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Best regards!!
Saludos!!

Caissa Lovers

[Chess piece image]
Winning With the Modern

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B. T. Batsford Ltd, London
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Before I commence my laudation of the king's fianchetto, the detractors must be allowed their say.

"It is, in general, dangerous to advance the Knight's Pawns one before the close of the game ... the move 1 ... P-KN3 (i.e. 1 ... g6) weakens the royal flank; and only yields KB an attacking range upon adverse Queen's side."

So wrote Jaenisch in his chapter on "Various Incorrect Openings" (Chess Preceptor, London 1847).

And a more comprehensive damnation of any fianchetto system ... "Any fianchetto development is open to suspicion, firstly on account of the waste of time involved and secondly, because weaknesses are thereby created in one's own camp; here (as Black) it is the squares f6 and h6, respectively, c6 and a6, which are the cause of concern. Furthermore the protruding pawns on b6 and g6 constitute an object for attack.

"As White one may with more justification permit oneself the luxury of a fianchetto development, but all known attempts up to the present day to defend the Lopez or the Four Knight's Game by fianchetto systems have failed, and this is due precisely to the weaknesses in the black structure that I have outlined here. The chess genius Morphy who, thanks to his remarkable intuition, always used to hit on the correct move when planning the disposition of his forces in the early phases of the game only employed a fianchetto development twice in his early chess career. That was certainly no accident, but well and deeply considered.

"One must, however, admit that the weakness of the fianchetto development in the closed games does not become so quickly and markedly apparent as in the case with the open games. The exploitation is then more arduous and proceeds at a slower tempo, but even so it should still be possible to accumulate a series of small positional advantages, which can be woven together
without too much difficulty. I know of no game in modern tournament practice where Black has stood better with the Modern Defence than with the formerly current methods of play. The sole advantage of the Modern Defence to the Queen’s Pawn rests alone and exclusively on its novelty. This still relatively little explored method of play can be less familiar to the opponent, and it is quite easy for him to stumble, which is in fact often the case. But we must distinguish between a purely practical opportunism and a scientific approach to the game; the former has but temporary value; the latter is of lasting worth. Unfortunately the hypermodern style is not founded on a firm scientific basis, and therefore its days are numbered; its disappearance is but a question of the very near future.

The above is an extract from an article by Akiba Rubinstein entitled *Die Verflachung des Schachspiel* (“The Dilution of the Art of Chess”) in 1924. Rubinstein’s point is that the fianchetto is fundamentally an unsound way to develop, for reasons of time and structure. Any exponent of the Modern Defence can sympathise with these criticisms. Although I have employed the fianchetto almost exclusively for a decade, I still feel daunted by White’s total occupation of the centre when none of my own pieces have ventured past the third rank. On several occasions I have also regretted my kingside fianchetto structure, when White has stampeded down the h-file and played $\text{Qh6}xg7$ with $\text{h6+}$ and mate to follow. Other times White has advanced $f4-f5$ and $g4-g5$ and my kingside has been blown away. But it is in this danger, in the provocative nature of the opening, that the strength and resilience of the Modern Defence lies. For every attack that comes crashing through, at least five times that number have failed. The late C. H. O. D. Alexander once wrote of the Modern: “One of the points of this defence is the opportunity that it gives White to overreach himself.”

For example:

**S. Arkell – Norwood**

London 1988

1. e4  g6
2. d4  Qg7
3. c3  d6
4. Qg5  Cf6
5. Qd2  0–0
6. f4  (1)

After just six moves White has built up a seemingly formidable centre. In the last century this position would probably have been assessed as
very good for White. The d4 pawn is reinforced by the c3 pawn and White has the option of further expansion with e4–e5. But as the hypermodern school emphasises, a pawn centre can be a target as well as an asset, and the bigger the centre, the bigger the target.

6 ... c5!

Normally this challenge to the centre would be less effective. With the bishop on c1 for instance, White could play dxc5 and after ... dxc5, e5 with a space advantage. Now if 7 dxc5 dxc5 (7 ... Qxd7 may be a promising pawn sacrifice; e.g. 8 cxd6 exd6 9 Qg3 Qe8 and Black has pressure against c4 and tactics along the g1–a7 diagonal) 8 e5 Qd5 (2).

Suddenly White’s centre looks less than impressive. The advance of the f-pawn has left the e3 square vulnerable. The early development of the dark-squared bishop also has its drawbacks; Black threatens ... h6 and ... Qxf4. In just a couple of moves White has lost control, allowing the centre, usually an asset, to become a weakness. Believe it or not, this is very easily done and is a recurring factor which works in the favour of the Modern player.

Back to the game:

7 Qg3 cxd4
8 cxd4 Qg4!

White’s standard response to this move is to play h3, but here it is problematic; e.g. 9 h3 Qxf3 10 gxf3 (10 Qxf3 hangs the e-pawn while 10 gxf3 destroys the pawn structure) 10 ... b6 11 b3 c6 and White’s pawn centre is again under considerable stress.

9 Qd3 Qc6

Completing development — now every one of Black’s minor pieces are exerting pressure on the centre. White is reluctant to release the tension in the centre with d4–d5 since this opens up to Black the diagonals a1–h8 and g1–a7.

10 b3 Qh5

Continuing the hypermodern strategy, f4 is awkward to
defend and d4 is a major problem.

11  \( \text{h} \times \text{b7} (3) \)

With the idea 11 ... \( \text{g} \times \text{d4?} \) 12 \( \text{d} \times \text{e7} \).

\[ \]

11  ...  \( \text{d7!} \)

The bishop has done its work on g4 and now returns to hold the knight on c6. Black does not need to worry about the loss of the b-pawn since White's centre remains weak and ... \( \text{b} \times \text{b8} \) will win the b2 pawn. White's king may also have problems finding a safe haven. White finds the best way to generate counterplay.

12  f5!  \( \text{b} \times \text{b8} \)
13  \( \text{a6} \)  \( \text{x} \times \text{b2} \)
14  0–0  \( \text{c} \times \text{d4} \)
15  \( \text{xa7} \)  \( \text{c6} \)
16  \( \text{e3} \)  \( \text{a8} \)
17  \( \text{c4} \)  \( \text{b4} \)
18  e5  dxe5
19  fxg6  hxg6
20  \( \text{b6} \)  \( \text{a7} \)

and Black was winning. Compare this position to the position after 6 f4.

This, then, is the classic strategy of the fianchetto.

Allow the opponent to take the centre. Then seek to undermine the centre. This is achieved by attacking the centre directly and by attacking those pieces that defend the centre. Once enough pressure is exerted upon the central pawns, then the opponent's over-extended position will crumble and we will be left in control. Alas! If only it were so easy. It is true that this does happen, but only on exceptionally good days. The classic hypermodern notion that "centre equals target" is quite misleading. The Modern allows White to control the centre and if White is content to hold the centre then this can easily be achieved (see Chapter 2). The idea that the e4 and/or d4 pawns are a vulnerable target is quite ridiculous; they can easily be defended by all of White's pieces. Certainly Black can challenge the centre, and usually deny White total domination, but Black will never be able to prove that a pawn centre is, per se, a weakness. Let's consider the following position which has arisen from a Classical Modern/Pirc (4).

Here Black, to move, would find it difficult to prove that White's centre was a target or weakness. The way for Black to play would be ... e5, and after dxe5 dxe5, both sides would have a similar pawn structure. Black's aim is to achieve full
equality by claiming an equal share in the control of the centre. In certain positions, the plan of attacking the centre from a distance or from the flank will simply not work.

The real strategy behind the Modern is quite complex and psychological. Black, moving after White, refuses to engage in the initial battle for the centre. So White establishes a centre: without question, a strategic asset. How then should White continue? Rubinstein points out that the fianchetto is bad because:

a) it wastes time (and White uses this fact to achieve control of the centre), and

b) “because weaknesses are thereby created in one’s own camp”.

However, whereas White can immediately take advantage of the waste of time, actually proving that the fianchetto is a weakness is another matter. If White wants to prove that squares like h6 and f6 are weak, then more aggression is called for than just sitting behind the e4 and d4 pawns. Some players charge with their h-pawn, others with their f-pawn, often castling queenside to facilitate these kingside pawn charges. This is surely what the great Rubinstein had in mind: active play to demonstrate the weakness of the fianchetto.

This is where the action starts. With continued expansion comes increased stress, and more potential weaknesses in the White position. If White advances the kingside pawns and castles on the other flank then Black will have even more targets. Not only can Black attack and break open the centre, but there is also the prospect of a direct queenside attack, especially if the g7 bishop can be levelled against b2.

After more than a decade of facing such attacks in the Modern, I am convinced that there is a kind of “elasticity” in Black’s position. White’s position advances, pushing against my humble fianchetto structure. Then suddenly my opponent pushes just a little too far and all the latent energy in my cramped position springs back into White’s face. Of course, sometimes White pushes, the elastic snaps and my position is over-run but this is usually due to a gross blunder on my part. The fact is that even when
White launches the most daunting attacks, Black’s position remains surprisingly gritty and resilient.

Rubinstein states quite forcefully that the only good point about the Modern Defence is its novelty. This alone can account for any success that the opening enjoys. “This still relatively little-explored method of play can be less familiar to the opponent, and it is quite easy for him to stumble, which is in fact often the case.” Seventy years on and many players are still stumbling. The strength of the Modern is not in its novelty. The Modern encourages White to expand, and few players can resist this temptation. As the position expands, the harder it is to control, and in such positions it is very easy to stumble.

But what if White refuses to be tempted, and sits comfortably behind a modest centre? As can be seen in Chapter 2, Black has to be content to play for equality. But the good news is that there is every chance that this equality can be achieved, and often it is a dynamic equality. Moreover, there is an added satisfaction about equalising with the Modern (which often makes me feel like I already have the initiative) in that we gave White the centre to start with!

It is time to consider the heart of the king’s fianchetto, the dark-squared bishop that resides on g7. This piece is the subject of so many myths and misconceptions that it is vital to set the record straight. The bishop is obviously an integral part of the Modern system. Shielded by the fianchetto structure, the bishop exerts a lasting influence along the a1–h8 diagonal. But to generalise further is dangerous. Some players misinterpret this to mean that they must keep this diagonal open at all costs. While it is true that the bishop is usually more effective when not restricted, sometimes it is imperative that Black blocks the diagonal. For example, many lines in the Pirc/Modern Defence oblige Black to advance in the centre with ... e5. This may be because White is threatening to push e4–e5 or simply because Black needs to challenge White’s control of the centre, but in any case the ... e5 advance is a fundamental theme in Modern strategy.

Another false notion is that the fianchetto bishop must be preserved at all costs. While it is generally true that Black should seek to avoid exchanging off the bishop, in certain positions this may be desirable or even necessary. For example, if Black has played ... e5 and this pawn has become blocked, then the dark-squared bishop
may not be so effective and Black might welcome an ex-
change with the white counterpart. The only absolute rule
in the Modern (and in chess generally) is that there are no
absolute rules. One has to consider the position at hand
with an open mind.

The only sure way to under-
stand the fianchetto, though, is
trial and error. Although this
book will hopefully act as a
guideline, it cannot be a sub-
stitute for practical experience.
Try to learn from your games,
especially defeats. If White
storms down the kingside and
gives checkmate then obviously
something is going seriously
wrong; did you castle too
early? Were you too slow in
countering in the centre? Or
should you have prevented his
e4–e5 thrust? It is important to
remember which pawn breaks
were effective in certain posi-
tions and which piece ex-
changes turned out in your
favour. Playing the Modern is
a continuing learning process.
Proficiency takes time, but
understanding will breed suc-
cess.
The Modern in Action

This section will consider some general themes and ideas for both sides in the Modern Defence. The bulk of the material will be under A) Positions arising from Section 1 (1 e4). This is because it is easier to speak in general terms about these positions, than those arising from the other sections.

A) Positions arising from Section 1

a) Challenging the Centre

As we discussed in the section "Understanding the Modern", Black cannot effectively attack White's pawn centre from a distance. At some point Black must use a pawn thrust to hit the centre. Firstly we draw a clear distinction between the Gurgenidze pawn structure and the Modern/Pirc structure.

These positions are quite different. In the Gurgenidze position (5) Black has already made a direct challenge to the centre with ... d5, White has advanced e4–e5 and hence the pawns have become blocked. Since the centre is sealed, Black feels safe enough to continue with the flank advance ... h5. This move would normally be
dubious in an open or fluid position (i.e. where the centre has not become fixed) but here it is the touchstone of Black's strategy to control squares on the h3–c8 diagonal. (The Gurgenidze structure is discussed in Chapter 1). Later the centre may be hit further with the pawn breaks ... f6 or ... c5, but for the moment Black is satisfied with this initial central challenge.

In the Modern/Pirc position (6) (Classical Variation) the centre is still fluid. Black has played ... d6, spurning the chance to challenge the centre with a quick ... d5. It is not yet clear how Black will try to combat the central pawns e4 and d4. If Black wants to hit the centre with a pawn thrust the options are as follows: ... e5, ... d5, ... c5 or even ... f5. To begin with, the last suggestion ... f5 is clearly dubious. Although e4 is a good pawn to attack, it is not worth the weakening of the a2–g8 diagonal. White could continue with dxc3 or even d5.

So we must rely on one of the other three alternatives, though none are totally satisfactory. In some ways the ... c5 advance is the most logical since it works in conjunction with our fianchettoed bishop. White could react with dxc5, a5+ and Black regains the pawn with ... dx5. Or White could push the d-pawn, d4–d5, leaving us with a Schmidt Benoni type position. My own reticence to play ... c5, however, is that White could play simply dxc3 and after ... cxd4, dxe4 we are in Sicilian Dragon territory (lots of theory to know!). In most of the variations that we consider, Black plays an early ... c6 which tends to rule out the ... c5 break.

The possibility of playing ... c5, though, should be borne in mind, e.g.:

Rechlis – Norwood
Oakham 1988

1 e4 g6
2 d4 d6
3 f3 f5
4 c4 d6
5 e2 0–0
6 h3 c5! (7)

Here the pawn break ... c5 is obviously a good idea, because now if:

a) 7 dxc5 a5+ 8 c3 dxe4 9 dxe4 dxc3+ will be good for Black.
b) 7 c3. Now the Sicilian
option is not so effective since $\text{c4, e2 and h3 is not a good plan against the Dragon; e.g. 7 ... $\text{c6 and Black already has the initiative.}$

c) 7 e5 $\text{e8 and White's pawn chain is under strain.}$

So White went for the Schmidt Benoni option with

7 $\text{d5}$

But again White's pieces are not well placed for the transposition;

7 ... $\text{b5}$

8 $\text{xb5 cxe4}$

and Black has the initiative. There is a useful rule in the Modern; if you allow a transposition, makes sure it is on your terms.

Let us take the position a few moves further. Black develops the knight to f6, castles and plays ... $\text{c6. White completes the Classical set-up with c3, 0-0 and h3.}$

By playing an early ... $\text{d6, it seems unlikely that ... d5 will be a viable option for Black, but in some positions the move is a useful break. Like with the c5 break, White has three ways to react a) Capture, b) Advance, c) Ignore. The key to analysing pawn breaks in the Modern is to remember this formula. Consider in turn the possibility that White will a) Capture, b) Advance or simply c) Ignore. So after ... $\text{d5, White can Capture with exd5, and if ... c6 been played, Black can recapture with ... cxd5. The resulting pawn structure is usually OK for Black and much of the tension has been removed from the position.}$

A more active method of play is to advance. The e4-e5 thrust usually hits the black knight on f6. The knight can retreat to e8 or d7 (or g4 if White has not played h3, especially if it hits bishop on e3). Black's position will be slightly cramped, although the e5 pawn can be challenged with ... $\text{f6.}$

Still, White's extra space is usually enough to ensure an edge. Or White might simply ignore. After ... $\text{d5 has been played, Black's usual intention is to play ... dxe4, so the e4 pawn must be bolstered; this is normally achieved by deploying the bishop to d3. After ... dxe4, cxe4 there arises a standard Caro-Kann pawn structure which is discussed in Chapter 1, Line C.}$

Probably the most effective means for Black to challenge the centre is with ... $\text{e5, al-}
though there is the drawback that the fianchettoed bishop may become blocked out of the game. This pawn advance must be prepared and in the diagram position the natural move is 7 ... Qbd7 with the continuation 8 a4 e5 (9)

\[ \text{Qxe5 10 Qxe5 dxe5 11 Qe3} \]

White has lasting pressure against Black’s queenside. However, in certain positions it may be advantageous to re-capture with knight, especially if this allows the a1-h8 diagonal to be kept open.

This is a well-known theoretical position. White has been content to hold the centre quietly and Black has had no choice but to make a bid for the centre with ... e5. Again our formula holds for considering White’s response.

a) Capture.

In this particular position, dxe5 is the best response to the ... e5 thrust. Black will re-capture with ... dxe5 and the bishop on g7 is shut out of the game. Re-capturing on e5 with the knight is based on the misguided assumption that this will untangle Black’s position. The d7 knight actually plays an important role defending squares like c5 and b6, and Black’s general plan is ... Qe7 and ... Qc5. After 9 dxe5

Black has challenged the centre, but at a price. Now the g7 bishop is out of the game and this lends White a temporary initiative. To equalise fully Black must neutralise this initiative. The structure of the position dictates the plan for Black, ... Qe7 and ... Qc5 to pressurise the e-pawn. Black may seek to land a knight on d4, in which case the bishop still has a role on g7. If this is not possible, it might be worth considering re-deploying the bishop via f8 - in this case ... f6 can be played to secure the e-pawn. The c8 bishop would also like to breathe at some stage, and e6 looks like a natural square. Beware of advancing any queenside pawns since this will inevitably create weakness-
es; e.g. ... c5 weakens d5 and b5; ... b6 is in itself a target in view of a4-a5 and it loosens the c6 pawn; and ... a5 leaves the b6 square weak. Another vulnerable square is d6, and white pieces (especially knights) should be denied access.

b) Advance.

Here this move is not effective. Black now has the option to capture, advance or ignore. Capturing is certainly possible but I prefer to ignore; e.g. 9 ... \( \text{xc5} \) (hitting the e-pawn) 10 \( \text{d2 a5} \) and Black is very comfortable. If White captures dx6 then ... bxc6 leaves Black with the central pawn majority. The d4-d5 advance is more dangerous for Black if ... b5 has been played, so that the queenside pawn position is vulnerable. But usually Black has good ways to counterattack.

c) Ignore.

White wants to keep the tension in the centre. The idea is that if Black captures ... exd4, then White will keep a space advantage. Of course, there is no obligation to capture and Black could continue to develop with ... \( \text{e7} \) and ... \( \text{e8} \). Sometimes, though, it is a good idea to open up the position with ... exd4. Black may have less space but the semi-open e-file can be useful for Black; e.g. 9 ... exd4 10 g3 and now if 11 f3 to defend the e-pawn, then 11 ... d5! gives Black the advantage. Remember, however, that opening up the position is a risky business – only do so if you strongly believe that it will work in your favour!

Conclusion

Challenging the centre requires good judgement and timing. The only general advice is to bear in mind White's options: Capture, Advance or Ignore. There is no correct method that will work in every position and your skill at challenging White's centre will determine your success with the Modern.
Always keep an open mind and avoid treating new positions in a routine fashion.

b) Tricks and Traps

Openings like the Sicilian contain dozens of lethal traps into which unsuspecting players of either colour can stumble. Because the Modern/Pirc is more strategic by nature, there are far fewer such traps to look out for. That being said, there are several recurring tricks that should be borne in mind. For example, some years ago your author stumbled into the following:

A. N. Other – Norwood

1 e4 g6  
2 d4 Qg7  
3 Qf3 d6  
4 Qc4 Qd7?? (13)

My aim was to delay ... Qf6 to avoid White’s tricks with e4-e5. My opponent continued quietly with 5 Qc3 missing a very big trick: 5 Qxf7+ is decisive, since 5 ... Qxf7 6 Qg5+ wins either the queen or the king!

But most tricks in the Modern are thematic in nature and usually yield only a positional edge.

White has developed casually (his last move was 8 Qc4) in this position, and Black, to move, has the chance to seize the initiative. Some players might be lured by the joy of sacrificing a piece with 8 ... Qxe4 but this is not a problem for White; e.g. 9 Qxe4 d5 10 Qd3 or even 9 Qxf7+ Qxf7 10 Qxe4. Instead Black played simply 8 ... d5! 9 exd5 Qb6 10 Qb3 Qf6 11 Qxd5 Qxd5 12 Qd2 c5 and Black took the offensive in Dukaczewski - Norwood, Benidorm 1991. Nothing flashy, just a foolproof method of taking the advantage, and one which crops up time and again.

Another recurring theme which is known from Sicilian
Dragon positions cost Black the game in the following position (15).

Black has just played the thematic 12 ... \( \text{b6} \) but after White's reply the position is resignable.

13 \( \text{d5! a4 (13 ... \text{xd2 14 xxe7+ h8 15 xxd2 and Black's c6 pawn cannot be defended.)} \) 14 xxe7+ h8 15 xc6 b4 16 xf6 xf6 17 d5 and White's position is winning; Norwood - Beaumont, British Ch (Plymouth) 1989.}

White's 12th move had been \( \text{b1} \) which should have made Black smell a rat. After the king move, \( \text{d5} \) is an option which must be borne in mind.

And sometimes the tricks backfire (16).

This is a typically unbalanced Pirc/Modern position. Black could continue with ... e6 and ... d5 to fix the central pawns. Instead I decided to go for gold:

10 ... \( \text{b5} \)
11 \( \text{e5} \)

This is the whole point; if 14...
bxc3 White would be left with two sets of doubled pawns and a miserable endgame. Now Black is obliged to undouble White’s pawns for him (thank you very much!)

14 ... \(\text{Wxe3+}\)
15 fxe3 \(\text{g}g8\) and Black had to struggle very hard to hold this unpleasant endgame in Emms – Norwood, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990.

As Black in these positions, it is more important to beware of tactics and traps which arise through sudden pawn pushes by White. The e4–e5 thrust followed by a tactical blow has claimed many a Modern victim. Always double check to make sure that White cannot suddenly push a pawn with lethal effect. A good way to avoid such a fate is to keep squares free for your pieces to retreat to, especially the e8 square for the f6 knight.

c) Summary of Moves and Ideas

We will now consider a selection of moves which are often seen in Pirc/Modern positions. Please note that our discussion is in VERY general terms. In over-the-board play each move must be considered within the context of the position at hand.

