



# PenChant

Reviews on Books, Movies and More...

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

"So long as we learn it doesn't matter who teaches us, does it?" said

E.R. Braithwaite in *To Sir, With Love*, a book that will take you on a beautiful journey, one like never before. To me spirituality has always had layers of meanings, easy to understand but so much more difficult to inculcate as a way of living. However, this issue offers you two of the best spiritual books relevant even in the 21st century.

The relevance of literature has been a question we have all pondered and debated upon, but this issue seeks to put things into perspective for you by eloquently trying to answer some questions. In fact, an assortment of contemporary songs like *I Lived*, legendary movies like *The Great Gatsby*, and quirky yet wise words of Dr. Seuss, have all come together in this issue to provide you with an array of options to choose your favourites.

We're back to school after a year, met with our friends (sometimes more than family) after so long and nothing feels better than to be finally back "home". In fact, it's the first time that the whole editorial board has had the opportunity to work together, as a team, without any of those those virtual boundaries, and I take immense pride in presenting to you, the fourth issue of *PenChant*.

Naviya Chamariya

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## To Sir, With Love

British-American novelist E.R Braithwaite was a prominent figure who, through his writing, portrayed the real life scenario of racial discrimination against black people. 'To Sir, With Love', his autobiographical novel, holds a landmark place in his illustrious career. First published in 1959, Great Britain by the Bodley Head Ltd, the novel which is based on his experience as a black teacher presents his struggles to attain basic human dignity; it deals with social and racial issues in a tough inner city school.

The plot set in the East End of London and based on true events, revolves around the principal character Ricky Braithwaite, a qualified engineer who had a hard time finding work despite his eligibility just because of his colour. The narrative follows his journey in Greenslade school as a teacher. The students' behaviour is obtrusive, they are shockingly unmotivated to learn, semi literate and unresponsive to his efforts at first. He discovers that they come from broken homes, single parents and financial instability. He openly discusses the students' problems with the parents. Braithwaite finds a solution to their unresponsiveness- he sets boundaries- he tells them that they will be leaving school soon and will enter adult society, so he will treat them as adults and they must behave responsibly

and he allows them to choose topics of study that hold meaning to them. He says, "You will treat me with respect and each other at all times."

The 22 chapter novel is splendidly realistic and takes us on the journey of how the rowdy teenagers turned into responsible young adults in the most unconventional way possible. The sub plot reveals a love story of Braithwaite and Gillian Blanchard, a teacher of the same school where he works. Braithwaite himself narrates his story in first person. The most attractive and engaging is the author's very vivid descriptive style for every situation and emotion. The literary flavour of this novel is unparalleled. At times, parts of the language can be a little hard to understand at first but the satisfaction after knowing what the author tries to convey is actually praiseworthy. Gritty and unsentimental, the book standing up as a pillar against racism shows Braithwaite gradually turning his class around through a mix of affection and respect which is admirable.

This book epitomises the impact a teacher can have on the most difficult and obstinate of students .

At several points in the novel Braithwaite is publicly humiliated. On the tube, taking his pupils to the Victoria and Albert Museum, two elderly well-dressed women start 'muttering darkly about 'shameless young girls and these black men' until one of the pupils,

Pamela, shouts at them: "He is our teacher, do you mind?" Again, Ricky is silent and so maintains his dignity. Anyone who thrives for observing history as if they could see it with naked eyes, should read this book. E.R Braithwaite has arguably been most successful in articulating his experiences to his readers.

**"Toughness is a quality of the mind, like bravery or honesty or ambition; it has nothing whatever to do with muscles."**

~E.R Braithwaite





For It Must Be Read...

# CHANAKYA IN YOU

**C**hanakya in You, by Radhakrishnan Pillai was originally published by Jaico Publishing House in 2015. Running into 242 pages, it is a semi-autobiographical narrative, related to mythology where the author writes in simple language, the tale of himself as a lazy and aimless youth who becomes a wealthy businessman. This happens after he is guided by the wisdom of Chanakya and his Arthashastra, the great king and creator of the Mauryan Empire. After reading his book, he is able to fend off all the obstacles in his life. The characters as such are unnamed and the reader is effectively involved as part of the story line.

