

An Analytical Study of Resilience and Resistance in the Face of Adversity in *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid* by Giuseppe Catuzzella

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Summary:

This study explores the concept of resilience and resistance in the face of the difficulties and obstacles faced by the female character Samia in Giuseppe Catuzzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid*. Samia is portrayed as a black Somali woman in a strict society who faces many obstacles and difficulties towards achieving her dream of becoming a world-class runner such as sexism, poverty and violence. This research examines how Samia clings to resilience and the resistance she adopts in the face of adversity. The aim of the study is to shed light on the methods used by Samia to overcome her ordeals and adopt a method of resilience in her resistance to adversity. The focus is also on the social systems and structures that constrain the female character Samia and perpetuate inequality and oppression. In the end, this study reveals a strong and unique picture of the heroine's ability to persevere, resist, and cling to steadfastness through the intersection of her experiences and her knowledge of the type of challenges she faces as a black woman who suffers from sexual, class, and societal discrimination.

1. Introduction

It is a common theme in literature to portray resilience and resistance in the face of adversity, and authors have explored it extensively across cultures and time periods. Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid*, portrays this theme through the story of the main female character Samia who fights to overcome the

difficulties face her. This research examines how Samia clings to resilience and the resistance she adopts in the face of adversity. The aim of the study is to analyze how Samia's character uses resilience and resistance in the face of adversity in this novel.

This study is based on feminist theories, such as Feminist resilience, black women, intersectionality, and standpoint theory. Where these theories can serve as a lens through which texts can be analyzed in Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid*, and images of resilience can be explored, as well as the interdependence between identities and how experiences of persecution and discrimination are shaped, according to the theory of intersectionality developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw. While the black woman theory adopted by bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins will serve as a lens to reveal the experiences and perspectives of black women in feminist analysis.

Feminist resilience theory is based on the principle of focusing on the ways in which individuals and societies move about and how they resist oppressive systems and structures. It depends on how you display personal and collective strengths in order to survive and thrive. The feminist Sandra Harding, who developed the standpoint theory, argues that the knowledge and understanding of individuals come from the social position to which they belong and their experience of it.

Accordingly, and by relying on feminist theories, the current study aims to present an accurate analysis of the concept of resilience and resistance in Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid*, with a focus on shedding light on the ways that shape Samia's personality and the experiences she went through in her journey. It's all about how to glean insights from her story to confront oppressive systems and adversity. In order to support this analysis, some primary and secondary sources and critical analyzes of the novel will be relied upon.

2. Methodology

This research is a qualitative research based on a text analysis approach to reach how to depict the female character Samia's confrontation with social obstacles and the values of oppressive regimes imposed on her, and how she is armed with resilience and determination and uses steadfastness to resist the challenges of the society in Giuseppe Catuzzella's *Don't Tell Me You are Afraid*. the analysis depends on an adequate and accurate reading of the texts, articles, and studies that have been written on topics related to the topic in the novel by applying feminist theories such as intersectionality, resilience, point of view, and the theory of black women as a lens through which the required text can be studied and analyzed.

3. Feminist Theories

The concept of intersectionality refers to how different forms of social inequality intersect, which are represented by a sexual, racial, class, and similar distinctions, and how these intersections interact with each other to produce an amount of abuse and oppression towards individuals. The female character of the novel, Samia, is a good model presented by the writer as a character who intersects many of the aforementioned persecutions with being a black woman who faces this amount of racial, sexual, and societal discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991).

On the other hand, the attitudes facing individuals of all their differences represent the extent of their understanding of the world around them, their experiences and their point of view. And here we apply to the heroine Samia in Giuseppe Catuzzella's *Don't Tell Me You are Afraid*, as her experience represents how she sees her society and her understanding of her own experiences with this society and the ways she believes are appropriate to confront this world. This seems clear from the capabilities that Samia pursues in terms of resilience and resistance in the face of

obstacles, which are certainly completely different from those capabilities pursued by those who are superior to her with privileges (Harding,1993).