For White:

f4
An aggressive move bringing a third pawn into the centre. The f4 pawn will support a timely e4–e5 advance. In addition, White will have the option of a kingside attack with f4–f5. Our preferred method of treating f4 is to play for ... d5, leading to Gurgenidze type positions. (See Chapter 1, Line A.)

h4
Another aggressive pawn thrust, but making less positional sense than f4. Black can block with ... h5, although this might leave the g5 square weak. Instead Black might chose to react with a central challenge, especially if White’s king is in the centre (as it usually is if White is pushing the h-pawn).

h3
A useful move preventing ... \(\text{g}g4\) and ... \(\text{g}g4\).

c3
A very solid way for White to play, securing the d-pawn. (See Chapter 3, Line A.)
f3

This usually suggests that White will play \( \texttt{Qe3} \) and \( \texttt{Qd2} \). The f3 pawn secures the e-pawn but makes the development of the g1 knight slightly awkward. (See Chapter 3, Line B.)

a4

Usually played in response to \( \ldots \texttt{c6} \) or \( \ldots \texttt{a6} \). The move prevents Black's natural advance \( \ldots \texttt{b5} \). White will sometimes advance the a-pawn further (a4-a5) to cramp Black. \( \texttt{Qe2} \)

The classical square for the bishop, safe and solid. (See Chapter 2.)

\( \texttt{Qd3} \)

Usually played in conjunction with c3; with the knight on c3 the move can be a little clumsy. The bishop overprotects e4 but blocks the queen's defence of d4. \( \texttt{Qc4} \)

An active square for the bishop, especially if White can play e4-e5. The drawback is that the bishop is often a target for Black's natural pawn thrusts \( \ldots \texttt{d5} \) and \( \ldots \texttt{b5} \). (See Chapter 3, Line E.)

\( \texttt{e4-e5} \)

White might play this important advance for two reasons. It may be for an immediate tactical goal, so that White follows up the pawn thrust with a forced sequence of moves, or it may be part of White's gradual expansion policy. Black must take great care not to fall foul of the former. On e5 the pawn can be challenged by \( \ldots \texttt{f6} \). Note that after e4-e5 White can occupy the e4 square with the knight. \( \texttt{d4-d5} \)

Usually less effective than the e-pawn push. This move signals that White wants to play on the queenside. Black can often react tactically. \( \texttt{Qe3} \)

Probably the best square for the dark-squared bishop. If White has not played h2 or f3 then the bishop is sometimes hit by \( \ldots \texttt{Qg4} \). \( \texttt{Qf4} \)

On f4 the bishop is well placed to prevent Black from playing \( \ldots \texttt{e5} \). But the drawback is that if Black \textit{does} get the \( \ldots \texttt{e5} \) advance in, the bishop will be hit! \( \texttt{Qg5} \)

Hoping to exert pressure along the h4-d8 diagonal, usually in conjunction with an e4-e5 break. Sometimes the bishop gets kicked by \( \ldots \texttt{h6} \) or Black can simply get on with playing \( \ldots \texttt{e5} \). \( \texttt{O-O-O} \)

This move usually spells aggression. White castles long in order to advance pawns on the other wing. As Black you should never let this move take you by surprise - your queenside attack should already have
commenced!

For Black:

... d6

This move is nearly always played, the only exception being when Black plays an immediate ... c6 and ... d5. It is an essential feature of the Pirc/Modern structure.

... c6

The move that enjoys a very high profile in this book. It is an excellent means of unbalancing the position. It prepares the ... b5 advance and allows the queen the option of deploying on the a5, b6 or c7 squares. If Black plays for ... e5 then the c6 pawn guards the important d5 square; the drawback is that the d6 square becomes a weakness.

... a6

This move holds an important place in Pirc/Modern theory, although it is rarely mentioned in this book. This is because it is usually an alternative to ... c6, and does not tend to work well in conjunction. If Black has advanced ... b5, it is sometimes played to secure the b-pawn. This is often unnecessary since the c-pawn tends to fulfil the role perfectly well.

... a5

Often played to prevent White advancing a4-a5, although this is hardly an earth-shattering threat. Otherwise it is played simply to expand on the queenside. The drawback is that the b6 square can become weak, especially if a white knight gets to c4.

... b6

If ... c6 has been played this move should only weaken Black’s queenside pawn position, since the b6 pawn will become a target.

... b5

It is a common misconception that Black should always play for this advance. In some positions ... b5 can seriously weaken Black’s queenside. The move can be powerful, especially when it undermines a knight on c3. It is also a useful move if White looks to be castling queenside. But beware of the e4-e5 thrust which in some positions will refute the ... b5 advance. In addition, the further advance ... b5-b4 can also backfire, since the b4 pawn can become weak, and White is able to claim the c4 and a4 squares. When used correctly, though, the advance of the b-pawn is a powerful weapon in the Modern/Pirc Defence. (See Chapter 3, Line B.)

... e5

The most common way to challenge the centre. (See "Challenging the Centre").

... d5

A pawn break to be borne in
mind (See "Challenging the Centre").

... c5

As above.

... h6

Usually played to hit a bishop on g5. Otherwise the move is nearly always a waste of time. In addition, it can become a target after g3 and g3.

... g5

After ... h6, Qh4 (or ... Qf4) Black may decide to pursue the bishop further with ... g5. After h3, ... Qh5 the black knight heads for f4. Sometimes this is playable for Black but it is rather doubtful. The f5 square can become a thorn in Black’s side when a white knight deploys to e3.

... f5

This move is nearly always dubious. (Unless ... e7-e5 has been met by d4-d5).

... f6

If Black has played ... e5 and the d-pawns have been exchanged, the bishop will often re-deploy via f8. In these situations the move ... f6 can be a useful method of defending the e5 pawn. Normally the move is anti-positional.

... Qf6

The normal way to develop the knight (the obvious exception is in the Gurgenidze). Sometimes the knight might remain on g8 for some time, usually to prevent White from playing Qh6 to exchange the fianchettoed bishop. (See Chapter 3, Line B.)

... Qbd7

The usual square for the knight, since ... c6 has been played. On d7 the knight fulfills many functions; it prepares the ... e5 advance, restrains White’s e4-e5 advance and controls squares like c5 and b6. In some lines the knight might deploy instead on a6 but this seems less apposite than ... Qbd7.

... Qg4

This move does not work well with ... c6. The bishop normally comes to g4 in conjunction with ... Qc6, aiming to pressurise the d-pawn. On g4 it seems likely that the bishop will be exchanged for the f3 knight, which hands White the bishop pair on a platter. My preference is to keep the light-squared bishop in reserve.

... Be7

A very useful square for the queen, particularly in Classical Pirc lines. Other squares for the queen are c7, a5 and sometimes b6.

... Be8

The rook is useful on the e-file if the e-pawn is likely to be exchanged. If the d-file has been opened then the rook is often more useful on d8.

... 0-0-0

Very rare. This can only be a good idea if White has already ripped open your kingside.
B) Positions arising from Section 2 (1 d4) and Section 3 (1 c4 and 1 Others)

This section is split into two parts, with a) considering 1 d4 and b) considering the other first moves for White.

a) 1 d4

Challenging the Centre

In queen's pawn openings White will usually utilise the c-pawn in order to control the centre.

1   d4   g6
2   c4   Qg7 (19)

Our standard starting position. White can omit the c2-c4 advance but these lines are less critical (see Chapter 6). It should also be noted that Black can transpose into the King's Indian Defence by playing ... Qf6, although we do not consider this option in this book.

The normal move for White here is to play 3 Qc3, after which Black must consider ways to challenge the centre.

Like in the Modern/Pirc, Black can play for the ... e5 advance. This is prepared by playing 3 ... d6. In chapter 4, we consider these lines after 4 e4.

A sharper way to react to 3 Qc3 is to challenge the d-pawn immediately with 3 ... c5. White has the usual options: Capture, Advance, Ignore. Capturing will jettison White's control of the centre, and Black can easily re-capture the pawn with ... a6 or ... a5. Or White can attempt to hold with 4 Qf3 but Black can continue to exert pressure on the centre: 4 ... cxd4 5 Qxd4 Qc6. Now 6 e3 will block in the c1 bishop, so White must either stand down or capture the knight on c6. Either way Black's position is fine.

The usual way to react to the ... c5 thrust is to advance: 4 d5. In chapter 5 we consider an unusual way for Black to continue, with 4 ... Qxc3+. White could avoid the murky lines of chapter 5 by playing immediately:

3   e4 (20)

This position will give an insight into Queen's Pawn openings. The difference as compared to the Pirc/Modern positions is that White is using a third pawn (i.e. the c-pawn) to hold the centre, and this
factor has lasting implications. How does the advance of the c-pawn affect the position? The most important difference will be illustrated when Black challenges the centre, e.g. 3 ... c5 4 d5.

After Black hits the d-pawn, the *advance* option is White's most natural. This is because the c4 pawn reinforces the advanced pawn on d5. Hence the c2-c4 advance allows White to continue with the strategic advance d4-d5. Without the support of the c-pawn, the pawn on d5 could quickly become a target.

The point is illustrated more clearly if Black plays for the ... e5 advance. e.g.

3 ... d6
4  \( \text{c}3 \)  \( \text{d}7 \)
5  \( \text{f}3 \)  e5 (21)

In Pirc/Modern positions, the normal way to react to the ... e5 advance is to *Capture*, so that after the exchange on e5 White will usually possess a small advantage, although structurally the position is very balanced. If White captures on e5 after playing c2-c4, however, the resulting positions are much more double-edged. The advanced c-pawn will give White more space in the centre and on the queenside but the drawback is that the d4 square is rather vulnerable.

*Ignoring* (holding) is usually a very sensible option for White. The point is that after Black exchanges off the d4 pawn, White can adopt a Maroczy bind type structure, e.g. 6 \( Qe2 \) exd4 7 \( Qxd4 \) \( Qgf6 \) 8 0-0 0-0 9 \( Qe3 \) \( Qc5 \) 10 f3 and White's pawns on e4 and c4 restrain Black's natural pawn breaks ... d5 and ... b5.

At some point though, White will consider advancing the d-pawn after ... e5. In Pirc/Modern positions, where the c-pawn is on the second rank, the move d4-d5 is usually not effective, since Black's pawn on c6 is well placed to dislodge White's extended centre (see A). The c4 pawn is an excellent support for the
pawn on d5, e.g.

6 \( \text{Qe}2 \) \( \text{Qe}7 \)
7 \( d5 \) (22)

White has released the tension in the centre in order to secure a lasting space advantage. The \( d5 \) pawn is firmly secured and there is little point in Black trying to challenge it with ... \( c6 \).

The central pawns have become fixed and a typical closed position has arisen. With the pawns blocked in the centre, Black has only one clear plan, to play for ... \( f5 \). If there were still tension in the centre (i.e. if White had not advanced \( d4-d5 \)) this kind of advance would be very risky. Here it makes perfect sense that Black should expand on the kingside, since White has more space on the other flank. Thus the immediate 7 ... \( f5!? \) is possible here.

White has more options; to fight Black for control of the kingside (by advancing pawns like \( h2-h4 \) and \( g2-g4 \)) and/or expand on the queenside (with \( b2-b4 \) and \( c4-c5 \)).

The addition of the \( c \)-pawn to White's pawn centre, therefore, alters the complexion of the game. In the \( Pirc/Modern \) positions White aims for quick development of pieces in order to seize the initiative. In these queen's pawn positions White is more concerned with a strategic pawn advance to ensure a lasting space advantage. Black has more time to challenge the centre, but White can still retain a space advantage by either holding or advancing the \( d \)-pawn. My own opinion is that the extra time gives Black plenty of chances to generate counterplay, but White's extra space makes it more difficult to equalise fully.

b) 1 \( c4 \) and \( 1 \) Others – Who challenges the centre?

The classical way to open a chess game is by staking a claim to the centre with either 1 \( e4 \) or 1 \( d4 \). The Modern is a system which is designed to react to this occupation of the centre. But what if White foregoes this right to seize the centre? How does the fianchetto development cope against players who are content to "stay back"? We consider ...

a)

1 \( c4 \)
Although less direct than 1 e4 and 1 d4, this move does exert an influence on the centre. On the first move White claims the d5 square and much of the subsequent strategic battle revolves around the struggle for this square. The recommended way for Black to play in this book is to allow White control of d5. Instead Black takes the opportunity to expand with ... e5 and ... f5. This sets the scene for a very uncompromising strategic struggle. Black expands on the kingside/centre, White on the queenside/centre.

b) Others

The most popular system under this heading is the King’s Indian Attack:

1. d4 f3  g6
2. g3  g7
3. g2 (24)

Since White has not occupied the centre, Black can make incursions, but cautiously ...

3 ... e5

4 d3

Now it might be tempting to seize more of the centre with 4 ... d5 but then our centre would become the target! My own policy is avoid playing both ... e5 and ... d5 in conjunction with the Modern. After playing ... e5, it is safer to consolidate with ...

4 ... d6
5 e4

And now Black can expand further in complete safety with 5 ... c5; see Chapter 8.

The basic rule is that even for hypermodern players the centre is important. If you have the opportunity to expand comfortably in the centre then you should take it! One must beware, however, of expanding too quickly. Remember that the Modern system is best suited to challenging large pawn centres rather than supporting them!
Section 1: 1 e4 g6 2 d4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)g7

\[ 1 \text{ e}4 \text{ g}6 \]
Nearly every player will complete the occupation of the centre with 2 d4 but sometimes (especially if your opponent knows you play 1 ... g6 and they want to surprise you) you will have to face 2 f4 (25).

\[ 2 \text{ d}4 \mathcal{Q} \text{g}7 \ (26) \]

White's idea is usually to play d3 and \( \mathcal{Q} \)c3 and gradually build up for an attack on the kingside. Of course, you can transpose into a Closed Sicilian at any point with ... c5, but if you do not know the theory this might be undesirable.

If you want to continue along independent lines, you can play something like this; 1 e4 g6 2 f4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)g7 3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)c3 c6 with the intention of 4 ... d5. By mounting an early challenge to the centre, Black is well placed to rebut any White offensive on the kingside.

White's choice of third move will determine our response and hence the direction of the game. We consider:

Chapter 1 3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)c3
Chapter 2 3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f3
Chapter 3 Others: including
3 g3, 3 f3, 3 f4,
3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)e3, 3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)c4
Of course 3 ... d6 is the normal move leading to the standard Pirc/Modern starting position. So why do we not follow standard theory? The first reason is that after 3 \( \triangleleft c3 \) d6 White has the option of playing some dangerous variations, most notably the Austrian Attack (4 f4). Aside from the fact that facing the Austrian can be a very unpleasant experience, you also need to know huge amounts of theory, and we don't want that. If you don't believe me, watch this.

Bareev – Norwood
Marseilles 1990

1  d4  d6

2  e4  \( \triangleleft f6 \)
3  \( \triangleleft c3 \)  g6
4  f4  \( \triangleleft g7 \)
5  \( \triangleleft f3 \)  c5
6  e5  \( \triangleleft g4?? \)

A very serious mistake in the opening – I do not get a second chance; 6 ... \( \triangleleft d7 \) is normal.

7  \( \text{dxc5} \)  \( \text{dxc5} \)
8  \( \text{\&xd8+} \)  \( \text{\&xd8} \)
9  h3  \( \triangleleft h6 \)
10  \( \triangleleft e3 \)  b6
11  0–0–0+  \( \triangleleft d7 \)
12  g4  \( \triangleleft c8 \)
13  \( \triangleleft g5 \)  f6
14  \( \text{\&xd7} \)  \( \text{\&xd7} \)
15  \( \triangleleft b5+ \)  \( \triangleleft c8 \)
16  \( \triangleleft e6 \)  \( \text{f8} \)
17  \( \triangleleft d5 \)  \( \text{f7} \)
18  \( \triangleleft d7 \)  \( \triangleleft d7 \)
19  \( \text{\&d1} \)  \( \triangleleft x e6 \)
20  \( \triangleleft x e6 \)  \( \text{fxe5} \)
21  \( \text{\&d8+} \)  \( \text{\&b7} \)
22  \( \triangleleft d3 \)  1–0

White took just 36 minutes for the game!

Okay, the cynic might point out that I would have lost to Bareev in any opening, but the fact is that I had lost this game before I had even started playing! As stated in the introduc-
tion, the aim of 1 ... g6 is to avoid playing openings where you end up lost because you haven’t spent all month analysing the latest theory.

The other reason for avoiding 3 ... d6 is more positive. 3 ... c6 is not a bad move in its own right. It is not unsound (in the sense that White can refute it) and it also steers the game into less known territory. Most White players will be on their own (i.e. out of their memorized theory) after just three moves. These days that is a considerable bonus!

From diagram 27:
A 4 f4
B 4 Qc4
C 4 Others including
  4 Qf3, 4 h3

Gurgenidze Systems vs. f4

A) 4 f4

This is the most direct response to 3 ... c6. By advancing the third central pawn, White will be assured of a space advantage throughout the middlegame. Now 4 ... d6 would return us to a Modern Variation.

4 ... d5

A direct challenge to the centre that cannot be ignored. The only way for White to preserve the pawn centre is by advancing:

5 e5 (28)

White has no alternative; any other move will lead to the crippling of White’s central pawn formation.

Let’s stare at this position for a few minutes. In blocked positions like these, strategy tends to be more important than exact variations.

General observations:
1) The central pawns are blocked.
2) White has more space and can develop freely; e.g. Qe3, Qd3, Qf3, 0-0.
3) White’s dark-squared bishop is restricted by the pawns on d4, e5 and f4.
4) White has a clear plan available: g4, f5 and kingside storm. White might also consider trying to open the centre with b3, c4 etc.
5) Black has less space but controls useful squares along the c8-h3 diagonal.
6) The fianchettoed bishop has few prospects on the a1-h8 diagonal. It might therefore re-deploy along the f8-a3
diagonal, or possibly to h6.

7) It is less clear what plans Black has available. For example, pawn breaks such as ... c6-c5 or ... f7-f6 could be double-edged. They might open up lines for White's pieces, especially the dark-squared bishop. Black may be able to expand on the queenside with ... a5-a4 and ... b5.

Black now has two sensible moves, both aiming to consolidate control over f5 and g4.

a) 5 ... h5
b) 5 ... h6

a) 5 ... h5

This is the move I prefer. Black completes the true Gurgenidze (this is the name of the opening) set-up. The point of 5 ... h5 is clear; to deny White the opportunity of expanding with g4 and f5. In a "normal" position a move like ... h5 would be frowned upon, but in a closed position like this, it is quite logical.

Normally, advancing the h-pawn to h4 would seem rash but in this position it can be easily defended; e.g. by the queen on d8, bishop on e7, rook on h8 (you may have surmised that kingside castling is rather doubtful for Black). Also, you can see the marked square, f5. With a knight on this outpost, h4 will be quite safe and White's g3 square is weak (N. B. the backward pawn on g2).

The main thrust of Black's plan in this system, in fact, involves playing the "square game". Enticing White's pawns to advance, fixing them and then occupying the weak squares that they have left behind them.

It is impossible to consider every variation that can arise
but a sensible continuation would be:

6  \( \texttt{\textsf{\text{\texttt{\textsf{e}}}}\texttt{\textsf{f3}} \texttt{\textsf{\texttt{h6}}} \)

Although 6 ... \( \texttt{\textsf{\texttt{h6}}} \) is invariably played here, this may not be the best move order for Black. A glance back in history might reveal the move of the future: 6 ... \( \texttt{\textsf{g4}} \)!, e.g. 7 \( \texttt{\textsf{h3}} \texttt{\textsf{xf3}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textsf{xf3}} \texttt{\textsf{e6}} \) 9 \( \texttt{\textsf{g3}} \texttt{\textsf{b6}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textsf{f2}} \texttt{\textsf{e7}} \)!
11 \( \texttt{\textsf{d3}} \texttt{\textsf{d7}} \) 12 \( \texttt{\textsf{c2}} \) 0–0–0 13 c3 f6 14 b3 \( \texttt{\textsf{f5}} \) 15 \( \texttt{\textsf{b1}} \) c5 16 \( \texttt{\textsf{xf5}} \) exf5 17 \( \texttt{\textsf{e3}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{a6}} \) and Black is very comfortable; Fischer – Petrov, Belgrade 1970. By delaying the move ... \( \texttt{\textsf{h6}} \), Black keeps the option of deploying the knight to e7, which may be a superior square. This idea needs some modern tests.

7 \( \texttt{\textsf{e3}} \) (31)

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[scale=0.5]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Chess Board}
\end{figure}

Black can now mix things immediately with 7 ... \( \texttt{\textsf{b6}} \), or continue with the more regular lines with 7 ... \( \texttt{\textsf{g4}} \).

a1) 7  ... \( \texttt{\textsf{b6}} \)
a2) 7  ... \( \texttt{\textsf{g4}} \)

a1) 7  ... \( \texttt{\textsf{b6}} \)

8 \( \texttt{\textsf{a4}} \)

In Herrera – Garcia Gonzalez, Cuban Ch 1989 White tried instead the rather awkward 8 \( \texttt{\textsf{b1}} \). The game is quite instructive: 8 ... \( \texttt{\textsf{d4}} \) 9 \( \texttt{\textsf{e2}} \) e6 10 b4 \( \texttt{\textsf{xf3}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textsf{xf2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{f8}} \) 12 0–0 \( \texttt{\textsf{d7}} \) 13 \( \texttt{\textsf{a4}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{c7}} \) 14 c3 \( \texttt{\textsf{e7}} \) 15 \( \texttt{\textsf{b2}} \) a5 16 a3 \( \texttt{\textsf{f8}} \). Black has done everything right: the f5 outpost has been grabbed by the knight; the light-squared bishop is outside the pawn chain; the bishop has been re-deployed to e7. White has also been enticed to put all his pawns on dark squares. Of course, if White had played h3 at any point, Black would reply with ... \( \texttt{\textsf{xf3}} \) and ... \( \texttt{\textsf{h4}} \) – the "square game". Note also that Black has not castled, preparing instead to bring the king to safety via f8 to g7. 17 \( \texttt{\textsf{g5}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{xe2}} \)
18 \( \texttt{\textsf{xe2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{g7}} \) 19 g3 d8 20 d2 axb4 21 axb4 a2 22 \( \texttt{\textsf{g2}} \) a6!.

Now White is in dire straits. Black is playing the square game brilliantly, preparing to jump into the gaping hole on c4. The bishop on f2 is also a thoroughly depressing piece. 23 \( \texttt{\textsf{c1}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{g5}} \) 24 \( \texttt{\textsf{gxf5}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{c4}} \) 25 h4 \( \texttt{\textsf{xd7}} \) 26 \( \texttt{\textsf{h3}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{a8}} \) 27 g4 \( \texttt{\textsf{hxg4}} \)
28 \( \texttt{\textsf{hxg4}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{h8}} \) 29 \( \texttt{\textsf{h1}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{d8}} \) 30 \( \texttt{\textsf{h3}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{g8}} \) 31 \( \texttt{\textsf{c4}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{dxh4}} \) 32 \( \texttt{\textsf{b2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{xb2}} \) 33 \( \texttt{\textsf{xb2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{h7}} \) 34 \( \texttt{\textsf{f4}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{h5}} \)
35 \( \texttt{\textsf{d2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{a8}} \) 36 \( \texttt{\textsf{h1}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{a3}} \) 37 \( \texttt{\textsf{e1}} \)
\( \texttt{\textsf{e7}} \) 38 \( \texttt{\textsf{g3}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{a1}} \) 39 \( \texttt{\textsf{h2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{d1}} \) 40 \( \texttt{\textsf{f2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{f5}} \) 41 \( \texttt{\textsf{f4}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{d3}} \) 42 \( \texttt{\textsf{e2}} \)
\( \texttt{\textsf{e7}} \) 43 \( \texttt{\textsf{h5}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{gxh5}} \) 44 \( \texttt{\textsf{e4}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{d5}} \)
45 \( \texttt{\textsf{d2}} \) \( \texttt{\textsf{g6}} \) 0-1.
Instead 8 ... \( \text{a}5+ \) may be interesting: 9 \( c3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 10 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \)?! 11 \( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 12 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}4 \) (12 ... \( \text{b}8 \) 13 \( \text{c}5! \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 14 \( \text{dxc}5 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 15 \( \text{axb}3 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 16 \( \text{xa}7 \) with a crushing position for White) 13 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 14 \( \text{c}1 \) \( e6 \) and White was obliged to return the pawn with 15 \( \text{c}5 \) in Arnason - Hébert, New York Open 1989.