My collection of reading books is rather small, but Chanakya in You has inspired me in ways I could not explain and is presently my favourite book! This book is very relevant and so gripping that I found myself hooked within no time. There is something for everyone and



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Radhakrishnan Pillai is educated in management and consultancy. He also has an MA in Sanskrit. He is the recipient of the Sardar Patel International Award in 2009. He is the founder of the academy, 'Chanakya Institute of Public Leadership', where he trains political leaders and aspirants. His bestsellers include: Corporate Chanakya and Chanakya's 7 Secrets of Leadership.*

can be read by children as well as adults. What really intrigued me was that the author, who is also the protagonist of the story finds answers to all his problems in a book that was written centuries ago.

The book has taught me a lot; I learnt about the importance of planning everything and having a concrete structure for all my actions. The book has been a motivator and has taught me that one should not only do things for profit but also to learn and add experience to life. This book has also taught me that compassion is the best virtue that one can have, which is somewhat lacking in today's day and age. Through the book we are also introduced to one of the greatest thinkers ever and all of Chanakya's teachings can be applied today and use those principles for attaining success. I highly recommend this book for its simplicity and ease of read apart from the already mentioned!

Luvish Sharma

Class X



**TAKE A LOOK  
IT'S IN A BOOK**

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI

Autobiography of a Yogi is the story of the life of an Indian sage called Paramahansa Yogananda who connected the orient and the occident through his way of life and his sublime teachings. It was first published in 1946 and astonishingly is still the bestseller in the genre of spirituality till date.

Born as Mukunda Lal Ghosh in Gorakhpur, India, into a Bengali family, Paramahansa Yogananda in his autobiography takes the reader on a journey into his encounters with spiritual figures of both the East and West and his deep reflections and realizations on Life. It is also termed 'the book of answers'. It truly answers all questions on life and as one progresses reading this book, one will truly feel one's progress as a spiritual being.

If you have ever wondered and contemplated questions like: "Why is there evil in this world?", "Who truly is God?", "Who truly am I?", "What is the purpose of human existence?", "What happens after physical death?" and so on, this is THE book. This takes one on a journey which makes one question their own reality and transports one into a world of magic, real magic. This book is not a religious book as the author does not subscribe to a set of ideologies but in his all inclusive approach also reveals esoteric messages and meanings in all the world scriptures from different religions and connects it with one thread, pure joy and love. The book is also very accurate in terms of scientific research as it not only explains all the deep questions on life unanswered by science, but also connects the scientific world to the world which is inside every being and hence breaking the label of a dogmatic religious text.

My journey with this book was amazing, bringing about a deep sense of happiness and contentment while reading it and causing deep reflections and tears of mixed emotions as well. I had found this book when my neighbour gifted it to my family and this is a masterpiece which has truly resonated with my being and my heart. It is said, "This book finds you," and truly it did find me. Today I can say with utmost conviction that this is a book which is beyond description and the best piece of everything that I have ever read.

Nilay Dhakal  
Class XII





## MEET THE AUTHOR

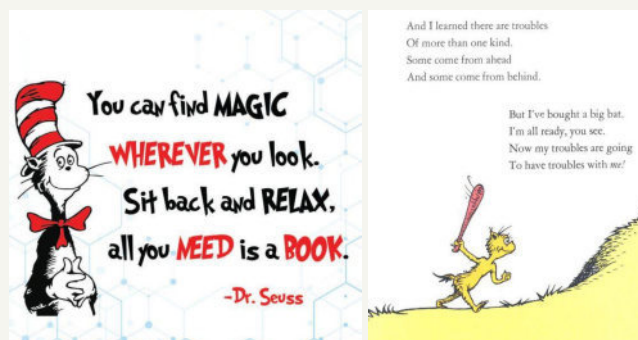


COURTESY: GOOGLE

Theodor Seuss Geisel (March 2, 1904 - September 24, 1997), better known by his pen name Dr. Seuss was an American children's author, political cartoonist, illustrator, poet, animator, and filmmaker with more than sixty books published under his name. Today we know him as one of the greatest children's writers and his "nonsense" words, playful rhymes and quirky illustrations are famous world-over and have been exciting the younger ones for generations.

He admitted that his books held no moral value but he argued, "What's wrong with kids having fun reading without being preached at?" After the World War, he had the most financially successful years of his career with the release of bestselling titles like 'Yertle The Turtle And Other Stories', 'Green Eggs And Ham', 'The Cat In The Hat' and 'How The Grinch Stole Christmas!'.

Dr. Seuss had a life which was contrary to his works, he was steadfast and disciplined in his ways but had a personal life that was a mess. He also had a rather controversial professional career which was heavily criticised in the later part of his life. Thus three decades after his death in 1997, there is no deep analysis on his works, in the end Dr Seuss seems like someone very significant, yet very small.



