

The Tunisian Awakening in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

Abstract

In her novel *The Awakening* published in 1899, Kate Chopin depicts Edna Pontelier's journey toward a consciousness of her being as a female self. The process starts with a revolt against married life and turns into a quest for identity. Edna Pontelier's process of self exploration reveals a number of similarities between Chopin's narrative and the Tunisian Revolution at different levels. First, the motifs of liberation and identity are indeed relevant to the context of the Tunisian revolution which started as an uprising against dictatorship and ended up questioning the Tunisian identity. Furthermore, the title of Chopin's novel is already pertinent to the Tunisian revolution for a revolution is an instance of awakening and both concepts stem from a desire to put into effect change. Then, there are many other common grounds between Kate Chopin's novel and the Tunisian revolution as far as the literary foci of characterization, motifs and plot are concerned. In Chopin's text, Edna Pontelier could stand for Tunisia as they both experience regression and oppression, hence, their respective quests for liberation. They both go through three main phases in their way to freedom: questioning the status quo, revolting and finally going through a chaotic phase. Thus, *The Awakening* by Chopin is in some way a narrative of the Tunisian awakening which means that history draws on fiction and vice versa, be it consciously or unconsciously.

I – The Awakening:

In Kate Chopin's narrative, the protagonist Edna Pontelier, the young mother and wife, announces the subversion of her husband's authority as she realizes that she can no longer stand the status that the society had tailored for her, namely, the housewife. She decides to let down her previous restraint experience and start a process of self-discovery, self-liberation and self-assertion. In the same way, in a climatic moment of anger, the Tunisian people decide to bring down dictatorship, corruption and despotism. This moment of rebellion is one of many other instances in the novel which support the idea that Kate

Chopin's book can be read as the narrative of the Tunisian revolution though the narrative precedes the event and nearly a century separates both.

In this light, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is telling the story of the Tunisian awakening as much as that of Edna Pontelier's awakening. Thus, the title of the novel proves to be adequate for both. The novel tells the story of Edna, who undergoes an awakening in order to subvert the stereotypical image of the mother woman. It also reflects the desire of the Tunisian people to be free from dictatorship and build a real democracy. Edna's awakening refers to Edna's revolt against her husband, her society and her lover so that she can stand by herself and be herself. Her struggle is inspired by a strong desire for change. Change is also what inspired the Tunisian people to revolt and achieve their own awakenings. Tunisian people needed to change their life conditions. They needed to feel free and dignified. From this vantage point, both Edna's awakening and Tunisia's revolution stem from the need to change and to live an alternative better life.

However, this change is in no way a sudden one, it is a whole process which explains the progressive aspect of the title, that is, *The Awakening*. The awakening imagery dominates the novel and the sleeping/awakening binary opposition pervades the narrative literally and metaphorically. In her article entitled "Language and ambiguity," Paula A. Treichler comments on the complex use of the verb "to awaken" in the book, which reflects the complexity of the process itself. She explains:

The verb 'awaken' from which the novel's title and central metaphor derive, formally complicates in a similar way the active and passive elements of Edna's experience. Both transitive and intransitive, it can take a grammatical object but does not have to: someone can awaken, can be awakened, can awaken someone else. The title is unspecified and can draw on all these possibilities. (264)

One of the instances of Edna's literal awakenings in the story occurs in Chénrière Caminada, (the island where Edna and her lover spend a whole day together). Edna literally wakes up

after a long sleep. This reminds the readers of the cavemen sleep. She washes, and eats bread and wine (symbols of body and soul).

The imagery is taken from the Christian tradition and alludes to a baby's baptism. At this level, Edna needs to overcome the dilemma she lives in as she becomes aware of the duality in her life defined in the novel as "the two contradictory impulses which impelled her" (893). These impulses could refer to duty and desire, that is, her duty toward her children and her desire to be herself. At the metaphorical level, this same event starts the process of Edna's awakening and her awareness of the need to change and defy the image of the mother woman she is entrapped in. Indeed, waking stands for thinking, enlightenment and knowledge as opposed to sleeping which rather epitomizes death, stagnation and ignorance.