9 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{f}5 \)

Or 9 ... \( \text{g}4 \) 10 \( h3 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 11 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 12 \( \text{d}3 \) with an edge for White.

10 \( h3 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
11 \( \text{d}2 \) \( b5 \)
12 \( \text{c}3 \) \( a5 \)
13 \( \text{e}2 \) \( a4 \)
14 \( 0-0 \) \( 0-0 \)
15 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \)
16 \( b3 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
17 \( \text{xf}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \)
18 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{h}6 \)
19 \( \text{ae}1 \) \( \text{g}7 \)
20 \( \text{e}2 \) \( f5 \)
21 \( \text{exf}6 \) \( \text{exf}6 \)
22 \( \text{d}1 \) \( f5 \)
23 \( \text{g}1! \)

and the knight is heading for \( e5 \) via \( f3 \), giving White the advantage; Mestel - Murshed, British Ch (Blackpool) 1988.

a2)

7 ... \( \text{g}4 \) (33)

This is the more common way for Black to play. Black wants to play ... \( e6 \) and ... \( \text{f}8 \) so it is obviously sensible to have the bishop outside the pawn-chain, where it will usually be exchanged for the knight on \( f3 \). White has two main ways of playing: 8 \( \text{e}2 \) and 8 \( h3 \) (8 \( \text{f}2 \) was tried in W. Watson - J. Kristiansen, Esbjerg 1988; after 8 ... \( \text{b}6!? \) Black is doing fine).

8 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}5 \)

8 ... \( e6 \) was also fine for Black in Pasman - Ciocaltea, Beersheva 1982; the game continued 9 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 10 \( g3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 11 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 12 \( h3 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 13 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 14 a3 \( \text{a}5 \) 15 g4 \( \text{hxg}4 \) 16 \( \text{hxg}4 \) \( \text{hxg}4 \) 17 \( \text{hxg}4 \) \( h1=\text{c}7 \) 18 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) and Black was at least equal.

9 \( \text{d}2 \) \( e6 \)
10 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
11 \( 0-0 \) \( \text{h}6!? \)
Already Black has pressure and White's next move leaves him virtually lost. 12 \( \mathcal{Q}f2? \mathcal{Q}xf3 \)
13 \( \mathcal{Q}xf3 \mathcal{Q}xe5! \) 14 dxe5 d4 15 \( \mathcal{Q}xd4 \mathcal{Q}xd4 \) 16 \( \mathcal{Q}xd4 \mathcal{Q}xd4 \) 17 \( \mathcal{Q}d3 \mathcal{Q}xc2 \) and Black went on to win; Morris ~ Norwood, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990.

After some years of experience I have become convinced that 8 \( \mathcal{Q}e2 \) is the wrong way for White to play. After the inevitable exchange on f3, White's bishop is not well placed on f3 - it really belongs on d3. Black really has little to worry about after 8 \( \mathcal{Q}e2 \).

Black faces much more danger when White grasps the nettle immediately with 8 h3!. Let's consider ...

\[
\begin{align*}
8 & \text{ h3} & \mathcal{Q}xf3 \\
9 & \mathcal{Q}xf3 & \text{ h4 (34)}
\end{align*}
\]

An alternative is 9 ... \( \mathcal{Q}b6 \), hitting b2; this move is an interesting way for Black to play.

Looking at the diagram position we can see that Black has achieved the aim of establishing an outpost on f5 whilst preventing the g2-g4 advance. If White captures the knight on f5 then ... gxf5 will give Black a g-file on which to raid the white king. Unfortunately, it is hard for Black to make progress since, as mentioned earlier, ... c5 could easily backfire. White has two simultaneous plans: b2-b3 with c2-c4 to roll in the centre, and \( \mathcal{Q}h2, \mathcal{Q}c3-e2-g1-f3, \mathcal{Q}f3-e2-e1 \) to pressurise h4. These plans may appear rather long-winded but in closed positions one does have the time to carry out such manoeuvres.

Still, all is not lost. Black's position is very solid and holds various possibilities. A pawn advance on the queenside can be effective and sometimes ... f6 (or even ... g5) is a possible way to drum up counterplay on the kingside. Whilst at the top grandmaster level Black's position may be difficult (but by no means unplayable) at lower levels it offers excellent practical chances.

For example 10 \( \mathcal{Q}f2 \mathcal{Q}f5 \) 11 \( \mathcal{Q}d3 \) e6 12 \( \mathcal{Q}xe2 \mathcal{Q}xd7 \) 13 0-0 \( \mathcal{Q}f8 \) 14 b3 \( \mathcal{Q}e7 \) (14 ... \( \mathcal{Q}a3!? \)) 15 c4 \( \mathcal{Q}a3 \) (15 ... \( \mathcal{Q}f8 \) 16 a3 \( \mathcal{Q}g7 \) 17 \( \mathcal{Q}fc1 \) was also better for White in Ehllvest ~ Negulescu, Erevan 1988) 16 \( \mathcal{Q}ab1 \) a5? 17 cxd5 exd5 (not the usual way to recapture, but after 17 ... cxd5 18 \( \mathcal{Q}c3 \) the b5 square is a thorn in Black's
camp) $18 \text{g}4$! and suddenly Black is in dire straits; Yudasin - McCarthy, New York Open 1991.

An extreme example of what can go wrong for Black in these positions.

**A Useful Trick – The Accelerated Gurgenidze**

Modern players should make note of a promising way of tricking White by adopting a different move order.

1. $e4$  
2. $d4$  
3. $\text{c}3$  
4. $f4$  

This is the point; it looks like Black is losing a move since it has taken the pawn two moves to reach $d5$.

5. $e5$  
6. $f3$  
7. $e3$  

Black has actually gained one! This position is normally reached with the bishop on $g7$, which will voluntarily return to $f8$. Here the bishop has stayed on $f8$, and is ready to spring into action on $b4$ or $e7$.

The game Mannion - Norwood, Walsall Kipping Jubilee 1992 continued:

8. $h3$  
9. $x f3$  

This is a difficult move for White to meet; if $10 \text{b}1$ $b4$, Black has the initiative.

10. $0-0-0$  

Also $10 \ldots h4$ is playable; $11 \text{d}3$ $h6$ 12 $e2$ $f5$ 13 $b2$ $d7$ 14 $c4$ $c4$ 15 $x c4$ $b7$ 16 $c3$ $b6$ 17 $b3$ and now $17 \ldots a5$ would have given Black a pleasant game in Popovych - Norwood, Philadelphia 1992.

11. $b1$  
12. $e2$  
13. $c1$  
14. $f2$  
15. $c3$  

Black intends $\ldots c4$, to be followed by $\ldots a4$, $\ldots a3$ and a queenside assault.

16. $x c5$  
17. $d3$  
18. $x f2$  
19. $x f2$ (36)

The endgame is clearly in Black’s favour. I have a better pawn structure and my knights are more effective than White’s knight and bishop. Look at the weak points in White’s position:
3, f4, e4. More importantly, have all the pawn breaks (...6 and ...g5) which I can carry out whenever I wish.

19 ... g5
20 Qb5 gxf4
21 Qd3 0–0–0
22 Qxd7 Qxd7

The king will be a useful piece in this endgame.

23 Qxf4 Qe7 (37)

This is the dream position to reach from a Gurgenidze Opening: White's g2 pawn is backward, and the e5 pawn is a permanent target. I have the option of pawn breaks with ...f4 or ...f6; and my rooks can terrorise the g-file. In contrast, White can only sit and suffer.

There is no need to do anything flash; patience and accuracy should win this position. 24 Nh5 Qh5 25 Qd3 Qg5 26 Qe1 Qc8 27 b3 b5 28 Qb2 Qg3 29 Qe3 Qe4 30 a4 Qf5 31 Qf1 Qxe5 32 axb5 Qd6 (Black's central pawns are much more effective than White's queenside pawn majority) 33 Qa1 Qf5 34 Qd3 Qxc3 35 b6 d4 36 Qee1 Qb8 37 Qf1 Qg5 38 Qf4 Qg2? (38 ...Qxb6 would win easily) 39 Qe4 Qc3 40 Qxd4 Qd5 41 Qxh4 Qxb6 42 Qa3 Qc6 43 Qda4 Qe3 44 Qa5 Qc4+ 0–1.

This move order also worked in the game Chandler – Norwood, London Lloyds Bank 1992: 1 e4 g6 2 d4 d6 3 c3 c6 4 f4 d5 5 e5 h5 6 f3 Qg4 7 c2 e6 8 0–0 Qh6 9 Qe3 Qf5 10 Qf2 Qd7 11 Qd2 Qh6 and Black already had the initiative; after 12 a4 Black should halt the queenside advance with 12 ... a5 and then play on the kingside.

b)

5 ... Qh6

In my opinion, the best that can be hoped for with this move is to transpose back into lines with 5 ... h5.

6 Qf3 Qg4
7 Qe3

Chernin – I. Ivanov continued 7 Qe2 e6 8 Qe3 Qf5 9 Qf2 h5 10 Qd3 and Black had a comfortable position.

7 ... Qf5
8 \textit{Qf2} h5
9 h3 \textit{Qxf3}
10 \textit{Qxf3}

and we have transposed into lines considered under section a).

Trying to cut out the move ... h5 entirely seems to give White a pleasant game; e.g.

1 e4 g6
2 d4 \textit{Qg7}
3 \textit{Qc3} c6
4 f4 d5
5 e5 \textit{Qh6}
6 \textit{Qf3} (38)

6 ... 0-0
7 \textit{Qd3} \textit{a6}
8 a3 b6
9 \textit{Qe2} c5
10 c3 c4
11 \textit{Qc2} \textit{b8}

and White had a good position in Oudeweetering - Gutman, Groningen 1988.

Black can also try 6 ... f6 although this was not successful in Diaz-Zilberman, Frunze 1989; 7 \textit{Qd3} \textit{Qg4} 8 h3 \textit{Qxf3} 9 \textit{Qxf3} 0-0 10 exf6 exf6 11 f5 and Black's position is starting to look very doubtful.

This concludes our survey of the Gurgenidze. Since these positions tend to be slow and strategic it is important that both sides are familiar with the plans available. Although the Gurgenidze proper seems to be suffering slightly in view of 8 h3, the Accelerated Gurgenidze is starting to look very promising for Black.

White Avoids f4

B)

4 \textit{Qc4}

This is the main alternative to 4 f4 and the resulting positions tend to be radically different from those arising in the previous chapter. 4 \textit{Qc4} appeals to players who wish to keep the initiative and avoid the highly strategic closed positions arising after 4 f4 d5 5 e5.

Black can continue in three ways:

a) 4 ... d5
b) 4 ... b5
c) 4 ... d6

a)

4 ... d5 (39)
in Ernst - Schneider, Naestved 1988.

8 ... a5

Can Black avoid committing a further pawn? 8 ... c6 will fail to 9 a4; 8 ... a6 was tried in Kudrin - Gufeld, Kusadasi 1990. The game continued: 9 a3 bxa3 10 bxa3 c7 11 f3 f6 12 e5 0-0 13 b4 a6 14 0-0 e8 15 e1 e6 (Black's position is already miserable) 16 c3 f8 17 c6 c8 18 f8 c8f8 19 f3 g7 20 eal b7 21 e5 b6 22 f4 e7 23 a4 d6 24 c5 c4 25 xc4 h5 26 h4 dxc4 27 e4 xd4 28 c6 d7 29 xe7 f5 30 c5 d6 31 xc4 xe7 32 xa7 xa7 33 xa7 h6 34 e3 1-0.

With this massacre in mind, it looks like 8 ... a5 may be necessary.

9 a3 bxa3
10 bxa3 (40)

White has a very comfortable position. In my experience this position promises nothing for Black except an uphill struggle. White has better development and the a5 pawn
42 1 e4 with 3 c3

will remain a target. Practical results are firmly in White’s favour.

10 ... c6

Or 10 ... e6?! 11 a4! d7 12 

13 a5 a5 14 a5 c6 15 c3 and Black had little play for the pawn in Dreev – Schneider, European Club Ch 1991.

11 f3 e6

12 a4!? ge7 13 h4 0–0 14 h5 a6 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 c1 c8 17 h6 f5 18 xg7 xg7 19 x6 xc6 20 g4 and White had a vicious attack; Nicholson – S. Arkell, British Ch (Plymouth) 1989.

My firm recommendation is to avoid 4 ... d5 in favour of the more dynamic 4 ... d6 considered in line (c).

b) 4 ... b5

This move is more fun for Black than 4 ... d5 but I am still not convinced that it is a good idea. I have always been suspicious of advancing my queenside pawns too early in the Modern. Not only does it delay development but it can also lead to the queenside pawns becoming fixed at an early stage in the game. I prefer to keep the option of a queenside advance in reserve.

5 b3 (41)

Obviously Black could now transpose into line (a) with 5 ... b4 6 ce2 d5 but this does not seem desirable. Instead of 6 ... d5, 6 ... d6 is possible and was tried in Dreev – Hessler, New York Open 1991: 7 f3 f6 8 e5 d5 9 f4 xf4 10 xf4 and White had a comfortable edge.

Black can now commit the pawns further and pursue the bishop with 5 ... a5, or try to consolidate with 5 ... d6.

b1) 5 ... a5

b2) 5 ... d6

b1)

5 ... a5

Hard to believe, but this move might be promising for Black; it’s certainly not easy to refute.

6 a3

Also possible is 6 a4; 6 ... b4 7 ce2 d5?! 8 e5 f5 9 g3 

10 c3 a6 11 xf5 xf5 12 c2 d7 13 f3 with advantage to White, Nunn – Wicker, London 1978 (Nunn). Instead 7 ... f6 looks fine for Black.

6 ... d6

7 f3

White continued more agg-
ressively with $7 \text{c}f3$ in Svidler – A. Ivanov, Gausdal 1991: $7 \ldots e6$
$8 \text{c}f4 \text{a}6 9 \text{c}d1 \text{c}e7 10 h4 h6 11 \text{g}3 \text{c}8$ (an interesting method of developing the king’s knight) $12 h5 g5 13 \text{c}c1 \text{d}7 14 \text{g}3 b4 15 \text{a}4 \text{d}5 16 e5 \text{c}e7$ (It is clear that White has over-extended and the position is close to being hopeless) $17 f4$
$\text{c}f5 18 \text{c}f3 f6! 19 g4 \text{xd}4!$ (this move gains two pawns for the piece, which, given the white king position, will be adequate compensation) $20 \text{xd}4 \text{xe}5 21 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 22 \text{e}3 0-0 23 \text{d}1 \text{d}6 24 \text{f}2 \text{f}3 25 \text{e}1 \text{f}8 26 \text{e}3 \text{xf}2! 27 \text{xf}2$
$\text{f}3 28 \text{g}3 \text{e}7 29 \text{d}2 \text{xe}1 30 \text{xe}1 \text{bxa}3 0-1$.

An excellent example which demonstrates the dynamic possibilities for Black when White pushes too many pawns!
$7 \ldots \text{a}6$
$8 \text{e}3 e6 (42)$

This position is very gritty for Black. If White now plays $9 0-0$, then both $9 \ldots \text{c}f6$ and $9 \ldots$
$b4 10 \text{e}2 \text{f}6$ are possible. In Kuijf – Hickl, Groningen 1988, $9$
$d5?! was tried: $9 \ldots \text{cxd}5 10$
$\text{c}xd5! \text{d}7 (10 \ldots \text{c}xd5 11 \text{c}xd5 wins) 11 \text{c}d4 \text{c}f6 12 \text{c}xf6$
$\text{xf}6 13 0-0 0-0 14 \text{c}e1 \text{e}7$ and Black was already comfortable.

b2)

$5 \ldots d6$

This looks like an inferior option to $5 \ldots a5$. Now simple development seems the best way for White to play: $6 \text{c}f3$
$b4 (6 \ldots a5 is possible) 7 \text{e}2$
$\text{c}f6 8 e5 \text{c}d5 9 \text{c}f4 e6 (9$
$\text{c}xf4 would have taken us back to the Dreev – Hessler game)$
$10 0-0 \text{d}7 11 \text{c}d3 and White$
$had an edge in Wittman – Kristensen, Thessaloniki OL 1988.$

c)

$4 \ldots d6 (43)$

This is the most popular and reliable option. Black adopts a true Modern-style set-up, preparing ...\text{c}f6 and ... 0-0. White now has a choice, which divides this section into two parts.

c1) $5 \text{f}3$

c2) $5 \text{c}f3$
c1)  

5 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Wf3}}} \)}

At first sight this move looks bizarre, defying the beginner’s principle that one should not bring the queen out too early. The slight oddity of the move caused this system to be christened "The Monkey’s Bum". This stems from an analysis session in which the queen move was first suggested; one of the protagonists exclaimed: "If this works then I'm a monkey's bum!" In recent years the move has been taken quite seriously. The point is that Black cannot now continue with the natural developing move 5 ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qf6}}} \)} in view of 6 e5. Therefore one must play the concessionary ...

5 ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} \)} (44)

It is important to consider some general principles in this position. Although Black has played ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} \)} , the plan is still to play for ... e5. Many players make the erroneous assumption that ... d5 is now the natural continuation for Black, but this will always leave White with a slight advantage (see Howell - Summerscale). So ... e5 has to be prepared, and this can be done by playing ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qe7}}} \)} , ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qf6}}} \)} and ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qd7}}} \)} . Of course one has to react to whatever White tries, but this general plan should be borne in mind.

White will normally play 6 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qge2}}} \)} , although we must first consider the aggressive alternative

6 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qf4}}} \)}

Snatching the d-pawn is suicidal for Black; e.g. 6 ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qxd4}}} \)} 7 0-0-0 e5 8 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qxe5}}} \)} winning. 6 ... b5 has been tried on several occasions but I feel that it neglects development. Z. Nikolic - Djordjevic, Belgrade 1989, continued 7 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qb3}}} \)} a5 8 a3 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qa6}}} \)} (8 ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qxd4}}} \)} is still too dangerous; 9 0-0-0 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qb6}}} \)} 10 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qxd6}}} \)} \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qd7}}} \)} 11 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qge2}}} \)} was excellent for White in Ghinda - Ciocaltea, Romanian Ch 1977) 9 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qge2}}} \)} and White was slightly better.

The best response to 6 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qf4}}} \)} is probably 6 ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qd7}}} \)} . White cannot grab the d-pawn in view of ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qb6}}} \)} winning a piece. Now the bishop on f4 gives Black an added incentive to play ... e5.

6 ... \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qd7}}} \)}

7 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qge2}}} \)}

Or 7 0-0-0 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qe7}}} \)} 8 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qe2}}} \)} e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qe3}}} \)} \( \mathsf{\text{\textit{\textbf{Qf6}}} \)} and Black has comfortably equalised; Fishbein - Webster, Oxfordham 1990. White's temporary
control of the d-file should not cause Black any problems.

7 ... \( \text{\textit{e7}} \)

8 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \)

Simply 8 a4 e5 is fine for Black.

8 ... e5

9 \( \text{\textit{dx}e5} \) \( \text{\textit{dx}e5} \)

10 \( \text{\textit{e3}} \) \( \text{\textit{gf}6} \) (45)

Black now wishes to castle and play ... \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) with a comfortable game. In order to justify the queen’s position on f3, White has to continue aggressively.

11 \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) \( \text{\textit{f8}} \)

This is perhaps too panicky; Adams - Walker, British Ch (Plymouth) 1990, continued 11 ... h6 12 g5 hxg5 13 \( \text{\textit{x}g5} \) \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) 14 h4 \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{e3}} \) and Black was at least equal in view of the weaknesses in White’s pawn structure. Also interesting is 11 ... 0-0; e.g. 12 g5 \( \text{\textit{h}5} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{g3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f4}} ! \) 14 \( \text{\textit{x}f4} \) \( \text{\textit{exf4}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{x}f4} \) \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) looks like a reasonable pawn sacrifice. Black has the bishop pair, while White’s pawn structure is awkward and the king lacks a safe haven. Both 11 ... h6 and 11 ... 0-0 suggest that 11 g4 is less than dangerous.

12 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) \( \text{\textit{h5}} \)

13 \( \text{\textit{g3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f4}} \)

14 h4 \( \text{\textit{e6}} \)

15 0-0-0 0-0

16 \( \text{\textit{f5}}! \)

This is just the kind of move that White has been hoping for; now the over-extended pawns are rather useful!

16 ... \( \text{\textit{gxf5}} \)

17 \( \text{\textit{exf5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c5}} \)

18 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \)

19 f6 \( \text{\textit{h8}} \)

20 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{b4}} \)

21 a3 \( \text{\textit{a5}} \)

22 h5 \( \text{\textit{e6}} \)

23 g6! (46)

23 ... \( \text{\textit{fxg6}} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \) 25 hxg6 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) (25 ... hxg6 26 f7+! \( \text{\textit{xf7}} \) 27 \( \text{\textit{xh8}} \) \( \text{\textit{gxh8}} \) 28 \( \text{\textit{xf7}} \) and 29 \( \text{\textit{h1}} \) will be mate) 26 f7+ \( \text{\textit{g7}} \) 27 \( \text{\textit{xh7+}} \) \( \text{\textit{gxg6}} \) 28 \( \text{\textit{g4+}} \) 1-0 Norwood - Webster, Prestwich 1990.

As long as Black is careful, 6 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) should not be a major problem. 6 \( \text{\textit{ge2}} \) is a more positional continuation and
practical results suggest that this move is more promising for White.

6 $\texttt{g}e2$ (47)

6 ... $\texttt{d}7$

7 0-0

Or 7 $\texttt{f}4$ as played in Ernst - Ehliwest, Thessaloniki OL 1990; 7 ... $\texttt{g}f6$ 8 $\texttt{d}1$ $\texttt{e}7$ 9 $\texttt{g}5$ and any White advantage must be minimal.

