

## A Change of Chemistry

By SHERMAN B. CHICKERING, editor of *The Moderator*, a national student magazine.

**S**MALLER even than the so-called little magazines are the literary magazines edited by college undergraduates. Unlike their larger counterparts, the literary quarterlies, the college literary magazines circulate only from 100 to 4,000 copies to students, parents, and professors. Although further limited by shortages of time, money, and talent, these magazines perform an important, if often misunderstood, function in most of the nation's 1,600 colleges and universities.

The student literary magazine is frequently regarded as a spawning ground for great literary talents, and there is some truth to this notion. Edgar Allan Poe, Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot were first published in undergraduate magazines, and many other great and near-great writers had a similar literary baptism. Campus magazines have served as the one place where the young writer of promise can freely experiment and fumble for a "voice" without having to meet rigorous critical standards.

But this function is incidental, if only because so few undergraduate writers

ever achieve prominence in the profession. More important, college magazines provide many students with a most necessary part of their education as writers. Nowhere but in the student magazine can the undergraduate experience what Cleanth Brooks calls that "change of chemistry" that a writer experiences when he sees his work in print. Once published, the young writer comes to view his work as public property, as something to be appreciated or criticized by his peers. He learns the art of communication in a way that no creative writing course can teach him. The literary magazine educates the reader, too. It enables its public to share in the private vision of a friend or contemporary. It offers, perhaps, a chance to evaluate in the work of a few students the esthetic convictions of a generation. Thus the college magazine need never give birth to a genius to be of value, a fact sometimes recognized only by student editors.

Fortunately for young writers and editors, most colleges recognize the value of the student literary magazine, at least by giving it subsidies when necessary. They levy a tax on students that provides for all undergraduate activities, including the literary magazine. Nevertheless, subsidized magazines are usually expected to sell sub-

scriptions and sometimes to take in advertising. Most magazines, whether subsidized or self-supporting, must therefore cope with the potential disapproval of both their readers and college authorities.

On small campuses this problem is less acute; there the literary magazine is usually more involved with college life than on large campuses, and publishes the works of writers known to more students. On large campuses, however, the editor feels successful if he sells to one out of twenty students. Free enterprise does not often produce a good college magazine, except on those small campuses that provide the necessary support. In addition, editors find that academic pressures prevent their spending time on any aspect of publishing other than content and makeup.

The editor's foremost problem is usually that of finding good material. As a rule, the manuscripts he receives are inferior. He must seek out the best writers on campus and cultivate them assiduously if he is to publish a noteworthy magazine. The best writers will require kid-glove attention because they tend to write for money, to try for big-name publications, and to be sensitive about showing their works to their peers.

The campus itself often discourages an enterprising editor. He sometimes feels that his magazine is an island of creativity in a sea of apathy and academic specialization. The editor of Princeton's *Nassau Lit* says, "We often feel obliged to prove that art is pragmatically useful in order to justify our place on campus." Specialization stifles the arts when classwork deprives a promising writer of the time and training required to produce pieces for the magazine.

Institutional help in overcoming these obstacles is increasing, however. Many colleges now enjoy the services of a writer-in-residence who, while not effecting a cultural renaissance, at least acts as an *éminence grise* behind much student writing. In addition, creative writing courses are offered on most campuses, often supplemented by extracurricular writing workshops.

Writing courses and their instructors, however, do not necessarily directly support the undergraduate magazine. The responsibility for developing a productive relationship with both the instructor and his students remains with the magazine editor. In fact, most of the best magazines maintain general excellence largely because the editor assumes this responsibility. At Trinity College, for example, the editor and faculty advisor work together in conducting biweekly sessions for students who wish to refine their writing. This

**COLLEGE LITERARY MAGAZINE CONTEST:** As Sherman B. Chickering's article on this page makes clear, U.S. college students publish dozens of first-rate literary periodicals. In order to give recognition and encouragement to these publications, SR's editors and the U.S. National Student Association are this year jointly initiating an annual contest for college literary magazines. Announcements giving details of the competition have been sent to some 600 campuses.