COURTESY: GOOGLE

Chinmoy Tamuli  
Class X





# I LIVED



*Hope when you take that jump  
You don't fear the fall  
Hope that you don't suffer  
But take the pain*

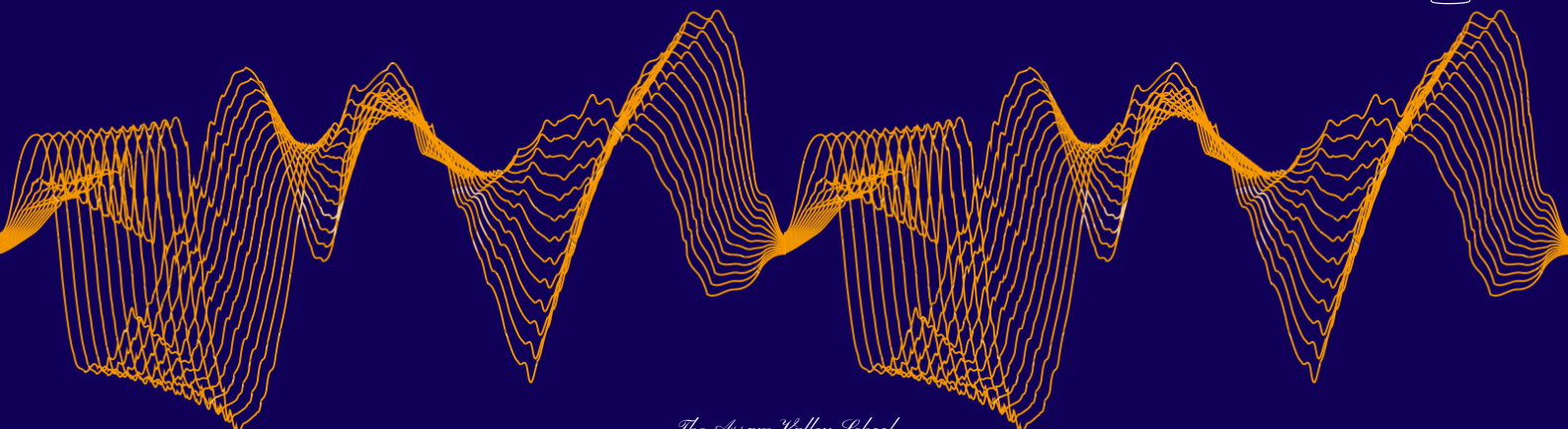


The 2014 single, 'I Lived' is one of One Republic's many beautiful compositions. Four minutes of pure reflection, joy and realizations about the adventure of life, penned down by the duo— Ryan Tedder and Noel Zancanella and sung by David McGlohan. The genre here is pop, like most melodies by the band. The song begins with upbeat guitar and piano tunes as drums join in midway, adding more life to it. The music in this song makes you feel relaxed, and released as the fifth single from 'Native', it was also the album's last one. The song has reached the top ten multiple times in Billboard's Weekly Charts and twice in the top forty Contemporary/Yearly Charts.

*I, I did it all  
I owned every second that this world could give  
I saw so many places, the things that I did  
With every broken bone  
I swear I lived*

Although the song was originally written from a father to a son, it applies universally. Personally, it is one of those songs that will make you want to venture out into the world, discover things you have never seen, hear stories worth passing on and above all, make the most out of every second. While I sit and listen to it right now, I think of adventures I have had so far and adventures awaiting me. It sure is a bumpy ride, but how would we have stories to tell and lyrics to hum otherwise? It is a pleasant evening and as I am surrounded by absolute stillness this song is my companion.

TanishaBhadra  
Class XI



# PERSPECTIVE

## THE RELEVANCE OF LITERATURE IN SOCIETY

Literature, as we know it, may have a varying importance to different people in the same society. However, nobody can deny that there are some books that literature bestowed upon us. Aristotle believed that it could alter, affect people's lives and the therapeutic, cathartic power of literature.

Literature for me is a window to the past. The glory of the years that have passed are alive because they have been portrayed through literature as a mirror to the time. Literature as words knitted in stories, poetry and drama, has helped preserve the precious culture of the bygone eras. Literature makes us realize how tiny and insignificant we are in the sands of time, yet it helps us realise how we can create a permanent mark for the generations to come. The variety, the flexibility, the freedom with literature is so unimaginable that it has the power to change society, and hence it is said to be more powerful than a sword, for swords can cut, but words can heal, influence and change a people emotionally and spiritually.