The transition from sleeping to waking brings about a transcendence of one's submission to exterior powers as well as interior ones. It results from a certain awareness of one's existence for it is the act of waking up that proves that one is alive and not dead and it is the trigger for the movement forward. However, there is a focus in the book on the fact that the awakening is not a moment, but rather a process that Edna has to go through. By the same token, the Tunisian revolution, which is in a way an instance of awakening, is also a process. It is the result of a series of deceptive moments and pressure. However, the association of Edna's experience with the Tunisian revolution goes beyond the concept of awakening to cover many other grounds.

II – Mother/Land Motifs:

Comparing the Tunisian experience to Edna's journey presupposes a comparison between Edna Pontelier (the protagonist in Kate Chopin's work) and Tunisia (the protagonist of the revolution). The allegory is in no way fake as there has always been a tradition in literature of associating the female body to the land. The tradition comes from pictorial art

where the parallel woman/land is a recurrent one. Indeed, in many paintings, the different continents are represented as women. The practice comes from the classical and medieval tradition of allegorizing ideal concepts and divine abstractions in female forms: in ancient Greece for instance, wisdom was personified as Athena; in Rome, chastity was epitomised by Virgin Tuccia carrying her sieve.

The allegory is also born from the association that the primitive man made between the cyclical regeneration of nature and female sexuality. This allegory produced the imagery of “mother earth” and “mother land.” The analogy was further given an impetus in graphic art where continents were represented as women, such as, Amerigo Vespucci’s representation of America as a fertile woman, who with her cornucopia offered wealth and riches to its explorers. Early visitors to Australia also represented the continent as a desired maiden.

Furthermore, the African continent is frequently portrayed as a savage and a naked woman while Asia is often envisioned as a woman with either flowers or a turban on her head. This tradition applies to countries today. Many painters and caricaturists use a woman figure to refer to their countries and this applies to Tunisia, too. This explains the photos which were shared by Tunisians on the net during and after the revolution where Tunisia was represented as a woman wearing the Tunisian flag.

The link between the land and the female body gave birth to some expressions which blend both “virgin forests” or “virgin lands.” It also inspired and still inspires many feminist writers, who express a pride with the parallel land/woman as they believe that it is an empowering metaphor. In this respect, Hélène Cixous announces “I am myself the earth, everything that happens on it, all the lives that live me, there in my different forms” (qtd in *Moi* 116) to show that she is the centre of the cosmos, and thus to defy the myth of the patriarchal centrism. Furthermore, the allegory has enriched the literary tradition where

writers use the parallel land woman to express patriotic feelings in the same way that feminist writers used it to defy the patriarchal reading of texts.

Taking into consideration this tradition, we can state that Edna Pontelier in *The Awakening* can be the epitome of Tunisia in modern circumstances. I shall prove that the simulation is a possible one at different levels. Indeed, Tunisia and Edna share many features and an analysis of the text reveals a number of levels, which show that Edna Pontelier can stand for Tunisia.

III – Historical Context:

The common ground between the Tunisian revolution and *The Awakening* is discerned in the environment in which both were born. Indeed, the late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of new women writers, who raised the issue of what was called “the new woman.” The readers were also new women who were seeking career opportunities, political and social freedom. Achieving these objectives required an uprising against the dominating patriarchal societies.

The movement was not about feminism, but rather about personal freedom, more precisely, the freedom of choice to many women. This refers to the choice between being a mother and being a woman. It is ultimately about being free. Elaine Showalter, in her article entitled “Chopin and American Women Writers,” situates the book as “a transitional female fiction of the fin de siècle, a narrative of and the passage from the homo-social women’s culture and literature of the nineteenth century to the heterosexual fiction of modernism” (314). Not surprisingly, the Tunisian revolution is also a transitional stage from dictatorship into democracy. It is a turning point in history, a rejection of old despotic values and an inspiration for building a new system. This could explain the reasons behind Tunisians’

refusal to reform the old constitution and opted for rewriting a new one. This reflects a desire for a total change and not a partial one.

Both Edna and Tunisia have revolted for the sake of change and aspired for freedom in order to set new rules in their relationships with their environment and with history. Then, *The Awakening* comes at the edge between two main literary traditions: Romanticism and Naturalism. Romanticism focuses on the individual's imagination while naturalism stresses the background and society rather than the individual. This highlights the powerful influence of the environment relegating personal choices. Kate Chopin has tried to face the dominance of naturalism through the focus on the individual in her text. She wanted to stick to the values of romanticism. This can explain the theme of solitude, which governs the narrative and the powerful "I" which dominates in the novel although the point of view is rather that of a third person omniscient narrator.

