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# *The Falconer*

## *From the Editor*

If you are reading this, you must have either bought a copy of the magazine or are borrowing the issue from a kind-hearted friend. Either way, thank you for supporting us.

I conceived the idea for The Falconer a few months ago, right before the outbreak of the ongoing pandemic. The department, despite being home to such cultural and intellectual activity, comes off as rather passive when seen as a community. Students come to the university a few minutes before their 8:30 classes, and before the teachers have even sunk back into their chairs, they are already a mile out. Book clubs, drama societies, seminars, poetry readings – nothing has been successful in getting the students to stay back and participate. The Falconer aims at countering this passivity that has found roots so deep that it manages to linger, and pierce through the ceilings of the Sindhi department classrooms. Although there will be some changes in the set structure of the magazine every month, the idea is that each issue will roughly have these four sections: the editorial (a featured column or a letter such as this), a content desk for the writings submitted by the students of the department, an interview from the *In Conversation* series, and columns written by the students of the department.

The title is, as you may have guessed, borrowed from Yeats' poem, *The Second Coming*. The third line (*The falcon cannot hear the falconer*), when isolated from the overt political context of the poem as a whole, metaphorizes the loss of communication. To build on that analogy, the department (the falconer) and the students (the falcon) have lost, to a great extent, their sense of communication. This is not to say that there is no sound to hear, but simply that the latter cannot hear it.

The purpose of the magazine, therefore, is to restore that lost sense of communication. Beyond the obvious association, however, the reason why we have decided on a Yeats poem is because of his ambivalent attitude toward politics. He was political and apolitical at once. Much like Yeats himself, The Falconer will carry within itself multitudes; and within those depths, readers may find a political undertone to the magazine as well.

This magazine has been a few months in the making now, and seeing it materialize, one page at a time, has been one of the great joys of my life. I would like to wholeheartedly thank the people who started on this journey with me and have proven to be, time and time again, the best team one could ask for. *Zonera Asim*, the Sub-Editor, for not giving up and working twice as hard as any of us. *Manal Fatmi*, the Content Head, for being resilient in her decision to not settle and only pick the best of the best. *Amtul Qamar*, the Design Lead, for giving shape (literally) to the most abstract of ideas (and doing that effortlessly). I would also like to thank M. Yousha for always making himself available for the magazine and helping us pan out this magazine.

With that, I give you the first issue of The Falconer. We hope you choose us, support us, and help us do justice to our mission. The road that lies ahead is hurdled with uncertainties; but with your continued support, even the rockiest of paths, would be but a meadow for us to tread through.

*Your Editor,*  
Moaz Ahmed Khan

## **“Victim of the Modern Age”**

### ***A Clockwork Orange: Book vs. Movie***

Arbia Javed (4th year, Evening)

In the genre of drama, what is read on a page is also seen on the stage: dialogues and soliloquies are meant for both the reader and viewer, words dance the same way the actors do and vice versa. But the case of a novel adapted for screen is and has been curious and complex. The narrative that an author weaves carefully one strand after another and with a careful hand at places that the reader can only feel through the words on the page, often gets tangled when tried to be presented on stage; imagination manifested rarely does justice to the process of imagination as well as the talent of the weaver of the images, for when the medium changes, so does the style.

A Clockwork Orange, if you do not read the novel, is a flawless movie, at least by the standards of movies made in the 70s. But if you have experienced the original, the adaptation will seem lacking in places. Unlike the adaptations of Huxley's Brave New World and Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower -movies that ate up the majority of the matter and manner of the books that made up their foundations and pillars, A Clockwork Orange preserves the heart of the book. It was only in a few moments that I hoped that the viewers of the film would have read the original text to know what they were missing out on.

Admittedly, the film drew an accurate and eerie and therefore effective image of the evil streak that Burgess wanted the reader to draw. Other areas like background music, performance of the actors, settings and direction of the film deserve credit where credit is due. But what the film

could not do, despite its utilization of Alex playing the narrative voice of Alex, is to convey the complete absurdity and abnormality of the prime character's thought processes. The film began with him talking to us, surely, but it stopped as the film went on and the viewer, previously the reader, could feel a lack of perspective of the protagonist. Action and narration cannot, I understand, go forever hand in hand, but the torture of Alex and his consequent realization that he is becoming a clockwork orange were crucial points in the story and told us that he can, in fact, ask "What, sir, happens to me?" but nowhere in the film is the phrase 'A Clockwork Orange' shown or uttered. Even though the filmmakers effectively showed that getting back the ability to choose between good and evil does not automatically give you the choice of making your own decisions—the Minister of Interior as the government that controls you still—their lens did not fully focus on the dilemma of man himself:

"Music and the sexual act, literature and art, all must be a source now not of pleasure but of pain."

