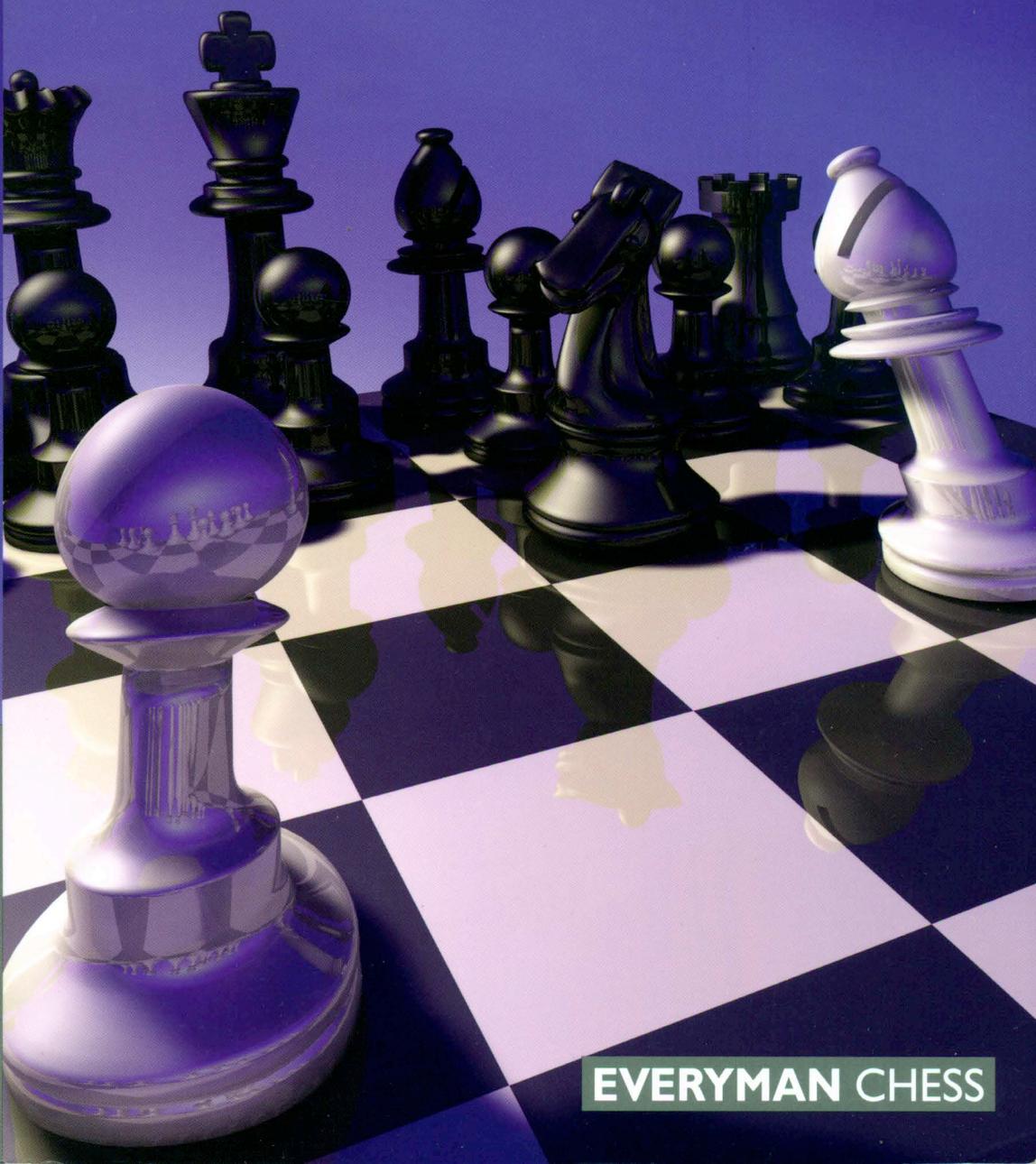


starting out: the Trompowsky attack

RICHARD PALLISER



EVERYMAN CHESS

starting out: the Trompowsky attack

RICHARD PALLISER

EVERYMAN CHESS

Gloucester Publishers plc www.everymanchess.com

First published in 2009 by Gloucester Publishers plc (formerly Everyman Publishers plc), Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT

Copyright © 2009 Richard Palliser

The right of Richard Palliser to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 9781 85744 562 6

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, P.O Box 480, 246 Goose Lane, Guilford, CT 06437-0480.

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Everyman Chess, Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT

tel: 020 7253 7887; fax: 020 7490 3708

email: info@everymanchess.com; website: www.everymanchess.com

Everyman is the registered trade mark of Random House Inc. and is used in this work under licence from Random House Inc.

For the chessplayers at the Minster Inn

EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES

Chief Advisor: Byron Jacobs

Commissioning editor: John Emms

Assistant editor: Richard Palliser

Typeset and edited by First Rank Publishing, Brighton.

Cover design by Horatio Monteverde.

Printed and bound in the US by Versa Press.