Literature builds critical thinking skills and what is more it helps us is to recognize symbols, read characters, find colours and themes and as the years go on we learn combinations and contrasts; good literature only expands these skills and continues to make us a better people. It makes us understand people and a culture. When we read a sad poem, somehow we can appreciate and possibly feel as the poet did. We realise and learn to appreciate the imperfections that people have, which is also the beauty of literature. It has the ability to recreate meanings and reform words with much truth, fact and emotions that the works outlive their authors.

Literature has played a big role in my personal development. It has taught me so many things that I would have never learnt otherwise. The connection that I have with those few characters alive in the pages of a book, and the journey that I go on with them as the narration goes on, the heaviness of the stone in my heart when the book is over, and the fact that those characters aren't a part of me anymore, is something that only literature made possible. Through literature I can calm my wild opinions and bring peace within, maybe finding answers as I find myself through the characters and situations that I read and immerse myself in.

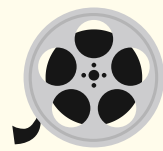
Chinmoy Tamuli  
ClassX





FOR THE GOOD TIMES...

# The Great Gatsby



Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*, originally written by the American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald is an exceptionally graceful film. The movie won the Academy award for Best Production Design as well as Best Costume in 2014. With its extravagant sets and detailed dresses, the production team really outdid themselves. The lavish parties in the film are choreographed in such a way that it makes you feel covetous of not being a part of it; not to forget the iconic soundtrack with Lana Del Ray and Jay-Z among many more.

Nick Carraway, played by Tobey Maguire arrives in 1922 New York in search of the American dream, which is the hope that anyone can earn success if they work hard enough. He moves in next-door to Jay Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) who is an eccentric millionaire. Across the bay lives Nick's cousin Daisy (Carey Mulligan) who resides in a mansion with her rich and shallow husband, Tom (Joel Edgerton).

Gatsby is famous for throwing the most enormous parties but he seldom meets his guests.

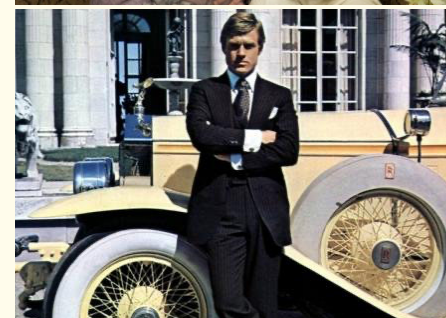
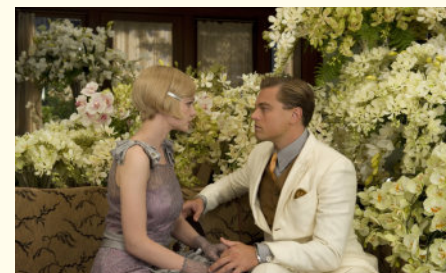
Nick becomes increasingly fascinated with the mysterious Gatsby and is soon befriended by him after personally being to one of Gatsby's parties. Nick gets drawn into the captivating world of the wealthy and soon bears witness to their phantasms and deceptions. Gatsby's favorite phrase being "Old sport", he carefully cultivates an accent to the word in order to disguise his origins. In fact, in a single scene, Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan makes his debut to Hollywood as the flamboyant Jewish "gambler," Meyer Wolfsheim.

DiCaprio's role as Gatsby was very well executed and he successfully portrayed Gatsby's



character of a respectable yet idealistically insane man. I watched this movie only last month so know that it's not too late for you either; I highly recommend it! *The Great Gatsby* is a story of impossible love, dreams and tragedy. Originally released in 1974 it was directed by Jack Clayton and produced by David Merrick from a screenplay by Francis Ford Coppola. The film starred Robert Redford as Jay Gatsby, and Mia Farrow as Daisy. This version is a timeless classic and the elegance of the time is very suitably brought out through the acting as well as the costumes in the movie.

Aditi Thekedath  
Class XI





LYRICAL

Time,

Hungry

Only remains lie,  
Of the mighty mammoths and  
Sabretooth tigers.

Or of gallant knights,  
Their names, deeds long forgotten,  
Their castles silent.


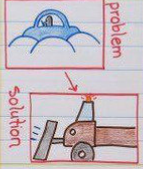

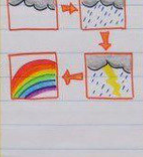
Once tall and proud, now  
Eaten, defeated, ravaged,  
By turbulent Time.

