

Prison Writing as Release and Resistance: A Comparative Analysis of Susan Abulhawa's *Against the Loveless World* and Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*

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Prisons in the modern context function as spaces for the containment or incarceration of those transgressing the bounds of society, yet also contribute to a military-industrial complex that constantly seeks the incarceration of more bodies to feed a new form of modern-day slavery, regardless of their criminal status. As a result, the bodies within prison walls create their own methods of resistance which face against their confinement in order to preserve their identities and selfhood. Usually, these bodies are masculine and belong to minority groups, yet there is a sizeable portion of women prisoners who undergo the double oppression of gender-based violence during their incarceration. The experiences of Muslim women prisoners in particular have been explored in a variety of works by writers who shift the focus onto the themes of resistance and identity. This paper aims to centre these themes while analysing the narratives of Muslim women's prison literature in the texts *Against the Loveless World* by Susan Abulhawa and *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi. The selected texts offer a window into the female psyche and spirit and the impact that incarceration has within the Islamic cultural milieu through the framework of comparative literary analysis. The paper will examine how the protagonists' journeys reflect resilience and resistance to external oppressive structures while grounding them in the overarching socio-historical constraints. The interplay of gender with the power dynamics of the respective systems unearths a complex relationship between oppression and autonomy and questions whether, by taking charge of their narratives and challenging traditional representations, such resistance is empowering.

Keywords: Prisons, resistance literature, Muslim women, incarceration