Contents

	Bibliography	4
	Introduction	5
1	The Classical 2...d5	9
2	2...g6 and Minor Lines	39
3	The Positional Choice: 2...e6	54
4	The Uncompromising 2...c5	100
5	The Popular 2...Ne4	142
6	The Modern Preference: 2...Ne4 3 Bf4	163
7	The Main Line: 2...Ne4 3 Bf4 c5	201
	Index of Variations	260
	Index of Complete Games	268

Bibliography

Chess Openings for Black, Explained, Lev Alburt, Roman Dzindzichashvili & Eugene Perelshteyn (CIRC 2005)

Dealing with d4 Deviations, John Cox (Everyman 2005)

El Ataque Trompowsky, Jesus De la Villa (Evajedrez 2001)

Fighting the Anti-King's Indians, Yelena Dembo (Everyman 2008)

Secrets of the Trompowsky, Julian Hodgson (Hodgson Enterprises 1997)

The Soviet Chess Conveyor, Mikhail Shereshevsky (Semko 1994)

The Trompowsky, Joe Gallagher (The Chess Press 1998)

The Trompowsky (second edition), Nigel Davies (Everyman Chess 2005)

The Trompowsky: The Easy Way, Andrew Martin (ChessBase DVD 2006)

The Veresov, Nigel Davies (Everyman 2003)

Trends in the Torre and Trompowsky, Julian Hodgson (Trends Publications 1995)

Winning with the Trompowsky, Peter Wells (Batsford 2003)

Other Sources

Good use was made of *Chess Informant*, *Mega Database 2008* (ChessBase), *New in Chess Yearbook* and Tim Harding's *UltraCorr 2* CD. I can also heartily recommend Eric Prié's Trompowsky coverage in his 'd-Pawn Specials' section of the *ChessPublishing* website.

Last, but by no means least, I am most grateful to John Emms and Peter Wells for their help with this project.

Introduction

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 (Diagram 1)

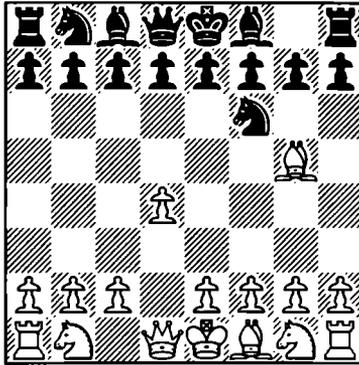


Diagram 1 (B)

The Trompowsky

Few openings allow White to stamp his authority on the game as early as the Trompowsky. At a stroke Black discovers that his favourite King's Indian, Nimzo-Indian, Modern Benoni, Grünfeld or even Benko Gambit has been side-stepped and without his obtaining easy equality in the process. The Trompowsky is no longer quite the shock weapon it once was, but even nowadays it carries a fair amount of surprise and practical sting; opponents might have decided on a response to 2 Bg5, but generally they have studied that line much less than the more critical parts of their repertoire after 2 c4.

Whether one is looking for an occasional weapon for surprise use or a full-time opening to be employed against 1 d4 Nf6, the Trompowsky fits the bill. It is not that hard to learn and White can expect to be somewhat more familiar with the resulting complex lines and often unusual middlegames than his opponent. I hesitate to describe the attributes of a typical Trompowsky player, though, as I believe

Starting Out: The Trompowsky Attack

that the opening appeals to a wide range of tastes. That said, in connection with the Trompowsky one tends to think first and foremost of that most creative of English Grandmasters, Julian Hodgson. Even in 2009 a number of unbalanced and fascinating lines remain far from worked out, and so the creative and original player will still find 2 Bg5 an enjoyable and successful opening to adopt, but so too will those looking for something a little more solid and positional.

Throughout this work we will see that White has at least a couple of fully viable options against Black's main defences to 2 Bg5. Which path to follow is often a matter of taste, and nowadays one can broadly see two main Trompowsky schools. One contains the aforementioned creative types; the other the more positional, 'systems-orientated' player. These are players who often have some experience of openings like the Torre and London, and like to employ simple but by no means innocuous set-ups. Many with a 1 e4 background have taken up the Trompowsky too, and even they will find some structures in which they have experience. After all we should not forget that an opening which arises after just two moves is likely to give rise to a wide range of middlegames and structures.

I don't want to over-theorize on these two schools, though, as the lines between them can become quite blurred at times and quite a few Trompowsky players have a foot in both camps. Indeed, many players will choose to include a mixture of fairly positional and much sharper lines in their Trompowsky repertoire. Moreover, even those who revel in sharp positions sometimes have to play more quietly and positionally, especially in the case of 2...d5 and 2...g6. Indeed, we should never lose sight of the fact that by playing 2 Bg5 White prepares to double Black's pawns, and after both 2...d5 and 2...g6 he is probably best advised to carry out that threat.

The Structure of this Book

Opening books often consider the more critical and theoretical lines first, moving on to the less forcing and theoretical lines towards the end. That will not, however, be our approach here. Rather I have begun with a discussion of two fairly simple defences, 2...d5 and 2...g6. These are especially popular at club level and there is no point taking up the Trompowsky if one isn't happy handling the resulting middlegames. The doubled f-pawn structure (**Diagram 2**) might give rise to fewer complications than some would like, but even here White has a choice of set-ups, including some quite pleasant ones in my view.