Ungar (2011) describes resilience theory as a form of resistance to oppression that focuses on the social injustice of individuals. Through the heroine Samia, it is possible to trace how the writer employed resilience as one of the elements of resistance to oppression and social discrimination that Samia is subjected to in Giuseppe Catuzzella's *Don't Tell Me You are Afraid*.

Finally, the intersection of the problems of race, gender, and class as a whole can fall under the umbrella of the black woman's theory because of the multi-source injustice the black woman suffers from. Where, through the lens of the black woman, we discover how Samia is subjected to multi-directional oppression as a black woman and how she confronts and challenges these strict oppressive stereotypes (Collins, 2000).

4. Literature review

Das & Rai (2022). In their study entitled *The Caged Bird Sings: Resilience and Resistance against the Afghan Patriarchal Culture* in Nadia Hashimi's *One Half from the East*, the challenges faced by Afghan women in a strict Afghan society, where the study focuses on the resilience of Afghan women to resist the authoritarian patriarchal society despite their All the restrictions and oppression that are imposed on them as women. The study shows the importance of slavery that the heroine follows to get rid of the restrictions of patriarchal authority through their adherence to Resilience and Resistance for the sake of salvation.

Tijani (2008) focused in his study "Gendering the Iraq-Kuwait Conflict: Literary Representations of Kuwaiti Women's Resilience and Resistance in some literary works". The study aims to reveal the role of

women in the face of this distress. Women divided into two parts in their reaction. Weak, passive, conflict-ridden woman, and the strong woman who takes resilience as a form of resistance. The importance of the study is to show the role of Kuwaiti women in facing the difficulties and their ability to resist during the war.

Corbella, (2006) discusses in "Strategies of Resistance and the Problem of Ambiguity in Azar Nafisi's Reading *Lolita in Tehran*" the Strategies of resistance followed by the female character in the face of discrimination and oppression. The study focuses on the arbitrary methods that are imposed on females and restrict their freedom. The study concluded that the female characters in the novel embodied the resistance strategies pursued by women in repelling oppressive power and social and political persecution.

Based on the aforementioned studies that present valuable research studies, the focus of this study will be on analyzing how to face the difficulties faced by the Somali female character in *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid* by Giuseppe Catuzzella. Samia, who represents a large segment of Somali women who suffer from sexual, class, and ethnic discrimination, social injustice and oppression, and who uses resilience for resistance, represents a big gap. Therefore, the main focus of this research will be to reveal how Samia uses resilience in resistance as a weapon to confront difficult circumstances and oppressive regimes, as this research will address this gap through a detailed analysis of the concepts of resilience in resistance and their relationship to hope and perseverance, in addition to analyzing the concept of intersectionality and standpoint as well as The position of black women in the face of adversity.

5. Discussions

In Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid*, the writer depicts the great challenges faced by the female character Samia, who aspires to become a global runner, such as sexual and ethnic discrimination, her lack of education, health and safety, and the constant threats she faces from extremist youth organizations. But Samia, insists on resisting all these obstacles and difficulties with her steadfastness and self-confidence.

Through the study of the novel, the concept of resilience and resistance is almost the main pillar in the novel, which is taken by the protagonist in the face of the adversities she encounters: "a small room with two mattresses on the floor and mud walls, talking about peace and hope while outside there was a war." (Catozzella, 2016, p. 39).

As an expression of adherence to hope and lack of despair, the above quote is placed by the writer in his novel as a strong expression of Samia and strength in the face of the difficult adversities she faces. The text depicts the strong motivation that Samia enjoys, which constantly urges her to stick to her goals and dreams and never give up or surrender to the circumstances and difficulties that would prompt her, one way or another, to abandon her goals. This is evident through what Samia is doing in order to reach her goal as a global runner, despite all the obstacles she faces, such as war, injustice, restrictions, and fleeing her country due to wars, criminal gangs that threaten her, and immigration: "I became an amateur dreaming about racing. While the others seemed unreachable " (p.138).

