقارن بكلية الدراسات العليا في جامعة النجاح الوطنية في نابلس، فلسطين.

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# التأناة وكيونة الأنثى في رواية نجوى بن شتوان "كونشرتو كورينا إدواردو" ورواية غادة خوري "طفلة الرعد"

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## الملخص

تناولت هذه الدراسة مفهوم التأناة في رواية "كونشرتو كورينا إدواردو" لنجوى بن شتوان، ورواية "فتاة الرعد" لغادة خوري، كشكل من أشكال المقاومة في السرديات العربية ما بعد الاستعمارية. تقوم هذه الدراسة على انة لا يتم النظر إلى التأناة على أنها عيب أو إعاقة لغوية، إنما تم النظر إليها على انها شكل تخريبي من أشكال الفاعلية، وفعل مقاومة أنثوية، وأداة احتجاج، وحالة من عدم التوازن تزعزع استقرار حدود اللغة. بالاعتماد على مفهوم سيفاك للعنف المعرفي (1998) وخطاب ديريدا المتمركز حول الذكورة، ونزعة دولوز وغواتاري اللاإقليمية، بالإضافة إلى كتابات هيلين سيكسو (1976) حول اضطهاد المرأة، تدرس هذه الدراسة التأناة كظاهرة إقصاء للإناث في المجتمعات الأبوية. علاوةً على ذلك، تُبين هذه الدراسة كيف تُسكت بنية اللغة الذكورية الأصوات الأنثوية، إذ تُحوّل ترددها أو كلامها المتقطع إلى علامة على النقص. علاوةً على ذلك، تكشف الدراسة أن فعل التأناة يُمثل شكلاً من أشكال المقاومة واستعادة الهوية الأنثوية. الشخصيتان الرئيسيتان في كلتا الروايتين، ريم وهيلانة، تتحدّيان بنية المجتمع الأبوي من خلال تحويل تأتأتهما إلى نمط من المقاومة على العرف السائد. وتدّعي هذه الدراسة أن النساء المتأنتات في السرديات العربية ما بعد الاستعمارية يُعطّلن الخطاب الذكوري، حيث تُمثل تأتأتهنّ شكلاً جديداً لتهدئة فاعليتهنّ وهويتهنّ.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التأناة، المقاومة، الوكالة، الأنثى، سرديات ما بعد الاستعمار، التردد، الكلام المجزأ، كونشرتو

كورينا إدواردو، فتاة الرعد