The light shed on the personal conundrum and the depression Alex faces, both when he wants to "snuff it" and when, in the last chapter of the book that was omitted in the film, after being able to choose violence, he wonders "What's it going to be then, eh?" i.e. good or evil or a ground in between, is absent in the film. One could justify this absence by assuming that the filmmakers only wanted to show the inevitability of man choosing and loving violence, but one can also hold them accountable for cutting the edges of a perfect square, the complex conscience of a conscious man.

Love and religion are also put under scrutiny in the novel; origin of the former and corruption of the latter as felt and carried out by humans

were also, perhaps, some sharp edges that the filmmakers thought best not to touch. The novel is 140 pages long and the movie is a little over two hours; time hardly seems to be the cause of cutting the edges.

“What’s it going to be then, eh?” one must ask: the full scenery or a few trees burned here and there as victims of the modern age?

## **After the War:**

### ***The Shift in the Literary Thought***

Hafsa Urooj (2nd year, Morning)

“Then suddenly, like a chasm in a smooth road, the war came.”

Engulfed by the catastrophic flames of the Great War of the early 20th century, the world witnessed a societal cataclysm that altered every aspect of society and culture. The cultural arena that perhaps saw the most radical shift, aided by the swift wave of social change, was Literature. Thus, the interwar years kickstarted unprecedented, innovative literary activity which called for new forms of artistic representation.

The most notable change in the Interwar Literature was the breakdown of established conventional values. The senseless sacrifices wiped out nearly an entire generation of young men, leaving behind a stunned group of writers, whom Gertrude Stein famously called The Lost Generation, and rightfully so. These writers entered the war with their fragile illusions of optimism, which were shattered completely after they had all seen the unspeakable, unshakeable horrors of the war. The pre-war hero mythology was forgotten in the ever-haunting image of the trenches. The poetic power of the Natural and the Sublime was lost in the throes of gory violence. The deep-rooted pastoral convention, adored by the poets since before the times of the Romantics, was tarnished by wartime distress. This skepticism about nature itself was vividly expressed in the works of the Interwar poets, most notably in Wilfred Owen's poem 'Futility' - why 'the kind old sun' even bothered 'to break earth's sleep at all'. Owen laments that no matter how many sunny days

broke during the war, the charm of the daylight always dwindled away to nothing behind the clouds of despondency and endless bloodshed.

As a result, the skepticism of this convention swirling in the smoke of disillusionment that grew out of the war contributed to the birth of literary modernism, a genre which rejected the Romantic views of nature and paved the way for a more dispirited tone, realistic subject material, and generally pessimistic views of the world. In the 1920s, writers like T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf echoed this passive, pessimistic, and bleak theme.

And just when the world was recuperating from the wounds inflicted by the violent vessel of the war, the Great Depression struck the western like lightning. The idea of the New World imploded within the society. Disillusioned with the capitalist ideals, many key literary figures of the time, including Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, and John Steinbeck, started to endorse the revolutionary ideas of egalitarianism and the like.

World War I reshaped and revamped not only the physical world but also the world of Literature. The war time brutalities crushed the long-standing traditional values while the traditionalists fought their last battle against the forces of change, eventually creating a path for more realistic values to take root, which we now see in full bloom. To these people, tradition, in all its open glamour, is what had inspired the calamity that will echo throughout the chambers of history for all time to come.