In this text, the writer sheds light on the huge amount of difficulties and challenges Samia faces in her journey toward achieving her goal. The phrase "While the others seemed unreachable." in the text refers to the difficulties that Samia used to face and hinder her and other's path, but Samia always did not give up, did not accept defeat, and clung to hope to

continue her path and achieve her goals. The text here shows Samia's ability to stand firm and stand firm despite the many and many obstacles.

The writer did not forget to provide an overview of Samia's strong challenge to many obstacles and problems that have always represented an impenetrable barrier to the goals of Samia to prove that she is able to win: "I have to stay here and continue running; this is my destiny. I have to win the Olympics, Hodan. I have to show the whole world that we can change." (p. 99).

The text describes the amount and harshness of the circumstances and the obstacles that have always stood in the way of Samia on her arduous path such as gender discrimination, racism and social obstacles. The text also refers to the amount of resilience and strong will that Samia possesses, and her strength in facing the most difficult difficulties that almost defeated her, to prove that she is a person who does not give in to adversity. Samia challenges the fate that hinders her from reaching the Olympics and fights to prove that she is capable of making a change.

Through the previous quotations, the author focuses on the steadfastness of the heroine, Samia, despite all the ordeals and difficulties she faces, whether because of the cruelty of society or the racial and sexual discrimination she is exposed to. Samia is a wonderful example of steadfastness and resistance to oppressive regimes that try to break the spirit of individuals in general and women in particular. Thus, we find that gathering strengths such as hope, perseverance, strength of character, determination and steadfastness all contribute to overcoming the obstacles and hardships that society imposes on individuals who are less powerful in it.

Therefore, the writer focuses a lot in the text in order to clarify the principle of determination and persistence to overcome the problems facing

Samia as a girl who suffers from many pressures that restrict her goals: "I realized my dream; I made it.. . . Dream, Samia, dream, like the wind playing among the leaves " (p. 182).

Through the text, we notice Samia's constant motivation to pounce on the obstacles she faces and reach her goal. Through the phrase "I made it", we understand that Samia was always ready to face what hinders her path and wait for opportunities to reach her goal, as well as through the word "I realized", which indicates that Samia always tries to seize opportunities to show a willingness to move forward and show her strength and courage represented in resilience, resistance, and patience. Through this quote, we also draw the importance of will, determination, and determination in the face of adversity, and this is confirmed by the theory of resilience, which believes that with determination and persistence, individuals and societies can resist oppressive regimes by relying on individual and collective strengths to reach the desired goals.

The writer's focus on enriching Samia with virtues such as resilience and resistance is very important, as the writer deliberately conveys a positive idea about women in the face of difficulties, in contrast to the prevailing notion that they are weak and dependent. Here, the writer focuses on showing Samia, despite the many problems and challenges she faces, she is often strong, characterized by persistence and determination in making her way: "I would tell the whole world what it meant to fight without means in order to achieve liberation" (p. 122). The concept of intersectionality is based on the idea that the social identities of individuals intersect to form their identities, affiliations, and viewpoints, and thus the way they fight for salvation from the restrictions and societal problems they face. In the above quotation, we see that the sublime power is not only concentrated in its physical strength, but also has the strength of well-being

and intellectual power that enables it. It proves that the intersection of identities positively affects her thinking and her well-being about the problem she faces. Where the intersection theory is based on the fact that individuals are often formed from a different mixture of identities, races, races, and affiliations, and therefore all these factors influence the obstacles facing individuals by societies and systems. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to these ruptures when analyzing the concept of resilience and resistance in Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid*.

Moreover, Samia's refusal to give up and defeat the obstacles that constantly impede her path falls under the concept of resistance and insistence on continuing to confront those obstacles and oppressive regimes against her intersecting identity. This interpretation applies to what is consistent with the theory of intersectionality, that individuals of different affiliations, races, and genders can create a defensive environment against institutional and societal forces that perpetuate injustice against them.