This year's awards for campus literary magazines and their contents, covering material published during the 1962-63 academic year, will be given for the best single issue of an undergraduate magazine, for the best short story, for the best nonfiction piece, and for the best poem written by an undergraduate. Campus editors are urged to choose single entries in one or more of the four categories, and to forward four copies of each nomination to the address given below.

The winning magazine will be given a commemorative plaque and a cash prize of \$250. Winners in the individual categories will receive a hand-lettered scroll, and the winning poem will be published in *SR*. The contest deadline is April 30, 1963; the awards will be announced in a forthcoming issue of *SR*. All entries and inquiries should be addressed to: Magazine Contest, U.S. National Student Association, 3457 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia 4, Pa.

practice helps produce the *Trinity Review*, which New England editors agree is perhaps the finest college literary magazine in the area. The pattern is not unusual. The University of Pittsburgh has no fewer than four literary magazines, primarily because of the size and quality of its creative writing department. Boston College's *Stylus* magazine was able recently to publish a spate of *Atlantic Monthly* second-place and honorable mention stories for much the same reason.

On most campuses the majority of the literary magazine's contributors are English majors or, at least, take creative writing courses. Most of the poets, however, come either from what the editor of the *Tuftonian* calls "the fringe" or from the group of writers and poets who gravitate toward one another with no evident correlation between their art and their academic interests.

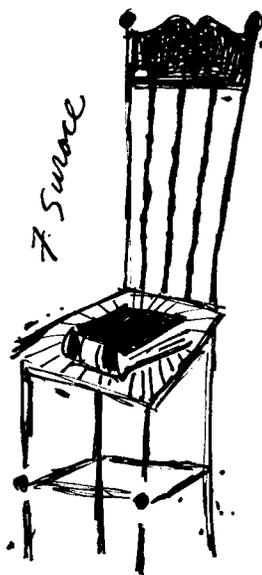
Similarly, students who work on the editorial board are as often as not a diverse group. A conscious effort is usually made to name a board representative of different interests and academic majors to prevent the magazine from becoming the organ of a clique. A recent editor of the Tufts magazine, for example, was a physics major. Some magazines, however, remain in the F. Scott Fitzgerald tradition. As the story goes, Fitzgerald and five companions on Princeton's *Nassau Lit* banded together solely to publish their own work. Where a clique-ridden magazine does exist, disapproval can be voiced in the pages of other undergraduate publications such as the newspaper or humor magazine. Opposition magazines seldom spring up, however, unless the established "lit" is self-supporting and doesn't saturate the market with free copies. Yale's *Harkness Hoot*, published during the Thirties in opposition to the venerable *Yale Lit* (founded in 1832), is perhaps the most famous of its kind.

Partly because of the catholic taste evident on their editorial boards, the magazines contain, within a period of a year or two, pieces representing almost every form and theme available to a young writer. Some boards strive for variety by including a wide range of artistic media; they open their magazine to work in all of the arts and allied fields. In addition to the usual complement of short stories, poetry, and illustrations, these magazines include parodies, symposia, controversial essays, and translations of foreign literature.

In the field of parody, Swarthmore's *Roc* satirized critic I. A. Richards with a piece entitled "The Structure of Structure"; *Riata*, the University of Texas magazine, parodied several folk songs; one of the University of Pittsburgh's magazines, *Ideas and Figures*,

included a parody of the Dutch Cleanser girl. Looking toward all the arts for contributions, the *Tuftonian* of Tufts University came up with designs for engineering projects; Colgate's *Caliper* translated Yevtushenko, the Russian poet; *Generation* at the University of Michigan published the complete book and part of the score of a new undergraduate musical.