Our journey then continues with 2...e6, which is especially popular with Nimzo players. Black is happy to put up with a slightly cramped position in return for avoiding doubled f-pawns, although he usually gains the bishop-pair in any case after 3 e4 h6 4 Bxf6 Qxf6. Of course, White obtains a strong centre that way and there's always the systems-based alternative, 3 e3, for those who prefer to keep their bishop.

The most critical sections of this book deal with 2...c5 and Black's most popular response, 2...Ne4. Then the play can become quite forcing and a certain body of theory has built up. However, in both cases White has a choice between some fascinating approaches, can easily gain an early initiative and still needs much less theoretical knowledge than to play 2 c4! Moreover, in keeping with the *Starting Out* format, here too I have included a number of tips, notes and warnings to help the reader understand their chosen lines as well as possible.

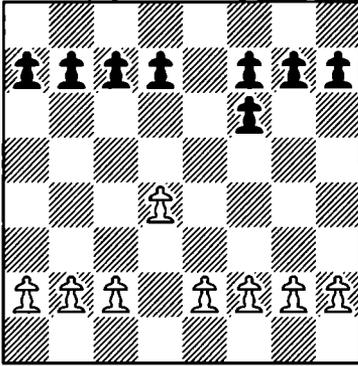


Diagram 2

An important structure

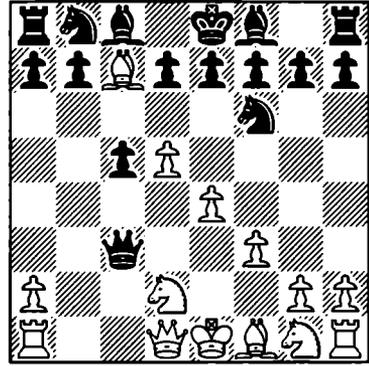


Diagram 3 (B)

A fascinating gambit

In the case of 2...Ne4 3 Bf4 c5, which one can consider to be the main line of the Trompowsky, I haven't shirked on supplying theoretical detail, largely because White has a wide range of options. These include a fascinating gambit which was unknown until introduced by Konstantin Chernyshov in 2005, namely 4 f3 Qa5+ 5 c3 Nf6 6 d5 Qb6 7 e4!? Qxb2 8 Nd2 Qxc3 9 Bc7! (**Diagram 3**), trapping the black queen mid-board. In other sharp variations too I have aimed to supply up-to-date theoretical coverage, which should help both those new to the opening and even long-term Trompowsky practitioners. Even after 2 Bg5 theory continues to evolve; there are now more than 40,000 Trompowsky games in my various databases!

Balancing plenty of explanation with supplying enough theoretical coverage for even the stronger club player to adopt 2 Bg5 doesn't come without its drawbacks. Chiefly I have had to include less new analysis than I would have liked, and much less than one finds in two of my all-time favourite opening works, De la Villa and Wells's respective works on the Trompowsky. Still, this work is hardly devoid of new ideas and suggestions, at least in the Trompowsky proper. Please be aware that there's no coverage whatsoever of 1 d4 d5 2 Bg5, the so-called Pseudo Trompowsky, largely because I consider it to be a much less challenging and fun relative: Black is fine in the complications after 2...f6, and the solid and popular 2...h6

Starting Out: The Trompowsky Attack

3 Bh4 c6 is a pretty tough nut to crack.

Garry Kasparov has enjoyed success with the Trompowsky in his many simultaneous exhibitions, while the creative young Azeri, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, has made good use of the opening on occasion throughout his career, as has the leading English Grandmaster, Michael Adams. More regularly, while Hodgson is sadly no longer playing actively, the 2600-rated Serb Grandmaster, Igor Miladinovic, continues to play his favourite Trompowsky against all-comers, as does the former Women's World Champion, Antoaneta Stefanova. We will see plenty of inspiring games from these players and many more leading grandmasters throughout this work. I hope that their efforts will inspire both the new and existing Trompowsky player alike, just as they have helped to remind me why the Trompowsky has long been one of my favourite openings.

Happy Tromping!

Richard Palliser,
York,
June 2009

Chapter One

The Classical 2...d5

- Introduction
- The Solid 3...exf6
- The Dynamic 3...gxf6
- White Declines to Exchange



Introduction

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 d5 (Diagram 1)

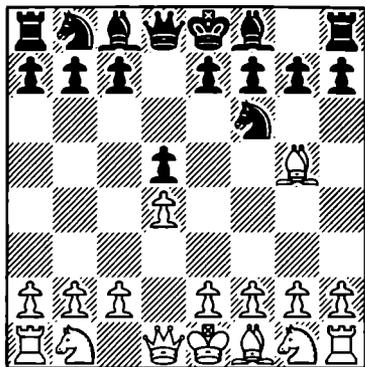


Diagram 1 (W)

A simple and solid defence

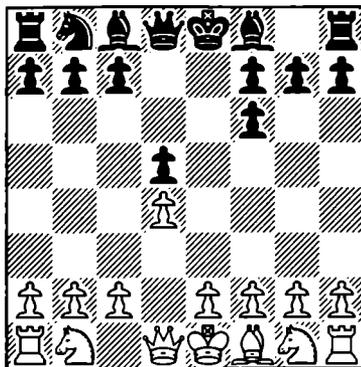


Diagram 2 (W)

White has the better structure

A solid approach which has been played in 20% of all the Trompowsky games in my database. 2...d5 is regularly employed by several solid Russian Grandmasters and is an especially popular choice at club level.