7 ... $\texttt{g}f6$

The innocuous 7 ... $\texttt{e}7$ was seen in Howell - Summerscale, London 1990; 8 $\texttt{f}4$ $\texttt{d}5$ 9 $\texttt{b}3$ 0-0 10 $\texttt{ad}1$ $\texttt{e}8$ 11 $\texttt{g}3$ b5 12 $\texttt{g}3$ a5 13 a3 $\texttt{b}6$ 14 $\texttt{h}6$ and Black's position is already inferior.

8 $\texttt{b}3$ 0-0

The immediate 8 ... e5?! was played in Lane - Vasello, Benidorm 1989; 9 h3 0-0 10 $\texttt{e}3$ $\texttt{e}7$ 11 $\texttt{g}3$ h5?! 12 $\texttt{fe}1$ h4 13 $\texttt{g}e2$ $\texttt{h}5$ and Black is having fun.

9 $\texttt{g}5$ h6

10 $\texttt{h}4$ e5

11 $\texttt{ad}1$ $\texttt{e}7$

12 $\texttt{e}3$ $\texttt{e}8$

13 f4! exd4

14 $\texttt{xd}4$ $\texttt{xe}4$

15 $\texttt{xe}7$ $\texttt{xd}4$

16 $\texttt{xd}4$ $\texttt{xc}3$

17 $\texttt{xc}3$ $\texttt{xe}7$

18 $\texttt{xd}6$

and White went on to win this very favourable endgame in Nunn - Ehliwest, Skelleftea 1989.

This game has become something of an advert for the plan of $\texttt{b}3$ and $\texttt{g}5$ with a view to a positional squeeze; without doubt it offers Black fewer chances for counterplay than the more aggressive lines with 6 $\texttt{f}4$. Still, it is hardly a disaster for Black (Modern players have had to face far more fearsome systems!). Perhaps 11 ... $\texttt{e}8$ is an improvement on the Nunn - Ehliwest game. Black could have also tried 12 ... g5 and 13 ... $\texttt{h}5$, although this does weaken the f5-square.

In conclusion, the Monkey's Burn remains popular with White, but it is not that clear that it offers anything special. What I have found from my own experience is that the Black side of the position is easier to play (unless White is a super-GM, that is) and as White, players have a tendency to over-extend. Black should pay close attention to strategic principles; knight play is very important - seek to occupy squares like d4, c5, e6 and even
sometimes f4 (after g4 has been played).

Whatever you do, you have to avoid emulating Black’s play in the following game at all costs...

Zlochevsky – Petakov
Novi Sad 1988

1 d4 g6 2 e4 Qg7 3 Qc3 c6 4 Qc4 d6 5 Qf3 e6 6 Qge2 d5?! 7 Qd3 f5? 8 exf5 exf5 9 h4 Qh6??
10 Qg5 Qd7 11 Qe3+ Qf7 12 Qxh6 1-0. Sad.

c2)

5 Qf3

This move is much less aggressive than 5 Qf3 and is actually an offshoot of Pirc Qc4 systems. Providing Black is careful, the most that White can achieve is a minuscule edge - and often not even that!

5 ... Qf6 (48)

Better than 5 ... b5 6 Qb3 e6 which was not good for Black in Fishbein – Matveeva, Oakham 1990.

White can now play the immediate pawn advance 6 e5 or retreat the bishop with 6 Qb3 (6 0-0 could be met by 6 ... b5, forcing the bishop to d3 to defend the e4 pawn).

First we consider:

6 e5 dxe5
7 Qxe5
dxe5 Qxd1+ is fine for Black.

7 ... 0-0
8 0-0 Qbd7
9 Qf4

Or 9 Qg5; the best reply is 9 ... Qc7, e.g. 10 Qf4 Qh5 11 Qxd7 Qxd7 12 Qe5 Qxe5 13 dxe5 Qf5 14 Qe1 Qe6, whilst White can also try 10 Qe2 Qxe5 11 Qxe5 Qxe5 12 dxe5 Qg4 13 Qxe7 Qe8.

Both lines, Nunn assures us, “promise White nothing.”

9 ... Qb6?!

Better is 9 ... Qh5 10 Qxd7 Qxd7 11 Qe5 transposing to the note above.

After 9 ... Qb6 White can retain a nagging edge: 10 Qb3 Qbd5 11 Qxd5 Qxd5 12 Qg3 Qe6 13 Qe1 a5 14 a4 Qb6 15 h4 Qad8 16 h5 Qf5 17 hxg6 hgx6 18 c3 and Black had a difficult position in Mortensen – Norwood, Reykjavik 1990.

The alternative

6 Qb3

offers White more chances for a slight advantage than 6 e5:

6 ... 0-0
7 0-0
Or 7 h3 \( \text{c7} \) 8 a4 e5 and Black quickly equalised in M. Schlosser - Norwood, Prestwich 1990.

7 \( \ldots \) \( \text{g4} \)
8 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{xf3} \)
9 \( \text{xf3} \) (49)

9 \( \ldots \) e6!?  

The alternative 9 \( \ldots \) \( \text{bd7} \) turned out well for White in Jansa - Ebeld, Metz 1985, after 10 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{a5} \) 11 \( \text{ad1} \) c5 12 e5 dxe5 13 dxe5 \( \text{xe5} \) 14 \( \text{xb7} \).

10 ... e5 is also a little better for White in view of the bishop pair.

10 \( \text{g5} \) h6
11 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{bd7} \)
12 \( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{a5} \)
13 \( \text{fe1} \) d5
14 a3

and White had a slight edge in Hassapis - Murshed, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990.

C)

4 \( \text{xf3} \) and others, including

4 h3

3 ... c6 is a provocative move, but White can refuse to be provoked. The third main alter-
native after 3 \( \ldots \) c6 is to play 4 \( \text{xf3} \) which tends to lead to more orthodox lines than either 4 f4 or 4 \( \text{c4} \). If White is looking for a slight advantage in a quiet position, then 4 \( \text{xf3} \) is the move to play.

4 \( \text{xf3} \) (50)

Black faces an important decision. 4 \( \ldots \) d6 will transpose into a main line Classical Pirc - see Chapter 2.

The alternative is to continue with 4 \( \ldots \) d5. Being a firm advocate of the Modern/Pirc school I always avoid this move but it is quite playable. The main drawback is that it removes much of the dynamism from the position. Black has good chances to achieve equality but virtually no prospects for anything more. Other fourth moves seem to assure White of an edge. 4 ... b5 is met by 5 \( \text{d3} \) and Black will soon have to play ... d6. 4 ... \( \text{f6} \) is imaginative but rather doubtful - the best response is 5 e5. After

4 \( \ldots \) d5

White will usually continue
with the modest

5  h3 \( (SI) \)

This move sums up White's policy in this position: quiet containment. 5 h3 prevents \( \textit{Qb}4 \) which would dislodge the \( f3 \) knight and put pressure on \( d4 \). Now we have arrived in a position known from the Caro-Kann. Theory outlines three moves for Black:

a) 5 ... \( \textit{dxe4} \)
b) 5 ... \( \textit{Qh}6 \)
c) 5 ... \( \textit{Qf}6 \)

a) 5  ...  \( \textit{dxe4} \)

6  \( \textit{Qxe4} \)  \( \textit{Qd7} \)

7  \( \textit{Qc4} \)

This is the most active move, although 7 \( \textit{Qd3} \) is also fine for White: 7 ... \( \textit{Qgf6} \) 8 c3 \( \textit{Qxe4} \) 9 \( \textit{Qxe4} \) \( \textit{Qc7} \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \textit{Qel} \) and White enjoyed a space advantage in Novikov - Maciejewski, Tuzla 1989.

7  ...  \( \textit{Qgf6} \)

Alternatives: 7 ... \( \textit{Qd6} \)? 8 \( \textit{Qc5} \)?! \( \textit{Qd5} \) 9 0-0 \( \textit{Qgf6} \) 10 \( \textit{Qel} \) 0-0 11 \( \textit{Qb3} \) b6 12 \( \textit{Qd3} \) \( \textit{Qb7} \) 13 \( \textit{Qe2} \) e6 was only slightly better for White in Westerinen - K. Arkell, London 1988; or 7 ... \( \textit{Qb6} \) 8 \( \textit{Qb3} \) \( \textit{Qh6} \) 9 g4?! (rather aggressive; simply 9 0-0 would give White an edge) 9 ... \( \textit{Qd5} \) 10 \( \textit{Qg5} \) \( f6 \) and the position is unclear.

8  \( \textit{Qxf6} \)  \( \textit{Qxf6} \)

9  0-0  0-0

10  \( \textit{Qe1} \)  \( \textit{Qf5} \)

Or 10 ... \( \textit{Qd6} \) 11 \( \textit{Qe2} \) e6 12 c3 and as usual White has a miniscule advantage; Westerinen - Djuric, Novi Sad OL 1990.

11  \( \textit{Qf4} \)  \( \textit{Qe4} \)

12  c3  \( \textit{Qd5} \)

13  \( \textit{Qb3} \)  \( \textit{Qe8} \)

14  \( \textit{Qe5} \)  \( \textit{Qxb3} \) ?!

This move assures White of an initiative in view of the superior pawn position.

15  \( \textit{axb3} \)  \( \textit{Qd7} \)

16  \( \textit{Qxg7} \)  \( \textit{Qxg7} \)

17  \( \textit{d5} \)  \( \textit{cx} d5 \)

18  \( \textit{Qxd5} \)  \( \textit{Qc7} \)

19  \( \textit{Qxa7} \)  \( \textit{Qxa7} \)

20  \( \textit{Qd4} \)  \( \textit{e5} \)

21  \( \textit{Qxa7} \)  \( \textit{Qc5} \)

22  \( b4 \)  \( \textit{Qd3} \)

23  \( \textit{Qe2} \)  \( f5 \)

24  \( \textit{Qa5} \)  \( \textit{Qxa5} \)

25  \( \textit{bxa5} \)  \( \textit{Qf6} \)

26  \( \textit{Qe1} \)  \( \textit{Qc1} \)

27  \( \textit{Qd2} \)  \( \textit{Qe6} \)

28  \( \textit{Qf3} \)  \( \textit{Qb3} \)

29  \( \textit{Qg5} \)  \( \textit{Qe7} \)

30  \( \textit{d5} \)  \( h6 \)

31  \( \textit{Qxe5} \)  1-0

In my opinion, Black's difficulties in this game are quite typical of the positions arising after 5 ... dxe4. Although objectively White's advantage must be minimal, it is simply unpleasant to play the Black side of the position. The open nature of the position leaves little room for intrigue. My own feeling is that it is best to avoid 5 ... dxe4. Either cut out 4 ... d5 entirely, or seek counterplay in the murkier lines with 5 ... h6 or 5 ... f6.

b) 5 ... h6

This rather odd-looking move is the way to liven the game up. It has been championed by former Women's World Champ, Nona Gaprindashvili, although her results of late have not been very encouraging.

A direct attempt to exploit the knight on h6 with 6 exd5 cxd5 7 g4 was tried in Anand - Gaprindashvili, Biel 1988. 7 0-0 8 e3 f6 9 d2 f7 10 0-0-0 h6 11 b1 a5 with an unclear position. More positional sixth move alternatives are 6 e2 and 6 d3. The most popular move, however, is:

6 f4 (52)

At first sight it looks like Black's plan will be to exchange on e4 and bring the knight to f5. White can always secure the d-pawn, however, with c3, and the knight on f5 would become a target for the pawn thrust g2-g4. Instead Black's plan is much more bizarre: ... f6, ... f7 with perhaps ... e5 to follow.

6 ... f6

Gaprindashvili tried 6 ... b6 against Xie at Novi Sad OL 1990; 7 c1 dxe4 8 xe4 f5 9 c3 e6 10 d3 d5 11 0-0 0-0 12 c1 and White had a pleasant game.

7 exd5 cxd5

8 xB8!!

8 xB5 has also been tried: 8 a6 9 c4 0-0 10 cxd5 a5 11 d3 f7 12 b3 xB3 13 axb3 should not have been much for White in Grünfeld - Gaprindashvili, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

8 ... xB8

9 B5+ (53)

9 ... f8!

It is important to retain the light-squared bishop, so 9 ... d7 is not advisable. 9 ... f7 was played in Barlow - Gaprindashvili, Palma de Mallorca 1989, but after 10 e2 White is threatening 11 xB5 with 12 c4 if the queen recaptures.
The game continued 10 ... e6 11 g4! a6 12 Qd3 Qd6 13 g5 and White has a powerful initiative.

After 9 ... f8, Gallagher - Spassky, Biel 1990 continued 10 Ne2 f7 11 0-0 e6 12 Qd3 Qh6 13 a4 g5 14 c4 b6 15 c3 e8 16 cxd5 exd5 17 Qc2 Qb7 18 Rae1 Qg5 19 Qxg5 Qxg5 20 f4 a6 21 Qxe8 Qxe8 22 Qb4 B5 23 Bd6 Draw agreed.

5 ... Qf6 (54)

c) 5 ... Qf6 (54)

White has the standard choice: continue development with 6 Qd3 or hit the knight immediately with 6 e5.

6 e5 Qe4
7 Qd3

Or 7 Qxe4; 7 ... dxe4 8 Qg5 c5 9 Qxe4 cxd4 10 f4 Qb6 11 Qd3 Qa6!? was O. K. for Black in Ziska - Karadeg, Novi Sad OL 1990.

7 ... Qxc3
8 bxc3 0-0
9 0-0 (55)

9 ... b6 10 Ne2 c5 11 dxc5 bxc5 12 c4 Qf5 13 Qxf5 gxf5 14 Qd3 e6 15 Qg5 Qd7 16 Qf6 and White had the initiative in Chiburdanidze - Danner, Graz 1991. Perhaps 9 ... b6 and 10 ... c5 is a little hasty. 9 ... Qd7, with the idea of ... c5, or even ... f6, should be fine for Black.

6 Qd3

The aim of this move is to secure a modest advantage and White should almost certainly be able to attain this goal.

6 ... dxe4
7 Qxe4 Qxe4

Or Black could play 7 ... Qbd7.

8 Qxe4 (56)

We are back to the standard type of position after the pawn exchange on e4. In view of his space advantage, White has an
easier game to play and it is very difficult for Black to create winning chances.

If Black does try to stir up the position, things can quickly go amiss; for example:

8 ... 0-0
9 0-0 0d7
10 0g5 c5?!
11 dxc5 h6

Or 11 ... 0xb2 12 0b1 and White has devastating ideas with c6.

12 0e3 0c7
13 c6!

Giving Black a weak pawn on c6. 13 ... bxc6 14 0d2 0a6 15 0fe1 0h7 16 0d4 e5 17 0f3! 0f6
18 0xh6 0xe4 19 0xe4 1-0


Conclusion

4 0f3 should really discourage Black from playing 4 ... d5. Of course, if you are happy with a draw then 4 ... d5 offers excellent chances for equality. But if White has modest ambitions then it is very difficult to create winning chances. The problem is that the central space advantage enables White to develop freely. After the eventual pawn exchange on e4 the position becomes sterile; there are simply no weaknesses in White’s camp.

My own (biased) advice is to opt for the Modern after 4 0f3 and learn the lines in the next chapter. Play is far riskier but at least you have better chances to play for a win!

Of the other fourth move alternatives for White, 4 h3 is by far the most popular. After 4 ... d5 White invariably plays 5 0f3 and we have transposed back into the lines above. After 4 h3 I would advise even more strongly that you enter a Pirc Defence. This is purely because I consider the Classical Pirc without h3 to be more dangerous than with h3 played; i.e. after 4 0f3 d6 White is not obliged to play h3.

4 0e3

is also sensible for White.

4 ... d5

and now ...

5 f3

Or 5 0d2!? dxe4 6 0xe4 0d7
7 0-0 0gf6 8 0xf6 0xf6 9 0f3 0-0 10 0e5 0e6 11 0b1 a5
12 h4 and White had a slight advantage in J. Polgar - Dunnnington, London 1988.

5 ... dxe4

This looks better than 5 ... 0b6, which did not work well in Wall - Murshed, London
1989, after 6 d2 dxe4 7 fxe4 
\( \mathcal{N} \)xb2 8 \( \mathcal{B} \)b1 \( \mathcal{N} \)a3 9 \( \mathcal{N} \)c4 and
White had excellent compensation for the pawn.

6 fxe4 \( \mathcal{B} \)f6
7 \( \mathcal{B} \)f3 0-0
8 \( \mathcal{N} \)d2

and again White has some
initiative.

Like with 4 \( \mathcal{B} \)f3, after 4 \( \mathcal{N} \)e3
I prefer to head into Modern-type positions with 4 ... d6.

This is covered in detail in
Chapter 3.

Other moves are not danger-
sous: 4 g3 is well met by 4 ... d5
5 e5 f6 6 f4 \( \mathcal{B} \)h6 with a promis-
ing Gurgenidze-type position.

This concludes our survey of
3 ... c6. My own experience has
been that this move order is an
excellent means of confusing
White at an early stage in the
game.
Black now has to go into a Modern/Pirc opening. 3 ... c6 would make little sense since White has not committed a knight to c3, and hence has the option of bolstering the centre with c2-c3. The good news is that after 3 Qf3 White no longer has the option of playing certain dangerous lines with f4 such as the Austrian Attack.

3 ... d6

So now it's time to learn about the Pirc/Modern Defence. The Pirc is a reliable opening. I can vouch for this since it has served me well for over a decade. The beauty of the Pirc is that there aren't endless amounts of critical theory to learn, as in an opening like the Sicilian. Once you begin to understand the general principles and plans of the Pirc, memorising the theory is not important.

4 Qc3

We consider 4 c3 in Chapter 3.

4 ... Qf6 (58)

This is the standard starting position of the Classical Pirc. There is now an important divergence which divides this chapter.

A) 5 Qe2
B) 5 Qe3

A)

5 Qe2

This is the true Classical Pirc. White develops calmly in the hope of securing a lasting
advantage through the superior pawn centre.

5 ... 0–0
6 0–0 c6!? (59)

This is Black's most provocative sixth move, and the only one that we will consider in this book. 6 ... Qg4 is the main alternative but my own opinion is that 6 ... c6 is more dynamic, and the theory is easier!

7 ... Qbd7

Black's plan is simple, to play ... e5, ... Qe7 and perhaps ... a5. If White exchanges with dxe5, then after ... dxe5 the black knight is ready to occupy the useful c5 square, where it will menace the e4 pawn. If this plan can be carried out then Black will have achieved comfortable equality.

8 a4

White can prevent ... e5 by the immediate thrust 8 e5. Black should play 8 ... Qe8! 9 Qf4 (other moves can be met by 9 ... dxe5 and 10 ... Qc7. Black's control of squares like e6 and d5 compensates for White's space advantage. The e5 pawn does give White more board room, but it is also a target at which Black's pieces can aim; e.g. 9 Qe1 dxe5 10 dxe5 Qc7 11 Qf1 Qe6 12 a4 Qc7 and both sides had roughly equal chances in Stohl - Gelfand, Dortmund 1990) 9 ... dxe5 10 dxe5 Qc7 11 Qc1 Qe6 12 Qh6 Qc7 13 Qxg7 Qxg7 14 Qe3 b5 15 a3 Qb7 and White was only very slightly better in Ostojic - Planinc, Yugoslav Ch 1978 (Nunn).

8 ... e5

9 dxe5

Must White exchange on e5? After 9 Qe3 Qe7 (maybe 9 ... Qe8 obliges White to play 10 dxe5) 10 Qe1 b6 11 Qd2 Qb7 12 Qad1 White had a comfortable position in Nunn - Mohrlok,
Hamburg 1987. The question must be whether Black can react immediately with 9 ... exd4, e.g. 10  
\[ \text{\texttt{x}} \text{xd4} \text{\texttt{e}} \text{e8} 11 \text{f3} \text{d5} \]  
or 10  \text{\texttt{x}} \text{xd4} \text{\texttt{e}} \text{e8} and White's  
e-pawn is awkward to defend.  
9 ...  \text{dxe5}  
10  \text{\texttt{e3}}  
White cannot exploit the  
a3-f8 diagonal with 10 b3 in view of 10 ...  \text{\texttt{e}} \text{e8} 11  \text{\texttt{a}} \text{a3} \text{\texttt{f}} \text{f8}!  
and after the exchange of the  
dark-squared bishops Black has  
comfortable equality.  
10 ...  \text{\texttt{e7}} (60)  

I have reached this position  
on dozens of occasions. A  
remarkable number of players  
continue with the "natural" 11  
\text{\texttt{h}} \text{d2} and after 11 ...  \text{\texttt{c}} \text{c5} they  
spend a quarter of an hour  
agonising over how to defend  
the e-pawn. After 11  \text{\texttt{d}} \text{d2}  \text{\texttt{c}} \text{c5}  
White is already struggling to  
equalise! 12  \text{\texttt{x}} \text{c5}  \text{\texttt{xc5}} gives  
Black control of the dark  
squares. 12  \text{\texttt{d3}}  \text{\texttt{d8}} and Black  
has the initiative.  

So Black intends simply ...  
\text{\texttt{c}} \text{c5} and this threat has to be  
taken seriously. The only sen-
sible move for White is one  
which appears quite awkward -  
and is virtually never found by  
White players!  
11  \text{\texttt{d}} \text{d3}!  
The whole point is that  
Black's plan of 11 ...  \text{\texttt{c}} \text{c5} is  
rebuffed by 12  \text{\texttt{c}} \text{c4}; the knight  
cannot then retreat to e6 be-  
cause the e-pawn will be hang-  
ing.  

But all is not lost! d3 is not  
the most natural square for the  
queen and Black can now  
switch plans:  
11 ...  \text{\texttt{h}} \text{h5}  
12  \text{\texttt{fd1}}  \text{\texttt{f4}}  
13  \text{\texttt{d6}}  \text{\texttt{xe2+}}  
14  \text{\texttt{xe2}} (61)  

This useful move is a recur-  
rting theme in these positions  
after White plays  \text{\texttt{d6}}. With  
the e5 pawn blocked it makes  
sense to re-deploy the bishop  
along the f8-a3 diagonal.  
15  \text{\texttt{xe7}}  \text{\texttt{xe7}} 16  \text{\texttt{d2}}  \text{\texttt{c}} \text{c5}  
and Black has equalised com-  
fortably; 17  \text{\texttt{c}} \text{c4} can be met by  
either 17 ...  \text{\texttt{xe4}} 18  \text{\texttt{xe5}}  \text{\texttt{e}} \text{e8}  
or 17 ...  \text{\texttt{f6}}?.
The conclusion seems to be that after 7 h3 Black has excellent chances to equalise fully. Moreover if White does not understand the position then the pendulum rapidly swings in Black’s favour.

Having now dealt with 7 h3 we now consider other seventh move alternatives for White.

a) 7 a4
b) 7 Ne1
c) 7 Qf4
d) 7 Ng5

a)

7 a4

This has become the most popular response to 6 ... c6. White aims to reach similar positions to those just considered, but without wasting a move with h3.