In the same way, the Tunisian revolution has stressed the individualistic aspect and experience of its people, especially, that the world lives in a context of globalization where the cultural characteristics of civilizations seem to fade away. The Tunisian Revolution is the expression of the Tunisian culture. It cannot resemble any other experience. It is an individual initiative which provided the spark of the revolution (that of Mohamed Bouazizi). Furthermore, almost all observers agree on the fact that what makes the Tunisian Revolution a special one is that it is unique and does not resemble any other revolution in the world. It also defies globalization in that no one could predict the change in Tunisia in a world context where everything seems to be set beforehand and controlled by the world powers.

In a similar way, *The Awakening* was written in a period of economic depression (1893 – 1896) and it was an expression of the need of women to have their financial independence. Besides, the Tunisian revolution came in a context of world economic crisis

leading to the rise of unemployment which is considered as one of the factors of the revolution.

IV – Common Motifs:

At the level of the text itself, the book opens with the caged parrot which could speak a language that “nobody understood” (881). The image illustrates Edna’s life as well as the Tunisian people’s situation prior to the revolution. Both were imprisoned and aspiring to freedom and they both needed “strong wings” to adopt Mlle Reisz’s metaphor in order to be free. The cage parrot imagery is part of the flight metaphor that dominates the novel and stands for the desire to be free. Both Tunisia and Edna feel the need to go out of the cage and fly high.

Edna is imprisoned in her motherhood. Motherhood frames the story, which starts with Adelle Ratignolle (the mother figure in the book) pregnant, and ends with the delivery of a child. Similarly, Tunisia was imprisoned in dictatorship which framed the post-independence phase of Tunisia’s history. It defined the parameters of post-independent Tunisia. The illusion of freedom ruled both Tunisia and Edna. As a matter of fact, before being awakened, Edna has lived in an illusionary freedom as Leonce Pontelier allowed her to do whatever she wanted as long as she did not harm his interests: she could go wherever she chooses, start a friendship with whomever she wanted, spend as much money as she could. But as soon as she shows a desire to be independent, she faces his objection. Leonce Pontelier grants Edna her financial safety in exchange of her freedom. Edna realizes afterwards that her freedom is a limited and conditioned one. So she decides to rebel and defy this patriarchal and subtle authority.

Likewise, Tunisians had lived in the illusion of freedom for a long time. They were made to believe that as long as they were safe, they should not ask for freedom, more

precisely, the freedom of speech. “A settled economy” and “a feeling of safety” were granted by the regime as long as people keep silent. The result was that Tunisia (like Edna) could not accept this bargain and, hence, the revolt of the Tunisian people. The theme of lack of communication which opens the book is a recurrent one: Edna Pontelier coming from a Kentucky Presbyterian society into a Catholic Creole society could not bridge the discrepancy between her and the language of this community and its lifestyle.

In the Creole society, married women could discuss sex openly, but in reality their roles are rigidly defined and controlled. The openness in language does not coincide with openness in action. This explains Edna’s feeling of embarrassment when she witnesses the conversation between Adele Ratignolle and Robert about a book discussing sex openly. Edna feels that she does not belong there.

This mismatch between language and action is one of the reasons of Edna’s awakening and of the Tunisian revolution. As a matter of fact, Tunisians had for long suffered from this incongruity between the official language (used in media) and practice. In media there was a focus on success at all levels while the reality was different. Corruption prevailed and poverty ruined many people’s lives. Language in media focused on how things should be and not how they really were. Tunisians had the same feeling of awkwardness Edna felt in the Creole society.

The Creole society (Edna’s oppressor) focussed on how women should behave and what they should do and not what they really need. Both Edna and Tunisia could not bear such conditions. Edna’s struggle was against the Creole patriarchal society and Tunisia’s rebellion was against a despotic dictatorship. By the same token, symbolism in the first chapter of *the Awakening* is an adequate metaphor to the Tunisian context: the caged parrot illustrates Edna’s life as much as Tunisian people’s situation prior to the revolution. Both were imprisoned and aspired to freedom.