NOTE: Even in 2009 there are some without a prepared line against the Trompowsky, and such careless players often fall back on 2...d5 followed by seemingly natural development.

It must be said that if White can't reach a position he's happy with after 2...d5, there's not much point playing the Trompowsky! However, the resulting different types of position offer something for everyone, whether White begins by carrying out his positional threat on f6 or aims for a kind of improved Torre with 3 e3. The latter is fairly popular with the more positional school of thought, but there is absolutely no reason for the more solid Trompowsky player to avoid exchanging on f6. Likewise those of ambitious bent might be drawn towards the less-theoretical 3 e3 – there really is something for everyone here! That also applies to Black: 2...d5 is only a solid choice if he recaptures on f6 with his e-pawn; one could never accuse 3...gxf6 of being a little dull.

The Solid 3...exf6

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 d5 3 Bxf6 exf6 (Diagram 2)

The obvious recapture, opening a standard path for the bishop on f8. Already we have a classic Trompowsky debate before us: will Black's bishop-pair prove useful or ineffective? As we will see, it is hard for Black to make his bishops felt for some time and patience really must be his watchword in this line. Moreover, White's knights often find good roles, putting pressure on Black's centre from such squares as c3, c4 (the c2-c4 advance is White's main pawn break) and f4. It is far from clear that White has any objective advantage here, but his game has always struck me as being the easier to play.

4 e3 Be6

Black takes steps to prevent White rushing through with c4, generating some early pressure. However, 4...Be6 is by no means universally played:

a) 4...Bf5 5 Bd3 (White is happy to trade bishops and speed up his development; 5 Ne2 c6 6 Nd2 Qb6 7 Ng3 followed by b3 and c4 is a decent alternative, but Black should allow such an expansion, whereas 7...Bg6 8 Rb1 Bb4 9 a3 Bxd2+?! 10 Qxd2 0-0 11 f4! Be4 12 Nxe4 dxe4 13 c4 Nd7 14 Be2 gave White a pleasant advantage with the better prospects on both flanks in R.Palliser-G.Bak, Leeds 2007) 5...Bg6 (less compliant than 5...Bxd3 6 Qxd3 c6 when 7 Nf3 Bd6 8 Nbd2 Na6 9 0-0 0-0 10 c4 dxc4 11 Nxc4 Bc7 12 Rfd1 Re8 13 a3 Qd5 14 b4 Rad8 15 Rab1 f5 16 Ncd2! Bb8 17 Rdc1 was rather depressing for Black despite his apparent solidity in J.Hodgson-E.Teodoro, Winnipeg 1994; White's control and queenside prospects give him clearly the upper hand) 6 Ne2 Bd6 7 0-0 Nc6?! (Black has the ambitious ...Nb4 in mind, but he must have underestimated White's next) 8 Bb5! 0-0 9 Bxc6 bxc6 10 Nbc3 Rb8 11 b3 (**Diagram 3**) gave the pure knight-pair the upper hand in M.Shereshevsky-E.Barkovsky, Minsk 1981; White will expand with Na4 and c4, and can always hinder the bishops with Nf4 if necessary.

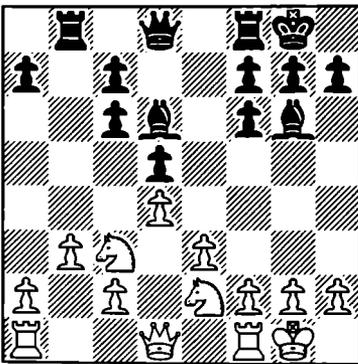


Diagram 3 (B)

White is in control

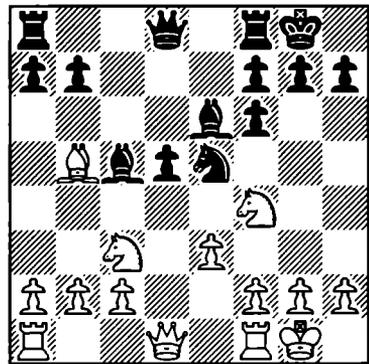


Diagram 4 (B)

White attacks the isolated pawn



TIP: Even when White begins by coordinating his minor pieces, the c4-break should remain at the front of his mind. Pawn breaks are the key to most middlegames and this variation is most certainly no exception.