7 ... Bd7

Many players are tempted to reply with 7 ... a5. This is certainly playable, but I feel that the text offers more dynamic play for Black.

White has two main moves:

a1) 8 Ne3
a2) 8 a5

a1)

8 Ne3 (62)

Though less popular than 8 a5, this move may be a promising alternative; e.g. 8 ... e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 wd6 (the queen cannot be evicted from this square without concessions) 10 ... Fe8 11 Qc4 Qf8 12 Qd2 and White had the initiative in Psakhis – Bologan, Nimes 1991. Another plan is 10 Qd2, which I have never seen in tournament play; e.g. 10 ... Fe7 11 Qc4 Qc5? 12 Qd6! with a clear plus for White.

The idea of 8 Ne3 is the result of a rethinking over the last few years as to whether this logical bishop move needs to be prepared by either h3 or f3, and is a recurring theme in recent Pirc/Modern theory. The question revolves around whether Black can exploit the placing of the bishop with an immediate ... Qg4. In this case 8 ... Qg4 is met by 9 Ne5 and White threatens 10 h3; if the knight must return to f6 then Black could be in trouble. Black could go the whole hog with 9 ... h6 and 10 ... g5. This might appeal to those who love to hack, but it also seriously weakens the light squares in
Black's position, namely h5, g4 and f5. One possible idea that has just crossed my mind is to try 8 ... d5!?; now 9 e5 (9 exd5 cxd5 should give White nothing) 9 ... g4 10 f4 f6 11 exf6 dxf6 and we have a murky position where Black's pieces look very active.

If this idea is codswallop, then Black needs some new ideas against 8 e3.

a2) 8 a5 (63)

The question is whether Black can get away with playing 8 ... e5; after 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 d6! the queen is surprisingly awkward to remove. For example, 10 ... c8 11 b4 h6 12 e3 c7 13 f1 d1 e6 14 d6 and according to Nunn, White was clearly better in Haik - Todorcevic, Marseilles 1987. Nunn also analyses 10 e8 11 c4 f8 12 d3 and points to the weakness on f7, but I cannot see any great problems for Black after 12 ... h6! ... e7 and ...

... c5 will follow and Black is not worse.

9 e3 e5

Another idea is 9 ... b8 as played by the colourful English grandmaster Julian Hodgson against Fleer (London 1990). 10 d2 b5 11 axb6 axb6 12 f4 b5 13 e5 e8 14 e1 c6 with chances for both sides.

10 dxe5 dxe5 (64)

11 h3 d8 12 b1 d8 13 a2 c6 and Black had few problems in Loginov - Azmaiparashvili, Manila OL 1992.

b) 7 e1

This was once considered a powerful option for White, but it now seems that Black can achieve equality with few problems.

7 ... bd7! (65)

Other moves are asking for trouble: diverge from the text at your own risk! As a warning: 7 ... c7 8 f4! bd7 9 e5 h5 10 exd6? (10 g5! is virtually winning for White, as your author discovered to his cost
some years ago, e.g. 10 ... dxe5 11 Qxe7 Qe8 12 d5! to meet 12 ... Qxe7 with 13 d6. 13 d6 is coming in any case and Black's position is in tatters) 10 ... exd6 11 Qg5 and White had only a slight advantage in Karpov - Speelman, Paris Immopar 1991 - 10 Qg5 would have been better, Tola!

![Chess Diagram]

8 Qf4 a5

Probably better than 8 ... b6 as tried in Karpov - C. Hansen, Biel 1992. 9 Qc1 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 Qe3 Qc7 12 Qd2 Qd8 13 Qd1 - this is similar to the position below but White has not been obliged to play a4. In this game White retained a slight advantage throughout.

9 Qd2

Other moves such as 9 Qd2 will be met by 9 ... e5.

9 ... Qc7!

Clever. Now White has no tricks with the e5 advance, and no way of preventing 10 ... e5. After 10 d5 Qb6! Black is very active.

10 a4

If 10 Qc1 then Black is under no obligation to play ... e5 immediately. For example, 10 ... b5 is an active way of playing.

10 ... e5

11 dxe5 dxe5

12 Qe3 (65)

A standard type of position which should not cause Black any great worry. Black's only task is to free his pieces, in particular the two bishops. The role of the dark-squared bishop on the h8-a1 diagonal is now defunct so it should re-deploy along the f8-a3 diagonal.

12 ... Qd8 13 Qc1 Qf8 14 Qd1 Qc5 and Black has equalised comfortably; Rigosov - Azmagnarashvili, Moscow 1986.

c) 7 Qf4

A double-edged move. If Black can get in the natural ... e5 advance then it will be with tempo, but the bishop on f4 makes this into a difficult task.

7 ... Qbd7

Less adventurous is 7 ... Qg4 8 h3 Qxf3 9 Qxf3 d5 10 e5 Qd7 11 Qg5 f6 12 exf6 exf6 13 Qf4
and White is slightly better.

8 \( \text{b}d2 \) (67)

Of course, 8 \( \text{e}e1 \) would transpose into (b) above.

![Chess diagram]

Although this system is rarely employed by White, it is not clear that Black has an easy route to equality. Trying to equalise with the immediate tactical blow 8 ... e5 seems to fail: 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 \( \text{e}xe5 \text{b}xe5 \) 11 \( \text{e}xe4 \text{f}xe5 \) 12 \( \text{c}xd8 \text{b}xd8 \) 13 \( \text{g}g5 \) and White has a dangerous initiative in the endgame; King - McNab, Blackpool Z 1990.

8 ... \( \text{c}c7 \)

9 e5 \( \text{h}5 \)

The alternative is 9 ... \( \text{e}e8 \) but after 10 \( \text{e}e3 \) White has established a powerful bind.

10 \( \text{exd}6 \)

Now 10 \( \text{g}g5 \) is not so powerful in view of 10 ... dxe5 11 \( \text{d}xe7 \text{exd}4 \) 12 \( \text{c}xd4 \text{b}e8 \) and Black is doing fine.

10 ... \( \text{exd}6 \)

11 \( \text{e}e4 \)

If 11 \( \text{g}g5 \) then 11 ... \( \text{b}b6 \) is roughly equal.

11 ... \( \text{df}6?! \)

12 \( \text{c}xd6 \text{xe}4 \) 13 \( \text{xc}7 \text{xd}2 \)

14 \( \text{xd}2 \text{xd}4 \) 15 c3 \( \text{g}g7 \) 16 \( \text{xh}5 \text{gxh}5 \) and the bishop pair compensated for the doubled h-pawns in Keitlinghaus – Lau, Dortmund 1991.

d) 7 \( \text{g}5 \)

White aims to utilise the bishop the h4-d8 diagonal. Providing Black avoids any tricks with an e5 break then this line is not dangerous.

7 ... \( \text{c}7 \)

I still prefer 7 ... \( \text{bd}7 \) intending ... e5. If 8 e5 then 8 ... \( \text{e}e8 \) 9 \( \text{e}4 \text{dxe}5 \) 10 dxe5 \( \text{c}c7 \) and Black has strong pressure on e5.

8 \( \text{bd}2 \) b5

9 a3 \( \text{bd}7 \) 10 \( \text{fe}1 \) e5 11 \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 12 d5 and the position was unclear in Guimaraes – Mohr, Solingen 1992.

This concludes our survey of line A, 5 \( \text{e}2 \). Apart from certain lines such as (a1) Black seems to have little difficulty equalising in most variations. Moreover, the "equal" positions arising are usually dynamic and tense, so that Black will have good chances to play for the full point.

B)

5 \( \text{e}3 \) (68)

This is far more aggressive than 5 \( \text{e}2 \). By delaying the development of the bishop on f1, White keeps certain options
open. For example, if Black plays immediately for an ... e5 advance, then after the exchange on e5, the f1 bishop will develop straight to c4 (rather than e2). Even more dangerous is the blunt plan of d2 and h6. This plan has been honed into a fine weapon by some of England's leading young players - having been on the receiving end I can assure you that it is not easy to negotiate!

The point is that the system is extremely flexible. If Black just develops casually with ... 0-0, ... c6 and ... c7 then d2, h6 and h4 comes with incredible force. But if Black takes too many precautions then White can quickly switch back to the quieter systems with moves like e2 or h3. Personally, I believe that this is one of the best ways of playing against the Pirc and Black must tread very carefully.

We will consider two ways of playing for Black:

a) 5 ... c6
b) 5 ... 0-0

Again the question of the immediate 5 ... g4 arises: 6 g5 h6 7 h4 g5 8 g3 and the pleasure of pushing pawns should not obscure the weaknesses in Black's kingside.

a) 5 ... c6

If you have transposed into the Pirc through the Chapter 1 move order 1 e4 g6 2 d4 g7 3 c3 c6 4 f3 d6 5 e3 f6 then you obviously do not have an option at this point. Still, ... c6 is always a good move to achieve counterplay since Black can flick in a quick ... b5 to put pressure on e4 in view of the ... b4 advance.

One important point to note is that if White plays e3 without h3, then White's pawn advance e5 is less effective. This is because Black can react with ... g4 hitting the bishop on e3.

Now White has a choice:

a1) 6 h3
a2) 6 d2

a1) 6 h3 0-0 (69)

It might be worth speculating if 6 ... b5 is possible; e.g. 7 e5 dxe5 8 dxe5 xd1+ 9 xd1 f6d7; now both 10 f4 and 10 e6 are possible. White can
probably avoid the issue with the immediate 6 a4 0-0 7 h3 with transposition.

Now Black’s natural ... e5 advance is not so good; e.g. 8 ... e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 \( \text{\texttt{Wd6}} \) and suddenly Black’s position is starting to look desperate. Now after 10 ... \( \text{\texttt{Ne8}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{Qc4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qf8}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{Wd3}} \), f7 is vulnerable, whilst 10 ... \( \text{\texttt{Ne8}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{Bb4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qf6}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{Cc4}} \) gave White a very pleasant position in Nunn – Davies, Swansea 1987.

Much more promising for Black is a move that I stumbled upon during a game in which I was totally ignorant of the opening theory.

8 ... \( \text{\texttt{Bb8}} \)

Black’s plan is simple: to play ... b5, and after axb6 and ... axb6, to play ... b5 again.

9 \( \text{\texttt{d5?!}} \)

This leaves Black with a promising position, so White has to find a good plan here. 9 \( \text{\texttt{Nc2}} \) b5 10 axb6 axb6 11 0-0 \( \text{\texttt{Cc7?!}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{d5}} \) was good for White in Motwani – Norwood, London 1988. However, some months later I played the superior 11 ... b5 12 e5 \( \text{\texttt{Nc8}} \) and Black was doing fine in Motwani – Norwood, British Ch (Blackspool) 1988.

9 ... \( \text{\texttt{Qc5!}} \)

10 \( \text{\texttt{Qd2}} \)

After 10 \( \text{\texttt{Qxc5}} \) dxc5 11 dxc6 bxc6 Black’s pair of bishops and open b-file more than compensate for the doubled c-pawns.

10 ... \( \text{\texttt{cx}d5} \)

11 exd5 b5 12 axb6 \( \text{\texttt{Wxb6}} \) 13
\(1 \, e4 \text{ with } 3 \, f3 \) 63

\( \text{c4 } b4 \, 14 \, d2 \, b7 \, 15 \, a5 \, d7 \, 16 \, c4 \, x b2 \, 17 \, 0-0 \, f5 \) and Black was already winning in Anand – Norwood, British Ch (Blackpool) 1988.

a2)

6 \, d2

This is far more aggressive than 6 h3, and has become a formidable weapon in the hands of several young English masters. It reminds me somewhat of the longbow. This weapon was developed in medieval England and used with devastating effect on the Continent. The English chess mercenaries have caused similar devastation with this system on the European chess circuit. It has been christened "The 150 Attack", since the crude simplicity of the opening would appeal to a club player rather than a master. (On the English rating system a 150 player would have an Elo equivalent of 1800).

Like the longbow, the system is easy to use and involves little risk for the attacker. The system is also quite flexible; White can often abandon the attack in favour of a more positional approach.

Black has two main alternatives to choose from at this juncture:

a21) 6 ... wa5

a22) 6 ... b5

Other moves seem to ask for trouble: 6 ... a6 7 axa6 bxa6 8 h6 was good for White in Hebden – Conquest, Hastings 1991.

6 ... bd7 7 h6 xh6 8 xh6 e5 9 0-0-0 leaves Black with dark square weaknesses.

6 ... g4 7 xe2 and as usual the ... g4 and ... c6 moves do not work well together.

6 ... 0-0. This move requires strong nerves; 7 h6 and White continues the attack with d3, 0-0-0 and h4-h5.

a21) 6 ... wa5 (71)

This active move aims to harass the king if White castles long; e.g. 7 0-0-0 b5 8 e5 b4 with a double-edged position. Now White's most natural move is to play 7 d3 but this runs into the surprisingly awkward 7 ... g4!; 8 0-0-0 leaves the knight pinned to the d1 rook and Black can continue with 8 ... bd7. In Gallagher – Norwood, Benidorm 1991, White could find no better reply to 7
64 1 e4 with 3 \( \text{\texttt{3\textbackslash f3}} \)

... \( \text{\texttt{f4}} \) than the "visual" \( \text{\texttt{f1}} \). The game continued 8 ... e5 9 h3 exd4 10 \( \text{\texttt{d4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e6}} \) with an unclear position.

However, White has a powerful response to 6 ... \( \text{\texttt{a5}} \):

7 \( \text{\texttt{a3!}} \)

This simple move cuts out much of Black's queenside counterplay. In some lines White can even begin queenside aggression with b2-b4.

7 ... 0-0

8 \( \text{\texttt{e2}} \) e5

Probably 8 ... \( \text{\texttt{b7}} \) is preferable.

9 dxe5 dxe5

10 \( \text{\texttt{d1}} \)

Abandoning any ideas of playing for mate with \( \text{\texttt{h6}}, \) White is happy to achieve a clear positional advantage.

10 ... \( \text{\texttt{bd7}} \)

11 h3 \( \text{\texttt{h5}} \)

12 0-0 \( \text{\texttt{c7}} \)

13 \( \text{\texttt{d6}} \)

After 13 ... \( \text{\texttt{x6d6}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{x6d6}} \) White enjoyed a lasting advantage which was converted into a winning endgame in Hennigan – Norwood, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1991. Although my own view is that Black should have some route to equality in this line, it is hardly a pleasant experience.

a22)

6 ... b5

7 \( \text{\texttt{d3}} \) (72)

I really do not trust this position for Black. White has firm control over the centre and the option of an attack with \( \text{\texttt{h6}}, \) h4-h5 etc. Moreover ... b5 has done little to help Black; after ... \( \text{\texttt{b4}}, \) \( \text{\texttt{e2}} \) the b-pawn is attacked and the knight is ready to redeploy on the kingside. In practice Black has been scoring abysmally with loss after loss.

7 ... \( \text{\texttt{bd7}} \) (7 ... \( \text{\texttt{a6}} \) was rather slow in Gallagher – Todorov, Biel 1991: \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) 0-0 9 e5 dxe5 10 dxe5 \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{g4}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{f4}} \) f6 13 h3 \( \text{\texttt{e5}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) fxe5 15 \( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) and White was clearly better) 8 \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) 0-0 9 \( \text{\texttt{tg7}} \) \( \text{\texttt{g7}} \) 10 a4! b4 11 \( \text{\texttt{e2}} \) a5 12 \( \text{\texttt{g3}} \) was very comfortable for White in Dunnington – Calvo, Cannes 1992.

My conclusion is that the starting position after 6 \( \text{\texttt{d2}} \) may well be difficult for Black. Perhaps Black can fiddle the move order by delaying either ... \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) or ... \( \text{\texttt{g7}} \), e.g. 1 e4 g6 2 d4 \( \text{\texttt{g7}} \) 3 \( \text{\texttt{c3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 4 \( \text{\texttt{f3}} \) d6 5 \( \text{\texttt{e3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d7}} \) 6 \( \text{\texttt{d2}} \) e5, though White can still play actively: 7 0-0-0 \( \text{\texttt{e7}} \) 8 \( \text{\texttt{b1}} \) \( \text{\texttt{gf6}} \) 9 \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \)
0–0 10 \( \text{Q}xg7 \text{Q}xg7 \) 11 h4 b5? 12 \( \text{Q}d3 \) was good for White in Mortazavi – Norwood, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1991. 11 ... h6 or 11 ... h5 were improvements for Black.

The other alternative is to play 5 ... 0–0 which is analysed in the next section, although this is not possible if Black has played an early ... c6.

b) 5 ... 0–0 6 \( \text{Q}d2 \) (73)

Other moves will transpose into lines under (a).

6 ... \( \text{Q}g4 \)

Both 6 ... \( \text{Q}c6 \) and 6 ... a6 are possible. After 6 ... \( \text{Q}c6 \) 7 h3 e5 8 dxe5 \( \text{Q}xe5 \) 9 \( \text{Q}xe5 \) dxe5 10 \( \text{Q}xd8 \) \( \text{Q}xd8 \) 11 \( \text{Q}c4 \) c6 12 a4 White possessed only a minute advantage in Fernandez – Spraggett, Andorra 1991.

6 ... a6 looks logical but may fail to a direct assault by White; 7 \( \text{Q}h6 \) b5 8 \( \text{Q}d3 \) \( \text{Q}b7 \) 9 a3 and White can now start blasting with h4–h5, 0–0–0 and so on.

7 \( \text{Q}g5!? \)

A tricky little move. 7 \( \text{Q}e2 \) will transpose into a more placid Classical with 7 ... \( \text{Q}g4 \) 8 h3 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) 9 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) e5 and we are in well-charted territory.

7 ... \( \text{Q}c6 \)

This seems preferable to 7 ... h6 as was seen in Kosten – Seret, French League 1991. Now White played the powerful 8 h3: 8 ... \( \text{Q}h5 \) 9 g4 hxg5 10 \( \text{Q}e2 \) and White will reclaim the piece with an excellent attack.

8 h3 \( \text{Q}d7 \) 9 d5 \( \text{Q}b4 \) (74)

After 10 \( \text{Q}f3 \) c6 11 \( \text{Q}e2 \) cxd5 12 \( \text{Q}xd5 \) \( \text{Q}a6 \)! Black had a very comfortable position in Wirthensohn – Khalifman, Hamburg 1991. This would suggest that 6 ... \( \text{Q}g4 \) is the most effective way to combat the plan of \( \text{Q}e3 \) and \( \text{Q}d2 \). The only drawback is that White does have the option of transposing into quieter lines with 7 \( \text{Q}e2 \). Still, one cannot have everything ...
3 Other Third Moves for White

Besides the most obvious moves, 3 \( \text{c}3 \) and 3 \( \text{f}3 \), there are many different ways of playing for White. After all, White controls the centre, and this in itself allows for a great deal of flexibility. The centre can be used to pawn-storm Black’s position, or to support a kingside attack. But the centre can also be an end in itself. Some players are content to secure the pawn centre in order to achieve a slight but lasting initiative. In this chapter we discuss these various plans and consider ways in which Black can counter.

We consider five different systems for White and hence this chapter divides into five independent sections:

A) White plays \( \text{c}3 \)
B) White plays \( \text{d}2 \) and \( \text{e}3 \) (without \( \text{f}3 \))
C) White plays \( \text{g}3 \)
D) White plays \( \text{f}4 \)
E) White plays \( \text{c}4 \)

A) White plays \( \text{c}3 \)
The idea of playing \( \text{c}3 \) is quite logical. Black has fianchettoed along the a1-h8 diagonal, and White’s move will reduce the scope of the bishop. In addition, if Black attempts the natural challenge to the centre with \( \text{e}5 \) or \( \text{c}5 \), then \( \text{c}3 \) will serve as a useful support for the d4 pawn. Also, if White does exchange in the centre, say with \( \text{dxe5} \), then the \( \text{c}3 \) pawn will guard the d4 square from enemy pieces. If White is the type of player who wants a risk-free way of playing against the Modern, then this is the system to chose.

3 \( \text{c}3 \) d6 (76)

Now White must chose between three ways of playing:
a) 4 f4  
b) 4 \textit{f3}  
c) 4 \textit{g5}  

could leave the whole system in doubt. Anyway, judge for yourself ...  

\begin{align*}  
4 & \ldots \quad \textit{f6} \\
5 & \textit{d3} \quad 0-0 \\
6 & \textit{f3} \quad \textit{c5! (78)} 
\end{align*}

Mounting a direct challenge to the centre which cannot be ignored. Black intends simply ... cxd4 and ... \textit{c6} to harass the weakened d4 square. So White accepts the bait:

\begin{align*}  
7 & \textit{dxc5} \quad \textit{bd7} 
\end{align*}

This is the idea. 7 ... dxc5 would be dreadful after simply 8 e5 when White has a huge position.

8 \textit{cxd6}  

White has no choice since 8 e5 can be met by 8 ... dxe5 9 fxe5 \textit{g4} and White's position is crumbling.

\begin{align*}  
8 & \ldots \quad \textit{exd6} \\
9 & 0-0 \quad (79) 
\end{align*}

White can instead try to prevent the knight moving to c5 with 9 \textit{e3}. Black should continue forcefully: 9 ... \textit{xe4} 10 \textit{xe4} \textit{e8} 11 0-0 (the piece cannot be held; 11 \textit{bd2} \textit{f6} 12 \textit{g5} h6! with a crushing posi-
Black has excellent compensation for the pawn. All White's pieces become tied to defending the e4 pawn, while Black's pieces are superbly placed. The white king is also slightly exposed.

10 ... \textit{e8}

11 \textit{bd2} (80)

Black should not be tempted to liquidate too quickly; 11 ... \textit{x}d3 12 \textit{x}d3 \textit{x}e4 12 ... \textit{xe4

Now 14 \textit{f}e1 is well met by 14 ... \textit{g}4 with a multitude of threats. So White must return
the pawn gracefully.

14  f5  \(f\)xe4
15  \(g\)xe4 \(g\)xe4
16  \(f\)xg6 \(h\)xg6
17  \(g\)xe4 \(g\)xe4
18  \(b\)b3 \(e\)e6
19  \(g\)xe6 \(g\)xe6
20  \(f\)f4 \(c\)c5!

and Black’s activity gave him an advantage in Hodgson – Norwood, British Ch (Plymouth) 1989.

Unless someone produces a refutation to 6 ... c5, this line suggests that Black can have lots of fun if White plays 4 f4.

b)  

| 4  | \(f\)f3 \(f\)f6 |
| 5  | \(b\)bd2 (82) |

This is an ultra-safe system for White, which keeps the central pawns well protected. Black can only really play for equality since after the natural ... e5 advance, and the exchange (dxe5, ... dxe5) White has the more active pieces in a near-symmetrical pawn structure. In such positions the c3 pawn will cover d4, the usual square for a black knight to head to; also, the knight on d2 can hop to c4 where it will harass the e5 pawn and the d6 square if Black has played ... c6.