On the fourteenth of January, one of the young people protesting in front of the interior ministry was holding a cage as a symbol of the Tunisian situation and as an expression of the need to be freed. This picture is one of many instances on the fourteenth of January which show that the Tunisian revolution was more than a decisive historical moment. It was an artistic performance and even a complete show. The protesters in Bourguiba Avenue screaming “dégage” reminded us of the chorus in Greek drama witnessing a cathartic moment of Tunisia. Poetry was also there as people referred to Abu el Kacem Echabbi’s famous Song of the Mighty. Music was there as many songs were sung for the occasion. Thus, the climatic moment of revolution was a work of art performed by the Tunisian people.

The sea motif which is recurrent in Chopin’s narrative is also adequate in this comparative approach. By learning how to swim, Edna becomes conscious of her individuality. She is now aware of the need to be in control of her life. Learning how to swim is compared in the novel to a child learning how to walk. This assimilation summarizes the Tunisian situation. In other words, the country is learning democracy the way a child is learning to walk. The experience is full of falls, but standing up against all odds and trying again is what matters.

V – The Plot:

As far as the plot is concerned, one can notice that it develops following the process of Edna’s awakening and self-discovery. Likewise, it reflects the development of the Tunisian Revolution. The first moment of Edna’s awakening comes in chapter three where she feels oppressed and aggressed by her husband. Subsequently, she goes out of the house (the frame) and resorts to nature for relief. She cries all night long as a form of purgation, a necessary

stage to have a new start, and go for a new experience: “the tears came so fast to Mrs Pontelier’s eyes that the damp sleeve of her peignoir no longer served to dry them” (886).

In the first phase, the protagonist expresses her anger and her lack of faith in the institution of marriage and in all the social Creole codes though no objective is yet defined and no solution looms in the horizon. This first phase in the book reflects the first phase of the revolution when Tunisians all through the country expressed their anger; they went out to express their dissatisfaction with their situation asking for change without however defining the change they need.

At first, Edna Pontelier cannot label this new feeling. She describes it without being able to define it. It is “an indescribable oppression, which seemed to generate in some unfamiliar part of her consciousness”, then some lines ahead, she adds: “it was strange and unfamiliar; it was a mood” (886). As she cannot define this feeling, she feels afraid of it. The difficulty of finding a name for this movement inside her and the difficulty of labelling the aspiration for change that Edna experiences is true about the revolution. Indeed, experts still cannot find a name for the Tunisian people’s movement in the period between the seventeenth of December and the fourteenth of January. Some prefer the word “Intifadha”. Others call it “social movement”, still others believe it is “a revolution” though it is different from any other revolution as it had no leaders. Another group think that it is no more than a failed “coup d’état” and the debate is still open for as soon as the movement is given a name, it would be mastered.

In chapter six of the book comes the second phase of Edna’s process of Awakening. She is now aware of the new feeling; she knows that it is there to stay and she is more conscious of it; she calls it “a light” that “was beginning to dawn dimly within her, the light which showing the way forbids it” (893). She now sees that she could no longer stand the fact that her life has always been dominated by men who seek to control her, namely her father,

her husband and even her lover. She needs to be treated as “a human being” and not as “a mother woman”. The novel tells Edna’s struggle against the patriarchal and social oppression. At this level, she realizes the need to change. However, she still cannot go for it because of the two “contradictory impulses” read as an oscillation between her duty vis a vis her children and her desire to become herself.

The dilemma in which Edna lives and the fact that two powers govern her make Sandra M. Gilbert compare Edna to Aphrodite in her article entitled “The Second Coming of Aphrodite” and she argues that Edna like Aphrodite “is associated with sunset and sunrise, the liminal hours of transformative consciousness – the entranced hours of awakening or drowsing” (280). The liminal space in which Edna finds herself is a space between two identities: the one epitomized by Mlle Reisz (symbol of feminine liberation) and Mme Ratignolle (the mother woman figure in the novel).

In the same way, Tunisia lives this same dilemma in the aftermath of the revolution as Tunisians are still debating the kind of identity they would like to adopt. Tunisia is now torn between two ends: the modernist western model and the Islamic eastern conservative model. Both powers are pulling the country to their ends; this explains the fact that Tunisia is still imprisoned in a liminal space, trying to find its own way.