b) The pseudo-active 4...c5 appears a little at odds with Black's last, but might be tried by those with little Trompowsky experience. Here White has a pleasant choice between 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Nge2 Be6 7 g3, as played by Smyslov and investigated further via the move order 2...c5 3 Bxf6 exf6 4 Nc3 d5 in Chapter Four, and the even simpler 5 dxc5 Bxc5 6 Nc3! Be6 7 Bb5+ Nc6 8 Nge2 0-0 9 0-0 Ne5 10 Nf4! (**Diagram 4**), which retained a pleasant edge in M.Gurevich-P.Wolff, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

c) 4...Bd6 has actually been a more popular choice in practice than our main line and introduces an important dilemma: how best to deploy White's pieces. Essentially White has three options: a quick c4 followed by rapid and often aggressive development; an outwardly-aggressive set-up with Bd3, Nd2, Qf3 and Ne2, which may pack some punch if Black is careless; and a sensible set-up with g3, Bg2, Ne2 and often Nd2, preparing c4 while keeping the position under control. Thus we have:

c1) 5 c4 dxc4 6 Bxc4 0-0 7 Nc3 is an easy-to-play approach. Game 1 will reveal why I feel Black is probably best advised to avoid this line with 4...Be6.

c2) 5 Bd3 0-0 6 Qf3 c6 (the aggressive 6...c5!? becomes a better bet with White's queen already committed; Black fears an isolated d-pawn less as he will obtain counterplay on the queenside and in the centre) 7 Nd2 Re8 (theory has generally approved of 7...Na6! 8 a3 Nc7 when long castling would be risky to put it mildly and 9 Ne2 Ne6 10 c4 Ng5 11 Qh5 g6 12 Qh4 Re8 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 Nc3 Be7 gave Black sufficient counterchances in J.Hodgson-M.Taimanov, Yerevan 1986) 8 Ne2 Qb6 9 0-0-0!? (**Diagram 5**) 9...Na6 10 c3 Be6 11 g4! Nc7?! (there is no time to waste; Black has to get on with 11...c5!) 12 h4 Rec8 13 g5 Ne8 14 Rdg1 Qd8 15 Nf4 gives White strong pressure, A.Zubarev-A.Bets, Obninsk 2007.

c3) 5 g3 c6 (or 5...0-0 6 Bg2 c6 7 Ne2 and now Black should hinder White's break with 7...Be6, transposing to the notes to his 7th move in our main line, whereas 7...Bf5! 8 0-0 Nd7 9 b3 Re8 10 c4 dxc4 11 bxc4 Be4 12 Bxe4 Rxe4 13 Nd2 Re8 14 c5 Bc7 15 Qc2 left him under unpleasant queenside pressure in R.Palliser-P.Swallow, Leeds 2004) 6 Bg2 (if White is worried about ...Qb6 ideas, he might consider 6 Nd2) 6...Nd7 (6...Qb6 has been proposed by some commentators, but after 7 b3 I have been unable to find a good way for Black to disrupt White's development, and 7...0-0 8 Ne2 Bf5 9 0-0 a5!? 10 c4 dxc4 11 bxc4 Qa6 12 c5 Be7 13 Nbc3 again saw White seizing the advantage on the queenside in K.Rusev-V.Kukov, Blagoevgrad 2009) 7 Ne2 0-0 (Howell later preferred 7...f5 when 8 b3 Nf6 9 Nd2 Be6 transposes to our main line) 8 0-0 f5 9 b3 Nf6 10 c4 (**Diagram 6**) sees White's aims become clear. Sometimes he can exchange on d5 and attack a resulting isolani (if there's no

knight on f6 to recapture on d5 or if White has a knight on c3), but more often he is after a direct queenside assault with c5, b4-b5, etc.

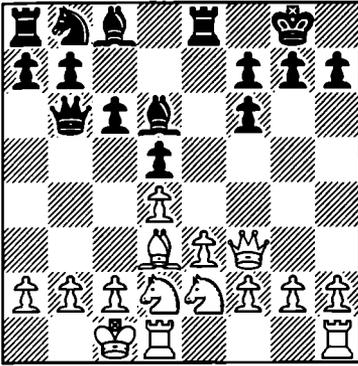


Diagram 5 (B)

Highly-aggressive play

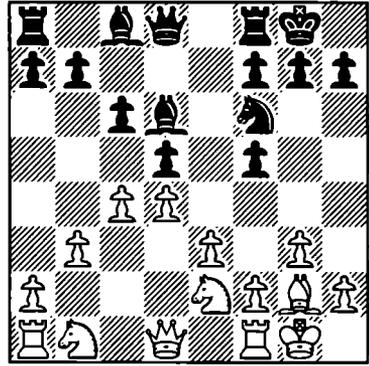


Diagram 6 (B)

White's key pawn advance



NOTE: Due to the omission of ...Be6, White has managed to break with c4 without resorting to the preparatory Nd2. This is definitely a gain, as White would like a knight on c3 and can now keep his king's knight flexibly placed on e2.