## **Kate Chopin's Regret:**

### ***A Non-Binary Approach***

Ayemun Imran (2nd Year, Evening)

Kate Chopin's *Regret* opens with the description of the protagonist, who wears a man's hat, an old blue army coat, and top-boots, owns a gun, stands in the gallery with arms akimbo, and lives alone with a few servants and animals. The central figure, however, is not a man. She is "Mamezelle Aurelie," a "strong figure" of the 19th century. From the moment she is introduced to the reader, almost immediately her presence strikes up a sense of artificiality, as if the strength of her character is in constant contradiction with all the other emotions she feels. She had disowned her maternal desires long ago, which is why the presence of children near her house seems an idea so far-fetched and surprising; almost as if they have "fallen from the clouds." Similarly, she fails to see any difference between animals and children and finds children-related conversations 'terrassent'. Considerably, a part of her owns a "white apron", but her dominant side has not permitted her to accept the clichés associated with femininity. She has never been in love and took the conscious decision of not getting married at the age of twenty. This act gives us an insight into her psychological developmental phases, where she might have observed the power imbalance between a man and a woman. She understands rather early on that it is easier to imitate the classic image of a strong man than to challenge the indestructible demarcation between gender roles.

Furthermore, it is the presence of women like Odile, who complains about getting half-crazy between children and the absence of a husband, or like Aunt Ruby, who exaggerates the duties of a woman by hinting that a woman has no room for mistakes; otherwise, her children can

grow “hard-headed,” that Mamezelle Aurielie continues to live devoid of any regrets. Unfortunately, the regret-free life could not stop loneliness from creeping in and deepening around the solitary figure.

One morning, fate decides to tease her by giving a peek into an alternate possible reality when her neighbor, Odile, temporarily leaves her four children on Mamzelle Aurelie. The plot further unfolds and blends with the story of “The Beauty and the Beast.” The protagonist begins to walk on the path of self-discovery and gradually shatters the illusions that were halting her from exercising freedom. The author wants the readers to observe that Madam Aurelie's potentials transcend from the designated roles given to the binary sexes by society. For instance, in the last stanza, she is holding “Elodie” in her arms safely and looking at the crib where the cattle was being fed, which indicates that her potentials, strength, and inclinations have no awareness of cultural division of labors between genders. Women are put in contrast to elucidate that individual potential has nothing to do with gender. For instance, “Odile” thinks that she would go crazy with the arrival of many responsibilities, while it takes Mamzelle Aurelie only two weeks to realize that she is far more capable than she had previously anticipated. But it is too late for her to announce that she is ahead of her time. Odile takes the children back and

“..let her head fall down upon her bent arm, and began to cry. Oh, but she cried! Not softly, as women often do. She cried like a man, with sobs that seemed to tear her very soul”

The imagery is profound in the ending lines as our protagonist, tormented between gender roles, finally cries - yet she cries like a man. We have often heard that strong men do not cry. Thus, this very act

indicates her repressed frustrations piercing through the lies she told herself and defying all the labels that were culturally forced into her mind. She finally identifies as a person who can sob loudly like a man, loves gently like a woman, and has immense knowledge of her work. By the end of the story, it becomes clear - she is neither a lady nor a man, instead she is complete and whole - she is Mamezelle Aurelie.

## *English Department's Original*

I met Love by the sidewalk yesterday,  
it was jittery in the way it stuttered while lying about having a good day,  
it was boastful in the way it seemed to brag about being better off after  
separating our paths,  
it was clumsy in the way it stumbled on its own feet and rushed to cover  
the exposed part of the sleeve that hides its battles,  
it was strained in the way it would avoid direct eye contact  
Love pretended to not recognize me, but its dilated pupils were  
confirmation for its unbreakable walls,  
or maybe its absence did change me, for there are most days when I  
can't recognize myself too.  
Love asked me, "how are you?" but what it meant to ask was "why are  
you here?" and "what is left for you to take now?"  
Love filled its room with products that come with a 'fragile' tag,  
they demand attentiveness and observation  
an antique vase wanted to be handled with care,  
a red pill used to get rid of the blues wanted to be kept in a dry place,  
a potted plant wanted to be checked up on daily,  
a piece of clothing came with special instructions on how it wants to be  
treated,  
many a times I have searched for the same tag on Love  
Love was so used to catering to others' needs, it forgot how to accept  
reciprocity.  
I often wonder whether I was in love or not,  
and in times when I don't stumble into Love,  
I can almost convince myself that I wasn't.