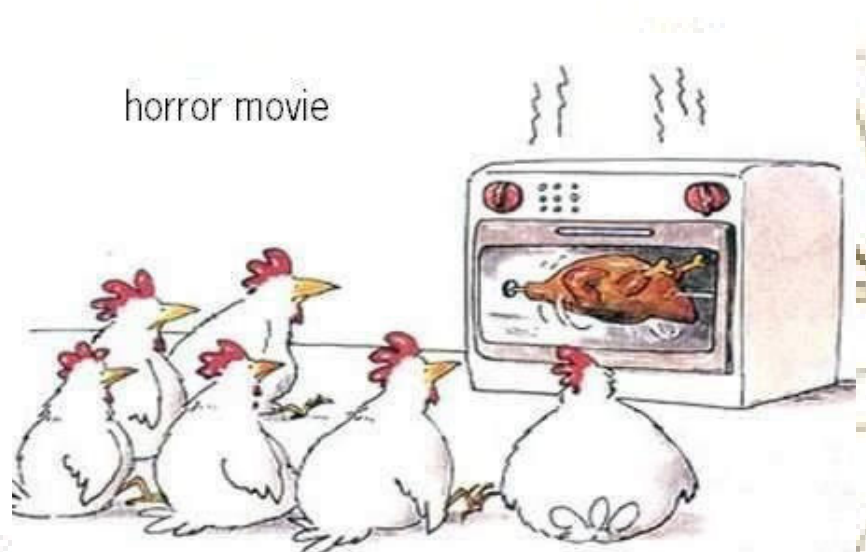
Aayat Hazarika  
Class VIII





# Eclectic

Text Structures		
Cause & Effect	writing organized based on what happened and the result Cause → why it happens Effect → what happens	 since when because if... then... so therefore without problem solution dilemma because question answer so that
Problem & Solution	The author presents a problem that must be solved.	 like both also most but whereas however
Compare & Contrast	The author looks for similarities and differences in people, places, things, or ideas.	 first next then as while finally last
Chronological Order	The author organizes the events in writing according to the order in which things happen. (time order)	







# The Last Word

# Chopin

Frédéric Chopin, a western classical composer and pianist of the Romantic period, best known for his solo pieces for the piano, was born in 1810 Warsaw, Poland and died in 1849 Paris, France. Although he wrote little but piano works, Chopin ranks as one of music's greatest tone poets (a tone poem largely being a single-movement piece of descriptive orchestral music).

Chopin was invited at an early age to play at private soirées, and at eight he made his first public appearance at a concert. Just playing the piano was not alone responsible for his growing reputation as a child prodigy. At seven he wrote a Polonaise in G Minor, and soon afterward a march of his appealed to the Russian grand duke Constantine, who had it scored for his military band to play on parade. Despite the sparkling musical life of Warsaw, Chopin sought a wider musical experience. He went to Vienna and composed his Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor and his Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor reflecting his brilliantly unique piano style.

With exalted imagination and fastidious musicianship, Chopin expressed heartfelt emotion through the notes of his compositions and his pieces are enveloped by a poetic feeling that has a universal appeal. Although quintessentially "romantic", Chopin's music has a classic purity. He found within himself and in the tragic story of Poland- its glories and sufferings the chief sources of his inspiration.

## Nocturne Opus 9 No. 2 in E flat Major

The Nocturnes, Op. 9 are a set of three nocturnes (a nocturne is a musical composition that reflects the moods and feelings of night time). The second nocturne of the work is widely regarded as Chopin's most famous piece. His music talks to the soul, to the best in every one of us... it is music to reflect in, to soak into the very core and leads you to an inner tranquility and takes you with its flow. It is incredible how music with non words can speak so much to us. His Nocturnes are considered the gold standard in which all other nocturnes must be measured.

## My favourite piece after the Nocturnes is the Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Opus 11, Movement 2

The concerto comprises three movements, typical of instrumental concertos of the period, written in 1830 when Chopin was twenty years old and performed during one of his farewell concerts before leaving Poland. He uses unexpected and eloquent modulations and development in this first movement and while this goes against 'classic' sonata form, it does make for remarkable listening. With a rich orchestration of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombone, timpani and strings the piano and orchestra are brought pleasingly into conversation.

Chopin said of this composition to his friend: "It is not meant to create a powerful effect; it is rather a romance, calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently towards a spot that calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening."

The second movement has been described by the composer as "unashamedly heart-on-your-sleeve stuff." This is palpable and as one is steeped in the virtuosity of the genius, it is apparent why he is considered by many to be one of the greatest piano composers that ever lived.



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