Note too that White shouldn't fear an exchange on c4, opening up the b-file for his use. Just take a look at the game P.Wells-D.Howell, Halifax (rapid) 2004: 10...dxc4 11 bxc4 Qe7 12 Nbc3 Re8 13 Rb1 Ne4 14 c5! Bc7 15 Nxe4! (a well-judged trade to leave Black low on counterplay and the remaining knight with good prospects in the resulting structure) 15...fxe4 16 Nc3 f5 17 Qa4 Rd8 18 Rb2 h5 (perhaps the grim 18...a6!? 19 Rfb1 Ra7 had to be tried) 19 Rfb1 h4 20 Rxb7! (not so hard to find, but still beautifully logical) 20...Bxb7 21 Rxb7 Qd7 22 Bh3 (**Diagram 7**) and White was in control with rich pickings in prospect on both flanks.

d) Finally, before returning to 4...Be6, we should note that 4...Be7 is rather passive and does little to help the dark-squared bishop: for example, 5 c4 (White plays as per Game 1; again a set-up with 5 g3 0-0 6 Bg2 is very possible too, as, indeed, Hodgson later employed: 6...c6 7 Nd2 Be6 8 Ne2 Nd7 9 0-0 f5 10 c4 Nf6 11 Nf4 Qd7 12 Rc1 gave White an edge in J.Hodgson-T.Upton, Moscow Olympiad 1994) 5...dxc4 6 Bxc4 0-0 7 Nc3 c6?! (ultra passive) 8 Nge2 Nd7 9 Qc2 Bd6 10 Bd3 g6 11 h3! (White prepares to meet Black's plan of ...f5 and ...Nf6 with an undermining g4 thrust) 11...Qe7 12 0-0-0 (**Diagram 8**) 12...a5 13 Kb1 Nb6 14 h4! saw White whip up a strong attack in J.Hodgson-J.Gokhale, British Championship, Dundee 1993.

Starting Out: The Trompowsky Attack

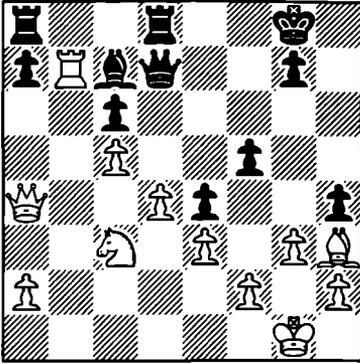


Diagram 7 (B)

A strong exchange sacrifice

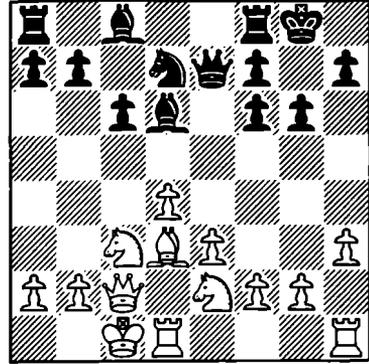


Diagram 8 (B)

Black's kingside is vulnerable

5 g3

There's no need for 5 Nd2 just yet if White is after a g3 set-up, although 5...c6 6 g3 has also been seen.



WARNING: White must not hurry with c4 once Black's bishop is on e6: 6 c4?! dxc4 7 Bxc4? Bxc4 8 Nxc4 Qd5 (Diagram 9), forking c4 and g2, is most certainly one to avoid.

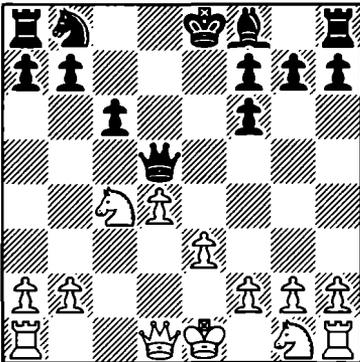


Diagram 9 (W)

One to avoid

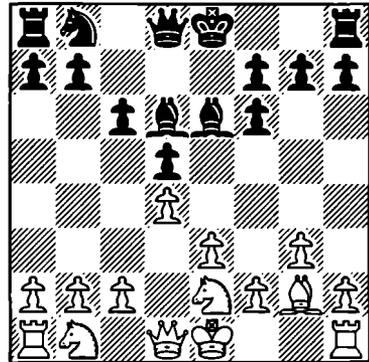


Diagram 10 (B)

A harmonious set-up

White might, though, begin with 5 Bd3 f5 and now 6 Nd2 is sensible, but a leading

Trompowsky authority preferred to plough a creative furrow in I.Miladinovic-M.Krivokapic, Pancevo 2006: 6 h3 Nd7 7 g4!? (who'd have thought that h7 would be an early target?) 7...Qf6 8 Qe2 h5 (the immediate 8...0-0-0!? might be stronger) 9 gxf5 Bxf5 10 Nd2 Bd6 11 0-0-0 0-0-0! 12 Bxf5 Qxf5 13 Qf3 Qe6 14 h4 and a complex, manoeuvring middlegame lay ahead. I would, however, be in less of a hurry to undouble Black's pawns.

5...c6 6 Bg2 Bd6 7 Ne2 (Diagram 10) 7...Nd7

The most flexible, although there can't be too much wrong with 7...0-0 – the subject of Game 2.

8 Nd2

White too refuses to commit his king just yet. Moreover, the knight must go to d2 either here or after 8 0-0 f5 9 b3 Nf6 to support the c4-break.