A search for variety characterizes the editorial policy of many student magazines. Editors point out, however, that the major criterion for accepting pieces is quality, and that quality on their magazines means technical competence. Themes needn't be extraordinary, they say, if the work is well wrought and maturely treated. Editors want writers to avoid overimitation on the one hand and oversubjectivism on the other. And the editor of *Riata* is adamant on this point: "Some genres must be excluded, such as poems written at 3 A.M. and not revised. First drafts should be submitted to the Rare Books Library, not *Riata*."



Close examination of editorial policies and practices of the better undergraduate magazines dispels the notion that the seductions of the Beat Generation have overcome craftsmanship.

A letter from the editor of the University of Utah *Pen* to the Baylor magazine is a case in point. Citing a proliferation of Ferlinghetti imitations in the Baylor magazine, the *Pen* editor advised her counterpart to "leave imitation of the Beats to the Beats." Poetry of a Beat persuasion *does* appear in many student magazines, but most poetry accepted is concerned with conventional forms and rhythms. Whether written in blank, free, or formal verse, poems in the better magazines generally reflect the influence of "academic

poets," of the French symbolists, or of Americans of different "schools," such as Frost, William Carlos Williams, and Wallace Stevens.

Formal considerations are less noticeable in fiction. Because themes are often bound up with the psychology of growing up, of initiation, or of fractured personalities, the approach is frequently experimental, sometimes reflecting the poetry-in-prose technique of Joyce or the anti-novel approach of Robbe-Grillet. Student editors say that most of their short story writers are concerned mainly with an imaginative rendering of personal experience and seldom consciously imitate the style or adopt the vision of established writers. Hemingway and Faulkner, they say, have been assimilated; the only writer receiving conscious attention is Salinger. The editor of Rutgers's *Anthologist* believes that the established writers are more parodied than imitated. Editors see the themes prevalent in the better prose pieces as neo-romantic, yet with a strange social relevance, akin in some ways to the work of writers like Saul Bellow, Fitzgerald, and Edgar Rice Burroughs. As such, they say, the themes show an approach to writing that is more an examination of experience than an imitation of forms and styles. The element that keeps the romanticism socially relevant, says the editor of the Michigan *Generation*, is ironic humor, "the quiet tinge that lets the romanticism work without allowing the piece to read like a Superman comic book." The prose, like the poetry, seems more concerned with the particular, the concrete, and the contemporary; form is adopted to mood.

There is much finely chiseled, searching, imaginative poetry and prose being written by undergraduates, and the literary magazines are largely responsible for fostering it and making it public. Some of the best magazines, such as the *Trinity Review*, the *Wesleyan Cardinal*, the *Stylus* of Boston College, and Michigan's *Generation*, can be read profitably by anyone interested in an imaginative and disciplined approach to the art of writing.

The student literary magazine may rarely contain a notable piece of prose or the poem of a promising young writer, but its function in the academic community is assured. The editor of the *Wesleyan Cardinal* defines this function in words that are shared by many student editors: "The ultimate value of college literary magazines may lie in their first exposing to a critical public the works of those few talents that will mature into genius; but the practical value lies in allowing most of us our last youthful flights of fancy before we stop being 'creative' forever."



—Wide World.

# BOBBY FISCHER

## *Best in Chess?*

By ROBERT O'BRIEN

**T**O many non-chess players, the game appears to be an obscure and tedious pastime of eccentrics. To the 15,000,000 Americans who do play, it is the most ingenious device ever conceived for engaging the human intelligence. As played by the grandmasters, who hold the royal rank in international chess, a game is like full-scale war. Survival demands nerve, courage, determination, stamina, and iron control. As its long-drawn silences and ponderings drag on, tension builds to excruciating levels. Clearly, it's no game for the timid.

"Grandmasters in tournament play," says *Chess Review* editor Jack Straley Battelle, "are like sharks. For the most part, they sniff cautiously at one another. But when they sense a weakness, they strike and kill."