*Anonymous*

فلک سے ٹوٹ رہا ہے ستاروں کا آشیاں  
اب کس کی خاطر آپ دیکھیں گے آسماں۔

اب کہ بچھڑنے لگی ہے کائنات سے رنگ و بو  
ہاں اب کہ ہوگا یاں اپنا سا سماں ۔

آپ ہیں ہی نہیں، سو ہے آپ پر بھروسہ  
دیکھیں آپ ہی ٹھہریں گے میرے رازداں۔

یہاں کچھ بھی نہیں ہے، کچھ ہے تو فقط یہاں  
آپ وہاں کو جائیے، کچھ ہے تو فقط وہاں۔

Moazzam Qureshi (4th Year, Evening)

## **In Conversation with *Mr. Babur Khan Suri***

**As we have already discussed with you before, one of the many reasons for introducing a publication such as *The Falconer* is to foster communication within the department. The purpose is not only to start a dialogue between the students of the departments, but also to allow them to get to know their teachers outside of the classroom. Could you tell us a little about yourself and your time here at the university?**

I have been here at the University of Karachi for the past decade or so. I did my Bachelor's from here, and then my Master's in Literature and Linguistics from here. I am in the final stages of completing my M.Phil. Hopefully, I will be doing my PhD from here as well. As far as my interests are concerned, unlike my colleagues, who could spend eternity praising their favorite poems, I find myself more in line with the tradition of the novel.

**What novels would you say are your favorite?**

That is a difficult question to answer, but I suppose I do have some favorites. *The Master and Margarita* (Mikhail Bulgakov), *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Bronte). It is easier to choose the authors that I admire the most, which would include Joyce, Woolf, Borges, and Marquez

**Well, that sure is a powerful group of writers. Moving on, why do you think that a publication such as *The Falconer* is important for the English department?**

Over the course of the last couple of years, there has been a strange passivity that has settled within the English department. Whether it's the morning shift or the evening one, I find students would rather take classes and move on with their lives than invest their time in a project

such as the one that you've started. As the student advisor, I have tried many times to get students to play a more active role in the department, but to no avail. The storm rages on for a couple of days, and then things return to the calm, passive waters that the department has gotten so accustomed to. I am glad to finally see students taking up an initiative such as The Falconer on their own accord, without having to be forced onto them by a teacher. Hopefully, this will set an example for others to follow as well.

**Speaking of Literature, what role do you think that it seeks to fulfill in times such as ours? With the pandemic and the ensuing tumult that has followed, do you think that literature provides us with an escape from the scruples of a chaotic modern life?**

It is not easy describing the role that literature plays in our times. Although that role may differ from person to person, for the most part, it teaches us to be empathetic towards others. That is the generic answer to this question. More than that, what Literature does is that it defamiliarizes the world for us – it presents ideas and objects that are otherwise known to be well-understood in different, unfamiliar ways. This way, people are given newer, fresher perspectives to look at the world. It can be a positive shift or a negative shift, but it is a shift from the conventional view.

**But do you think that students today invest enough time in Literature for it to be able to fulfill that role?**

Speaking strictly as a teacher with more than a decade of experience, no. I do not mean that students are not capable of it. I understand how hard it is to sit down to read a book when the world today has provided people with a plethora of alternatives. But I do believe that students usually are either not willing enough to invest the kind of patience that

literature demands or are not determined enough to keep it up. I also feel that students fail to distinguish between Literature and commercial writing. The books that people read these days are less literary, and tend to fall into the category of sentimentalist, sensationalist commercial writing. Readers, especially the students of English, ought to be more careful with their understanding and subsequent choice of books.

**You mentioned that students of English must do a better job at picking what to read. Are you optimistic about the future of the students of the English Department at KU?**

Yes, and I don't have to make any assumptions. The past speaks for itself. Virtually, no student of the department has been, in all conventional sense of the word, unsuccessful career-wise. Of course, there is the natural scope of failure, but that is true for every major or degree. You cannot guarantee success to or for anyone. But generally speaking, students of the English Department have been more than successful – financially and otherwise.

**To conclude the interview, do you have any advice for the students of the department?**

As generic as it may sound, the only advice I have for the students reading this is to READ, READ and READ! As I have mentioned already, there is nothing more I want for my students other than to be able to experience good Literature in all of its glory. Invest your time, patience, and energy, and you shall receive it.

**Thank you for your time. We are very honored to have been in your company.**

Best of luck.



## *Literature in my life*

Rabia Jawed (1st Year, Morning)

For as long as I can remember, books have had a special place in my heart. It started when I discovered my grandfather's treasure trove of classics long after his demise and felt a deep, if not obscure, connection with him over a shared love for literature. As I stood there, in front of the broken desk on which he kept some of his favorites, I could, if only for a fleeting moment, feel his presence linger on in the books he left me. I knew then and there that literature was to play a pivotal role in my life.