8...f5

Common. Inexperienced Trompowsky players have been known to worry about 8...h5, but after 9 h4 Black's advance is likely to cause him at least as many problems as White: for example, 9...0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 c4 dxc4 12 Nxc4 Bc7 13 Qc2 Re8 and now White might well elect to get his queenside play under way with 14 b4.

9 b3!?

Peter Wells has done much to support this approach, which has an ambitious follow-up in mind. More routine is 9 0-0 Nf6 10 b3 when Tiviakov's 10...Ne4! demonstrates that Black is alert to the needs of the position. Now 11 c4 Qa5!? gives Black decent counterplay and 11 f3 Nf6 12 c4 0-0 13 c5 Bc7 14 b4 Re8 saw Black playing most aggressively to target the weakness on e3 with 15 Qb3 Bc8 16 Rfe1 a5!? 17 a3 Qe7 18 Kf2 g5, which was rather unclear in M.Cebalo-D.Solak, Portoroz 2004.

White has also tried 9 Rc1 Nf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 c4, but then 11...dxc4! 12 Nxc4 Bd5 13 Nxd6 Qxd6 14 Nc3 Bxg2 15 Kxg2 Rfe8 was extremely solid for Black in R.Wojtaszek-K.Landa, German League 2006. Indeed, the f5-pawn can hardly be considered a weakness here, binding down most effectively on the e4-square.

9...Nf6 10 c4 (Diagram 11)

White fights for the initiative with a pawn sacrifice. Despite good coverage in *Winning with the Trompowsky*, this position remains quite unexplored and I must confess that the premature end at this point to a game of mine with Jon Speelman (British League 2005) did not help to flesh out the theory! White really should continue and here we have:

a) 10...Bb4 11 0-0!? (okay, only now do we actually have a pawn sacrifice, but 11 cxd5 Bxd5 would be very solid for Black à la Landa) 11...Bxd2 12 Qxd2! (12 cxd5 Bxd5 13 Qxd2 Bxg2 14 Kxg2 Qd5+ 15 Kg1 Ne4! is again fine for Black) 12...dxc4 13 Nf4 cxb3 14 Nxe6 fxe6 15 Rfb1! 0-0 16 Rxb3 gave White good pressure for his pawn in J.Hodgson-S.Tiviakov, Groningen 1994, but Black should not be worse.

Starting Out: The Trompowsky Attack

b) 10...Ne4 11 c5!? Bc7 12 b4 g6 13 Qb3 Kf8 14 a4 led to a rather complex manoeuvring battle in A.Walton-M.Schaefer, Bad Wörishofen 2003.

c) 10...h5 11 h4 Ne4 12 c5 Bc7 13 b4 g6 14 a4 (**Diagram 12**) is similar and after 14...Kf8 15 Qc2 Kg7 16 Qb2 Bd7 17 Nf4! Rb8 18 Ra3 Qe7 19 Nf3 a6 20 Ne5 Be8 21 Ned3 White had manoeuvred well, but the position remained extremely rich in potential in P.Wells-J.Parker, British League 2003.

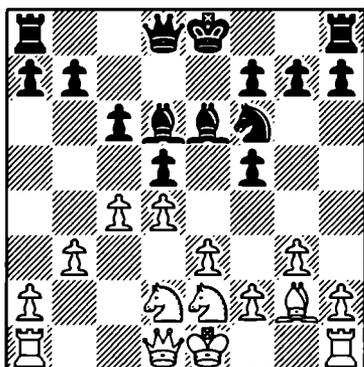


Diagram 11 (B)

White will sacrifice a pawn!

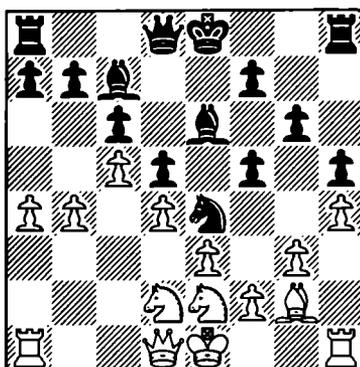


Diagram 12 (B)

Heavy manoeuvring beckons

Conclusion

White's score of 55% from 2,800 games with 4 e3 suggests that his position is the more pleasant to play. Indeed, he often has a decent choice of set-up. I quite like an approach with g3, but must concede that Black's precise play in our main line should enable him to equalize. However, at sub-grandmaster level Black is sometimes on his own even as early as move 4, and one will often encounter the alternatives to 4...Be6.

Illustrative Games

Game 1

□ V.Kramnik ■ V.Tkachiev

Tal Memorial Blitz, Moscow 2008

It's often hard to include a blitz game in a book. There are bound to be mistakes, but here White's approach is highly thematic and his overall play still of high

quality, as one would expect from such a strong player.

1 d4 d5 2 Bg5

This is often referred to as the Pseudo-Trompowsky. I must admit that I'm not a fan (White should play 2 c4 or 2 Nf3!), but Tkachiev generously returns play to standard Trompowsky waters.

2...Nf6 3 Bxf6 exf6 4 e3 Bd6 5 c4

And why not with Black having made no attempt to dissuade this ideal break?