The intensity of the struggle may explain in part why, in all the world, a mere sixty-odd players bear the title of grandmaster. More than half of the sixty are natives of the Soviet Union and other Iron Curtain countries, where chess is a national pastime. Only nine are Americans, but one of these plays with the magic fire of genius. He is Robert James ("Bobby") Fischer of Brooklyn, the most exciting and controversial American chess personality in the last century.

Fischer, a six-foot-two, moodily handsome, outrageously outspoken young

man of twenty, freely admits that he is the best chess player in the world. He may be right. Last January I saw him win the U.S. championship for the fifth time. Experienced observers believe he will restore the world's championship to the United States for the first time since 1862. Already he looms as a qualified opponent for the current world champion, fifty-two-year-old Mikhail Botvinnik of the Soviet Union.

Five years ago, when Fischer was a coltish youngster in corduroys and sneakers, he won every U.S. national title in sight without losing a game. Chess fans wondered if he could possibly be as good as he looked. At the time, players of awesome power and skill across the Atlantic were waiting impatiently to put the American *wunderkind* in his place. But since 1958 Bobby has met Europe's greatest, and emerged with ever-increasing stature.

Actually, Fischer is probably better known and more widely appreciated abroad than at home. In Russia, where as many as 700,000 take part in amateur tournaments, he is easily as popular as pianist Van Cliburn. Yet despite this, last summer, at the very summit of international chess, Fischer lost out on his best chance to date for world dominance. After finishing fourth behind three Russians at the Candidates' Tournament at Curacao, Fischer publicly accused Communist players of collusion. By agreeing in advance to throw draws, or games, to each other after a few perfunctory moves, Soviet players, Fischer said, manipulate their scores, and make it impossible for a non-Communist to break through to victory unless he wins almost every game he plays.

Although it cannot be proved, and is denied by the Russians, tournament records seem to substantiate Fischer's charge. There were eight players: five Russians, two Americans, and one Yugoslav. At the halfway mark at Curacao, where each player played twenty-seven games, the four leading Soviet masters had drawn every game they played against one another; three of them drew every time they met during the whole tournament. The points the Russian players thus amassed became an insurmountable obstacle to the others, particularly after they had fallen behind with one or two losses.

It wasn't the first time the possibility of such collusion had occurred to a non-Communist. American and English players have been muttering about it for the last ten years. But Fischer had the nerve to drop the bomb. Furthermore, he added, he had had enough of these rigged affairs; never again would he play in a Candidates' Tournament, which, given the complicated machinery of international chess, determines the challenger for the world's championship.

His charges, reprinted in Dutch, German, Spanish, Swedish, Icelandic, and, in somewhat garbled form, Russian, created a sensation in the chess world. The *Fédération Internationale des Echecs*, governing body of world chess, swears that Fischer's bold accusations had nothing to do with it, but a few months later FIDE's rules committee voted certain changes in tournament regulations designed to make it impractical, if not useless, for players to throw draws.

Bobby Fischer grew up in Brooklyn. His parents were divorced when he was two. To support Bobby and his eight-year-old sister, Joan, their mother became a registered nurse. Today she is remarried and lives in England. Joan and her husband live in California. Fischer lives alone in the same four-room, walk-up flat that they once shared. He lives on a modest income from his winnings in tournament play, and from occasional articles for chess magazines.

Fischer's dedication to chess began the day he was six and his sister bought him a \$1 chess set. From that moment, he never really lived for anything else. He read every chess book in the Brooklyn Public Library. A chessboard with pieces in place stood beside his bed. (It still does). On weekends, while schoolmates played football or went to the movies, Fischer took on all comers at the Brooklyn Chess Club.

In Brooklyn's Erasmus High, without trying too hard, he won top grades in mathematics, Spanish, and biology. But he was always restless, and in his junior year he quietly dropped out of school. By then, as the youngest player ever to win the national junior championship, he was already famous. Awed chess critics called him "the Corduroy Killer." Admiring high school students