In the end, the analysis of the previous text gives us an explanation that the multiple and intersecting identities are what shape the experiences of others and produce the kind of resistance they have towards the obstacles imposed on them by tyrannical regimes. Samia acted as a resistance force as a result of her intersecting identity, which gave her a special power to confront. This interpretation emphasizes the need to address social problems, discrimination, and systemic and societal imbalances that impede the goals and choices of individuals.

Samia's refusal comes from the societal rejection and extremism she faces as a kind of resistance that she adopts to repel societal restrictions. Its resistance is also a form of challenging the fundamental concepts of discrimination on the basis of identity. Through this text, we find that the author describes Samia as a model for the black woman in the face of

oppressive regimes: "It was the only way I managed to survive. I dreamed about the coach I would have once I got to Europe. I measured my times, seeing them improve week after week, day after day. I saw myself in the final.." (p.164).

In this text, Samia appears in Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid*, as a strong woman who faces and rejects the restrictions, adversities, and oppressive regimes imposed on her. The importance of this description comes in its inclusion under the concept of black feminist theory, which focuses on the fact that black women have always been a primary target of social and oppressive restrictions, continuous discrimination against them, and violation of their rights. As the black feminist theory is based on the concept that intersectionality in gender, color, race, class, and other social differences represents a clear influence in societies dominated by the strongest, the resilience and resistance that Samia has always followed to resist the hardships she faced can be emphasized here, as its importance in the black feminist theory to confront societal oppression.

Returning to the text, we find that the phrase "I dreamed about the coach I would have once I got to Europe" refers to the restrictions and external forces that try to besiege Samia and suffocate her and stifle her goals before reaching her because of her intersecting identity of being a black woman living in a poor and marginalized society. However, we find that Samia did not surrender to all the circumstances she faces and fights valiantly to reach her goal and achieve her dreams. Samia is fighting to reach a new land of liberation where no one will press her of being a woman. She gives herself power by dreaming of what happens when she reaches. Here, the role of resilience that Samia adopted as the basis for her resistance to injustice in black feminist theory is presented

The writer emphasizes a very important point, which is that different individuals possess their own individual capabilities that enable them to resist and withstand in any way the restrictions imposed on them. Samia is a model for this, urging that she is a black woman who suffers from poverty and persecution in an authoritarian and cruel society, but she is armed with resilience and hopes to resist all those obstacles that stand in her way.

Hence, the story of Samia, who was endowed with strength, determination, and hope, is a clear example of the ability to confront injustice in an available way. Hence, the writer stresses that the need to understand the points of view of the oppressed and marginalized groups in order to help them cross the tribulations they face is a basic principle of the point of view theory: "In spite of everything, maybe I still felt like I was invulnerable, invincible, the Samia I'd always been. True, I had effaced myself and struggled to even remember who I was; memories flashed by only when they chose to." (p. 153).

In the text above, the author focuses on the power dynamics that Samia uses to confront societal constraints and the obstacles she faces as a black woman facing a harsh society. The writer portrays Samia as a model for many black women in her society who suffer from restrictions, restrictions, and persecution due to society's marginalization of them and their view as lower status in society. Samia's perspective on the oppression she faces and the slavery she uses to resist those restrictions and oppression gives her a unique perspective for understanding those authoritarian structures that maintain inequality and how to confront them. The experiences she goes through also enable her to have a greater understanding of all these challenges and harsh conditions, and how to deal with them and overcome them in the appropriate way. Thus, since the

theorists based on the principle that the social position of individuals constitutes an understanding and develops their experiences about what surrounds them in a clearer and easier way that makes them able to deal with the conditions that restrict them, They highlighted the need to listen to the viewpoints of marginalized and oppressed groups in understanding social systems.