In the difficult years of my adolescence, books reassured me and provided me with the comfort and solace I needed. No matter the phase that I was going through, there was always a poem, a novel, a short story that reminded me that I was not alone in my weirdness and my quirks. "We read to know we are not alone," says William Nicholson, and that quote rings deep and true for me. The realization that people from ages bygone and cultures far-off shared, and continue to share, the same experiences as me, with me, made me feel at home with myself, with my being in the world.

Literature awakened the inner rebel in me. When I read the wild, stormy love story of Heathcliff and Catherine, it shattered my understanding of the classic English ideals of propriety and restrained emotions. The powerful, strong imagery, wild characters, and the timelessness of this story made me fall in love with it. To this day, whenever I find myself afloat a turbulent flood of emotions, I take solace in the fact that I will always have Heathcliff and Catherine to turn to.

It is not just comfort and peace that literature has brought to me. In more ways than I can count, whatever little literature that I have consumed has been responsible for shaping my political beliefs. Literature fired my inner feminist, and showed me strong women of different eras - the responsible, sensible Jane Eyre and the intelligent Elizabeth Bennet, who inspired me to be myself; to break the norms and stand unwaveringly in my beliefs despite all the naysayers.

Was there ever a moment when I decided that literature was the thing for me? I cannot think of one. What I can recall are little moments throughout my life that cemented my love for it and steered me in this direction. To collect my thoughts, I will end with a quote that is a holistic expression of the love I have for literature.

"You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive."

## *Meet the Team*

Sometimes great opportunities knock on your door when you least expect them to.. On 22nd July, in the midst of the stressful Pandemic blues, those five voice-notes from Moaz contained this great idea that you now see materialized.. My initial reaction was of uncertainty, but the excitement was making its way in and it peaked when he asked me to be the sub-editor. From the very moment he spoke the words, I knew this position came to me as an opportunity, but that I would have to earn it and so naturally, I gave it my best. Through the magazine, I met two amazing people, our extremely co-operative and competent Content Head, Manal; and our exceptionally creative and capable Design Lead, Amtul Qamar. As I write this, I cannot help but feel ecstatic, seeing a figment of our imagination turned into this beautiful thing, which is now in your hands. I would like to end with a few lines from Erin Hanson,

"There is freedom waiting for you,  
On the breezes of the sky,  
And you ask "What if I fall?"  
Oh, but my darling,  
What if you fly?"

*Zonera Asim, Sub-Editor*

Let me just put this out there. This is all incredibly, shockingly new to me. From bombarding my friends with texts and voice messages to the actual process of selecting pieces to publish, I've never done anything like this before. As the content head of The Falconer, I did not know what to expect when I first signed up for the job. Perhaps that's part of what makes the whole experience so completely surreal. Over the course

of the past few months, I've learnt so much from the friends that I started on this journey with to the students who were gracious enough to send in their entries. Each day has been, in all senses of the word, an adventure. There have been difficult days, and there have been days when I just felt stuck, but on neither of those days, did I ever want to give up on this lovely project. While we've only just started, I can only hope that the future of this publication is as bright as it is in my imagination. In my imagination, I see The Falconer outliving us, and staying alive long after I've bid my time here. There will be someone else in my place, a fresh-faced first or second year, exhausted from the multiple times they've had to run up and down the coveted blue stairs of that lovely, little place I like to call home. If anything, I hope that this magazine extends to the reader what the English department at the Karachi University extended to me - warmth, community, and literature. Until we meet again, keep soaring high!

***Manal Fatmi, Content Head***

When Zonera approached me with this idea, I knew instantly I had to be a part of this project. Initially, I was a bit skeptical about how the rather abstract idea of the Editor would pan out, but as time passed by, and brick by brick we formed the foundation, my faith in the magazine also gelled. Working with the team over the last few months has been a fulfilling experience and I am very excited for our upcoming issues. If you're reading, I'd like to take my leave by saying thank you for the support!

***Amtul Qamar, Design Lead***

# The Second Coming

*W. B. Yeats*

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
    *The falcon cannot hear the falconer;*  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
    Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
    The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
    Are full of passionate intensity.

    Surely some revelation is at hand;  
    Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
    When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
    A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
    A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
    Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
    That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
    Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?