Up to the tenth chapter, Edna’s struggle is limited to the level of thoughts. The change in her attitude comes with the swimming scene. At this level she feels ready to swim on her own. Actually, swimming on her own is metaphorically read as an attempt to act and to change her life through defying her fears. She manages to swim on her own as “she seemed to be reaching out for the unlimited in which to lose herself” (908) but the result was that she was about to die and she suffered a lot because of that. As a matter of fact, suffering seems a necessary experience that both Edna and Tunisia had to go through in order to achieve purgation. Change and thus resurrection is a painful experience. Edna had to suffocate and

almost die to achieve her awakening and Tunisia had to sacrifice martyrs in order to get freedom and dignity.

The culmination of this second phase of Edna's awakening comes in chapter fourteen when she realizes that "she herself – her present self- was different from the other self" (46) Edna is now aware of the change inside herself. She perceives herself as a new one different from an old weak self that she rejects and seeks to overcome. She is now the woman and not the mother woman. Here the awakening is discerned as an experience of rebirth and resurrection.

Back to New Orleans from Grand Isle, Leonce Pontelier is presented as a possessive character, proud of himself and his possessions. When describing the house, the focus is on the luxurious furniture that Leonce values and he is portrayed as very proud of what he owns: "he was very fond of walking about his house examining its various appointments and details, to see that nothing was amiss" (931). He considers that Edna is one of those things he owns. He treats her as part of his possessions and not his partner that is why he "was looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage" (2) when she came out of the sea with Robert in an earlier scene in the novel.

In the same way, Ben Ali considered Tunisia his own property. He considered Tunisia part of his possessions so he thought he was allowed to do whatever he wanted with it, ignoring the feelings of its people. In New Orleans Edna goes further into action: she decides to challenge the society and her husband through subverting many traditions she used to follow such as receiving guests on the reception day. Back in the city, she decides to go out of her house for a walk on the reception day. Edna is therefore changing her habits and the narrative focuses on the progressive changes in Edna's character.

Another example of this change is that Edna no longer cries after a quarrel with her husband, she now "finishes her dinner alone, with forced deliberation" (934). She is now

resisting her husband's power. She is no longer afraid of either her husband or the society. Similarly, Tunisians faced bullets without being afraid of death. Their need for change made them defy their own fear. They felt ready to act and to resist the despotic regime. One of the protesters on the fourteenth of January was wearing a T-shirt on which there was an arrow pointing to his heart as a target for the bullets. The picture is significant in that it shows the courage and the daring of the Tunisian people at that unforgettable moment. Courage is in both cases the empowering effect of the awakening and the revolution.

The explanation that Leonce gives to Edna's changing habits is that she probably went mad that is why he invites Dr Mandelet to his house to see her. Leonce considers that Edna is insane because she wants change and she no longer obeys his commands: "it sometimes entered Mr Pontelier's mind to wonder if his wife were not growing a little unbalanced mentally" (939). Likewise, "Bouazizi" the launcher of the revolution was accused of being insane and of hallucinating when he set fire in his own body in an act of protest.

The oppressor does always think that defying his authority is a sign of a mental disturbance because he fails to see his own defiance and tries to blame others rather than to blame himself and this is true for systems as well as individuals. Actually, Mademoiselle Reisz, the outcast and the epitome of the liberated woman in the book, is also considered insane by the society as mentioned by Alcée Arobin " 'I've heard she's partially demented'" (966).

The story that Edna, in chapter twenty three, tells to her father, her husband and her doctor, happens to be her own one. The journey that the lovers (the protagonists of her story) go for in the story is indeed Edna's journey. They are travelling to the "unknown" the way both Tunisia and Edna are travelling to "the unknown". This self reflexivity shows that Edna is aware of the outcome of her experience. She is determined to go for the journey though she knows that it could deviate. Edna's journey deviates as she commits suicide by the end of the

journey in the way the Tunisian Revolution is deviating from its objectives. In both cases, the quest for freedom turns into a quest for identity.

Edna's awakening was meant to lead her to freedom from all the social constraints but she ended up looking for an identity (a mother or a wife or a woman). In this respect Elizabeth Fox-Genovese asserts that "*The Awakening* sets forth a quest for a possible female identity, it remains nuanced in its evaluation of the decisive forces that shape such an identity" (257). In the same way, the objective of the Tunisian revolution was freedom and dignity but the outcome has turned into a quest for a Tunisian identity (arab, muslim, modernist...)