The phrase "In spite of everything, maybe I still felt like I was invulnerable" is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit sign to clarify that Samia's experience as a marginalized black woman who alone resists injustice and restrictions represents a broad struggle against oppression and marginalization and that her steadfastness indicates the determination and steadfastness of those marginalized and forgotten individuals who own their harsh experiences on their various social sites

The concept of point of view theory indicates that whenever the opposite social situation and the intersection points of oppression meet, then we have sufficient knowledge and experience to meet the various challenges facing individuals. From that, we find that social position, including social identities, such as gender, race, and class, has a significant impact on the experiences, knowledge, and behavior of individuals toward any difficulties or hardships they face. Hence, the writer embodied for us a sublime image as a model who suffers from sexual, survival, social, and ethnic discrimination in a society that restricts her with all her possessions, so she tries to match her vivid experiences in order to confront these restrictions.

Moreover, the novel emphasizes that resilience and resistance are serious weapons against society's oppression. Samia had patience and hope, and with the support of her family and friends, she resisted injustice.

In conclusion, Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid* is an embodiment of how to arm yourself with hope, reliance, and resistance to restrictions by relying on the experiences and capabilities that are available to the individual. The author emphasizes perseverance and resistance, and the need for community support for affected individuals and those who still represent the minority or the marginalized in the wider world. Therefore, Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid* represents a source of inspiration for many who suffer from societal stereotypes that restrict them and make them despair. Samia as a model is a source of hope and an inspiration that in the darkest situations and circumstances there is still hope, determination, and persistence that can crush injustice.

Conclusion

After analyzing the texts in Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid* using the theory of resilience, intersectionality, the black woman, and the point of view as a lens to study how the heroine of the novel, Samia, uses resilience as a tool to defeat the societal restrictions that besiege her and limit the achievement of her goals available in the female character Samia. The intersection of identities that exist in the female personality, Samia, such as sexual, racial, and class discrimination, made her adopt her ideas and experiences and develop her knowledge of what is going on around her in the society in which she resides. Also, Samia, as a marginalized and restricted black woman, was able to cling to hope and be resilient as one of the strongest reasons that made her continues to resist the violent tide that constantly hits her to belittle her or stop her from her ambitions. Therefore, the writer in Giuseppe Catozzella's *Don't Tell Me You're Afraid* embodied for us, through sublime, a unique model for the marginalized and restricted black woman who possesses a sufficient

identity intersection to make her aware of the quantity and quality of the problems that surround her and enable her to draw a point of view of her own that suits her experiences and circumstances that surround her in order to meet them using adherence to hope. In addition, the use of Resilience and determination is necessary to resist all the challenges that stand in its way. Samia presents a model for those marginalized who suffer from multifaceted societal oppression from the dominant group in their societies.

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دراسة تحليلية للصمود والمقاومة في مواجهة الشدائد في "لا تخبرني أنك خائف" بقلم

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الملخص:

تركز هذه الدراسة مفهوم الصمود والمقاومة في مواجهة الصعوبات والعقبات التي تواجهها البطلة سامية في رواية لا تخبرني بأنك خائفة لجوزيبي كاتوزيلا ، حيث يتم تصوير سامية على أنها امرأة صومالية سوداء في مجتمع صارم يواجه العديد من العقبات والصعوبات مثل التحيز الجنسي والفقر والعنف التي تحول دون تحقيق حلمها في أن تصبح عداءة من الطراز العالمي. . تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية تمسك سامية بالصمود والمقاومة التي تتبناها في مواجهة الشدائد. تهدف الدراسة الى إلقاء الضوء على الأساليب التي تستخدمها سامية للتغلب على محنتها واعتماد أسلوب الصمود في مقاومتها للشدائد، كما ينصب التركيز أيضاً على النظم والهيكل الاجتماعية التي تقيد شخصية سامية الأنثوية وتديم اللامساواة والقمع. في النهاية تكشف هذه الدراسة عن صورة قوية وفريدة من نوعها لقدرة البطلة على المثابرة والمقاومة والتشبث بالصمود من خلال تقاطع تجاربها ومعرفتها بنوع التحديات التي تواجهها كأمراة سوداء تعاني من التمييز الجنسي ، الطبقي والمجتمعي.