5...dxc4 6 Bxc4 0-0 7 Nc3 (Diagram 13)

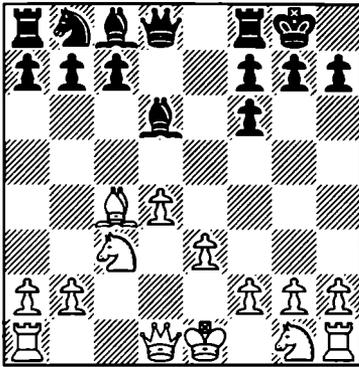


Diagram 13 (B)

White enjoys easy development

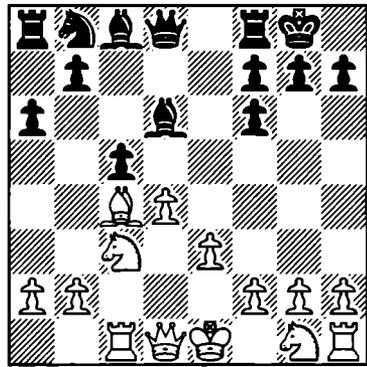


Diagram 14 (W)

How to net a pawn?

7...c6

Solid and fairly popular, but hardly essential at this stage. Thus practice has also seen:

a) 7...f5 8 Nf3 Nd7 9 Qc2 (the more solid 9 0-0 c6 10 Re1 Nf6 11 Qc2 Qe7 12 Bd3 g6 13 a3 Be6 appears fine for Black, although both Hodgson and Miladinovic on occasion have been happy to play this way and then manoeuvre) 9...Nf6 10 0-0-0!? Qe7 11 h4 (11 Bd3 would be consistent with Kramnik's approach in our main game; then Black might block things up with 11...g6 12 h4 h5, but 13 Ng5 gives White something to play with: Rhe1 and e4 may follow) 11...h5 12 Ng5 c6 13 Kb1 g6 14 Bd3 (thus we reach the same sort of position after all) 14...a5 15 Rde1!? (White wants to keep his king's rook on the h-file) 15...Nd5?! (this doesn't fit in too well with Black's 14th and further weakens his structure) 16 Nxd5 cxd5 17 Qa4! Bb4 18 Re2 saw White abandon his kingside lust for a positional edge in V.Iotov-J.Borisek, Dresden Olympiad 2008.

Starting Out: The Trompowsky Attack



TIP: Never forget that White's superior pawn structure often allows him a decent degree of flexibility, as Ionov fully exploited here.

b) 7...Nd7 8 Bd3 c5!? 9 Nge2 cxd4 10 Nxd4 Ne5 11 0-0 Bd7 12 Be4 restricted White to just a pull in I.Miladinovic-D.Ivanovic, Mataruska Banja 2007.

c) However, the immediate 7...c5? is misguided for the same reason that 7...a6 8 Rc1 c5? (**Diagram 14**) 9 dxc5 Bxc5 10 Bxf7+! Kxf7 11 Qh5+ Kg8 12 Qxc5 cost Black a pawn in J.Hodgson-K.Arkell, London 1991.

8 Nf3

This can't be faulted, especially as White is happy to chase the bishop in the event of ...Bg4, but a decent case can also be made for 8 Qf3 followed by Nge2.

8...f5

More recently 8...Nd7 9 Qc2 Re8 10 Rg1!? (I'm not too sure why White rejected 10 0-0-0, although after 10...f5 he must, of course, avoid 11 Qxf5? on account of 11...Ne5) 10...Nf8 11 g4 a5 12 h4 a4 13 a3 Qa5 14 g5 f5 15 h5 led to a rather unbalanced middlegame in M.Bosicic-F.Berkes, European Championship, Budva 2009.

9 Qc2 Nd7 10 Bd3! (**Diagram 15**)

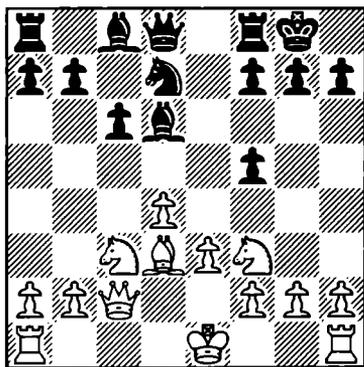


Diagram 15 (B)

Only now is f5 en prise

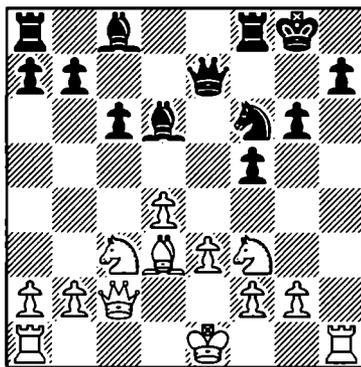


Diagram 16 (W)

Prising open the kingside

White avoids the aforementioned tactic and forces Black to weaken his kingside.

10...g6 11 h4!

Kramnik wastes no time exploiting the hook on g6 to launch a strong attack.

11...Qe7

Risky. More solid would have been 11...h5, although after 12 Ng5 Nf6 13 0-0-0 Qe7 14 Kb1 play has actually transposed to the fairly pleasant waters (from White's point of view) of Iotov-Borisek.