The culmination of Edna's process of awakening comes with her decision to move to another house "the pigeon house" and to have a party to celebrate her liberty (the dinner referred to by Arobin as "Le coup d'Etat"). After a long period of confusion, chaos and turmoil, Edna finds her way and decides to free her body through moving away from her husband, having an affair with Alcee Arobin and trying to free her soul and have "the courageous soul that dares and defies " that Mlle Reisz thinks necessary in the process of freedom.

The decision comes after some moments of confusion that governed Edna's feelings when she becomes aware of the need to change. These chaotic moments are mentioned again and again by Kate Chopin for instance she refers to them in the early pages of the book where Edna admits that "the beginning of things, of a world especially, is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic, and exceedingly disturbing" (893). As a matter of fact, Tunisia lived these same moments of confusion and chaos following the dictator's flight. Tunisians can never forget the scary nights they spent trying to protect the neighbourhood from the prevailing disorder. So, chaos is one of the features of any revolution's aftermath. It is necessary to go through the phase of chaos in order to start a process of rebuilding.

In the last phase of Edna's awakening corresponding to the falling action in the plot Edna seems independent and self reliant (she lives on her paintings) : she is now "the regal woman, the one who rules, who looks on, who stands alone" (972). She is determined, focused and self confident. She fully awakened free from all constraints. However, Edna's reaction to this new self is "a shock of the unexpected unaccustomed". (967). This statement can apply to the aftermath of the revolution. The country is independent, free and dignified but still not used to it, not accustomed to this freedom which creates a kind of a shock and surprise at the events. Tunisians could not believe it. It took them time to realize that they had been freed from fear and despotism.

In another instance, Kate Chopin refers to this worrying feeling that prevented Edna from enjoying her victory and self assertion: "she felt the old ennui overtaking her; the hopelessness which so often assailed her, which came upon her like an obsession" (972). The old ennui is the obstacle in front of Edna's self accomplishment. It is also what prevented Tunisians from celebrating their revolution. It is the unknown that spoils the moment of victory.

VI – The Resolution

This "ennui" leads Edna to committing suicide by the end of the novel leaving the readers with the confusion of whether this resolution in the plot is an empowering one or a sign of failure. The suicide can symbolise a return to the womb in order to be reborn. But it can also mean that Edna's experience of awakening is a failure just like the "bird with a broken wing [which] was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disable down, down to the water" (999).

Some consider that Edna's suicide is an expression of the failure of the experience. Edna awakens only to discover the absurdity of her experience and thus suicide is placed as "a

defeat and a regression, rooted in a self annihilating instinct, in a romantic incapacity to accommodate herself to the limitations of reality” as Suzanne Wolkenfeld explains in her article entitled “Edna’s Suicide: The problem of the One and the Many” (243).

Others believe that Suicide is rather a step back for a better jump. In other words Edna’s suicide is read as a way to live a new and more fulfilling life. In this respect Cynthia Griffin Wolff suggests that “with her final act Edna completes the regression, back beyond childhood, back into time eternal” (241). Thus Edna’s suicide can be read as a way to resort to a more fulfilling world a new start and a new chance to be free that’s why at the end of the novel, Edna “felt like some new born creature, opening its eyes in a familiar world that it had never known” (1000).

Suicide is ironically another shared motif between *The Awakening* and the Tunisian revolution. Bouazizi’s suicide started the Tunisian revolution and Edna’s suicide ends her awakening. Both aspired for change and resorted to suicide to express their revolt. This shows that change is an ambivalent process. It can be an ascending process which brings about fulfilment and self assertion. But it can also be a circular process which brings its agents to the initial situation and not necessarily a movement forward.

All these common grounds between Edna’s experience and the Tunisian one show that Kate Chopin’s novel *The Awakening* can be read as the narrative of the Tunisian revolution par excellence. Even though the narrative was written about a century before the event takes place, the novel is still valid as the incarnation of the Tunisian revolution. The story of the revolution is told in Chopin’s novel where Edna’s process of awakening coincides with the Tunisian process of revolt. By the same token, the Tunisian revolution reflects the artistic aspect of the narrative as it is presented as more than a historical moment. What happened on the fourteenth of January was a work of art full of music, poetry and drama. The Tunisian awakening has much in common with Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* at the level of

characterization, plot, motifs and performance. Thus, it is clear that history could draw on fiction and vice versa. In other words fiction could draw on history in the same way that history draws on fiction, be it consciously or unconsciously.

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