Although there are few prospects of an advantage from the opening, Black does have excellent chances for equality. My own policy against this c3 system is to try to equalise fully and put the onus on White to prove any advantage. To do this White usually has to unbalance the position; then Modern players must grab their chances.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
5 \ldots \\
6 \(e\)e2
\end{array}
\]

The alternative is 6 \(d\)d3. Now 6 ... \(c\)c6 has tended to lead to an edge for White, e.g. 7 0-0 e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 \(c\)c4 \(e\)e7 10 b4 \(d\)d8 11 b5 \(e\)e6 12 \(a\)a3 \(e\)e8 13 \(c\)c2 \(x\)xc4 14 \(x\)xc4 \(a\)a5 15 \(e\)e2 and the bishop pair gives White a comfortable position; Knezevic – Tal, Leningrad 1977. My own preference is 6 ... \(b\)bd7 7 0-0 e5. Now if 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 \(c\)c4 \(e\)e7 10 b4 b6 is possible; Black aims to fianchetto and put pressure on e4. Black should be doing okay in these positions.

6 ... \(c\)c6

According to Nunn, this is the safest move, but I still like 6 ... \(b\)bd7; e.g. 7 0-0 e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 \(c\)c2 b6 and there is still tension in the position.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
7 \ 0-0 \\
e5
\end{array}
\]
8  dxe5  dxe5
9  dxe5  dxe (83)

Although White's pieces are slightly more active, Black should have little difficulty equalising in this position. A natural move for White such as 10 c2 allows Black to equalise immediately with 10 ... h6. Now White is obliged to trade bishops and the exchange of Black's poorer bishop (restricted by the e5 pawn) leaves little play in the position, e.g. 11 d1 e7 12 c4 xc1 13 axc1 b6; the bishop will come to b7 and the rooks will be traded along the d-file.

The only danger in this system is that Modern players might not be able to avoid drawing.

c)  4 g5

This is a more active way of playing for White, since the bishop is more menacing along the h4-d8 diagonal than stuck at home on cl. Still, my own feeling is that it should not be too dangerous for Black and there are more chances for action than in line (b) above.

4  ...  f6 (84)

5  d2

This is probably the best way to defend the e4 pawn since it allows White the option of deploying the bishop to squares other than d3. After 5 d3, 5 ... 0-0 6 f3 c6 7 0-0 h6 8 h4 e5 is considered to be an equalising line for Black. 9 dxe5 dxe5 (9 ... dxe5 is also fine) 10 a3 c6 11 c2 e8! led to equality in Sharif - Ftcancik, Lyons 1988. Black intends simply ... h5 and ... f6. Black's only problem in these positions is that the bishop is out of play on g7. Once it is exchanged for White's active bishop on h4, Black should have few problems.

5  ...  0-0

Or Black can mix things with an immediate 5 ... c6 6 g3 h6 7 h4 g5 8 g3 h5 9 c4 e6 which was unclear in Barbero - Davies, Budapest 1987.
5 ... h6 6 ∆h4 e5 is also satisfactory for Black; 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ∆gf3 ∆bd7 9 ∆e2 0–0 10 0–0 ∆e8 11 ∆c2 ∆h5 12 ∆fe1 ∆f6 and Black has equalised.

6 ∆gf3 (85)

If Black wants to equalise, then 9 ... ∆e8 is the sensible move in this position. The plan is to play ... ∆h5 and ... ∆f6. The drawback is that this plan is less effective if White has not exchanged on e5. If you are intent on achieving equality then you should probably play 5 ... h6 and follow the line under that footnote.

9 ... exd4!? 10 cxd4 g5 11 ∆g3 ∆h5

Black's risky play hinges on the assumption that the bishop pair and pressure against White's central pawns will compensate for the weakness of the kingside pawn structure.

6 ... h6

Also playable is 6 ... ∆e8 with the idea 7 ∆d3 ∆c6 and Black can play for equality with ... e5.

7 ∆h4 ∆bd7!? 8 ∆d3 e5 9 0–0 (86)

Assessing this position is rather difficult. True, Black's
kingside is exposed and the f5 square looks rather vulnerable. But Black has active pieces and if the queens are exchanged then the queenside majority will favour Black.

16 e5

I now made a serious error in the game Tiviakov - Norwood, Amantea 1992, with 16 ... dxe5; 17 dxe5 d8 18 c2 (now 18 g4 fails to 19 h4 xex5 20 xg4 xxb2 21 xh6+ f8 22 xc5+ 18 ... e6 19 f5 c7 20 fd4! then left White clearly better. The point is that the queen is a target on e7, and therefore 16 ... c7 was a much better move, e.g. 17 d1 fd8 (17 ... d6 intending ... xd5 is also possible) 18 c2 d6 19 f5 xd5 and Black is fighting. This line is not for the faint-hearted but could be useful if you need to play for a win. Those wishing for a quiet life can select the safer alternatives in the early opening.

The general conclusion of the c3 lines is that if Black wants equality then there is every chance of attaining it.

B) White plays d2 and e3 (without f3)

White's aim in this system is to play against Black's fianchetto position. By lining up the queen and bishop along the c1-h6 diagonal White has the option of exchanging the dark-squared bishops with h6. In itself this is not a dangerous threat, but it is often combined with a kingside pawn-storm h2-h4-h5 opening the h-file for the queen and rook. If Black is careless and castles too early on the kingside this can be a lethal plan. White will often castle queenside so that the kingside pawns can be used for aggressive purposes.

There are several ways to combat this system but the method which I recommend gives Black active counterplay. This involves leaving the knight on g8, where it prevents White's bishop from infiltrating on h6 and is safe from an e4-e5 thrust. The king also remains on its starting square in order to lessen the effect of White's h4-h5 storm. Instead Black expands on the queenside with c6 and b5 preparing for an assault on the monarch if White castles long. If White castles kingside then Black can also castle kingside without danger and revert to positional
play. The system as a whole requires some juggling by Modern players. You have to be prepared to react violently against White’s aggression. But beware of throwing all your pawns forward too quickly in case White continues positionally and you are left with a shattered position.

1 e4 g6
2 d4Bg7
3 Qe3 d6
4 Qc3 c6

Now 5 Qf3 would transpose into lines that we considered in Chapter 2. Here it is the white pawn which comes to f3.

5 Bd2 Qd7 (88)

White now has several options and Modern players need to be prepared for each.

a) 6 f3
b) 6 h4
c) 6 0–0–0
d) 6 f4

a)

6 f3

In keeping with White’s plan to secure the centre and play against Black’s kingside position. However, Black is under no obligation to castle into the danger.

6 ... b5
7 Qge2 (89)

Alternatively 7 h4 h5 8 0–0–0 a5!? 9 b1 Qb6! and Black is threatening ... b4 and ... Qc4. In Adams - Norwood, Oakham 1990, White could find nothing better than 10 Qe2 and now 10 ... Qxd2+ 11 Qxd2 f5 would have given Black a better endgame. 7 0–0–0 Qb6 8 h4 h5 tends to lead to unclear positions where Black can storm with the queenside pawns.

7 ... a6

This is the move favoured by Todorcevic, but I prefer 7 ... Qb6 which forces White to think about the c4 square immediately, e.g. 8 Qg3 h5? My own feeling is that 7 ... a6 is unnecessary.

8 g3

This seems strange but it was tried twice at Las Palmas.
1991. 8 0-0-0 looks more in the spirit of things but after 8 ... 
\( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b6 9 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) g3 h5 10 h4 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) gf6
Black should be doing fine - the knight seems slightly mis-
placed on g3.

8  \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) e5

9 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) g2 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) gf6 10 0-0 0-0 and Black had a satisfactory posi-

b) 6  \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) h4 (90)

This looks crude but it is certainly playable.

Has Black anything better? 6 ... \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) gf6 7 f3 b5 8 g4 h5 (per-
haps 8 ... h6 was possible) 9 g5 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) g8 10 a3 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b7 11 f4 turned out

7  f3  b5

8 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) h3  a6

I still like 8 ... \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b6 9 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) f2
\( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) f6 with active play.

9 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) f2  c7

10 g4 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b6 11 g5 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b7 12 b3 e6 and Black has a very comfort-
able position since White has

over-extended on the kingside; Jurkovic – Todorcevic, Geneva

c) 6 0-0-0

This seems like White’s best try since there is no compulsion
to play 6 f3, and delaying the move keeps the option of an f4
advance.

6  \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b5 (91)

7 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) d3

Probably more incisive is 7 f4 and now 7 ... b4 8 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) ce2 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) gf6 9
\( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) g3 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) g4 10 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) f3 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) xe3 11 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) xe3
a5 12 e5 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b6 13 f5 was unclear
in Geller – Terler, Leningrad
1977 (Nunn). Maybe 7 ... \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) gf6 is
possible with the idea 8 e5 b4 9
exf6 bxc3 10 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) xc3 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) xf6 11
\( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) xc6+ \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) d7 - in return for the
pawn Black has a better pawn
structure, active piece play and
open files against the white
king.

7  \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) b6

8 \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) f3  b8

Perhaps 8 ... \( \text{\textcopyright{}} \) g4 with a view
to doubling the f-pawns was
an improvement.
9 b3?! a5
10 h3 a4 11 h*el axb3 12 cxb3 f6 was already good for Black in Hort – Todorcevic, Biel 1991.

d) 6 f4

White attempts to exploit the calm moves ... d7 and ... c6 by amassing a powerful pawn centre.

6 ... b5

If 6 ... gf6 then 7 e5 g4 8 f3 and White enjoys a space advantage.

7 f3 gf6

8 e5

Instead 8 ed3 would transpose into Prasad – Chernin, Subotica 1987; 8 ... g4 9 e1 b7 10 h3 gf6 11 0-0 b4 12 e2 a5 13 b1 0-0 14 h4 c5 15 e5 h5 and Black was fighting.

8 ... b4 (92)

9 exf6

If 9 d1 f5 and Black has the coveted d5 square; 10 f2 0-0 and Black is fine.

9 ... bxc3

10 xc3 xf6 11 xc6+ d7

12 a6 0-0 13 d3 b8 14 b1 g4 15 d2 e5 and Black’s activity compensates for the pawn; Van der Wiel – M. Gurevich, Amsterdam 1991.

My own feeling about this system is that provided Black is careful there should be excellent prospects for activity and counter-attack.

C) 3 g3 (93)

Deploying the light-squared bishop is always a difficult decision for White when faced with the Modern. There is no totally satisfactory square along the f1-a6 diagonal. On b5 it will be hit by ... a6 or ... c6. On c4 it could be hit by either ... d5 or ... b5. On d3 it will be hemmed in by the e4 pawn and will also block the defence of the d4 pawn by the queen. If it rests on the natural square e2, then the e4 pawn can often be targeted. By fianchettoing this bishop White supports the centre from a distance and facilitates an easy deployment
of his pieces: knights on c3 and e2, bishop on e3, queen on d2, rooks on d1 and e1. White's position will basically play itself, since natural moves are often the best. I have been on the White side of this system on dozens of occasions and every time I achieve an enormous position from the opening. This is simply because my opponents had no idea how to deal with the system. They have probably heard that the system is not very dangerous (true) and assume that it will not be difficult to equalise (definitely not true!).

3

... d6

One way to set White thinking is to play the immediate 3...
d5 4 e5 f6!? 5 f4 c5 6 c3 dxc6 7
g2 f5 8 e2 e6 9 0-0 h5 10
c3 b6 and Black was doing fine in Kogan – Norwood, Oakham 1990. Unless White has a refutation, 3...
d5 could be a powerful riposte to 3 g3. Perhaps White has to try to transpose to the fianchetto with 3 e2 d6 4 g3. Anyway it’s worth having 3...
d5 up your sleeve.

4

g2 f6

There are obviously transpositional possibilities: 4...
c5 5
e2 cxd4 6 dxd4 f6 and we have a Sicilian Dragon.

5
c3 0-0

6
g2 e5

7

h3 (94)

This is the only move to play for an advantage. 7 dxe5 dxe5 is turgidly equal. 7 0-0 can be met by 7...
c6; now if 8 h3 then 8 exd4 9 d4 e4 10
c6 xc3 is very good for Black. White must play either 8
d5 or 8 dxe5 but the release of tension in the centre cannot be beneficial.

Now the position gets tricky. Black has three options here;
7...
c6; 7...
c6 and 7...
b7. In my own experience playing both sides of this position, only
7...
c6 can be recommended. 7...
c6 is playable; but Black has far fewer chances than with 7...
c6. 7...
b7 is quite dismal. The knight is not happy on
d7 and White is able to develop in comfort. The following game is a good example of what can go wrong for Black.

Norwood – Canfell
British Ch
(Eastbourne) 1991

1

g3

2

g2

3
e4
My opponent is now obliged to transpose into the Pirc Defence.

3  ...  d6
4  d4  Qg7
5  Qc3  0-0
6  Qge2  e5
7  h3  Qbd7
8  0-0  c6
9  a4

White usually has to prevent the pawn advance ... b5, so ... a6 or ... c6 will be met by a4.

9  ...  a5
10  Qe3  exd4
11  Qxd4

Probably the best way to recapture; now 11 ... Qc5 is prevented in view of 12 e5!. The e2 knight will soon find a better square than d4.

11  ...  Qe8
12  g4  Qe7?!

It is unwise to put the queen on the e-file since a white rook will soon be deployed on e1.

13  Qg3  h6
14  Qe1  Qc5
15  Qd2  Qe6
16  Qe3  Qh7
17  Qad1 (95)

White has done nothing special but already has complete domination. The d6-pawn is very vulnerable and I have the plan of f2-f4.

17  ...  Qd8
18  f4  Qe8
19  Qb6  Qb7
20  f5  Qe5
21  Qe2  Qf8
22  b3!

No need to take any risks; now the a-pawn is ready to drop so Black decides to lash out.

22  ...  d5
23  exd5  cxd5
24  Qd4  Qd7
25  Qf4  Qd6
26  Qxe5  Qxe5
27  Qf2  d4
28  Qe4  Qb6
29  fxe6  fxg6
30  Qd3!

and Black resigned since 30 ... Qxd3 31 Qf7+ Qh8 32 Qf6 is demolition time.

So my advice is to forget about both 7 ... c6 and 7 ... Qbd7 and concentrate on 7 ... Qc6.

7  ...  Qc6
8  Qe3  Qd7

This move seems preferable to the immediate 8 ... Qe8. This is because if White decides to push d5 then the rook is well placed on f8 to support an f7-f5 thrust. After 8 ... Qe8 9 0-0 a6 10 a4 Qd7 White tried to
exploit this move order with 11 d5; Djurhuus – Watson, Oslo 1991 continued 11 ... \( \texttt{a7} \) 12 f4 (I am not convinced that this move need be rushed; perhaps 12 a5 is an improvement) 12 ... exf4 13 \( \texttt{xf4} \) (both 13 exf4 and 13 \( \texttt{xf4} \) are possible) 13 ... b5 14 \( \texttt{d4} \) b4 15 \( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{c8} \) 16 g4 h6 17 \( \texttt{g3} \) \( \texttt{b6} \) with an unclear position.

9 \( \texttt{0-0} \) \( \texttt{a6} \) (96)

Here White captured on e5 in Kir. Georgiev – C. Hansen, Biel 1992; 10 dxe5 \( \texttt{xe5} \) (10 ... dxe5 11 \( \texttt{xd5} \) 11 b3 \( \texttt{e8} \) 12 \( \texttt{xd5} \) (perhaps 12 f4 was more testing) 12 ... \( \texttt{xd5} \) 13 exd5 h5 14 \( \texttt{d4} \) c5 15 dxc6 \( \texttt{xc6} \) and Black was doing O. K.

10 \( \texttt{a4} \) \( \texttt{exd4} \)
11 \( \texttt{xd4} \) \( \texttt{e8} \)
12 \( \texttt{e1} \) (97)

The alternative is 12 \( \texttt{de2} \) although this move seems less promising for White if ... a6 and a4 have been played. Now Black can continue 12 ... \( \texttt{b4} \) (is 12 ... b5 possible here? 13 axb5 axb5 14 \( \texttt{xa8} \) \( \texttt{xa8} \) 15 \( \texttt{xb5} \) \( \texttt{b8} \) 16 \( \texttt{ec3} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) with complications)

13 \( \texttt{f4} \) a5!? 14 \( \texttt{e1} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) 15 \( \texttt{d4} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 16 \( \texttt{d2} \) \( \texttt{f8} \) 17 \( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{ae8} \) 18 \( \texttt{ae1} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 19 \( \texttt{g7} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 20 b3 h5 with an unclear position in Mohr – Kosten, Altensteig 1989.

This is a critical point in the opening since White is on the verge of consolidating a space advantage. Black now has a resource which complicates the issue and yields active counterplay.

12 ... \( \texttt{b4} \)!

This is preferable to 12 ... \( \texttt{a5} \); Nunn analyses both 13 g4 and 13 b3 with favourable assessments for Black. However I cannot see a good reply to simply 13 \( \texttt{d3} \); e.g. 13 ... c5 14 \( \texttt{de2} \) and the knight looks woefully misplaced on a5.

13 \( \texttt{d2} \)

Less reckless than 13 g4 as played in Svidler – Hennigan, Oakham 1992; 13 ... c5 14 \( \texttt{de2} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) 15 \( \texttt{g3} \) b6 16 g5 \( \texttt{d7} \) 17 f4 \( \texttt{f8} \) 18 \( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{c7} \) 19 \( \texttt{c1} \) \( \texttt{ad8} \) and White's over-extended position is under considerable stress in view of the ... d5 break.
13 ... c5
14 Nb3 Nc6
15 Qf4

Far better than the passive 15 f3 c7 16 e2 Nxd8 17 c3 d5 18 Qf4 Nbd6 19 e5 Nxe4 and Black is having all the fun; Sek - Ksieki, Poland 1981.

15 ... Nh5
16 Qg5

16 Qxd6 Ne2 is good for Black. After 16 Qg5: 16 ... Qf6 17 Nh6 c7 18 Qd1 Qd7 19 g4 Qg7 20 c3 Qe6 21 Qe3 Nf6 22 Qd5 Qxd5 23 exd5 Qe5 24 Qe2 Nbd6 25 Nf4 Qd7 26 Bxe8 Nxe8 27 Qd2 Qe5 28 Qc4 Qxf4 29 Qxb6 Qxh6 30 Qxd7 Ng5 31 Qb6 and the game was agreed drawn in Klinger - Miles, Kusadasi 1990.

The conclusion is that if Black knows the theory in the 7 ... Qc6 variations then the g3 system should not be too dangerous. The real danger lurks in the variations with 7 ... Qbd7 and 7 ... c6 so I have avoided analysing these entirely. If you want to dabble in them, then you are on your own!

D)

3 f4 (98)

Probably the best that White can achieve from this move is a transposition into the Austrian Attack. However, as we discussed in Chapter 1, Modern players should try to avoid these highly theoretical lines. But 3 ... c6 is not a useful move with the knight still on b1. After 3 ... d6, however, Black will soon be obliged to face the Austrian; e.g. 3 ... d6 4 exf3 Qf6 5 f3. Since White has the “Austrian Option” after 3 ... d6, we will not consider this move. Black has two ways to mix things at this early stage in the game.

a) The sharp 3 ... c5
b) The stodgy 3 ... d5

a)

3 ... c5

White’s inflated pawn centre begs a direct challenge like ... c5, and the move cannot be ignored.

4 d5

This is the only way to play for an advantage. 4 Qf3 cxd4 5 Qxd4 Qc6 6 b3 d6 7 Qe2 f5?! 8 exf5 Qxf5 9 0-0 Bb6+ 10 Qh1 Qf6 11 Qc3 0-0 and Black’s active pieces more than compensated for the light-square weaknesses in Large - Norwood, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990. 4 dxc5 Qa5+ 5 c3 Qxc5 6 Qf3
\( \text{\&f6} \) is already comfortable for Black. 4 c3 cxd4 5 cxd4 \( \text{\&b6} \) 6 \( \text{\&f3} \) \( \text{\&c6} \) 7 d5 \( \text{\&d4} \) cannot be bad for Black.

4 ... \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{\textit{(99)}} \)

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\caption{Chessboard Diagram}
\end{figure}

Note that White now has the option of playing 5 c4 which transposes to lines considered in Chapter 5.

5 a4

Or 5 \( \text{\&c3} \) \( \text{\&f6} \) 6 \( \text{\&f3} \) 0-0 7 \( \text{\&d3} \) e6 and now if 8 dxe6, 8 ... \( \text{\&xe6} \) seems satisfactory for Black.

5 ... \( \text{\&f6} \)

6 \( \text{\&b5+} \) \( \text{\&fd7}?! \)

The idea of this move is to use the king’s knight to restrain the e5 advance while deploying the b8 knight on a6 where it will move to either c7 or b4. On the minus side, it leaves Black’s kingside position rather vulnerable. 6 ... \( \text{\&d7} \) and 6 ... \( \text{\&bd7} \) are alternatives.

7 \( \text{\&f3} \) 0-0

8 0-0 \( \text{\&a6} \)

9 \( \text{\&c3} \) \( \text{\&b4} \) \( \text{\textit{(100)}} \)

I prefer 9 ... \( \text{\&c7} \) with the idea of ... a6 and playing for ... b5, but White can still go for the jugular with 10 f5!?

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard2.png}
\caption{Chessboard Diagram}
\end{figure}

Positionally Black is doing fine, with the plan of queenside expansion (... a6, ... \( \text{\&b8} \) and ... b5). So White has to try to utilise the central pawns for a direct kingside onslaught.

10 f5 \( \text{\&f6} \)

11 \( \text{\&g5} \) h6

12 \( \text{\&h3} \) g5

13 \( \text{\&f2} \) e6

14 dxe6 \( \text{\&xe6} \)

15 \( \text{\&d3} \) a6

16 \( \text{\&c4} \) d5

with a very messy position that somehow turned out good for Black in Bareev – Speelman, Brussels Rapid 1992.

These lines look rather dangerous for Black but White runs the risk of over-extending, and in practice Modern players have been able to cope with the direct kingside attack. If your nerves are up to the challenge, these lines can be a lot of fun!

b)

3 ... \( \text{d5} \)

4 e5 \( \text{\textit{(101)}} \)
Other moves will wreck the cohesion of the pawn centre.

This is the "Accelerated Gurgenidze"; i.e. without ... c6 and $\textrole{c}3$ thrown in. It appears that this should favour White since the knight is often misplaced on c3 and is usually trying to re-deploy. White also has the option to play c3 if the d4 pawn becomes a target. On the other hand, Black's position is still quite solid and White has to work hard to prove an advantage.

4 ... $\textrole{h}6$

My feeling is that 4 ... c5 is just a little too loose. 5 dxc5 f6 6 $\textrole{xf}3$ $\textrole{g}4$ 7 $\textrole{d}5+$ (7 $\textrole{d}e2$ may be better) 7 ... $\textrole{xc}6$ 8 0-0 $\textrole{h}6$ 9 $\textrole{xf}3$ 10 $\textrole{xf}3$ 0-0 11 $\textrole{xc}6$ $\textrole{bxc}6$ 12 e6 f5 13 c3 $\textrole{c}8$ 14 $\textrole{e}1$ d4 15 cxd4 $\textrole{xd}4+$ 16 $\textrole{h}2$ $\textrole{xc}5$ 17 $\textrole{d}2$ $\textrole{d}4$ 18 $\textrole{c}3$ and White has returned the pawn with a favourable position; Polgar - de la Riva, San Sebastian 1991.

5 $\textrole{f}3$ $\textrole{g}4$

6 h3

Should White rush this move? 6 $\textrole{e}3$ intending 7 $\textrole{bd}2$ looks more sensible. 6 ... $\textrole{f}5$ is met by 7 $\textrole{f}2$.

6 ... $\textrole{xf}3$

7 $\textrole{xf}3$ $\textrole{f}5$

8 c3 e6

9 g4 $\textrole{h}4+$

10 $\textrole{d}1$ $\textrole{g}3$

11 $\textrole{f}2$ h5

12 $\textrole{g}1$ $\textrole{f}5$

13 $\textrole{g}2$

Presumably 13 $\textrole{hx}h4$ $\textrole{hx}h4$ is an okay endgame for Black.

13 ... $\textrole{hxg}4$

14 $\textrole{xg}4$ $\textrole{e}7$

with chances for both sides; Ruhan - Moskalenko, Balassagyarmat 1990.

White may be able to get an advantage after 3 ... d5 but the ensuing positions are very gritty and are perfectly playable, even at grandmaster level.

E)

3 $\textrole{c}4$ (102)

The plan of $\textrole{c}4$ against the Modern has experienced a fall from popularity in recent years. In the long term the bishop may be a target to a ... b5 or ... d5 advance, but White does
have immediate pressure against f7. Modern players must also beware of the thrust e4-e5 which in certain positions can be devastating. On the whole, however, the system is not dangerous for Black and there are opportunities to mix things.

3 ... d6
4  \( \text{\textit{f3}} \)

This is the only way for White to play an independent line. After 4 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) c6 we have transposed back into lines considered in Chapter 1.

Play now diverges:

a) 4 ... \( \text{\textit{f6}} \)
b) 4 ... e6

\[ \text{\textit{a)}} \]

4 ... \( \text{\textit{f6}} \)

This move is preferable to the one I tried many years ago: 4 ... \( \text{\textit{d7??}} \). Fortunately for me, my ageing opponent quickly played 5 0-0, missing the deadly 5 \( \text{\textit{xf7+ df7}} \) 6 \( \text{\textit{g5+}} \) and wins – I went on to win the tournament!

5 \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) (103)

Again 5 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) c6 will transpose to Chapter 1. In Utemov - Glianez, Moscow 1991, White pushed immediately 5 e5 dxe5 6 \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) 0-0 7 0-0 \( \text{\textit{fd7}} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) c5 and Black was doing fine.

After 5 \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) we take 5 ... 0-0 as the main line but there are other possibilities for Black. An active way to play is 5 ... \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) threatening ... \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) to attack d4. So 6 e5 dxe5 7 dxe5 \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{hb5}} \) (8 e6 f5 and the e6 pawn will become a target) 8 ... \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) 0-0 10 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) a6 11 \( \text{\textit{c4}} \) b5 12 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) b4 13 \( \text{\textit{a4}} \) a5 and according to Nunn, Black was slightly better in Vasiukov - Ribli, Wijk aan Zee 1973.

Another way to play is 5 ... c6 6 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) and now the best move is 6 ... e5: 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 0-0 \( \text{\textit{e7}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{bd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) and Black should be doing fine.

5 ... 0-0
6 e5

Other moves are not dangerous: 6 0-0 \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 7 e5 \( \text{\textit{e8}} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{d1}} \) \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{g3}} \) dxe5 and the complications look favourable for Black. 6 \( \text{\textit{bd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) 7 c3 e5 8 dxe5 \( \text{\textit{h5}} \)! and now 9 exd6 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn.

6 ... \( \text{\textit{e8}} \) (104)

Perhaps 6 ... dxe5 is possible here; 7 dxe5 \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) 8 0-0 \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{d1}} \) c6 10 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) \( \text{\textit{c7}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{cxd5}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) and Black has good compensation for the pawn.
Now the question is whether White has anything better than 7 0–0 which will transpose into the note to 6 e5. 7 h3 prevents ... \( \text{g}4 \), so this must be the move to consider. 7 ... c5 (7 ... \( \text{c}6 \) is also interesting) 8 dxc5 \( \text{a}5+ \) 9 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{x}c5 \) 10 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 11 0–0 \( \text{c}6 \) should be O. K. for Black, but White seems to have a temporary initiative.

b) 4 ... e6

This is the older move, popular before it was realised that 4 ... \( \text{f}6 \) was probably good for Black. Although this move is probably not as accurate as 4 ... \( \text{f}6 \) it may be useful as a surprise weapon sometime.

5 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \)

The rather odd 5 ... \( \text{c}6 \) was tried in the Yugoslav Ch 1991 in the game Andrijevic - Rakic: 6 c3 \( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{bd}2 \) 0–0 8 0–0 b6 and now 9 \( \text{e}1 \) would have been slightly better for White.

6 0–0 (105)

Or 6 ... b6 7 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 8 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 9 c3 was minutely better for White in Wittman - Kindsmann, Munich 1987.

7 c3 b6

8 \( \text{bd}2 \) \( \text{bc}6!? \)

9 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{a}5 \)

10 \( \text{c}2 \) c5

11 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{ac}6 \)

12 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{c}7 \)

13 \( \text{c}1 \) e5

Black has virtually equalised; Hübnér - T. Petrosian, Biel 1976.

Lines with \( \text{c}4 \) seem to allow Black excellent chances for equality and I would recommend 4 ... \( \text{f}6 \) over 4 ... e6. The fact that \( \text{c}4 \) has virtually disappeared from grandmaster play suggests that Black's chances in these variations are more than adequate.
Section 2: 1 d4 g6 (2 c4 d5 3 g3)

We will now consider 1 ... g6 against Queen’s Pawn openings. The main difference to the 1 e4 lines is that White will advance another pawn, c2-c4, in order to consolidate control of the centre. Let’s take the following position as our starting point.

1  d4  g6
2  c4  d5
3  g3  (106)

Were Black to continue 3 ... f3 then we would have the easily recognisable King’s Indian Defence, probably the most popular opening against 1 d4. Although I have a great deal of respect for the KID, I have never been tempted to play it. The sole reason for this, is that it has been analysed almost to exhaustion. I have seen fellow GMs play the KID and be lost before their opponents have even left their memorised theory! Within the last couple of years five or six books have been devoted solely to KID analysis. If you have the dedication and the analysis team of Kasparov then it’s a great defence. If you have a life to lead then you should perhaps think twice. For this reason this book will not concern itself with KID theory but will aim to provide perfectly playable alternatives.

Black’s choice of third move will radically alter the direction of the game, and so we will use this as a separation point for the chapters.

Chapter 4  3 ... d6
Chapter 5  3 ... c5
Chapter 6  White plays 1 d4 but omits 2 c4
4 3 ... d6

1 d4 g6
2 c4 Qg7
3 c3
3 ... d6

This move suggests that Black is looking for an alternative to ... c5 as a means of challenging White's pawn centre. Since we are committed to avoiding the KID, the knight must remain on g8. The plus side is that the fianchettoed bishop is hitting d4 and Black should seek to put rapid pressure on this pawn.

The normal move for White is 4 e4, but the option of a kingside fianchetto must be considered. 4 f3 d7 5 g3 e5 6 Qg2 e7 (deploying the knight to this square keeps the game independent from the KID) 7 0-0 0-0 8 dxe5 dxe5?! turned out bad for Black in Corkett - Norwood, London Lloyds Bank 1991. However simply 8 ... Qxe5 looks fine for Black; 9 Qxe5 dxe5.

4 e4 (107)

Well, White controls the centre and Black must find a method to challenge. The immediate 4 ... e5 will lead to a depressing endgame after 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 Qxd8+ Qxd8 7 f4! when White has a strong initiative. Since we do not consider ... f6 variations there are basically two moves available to Black.

A) 4 ... Qd7
B) 4 ... Qc6

It should be noted here that both these moves can lead to extremely risky positions for Black. Although both moves are playable at grandmaster level, my hunch is that White should be able to gain an advantage. Still, the ensuing positions are very fertile and there are lots of opportunities for Black to mix things tactic-
ally.

A)

4 ...  \( \varepsilon_\text{d7} \)

The aim of this move is to prepare the ... e5 advance while keeping White guessing about the destination of the g8 knight.

5  \( \varepsilon_\text{f3} \)

This seems like the most sensible move, but there are alternatives. 5 \( \varepsilon_\text{e3} \) e5 6 d5 a5 7 h4 8 g6 8 g5 9 f3 h5 10 g5  \( \varepsilon_\text{fd7} \) 11  \( \varepsilon_\text{d2} \) 0-0 12 0-0-0  \( \varepsilon_\text{b6} \) 13  \( \varepsilon_\text{h3} \)  \( \varepsilon_\text{d7} \) with equal chances, Ernst – Speelman, Subotica IZ 1987.

And the more aggressive 5 f4 e5 (5 ... c5 6 d5 \( \varepsilon_\text{xc3?} \) is playable) 6 fxe5 dxe5 7 d5 – this position is murky but White has tended to retain an initiative, e.g. 7 ...  \( \varepsilon_\text{h6} \) 8 \( \varepsilon_\text{f3} \) 0-0 9 \( \varepsilon_\text{e2} \) f6 10 0-0  \( \varepsilon_\text{f7} \) 11 \( \varepsilon_\text{e3} \) and Black was a little worse in van der Sterren – Todorcevic, Budel 1987.

5 ... e5

6 \( \varepsilon_\text{e2} \) (108)

For some strange reason White players seem to like 6 g3 in this position – I very much doubt that this will yield any advantage. 6 ...  \( \varepsilon_\text{e7} \) 7 \( \varepsilon_\text{g2} \) exd4 8  \( \varepsilon_\text{xd4} \)  \( \varepsilon_\text{c6} \). This move really puts the question to White. If now 9 \( \varepsilon_\text{xc6} \) bxc6 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \varepsilon_\text{c2} \)  \( \varepsilon_\text{b6} \) 12 b3 was equal in Ribli – Norwood, Calcutta 1992. But if 9 \( \varepsilon_\text{e3} \), White runs into even deeper water after 9 ...

\( \varepsilon_\text{de5} \). White is under pressure in the centre, since the e5 knight eyes both the c4 and g4 squares. 10 \( \varepsilon_\text{xc6} \) bxc6 11 c5 (Bad, but what else? 11 \( \varepsilon_\text{e2} \) is met by the powerful 11 ... \( \varepsilon_\text{a6} \). Maybe 11 \( \varepsilon_\text{d4} \) c5 12 \( \varepsilon_\text{xe5} \) \( \varepsilon_\text{xe5} \) was necessary but White is already worse. The point about this position is that the doubled c-pawns are actually quite strong and allow Black extra tactical threats with ... \( \varepsilon_\text{a6} \) and ... \( \varepsilon_\text{b5} \).) 11 ... 0-0 12 f4 (12 0-0 fails to 12 ... \( \varepsilon_\text{a6} \) 13 \( \varepsilon_\text{e1} \) \( \varepsilon_\text{d3} \) winning) 12 ... \( \varepsilon_\text{c4} \) 13 \( \varepsilon_\text{c1} \) and White had a dismal position in I. Ivanov – Norwood, London Lloyds Bank 1992. The conclusion is that Black has no reason to worry after 6 g3.

<diagram>

Aside from 6 ... \( \varepsilon_\text{gf6} \) with transposition to the KID, Black has three alternatives in this position. My own opinion is that a) merits the most attention since the knight seems to have a better future on e7, where it can re-deploy to c6 if necessary, b) is rather slow and it seems that Black is strugg-
ling to equalise in this position. c) has been ruled out as dubious from time to time but it may be playable for Black.

a) 6 ... \( \mathit{\text{\&}} \text{e7} \)
b) 6 ... \( \mathit{\text{c6}} \)
c) 6 ... \( \mathit{\text{\&}} \text{h6} \)

a)

6 ... \( \mathit{\text{\&}} \text{e7} \) (109)

My main worry when I play this position is that White will do nothing; i.e. just castle kingside and slowly consolidate the central space advantage. If White is content to build up slowly then Black will probably remain slightly worse. But if White tries to blow away Black’s position then there are usually plenty of chances for counterplay.

There are several ways for White to continue and we will consider:

a1) 7 \( \mathit{\text{h4}} \)

7 \( \mathit{\text{h4}} \)

This is a direct attempt by White to prove that the knights on e7 and d7 are not in harmony with Black’s kingside fianchetto. In fairness, the knights are poorly placed to mount an immediate assault on the centre – the recommended policy when your opponent charges down the wing – but my hunch is that Black’s resources are adequate.

7 ... \( \mathit{\text{h6}} \)

Preparing to react to 8 \( \mathit{\text{h5}} \) with 8 ... \( \mathit{\text{g5}} \). 7 ... 0–0 seems a poorer alternative; 8 \( \mathit{\text{h5 exd4 9 \&xd4 \&c6 10 \&e3 \&e8 11 \&d2 \&xd4 12 \&d4 \&xd4 13 \&xd4 \&ff6 14 \&xe3 \&b6 15 0–0–0 \&e6 16 \text{b3} a5 17 \text{a4} and White’s king was much safer than mine in Mikhailchishin – Norwood, Liov 1986. 7 ... exd4 was also better for White after 8 \&xd4 \&c5 9 \( \mathit{\text{h5 \&c6 10 \&e3 Keitlinghaus – Rakic, Berlin 1987.}} \)

8 \( \mathit{\text{\&e3}} \) (110)

Other moves have been tried but in practice they have achieved little for White. 8 \( \mathit{\text{h5 g5 9 d5 f5 10 g4!? fxe4 (10 ... fxg4 cannot be bad for Black; 11 \&h2 \&f6 12 \&xg4 \&xg4 13 \&xg4 \&xg4 14 \&xg4 \&d7 will lead to an equal endgame) 11 \&xe4 \&f6 12 \&xf6 \&xf6 13 \&d2 was slightly better for White in Keitlinghaus – Lau, W. German Ch 1989.}} \)

8 \( \mathit{\text{d5 0–0 (8 ... f5 seems}} \)
logical to me) 9 \( \text{Qd}2 \) f5 10 \( \text{Qc}1 \) fxe4 11 \( \text{Qxe}4 \) \( \text{Qf}5 \) 12 g4 \( \text{Qd}4 \) with chances for both sides; Litvinov – Vladimirrov, USSR 1974.

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

8 ... 0–0

Maybe 8 ... f5 is worth a try in this position, e.g. 9 dxe5 \( \text{Qxe}5 \) 10 \( \text{Qxe}5 \) \( \text{Qxe}5 \) 11 \( \text{Qd}2 \) fxe4 12 \( \text{Qxe}4 \) (12 \( \text{Qxh}6 \) \( \text{Qf}5 \) 13 \( \text{Qg}5 \) e3! 14 fxe3 \( \text{Qxg}5 \) 15 h\( \times \)g5 \( \text{Qg}3+ \) and 16 ... \( \text{Qxh}1+ \) could be good for Black) 12 ... \( \text{Qf}5 \) and the position is messy.

9 \( \text{Qd}2 \) \( \text{Qh}7 \)

10 0–0–0 \( \text{c}6 \)

11 dxe5 dxe5

12 \( \text{Qd}6 \) \( \text{Qg}8 \)

13 c5 \( \text{Qe}8? \)

This fails tactically so Black should play 13 ... \( \text{Qf}6 \) with a view to evicting the queen with ... \( \text{Qe}7 \); then ... \( \text{Qc}7 \) or ... \( \text{Qa}5 \) to play against c5 and prepare the pawn break ... b6. White needs to act quickly in order to prove an advantage in this position.

14 \( \text{Qg}5+! \) h\( \times \)g5

15 h\( \times \)g5+ \( \text{Qh}6 \)

16 g\( \times \)h6


a2)

7 0–0

This is not played very frequently, although it seems like the surest way for White to gain the advantage.

7 ... 0–0 (\( \text{f}11 \))

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

8 \( \text{Qe}1 \)

Or 8 \( \text{Qe}3 \). This may be White's best chance to gain an advantage. 8 ... f5! (good fun but very double-edged) 9 \( \text{Qg}5 \) (if 9 dxe5 Black might try the pawn sacrifice 9 ... f4 10 exd6 fxe3 11 dxe7 \( \text{Qxf}2+ \) 12 \( \text{Qxf}2 \) \( \text{Qxe}7 \) 13 \( \text{Qd}5 \) \( \text{Qd}6 \) and Black's dark square control compensates for the pawn) 9 ... \( \text{Qf}6 \) 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 \( \text{Qc}5 \) \( \text{Qe}8 \) looks okay for Black. Safer is 8 ... h6 9 \( \text{Qd}2 \) \( \text{Qh}7 \) with an edge to White.

8 ... h6

This move does not appeal, but White gets an edge after 8 ... exd4 9 \( \text{Qxd}4 \) \( \text{Qx}6 \) 10 \( \text{Qe}3 \).

9 \( \text{Qe}3 \) f5

This looks like the only way to make a fight of it. Now 10
dxe5 f4 looks very promising for Black: 11 exd6 (11 Qd2 Qxe5 12 Qxe5 Qxe5 13 Qg4 is probably White's best) 11 ... fxe3 12 dxe7 exf2+ 13 Qxf2 Qxe7 and White is being trounced on the dark squares. One suspects that if White plays carefully then 8 ... Qf6 should yield an edge. Still, it is far from disastrous for Black and as some of these lines show, there are opportunities to randomise.

7 d5

Releasing the tension in the centre seems slightly illogical. Now Black can prepare the ... f5 break without the worry of White opening the centre with dxe5. Still you have to bear in mind the Qg5-e6 threat.

7 ... 0-0 (112)

Maybe 7 ... f5 should be tried immediately; if 8 Qg5, 8 ... Qf6 seems adequate since after 9 Qxe6 Qxe6 10 dxe6, 10 ... Qc8 will round up the e-pawn. Unless 7 ... f5 can be refuted, it is preferable to 7 ... 0-0 since the king becomes an immediate target.

8 h4

This is better than 8 g4, as played in Gheorghiu - Todorcevic, Istres 1975. Black continued 8 ... Qc5 9 Qg1 and White was better since the knight has no future on c5. I think that Black should just bite the bullet and play 8 ... f5; 9 Qg5 Qf6 10 gxf5 gxf5 11 Qg1 and now 11 ... Qg6 with a messy position.

One suspects that Black has good chances for counterplay after 7 d5 since ... f5 can be played without danger.

7 dxe5

As with 7 d5, releasing the tension in the centre seems unlikely to give White much of an advantage.

7 ... dxe5

8 b3 0-0

9 0-0 b6

10 Qa3 Qe8

11 h4 Qb7

12 Qg5 h6

13 Qf3 Qc6

14 h4 g5

15 Qh2 Qd4

Black has no problems; Portisch - Kagan, Rio de Janeiro 1979 (Nunn).

Although I have to confess that I do not trust 6 ... Qe7 one hundred percent, it does seem to be faring OK in international
play. The most important thing is to know these variations well, especially the opportunities for an ... f5 break. Generally speaking, it is important for Black to seek counterplay quickly before White is able to consolidate the space advantage. One advantage is that these systems are still relatively obscure and White players rarely know what to do against 6 ... \( \text{Q} \text{e}7 \).

b) 6 ... c6

Although this move is reasonably solid it does remove some of the dynamism in Black's position, such as the prospect of playing for a quick ... f5.

7 0-0

The immediate 7 d5 has been tried on several occasions; 7 ... c5 and now: 8 g4 h5 9 g5 \( \text{Q} \text{e}7 \) 10 h4 a6 11 \( \text{Q} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 12 \( \text{Q} \text{d}2 \) f5 13 f3! f4?! 14 \( \text{Q} \text{f}2 \) was slightly better for White in view of the bad bishop on g7. 8 h4 h5 9 \( \text{Q} \text{g}5 \) \( \text{Q} \text{f}8 \) 10 f4 exf4 11 \( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{f}4 \) \( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{c}3+ \) 12 bxc3 f6 13 \( \text{Q} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{Q} \text{h}6 \) 14 0-0 \( \text{Q} \text{f}7 \) Black can gain control of the important square e5. 15 a4 \( \text{Q} \text{g}4 \) 16 a5 \( \text{Q} \text{d}7 \) 17 \( \text{Q} \text{e}1 \) and the game was agreed drawn; Ribli – Rukavina.

7 ... \( \text{Q} \text{h}6 \) (113)

8 \( \text{Q} \text{b}1 \)

Is this really the best plan available to White? I quite like the idea of 8 c5, exploiting the slightly awkward placing of Black's pieces. Now 8 ... exd4 9 \( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{h}6 \) \( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{h}6 \) 10 \( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{d}4 \) 0-0 11 cxd6 is good for White. So Black has to play 8 ... dxc5 9 dxe5 0-0 (the logical 9 ... \( \text{Q} \text{g}4 \) fails to 10 e6! fxe6 11 \( \text{Q} \text{g}5 \) 10 h3. Now the knight on h6 will become a target after White's logical \( \text{Q} \text{f}4 \) and \( \text{d}2 \) development. 10 ... \( \text{Q} \text{h}8 \) 11 \( \text{Q} \text{f}4 \) \( \text{Q} \text{g}8 \) 12 \( \text{Q} \text{d}6 \) \( \text{Q} \text{e}8 \) 13 a4 h6 14 \( \text{Q} \text{fd}1 \) and White has a dominating position. Unless Black has a refutation to 8 c5, the move could put the whole line out of business.

8 ... 0-0

9 b4

This gives White a better chance of an edge then 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 b4 \( \text{Q} \text{e}7 \) (10 ... f5 is also playable) 11 c5 a5 12 a3 axb5 13 axb5 f6 14 \( \text{Q} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{Q} \text{f}7 \) 15 \( \text{Q} \text{c}4 \) \( \text{Q} \text{d}8 \) 16 \( \text{Q} \text{b}3 \) \( \text{Q} \text{f}8 \) 17 \( \text{Q} \text{b}6 \) \( \text{Q} \text{e}6 \) 18 \( \text{Q} \text{c}4 \) \( \text{Q} \text{ab}8 \) with an unclear position according to Nunn; Cebalo – Kovacevic, Yugoslav Ch 1985.

9 ... exd4

This seems better than 9 ... a5 as tried in Polugaevsky – Ljubojevic, Palma de Mallorca
1972. 10 b5 exd4 11 cxd4 c7 12 Qf4 e5 13 d2 h4 14 h3 f6 with an edge to White. 9 ... f5 is also rather risky; 10 Qg5 e5 11 dx e5 dxe5 12 b3 f7 13 c5 h6 14 Qf6 Qf6 15 c4 and White had the initiative in Kuhlmann – Westerman, Dutch corr. Ch 1990.

10 Qxd4 e5

11 b5 h4 12 bxc6 bxc6 13 b3 Qg4 14 f3 e6 15 xe6 with an unclear position (Portisch – Meleghegyi, Hungary 1979), although Fridshtein suggests that 15 f4 is good for White. My own feeling about the 6 ... c6 line is that Black has to take certain risks for very scant reward.

c) 6 ... h6 (114)

This move has been played more frequently than 6 ... c6 in recent years. Black wants to achieve a solid position by playing ... f6 and ... f7. However, this rather modest plan suggests that Black can hope for at best equality in these lines. The only real winning chances will come if White overreaches.

7 dxe5

Nunn states that 6 ... h6 is dubious in view of White's reply 7 h4, but this move is rarely seen in practice. With the knight slightly misplaced on h6, the h4-h5 advance does look logical. Nunn gives: 7 ... f6 8 h5 c6 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 h4 f7 11 e3 f8 12 d2 Qb4 13 0-0-0 g8 14 hxg6 hxg6 Ivkov – Ivanovic, Yugoslav Ch 1978. Now 15 a3 is good for White since 15 ... c5 fails tactically to 16 Qxc5 Qxc5 17 Qxb8 Qxb8 18 Qxg6! Qxg6 19 Qh8+ winning back the piece; or 7 ... exd4 8 Qxd4 c5 9 h5 c6 10 Qf4 and White is already clearly better; A. Rodriguez – Rakic, Vrnjacka Banja 1977. Maybe Black could have tried to mix things with 8 ... Qe5, to meet 9 h5 with the daring 9 ... Qg4, although it looks like Black is living on a knife edge. Still there may be hope in this position especially if Black has time to castle long.

Still it's something of a mystery that 7 h4 is not tried more often. The other move for White is 7 0-0: 7 ... 0-0 8 Qe1 Qe8 9 Qf1 c6 10 Qb1 exd4 11 Qxd4 Qc5 12 b3 Qe6 13 de2 g4 and White's rather unambitious play has given Black a comfortable game; Santos – Piasetski, Thessaloniki OL 1988.
7 ... dxe5
8 h3

White’s modest play is aimed at securing a slight edge, since the h6 knight must now re-route with ... f6 and ... Qf7. 8 h4 has actually been tried in this position; 8 ... c6 9 h5 Qc7 10 Qg5 Qf8 11 hxg6 hxg6 12 Wa4 Qd7 13 Qe3 f6 14 Qh3 Qf7 15 0-0-0 Qh6! and the exchange of the dark-squared bishops gave Black a comfortable game in Jacimovic – Savicevik, Yugoslav Ch 1991. 8 b3 0-0 9 Qa3 Qe8 10 0-0 f6 (10 ... Qf6?!?) 11 c5 c6 12 b4 looks rather unconvincing for White; Bönsch – König, Bundesliga 1992.

8 ... 0-0 (115)

White was better in Korchnoi – Lev, Beersheva 1988. Although Black may have improvements in this game, the general impression is that 6 ... Qh6 gives White every chance of securing a lasting initiative.

The general conclusion is that both 6 ... c6 and 6 ... Qh6 should allow White to achieve a comfortable position. 6 ... Qd7 seems the most promising move since it gives Black chances for dynamic activity.

B) 4 ... Qc6 (116)

This move is very much in the spirit of the hypermodern system. Black puts pressure on the d4 pawn, thereby precipitating a tense struggle for the control of this important central square. The classic hypermodern battle will ensue. White will seek to consolidate the space advantage and maintain control of the centre. Black will target the central pawns, especially d4, and will
challenge with a ... c5 or ... e5 pawn advance.

White’s immediate dilemma revolves around protecting the d-pawn. A casual move like 5  \( \text{d3} \) is met by 5 ... \( \text{g4} \) and the pressure on the d4 square increases. So White can decide to push the pawn, 5 d5, or hold with 5 \( \text{e3} \), and these moves separate this section.

a) 5 d5
b) 5 \( \text{e3} \)

Both these moves have their attractive points. 5 d5 is the critical test of the system. White grabs more space and forces the knight to move. Black must then bite the bullet and occupy the central square d4 and a sharp tactical struggle ensues in which White tries to evict the intruder. This line is very tricky for both sides but if you wish to play it with Black you really have to be familiar with all the analysis in this section.

After 5 \( \text{e3} \) Black steps up the pressure on the centre with 5 ... e5, and after 6 d5 the knight retreats to the e7 square. Again play is quite tricky but on current evidence Black’s head is above water.

a) 5 d5 \( \text{d4} \)

5 ... \( \text{e5} \) just gives White too much time: 6 f4 \( \text{d7} \) 7 f3 and Black is way behind in development.

6 \( \text{e3} \)

Or 6 \( \text{ge2} \) c5 7 \( \text{xd4} \) cxd4 8 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{b6} \) 9 c5!. Black threatens simply ... a6 so White has to continue tactically. If now 9 \( \text{xc5} \) Black loses heavy material after 10 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{b6} \) 11 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 12 \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{a6} \) 13 \( \text{b4} ! \) and 14 \( \text{c7} \) will win the monarch. 9 ... \( \text{xc5} \) 10 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f8} \) 11 \( \text{c1} \) (chasing the queen with 11 \( \text{c7} \) does not look dangerous for Black after 11 ... \( \text{f6} \) 11 ... a6 12 \( \text{c7} \) \( \text{f6} \) 13 \( \text{a3} \) (117)

\[ \]

This complex position occurred in the game Azmaiparashvili - Davies, Albena 1986. The game continued 13 ... b5 14 \( \text{xc5} \) d3 15 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 16 \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{f6} \) with endless complications. Maybe 13 ... d3 immediately is possible. Any assessment of this line must remain tentative until more games are played with 6 \( \text{ge2} \).

6 ... c5

7 \( \text{ge2} \)

7 dxc6 cannot be any good. After 7 ... \( \text{xc6} \) we have a
Maroczy Bind type position where the knight on e2 looks misplaced.

7 ... \( \text{b6} \) (118)

Black cannot surrender the d4-square without a fight; 7 ... \( \text{xe2} \) 8 \( \text{xe2} \) would give White a very comfortable position.

\[ \text{Play now diverges:} \]

a1) 8 \( \text{xd4} \)

a2) 8 \( \text{a4} \)

a3) 8 \( \text{d2} \)

a1)

8 \( \text{xd4} \)

This was once the most popular option but it seems to have fallen from favour in the last few years. This is probably because the resulting positions are very murky and Black's chances seem adequate.

8 ... \( \text{xd4} \)

9 \( \text{a4} \)

Black could leave the queen \textit{en prise} in this position: 9 ... \( \text{xe3} \) 10 \( \text{xb6} \) exf2+ 11 \( \text{xf2} \) axb6. This may be good for the crowd but I would not recommend it as a playable line for

Black. In Miles - Rohde, London 1984, White quickly made the monarch count; 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 13 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{g4}+ \) 14 \( \text{e2} \) 0-0 15 h3 \( \text{e5} \) 16 b3 and Black was beginning to suffer.

9 ... \( \text{a5+} \)

10 \( \text{d2} \)

White can force a draw here if desired; 10 b4 \( \text{xb4}+ \) 11 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{a3} \) 12 \( \text{c1} \) with perpetual against the queen. Therefore, if you need to win at all costs 4 ... \( \text{c6} \) should not be played.

10 ... \( \text{c7} \) (119)

11 \( \text{c5} \)

Or 11 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 12 b4 \( \text{g4} \) 13 \( \text{c1} \) 0-0 14 0-0 \( \text{e5} \) 15 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{a5} \) 16 \( \text{b1} \) axb4 17 \( \text{xb4} \) b6 18 \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{d7} \) seemed fine for Black in Korchnoi - Speelman, Beersheva 1987.

11 ... \( \text{f6!} \)

Grabbing the pawn will run into trouble after 11 ... \( \text{dxc5} \) 12 \( \text{b5+} \) \( \text{d7} \) 13 \( \text{xd7+} \) and re-capturing the piece with either king or queen will be worse for Black in view of the c5 weakness.

12 \( \text{b5+} \) \( \text{d7} \)
13 \( \text{Qxd7+?} \)

White's best bet is 13 c6 bxc6 14 dxc6 \( \text{Qe6} \) 15 \( \text{Qc2} \) 0-0 16 0-0 d5 with a double-edged position according to Nunn; Danailov - Kharkov, Bulgaria 1984. My own opinion is that Black controls the centre and has a much easier game to play. White's position seems extended and the c6 pawn looks more like a target than an asset.

13 ... \( \text{Qxd7} \)

14 cxd6 \( \text{Qxd6} \) 15 \( \text{ac3} \) 16 \( \text{ac1} \) 0-0 17 \( \text{Qc5} \) \( \text{Qxc5} \) 18 \( \text{Bxc5} \) \( \text{Bc8} \) 19 \( \text{Bb5} \) \( \text{Qc2} \) 20 \( \text{Bxc2} \) \( \text{Bxb5} \) 21 a4 d3! and Black achieved an excellent endgame in Agnos - Webster, London 1990.

The conclusion on 8 \( \text{Qxd4} \) is that if White does not opt for the repetition, then Black's chances look quite adequate.

\[ \text{a2)} \]

8 \( \text{Qa4} \)

This move is the acid test of the system. White plays to exploit the early development of the black queen. Play becomes quite complex and my best advice for Modern players is BE PREPARED.

8 ... \( \text{wa5+} \)

9 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{wa6} \)

Probably the best square for the queen but other moves are certainly playable: 9 ... \( \text{Qc7} \) 10 \( \text{Qc3} \) e5 11 dxe6 \( \text{Qxe6} \) 12 \( \text{Qxg7} \) \( \text{Qxg7} \) 13 g3 (13 \( \text{Bc3} \) and 14 \( \text{Qf4} \) to control d5 is an alternative plan) 13 ... \( \text{Qf6} \) 14 \( \text{Qg2} \) 0-0 15 0-0 \( \text{Qd7} \) 16 \( \text{Bac3} \) \( \text{ac6} \) and Black's position seems perfectly OK; maybe 9 ... \( \text{Qc7} \) is a reasonable option. 9 ... \( \text{wa8} \) 10 \( \text{Qxd4} \) (10 \( \text{ac3} \) e5 11 dxe6 \( \text{Qxe6} \) 12 \( \text{Qxg7} \) \( \text{Qxg7} \) 13 \( \text{wa2} \) \( \text{wa6} \) 14 f3 \( \text{Qe6} \) 15 \( \text{Qf4} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 16 0-0-0 with some advantage to White; Gelfand - Azmaiparashvili, Dortmund 1990) 10 ... \( \text{Qxd4} \) 11 \( \text{ac3} \) \( \text{ac3} \) 12 \( \text{xc3} \) was slightly better for White in Petursson - Høi, Östersund 1992.

10 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) (120)

This is a well-known theoretical position and several moves have been tried by White. Although White's space advantage tends to ensure an advantage in most lines, Black's position has some dynamic potential. We consider:

\[ \text{a21)} \] 11 \( \text{Qc3} \)

\[ \text{a22)} \] 11 \( \text{Qc2} \)

\[ \text{a23)} \] 11 \( \text{Qd3} \)

\[ \text{a24)} \] 11 \( \text{Qe2} \)
a21)

11 \( \Box c3 \)

This is the most popular move these days. White wastes no time returning the knight to the natural square c3. Here it threatens to wreak havoc in Black’s camp with \( \Box b5 \). Now Black has a choice. The safest way to play is 11 ... \( \Box d7 \) to guard against \( \Box b5 \). Now 12 \( \Box b5 \) \( \Box x b5 \) 13 \( c x b 5 \) \( \Box b 6 \) 14 \( \Box a 4 \) c4! frees the black queen and opens up pressure on f2; 15 \( \Box x c 4 \) \( \Box x f 2+ \) 16 \( \Box e 2 \) \( \Box f 6 \) was better for Black in Andruet - Murey, Haringey 1988. After 11 ... \( \Box d 7 \) White has the option of \( \Box c 2 \), \( \Box e 2 \) or \( \Box d 3 \) as in (a22), (a23) and (a24), so we will consider this move in these sections rather than under (a21).

The question is whether Black can allow White to play \( \Box b 5 \). The move 11 ... \( \Box b 6 \) has been tried on several occasions and has not yet been refuted. The whole line looks ultra-risky but maybe it is okay for Black.

11 ... \( \Box b 6 \)

Or 11 ... \( \Box g 7 \); 12 \( \Box b 5 \) \( \Box b 6 \) leads to the same scenario, but White can also play 12 \( \Box d 3 \) \( \Box f 6 ? \) (12 ... \( \Box d 7 \) is safer) 13 \( \Box b 5 ! \) \( \Box d 8 \) 14 0-0 with a clear advantage to White, Tisdall - Olaru, Gausdal 1992.

12 \( \Box b 5 \)

In Zsu. Polgar - Todorcevic, Pamplona 1991, 12 \( \Box b 3 \) was tried and Black reacted with the rather unusual 12 ... \( \Box d 8 \). My own instinct would be simply to play 12 ... \( \Box d 7 \) since the exchange of queens does not look particularly worrying for Black. Polgar gives simply 12 ... \( \Box x b 3 \) 13 axb3 \( \Box d 7 \) with equality.

12 ... \( \Box g 7 \) (121)

Capturing the b2 pawn is dubious. 12 ... \( \Box x b 2 \) 13 \( \Box b 1 \) \( \Box g 7 \) 14 \( \Box a 4 \) \( \Box f 8 \) 15 \( \Box a 5 \) \( \Box a 6 \) 16 \( \Box a 3 \) \( b 6 \) 17 \( \Box c 7 \) \( \Box a 5 \) 18 \( \Box x a 5 \) \( b x a 5 \) 19 \( \Box x a 8 \) \( \Box c 3+ \) and Black has some compensation for the exchange; Polugaevsky - Ljubojevic, Reykjavik 1987. However, White was under no obligation to capture the rook immediately; 19 \( \Box d 2 \) would have eliminated Black’s counterplay.

13 \( \Box a 4 \) \( \Box d 7 \)

14 \( \Box a 5 \) \( \Box a 6 \) (122)

Strong nerves are obviously necessary in this position. Black looks to be dancing on a knife edge but I cannot see anything good for White. 15 \( \Box c 7+ \) \( \Box f 8 \) and now after 16 \( \Box x a 6 \) \( \Box x a 4 \) and the endgame is good for Black, whilst in the event of 16 \( \Box a 3 \) \( \Box x b 2 \) 17 \( \Box x b 2 \) \( \Box x a 5+ \) 18
White is attacking two
rooks but his position is in
tatters: 18 ... c8 19 xh8 xc7
20 b2 b5 and Black has more
than enough compensation for
the exchange; Andruet - Tod-
orcevic, Montpellier 1989.

15 a3 c8!

I do not see any reason why
15 ... xb2 will not work. White
must transpose into Andruet -
Todorcevic above.

16 b1 b6

17 c3 xa3 18 bxa3 f6! 19
xa7 a8 20 xb6 xd5 and
White's position is collapsing;

Unless White has a refutation,
12 ... wb6 looks like a good bet
for Black. White can play safe,
of course, with 13 wc2 and this
leads to more orthodox lines.

a22)

11 wc2 (123)

For some reason I want to
take advantage of this move
with an immediate 11 ... f5 but
this may be too risky; e.g. 12
c3 fxe4 13 b5 (13 xe4 d5
14 d3 xe4 15 a4 xf6 16
d3 d4 17 0-0 d8 with a
double-edged position) 13 ... 
b6 14 a4 d7 15 a5 a6 and
Black may be doing OK. I don't
really trust 11 ... f5 but if the
move can be played then it is
the correct plan for Black. The
safer route tends to allow
White an advantage; e.g. 11 ...
d7 12 c3 b6 13 b1 f5 14
d3 fxe4 15 xe4 d6 16 g5
g4 17 0-0 e5 and White had
only a minuscule edge in So-
sonko - Chandler, Indonesia
1982. However, White could
have achieved more with 16
e4xf6 and whichever way Black
re-captures he will be worse.

a23)

11 d3
d3
d3
d3
d3

This move is quite logical
since it develops a piece, pro-
tects the centre and prepares
for kingside castling. White's
aim is to consolidate the space
advantage and prove that the
black bishop is misplaced on
d4.

11 ...
d7

Or 11 ... f6 12 0-0 0-0 13
\( \text{bxc3} \text{ d7 transposing back into normal lines below. If Black wants to continue along independent lines then } 12 \ldots \text{ g4 may be a try; } 13 \text{ c3 e5.} \)

12 \text{ c3} (124)

124

B

Black has to face a dilemma, whether to retreat the bishop back to its fianchetto square g7, or leave it on the central square d4. Retreating the bishop keeps it safe from an exchange with White's knight and on g7 it can safely control the a1-h8 diagonal. But the retreat does give White time to consolidate the central grip. On d4, though, the bishop is likely to be exchanged when the knight hits d4 via e2, and then Black's dark squares will be weak. But Black can drum up counterplay with the knight manoeuvre ... \text{ f6-g4-e5} and the d4 pawn could be a thorn in White's side. 12 ... \text{ g7 (12 ... b6 13 b1 g7 14 0-0 f6 15 f4 0-0 e5 e8 17 e2 was better for White in Ernst - Petran, Groningen 1991) 13 0-0 f6 14 e2 0-0 15 f4 e8 16 e5 c7 17 a4 b6 18 aae1 aae8 19 f3 c8 and Black was slightly worse in Lautier - Spraggett Corrèze 1989.}

My own feeling is that retraeting the bishop offers Black few prospects for dynamic play, so let's consider ...

12 ... \text{ f6}
13 0-0 0-0
13 ... \text{ g4 is possible; } 14 \text{ b5 b6.}

14 \text{ e2}

14 a4 b6 15 c2 g4 16 b5 xb5 17 axb5 d8 was fine for Black in Cramling - J. Johansson, Stockholm 1990.

14 ... \text{ b5?}

After 14 ... \text{ xb2 15 b1} White has good compensation for the pawn.

15 \text{ xd4} bxc4

Is 15 ... cxd4 playable?

16 \text{ c6} xc6
17 c2 d7

The position is unclear; Levitt - Efimov, Amantea 1991.

My impression is that 12 ... \text{ f6 offers more chances of active counterplay than } 12 ... \text{ g7.}

a24)

11 \text{ e2}

This move is rarely seen these days; the general feeling seems to be that the bishop belongs on d3. The lack of recent examples means that we have to rely on "prehistoric" theory.
11 ... \( \text{d6} \)

Again 11 ... f5 looks very risky but it might be worth a try: 12 \( \text{c3} \) f6! 13 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{b6} \) 14 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{d7} \) with the usual complications.

12 \( \text{c3} \) 0–0
13 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{g4} \)
14 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d7} \)
15 0–0

White is slightly better; Uhlmann – Timman, Amsterdam 1975.

So that completes our survey of 8 \( \text{a4} \). Although many of the lines look highly critical, Black does seem to be surviving. If you don't mind tempting fate, then these lines look like a lot of fun.

a3)

8 \( \text{d2} \) (125)

This move keeps the tension in the centre and Black is left guessing as to which plan White will adopt. Although this move has been less popular than 8 \( \text{xd4} \), recent analysis suggests that White has good chances to achieve an advantage.

8 ... \( \text{f6} \)

Although I cannot find any recent examples, 8 ... f5 is a possibility here. 9 0–0 0 0 \( \text{xe2} \) 10 \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{f6} \) (10 ... \text{fxe4} 11 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f5} \) may be a possibility) 11 exf5 \( \text{xf5} \) 12 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{xh6} \) 13 \( \text{xh6} \) 0–0 0 14 \( \text{eh1} \) \( \text{hf8} \) 15 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{a6} \) and Black was doing fine in Ivkov – Hübner, West Germany 1975. Nunn suggests 15 \( \text{f1} \) as an improvement but Black's position looks OK.

9 f3

We will take this as the main line for White. Other moves are: 9 h3 0–0 10 \( \text{d1} \) e5 11 dxe6 \( \text{xe6} \) 12 g3 \( \text{d7} \) 13 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{c6} \) with an unclear position, Böhm – van der Wiel, Dutch Ch 1982. 9 0–0 0 0 \( \text{xe2} \) (why not 9 ... \( \text{g4} \) ?) 10 \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 11 \( \text{gx} \text{g4} \) \( \text{gx} \text{g4} \) 12 f3 \( \text{d7} \) 13 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{h6} \) 14 \( \text{h6} \) 0–0 0 and I can't see why Black should be worse; Simenov – Grigorov, Sofia 1989. 9 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 10 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 11 \( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{xd2} \) and the strength of the dark-squared bishop ensures that Black has a comfortable game in every variation.

9 ... \( \text{d7} \) (126)

10 \( \text{d1} \)

Or 10 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{a6} \) 11 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xa4} \) 12. \( \text{b5} \) 0–0 13 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{xh6} \) 14 \( \text{xh6} \) and now both 14 ... \( \text{b4} \) + and 14 ... \( \text{a6} \) are fine for Black.

10 ... 0–0
11 b3! \( \text{xe2} \)
126

12 \( \text{Qxe2} \) a5
13 \( \text{Qc1} \) a6
14 \( \text{Qh6!} \) \( \text{Qxh6} \)
15 \( \text{Qxh6} \) b5
16 h4

Grabbing the pawn gives Black play: 16 cxb5 axb5 17 \( \text{Qxb5} \) \( \text{e5} \) 18 0-0 \( \text{b8} \) 19 \( \text{Qe2} \) a6.

16 \( \ldots \) f6
17 f4 \( \text{Qf7} \) 18 h5 g5 19 fxg5 \( \text{Qg7} \) 20 gxf6 \( \text{Qxf6} \) 21 0-0 with advantage to White in Hernandez Ruiz - Calderin, Colon 1991.

This is the latest verdict on 8 \( \text{Qd2} \) but I don't feel that it puts the line out of business. There are plenty of opportunities for Black to mix things, even the immediate 8 \( \ldots \) f5!

**General Conclusion on 5 d5**

This move will certainly cause Black sleepless nights. In many of the variations it appears that Black is treading close to the edge, but at present there is no blockbusting line for White.

b)

5 \( \text{Qe3} \) (127)

Refusing to be lured into the complex lines after 5 d5, White wants to keep the game along orthodox King's Indian lines. Here, many players do decide to return to the KID with 5 \( \text{Qf6} \), but we will only consider the independent lines after 5 \( \ldots \) e5.

5 \( \ldots \) e5

Stepping up the pressure on d4. If White tries to maintain the centre with 6 \( \text{Qf3} \) then Black continues with 6 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Qg4} \).

6 d5

The alternative is to exchange in the centre; 6 dxe5 \( \text{Qxe5} \) (6 \( \ldots \) dxe5 7 \( \text{Qxd8} \) \( \text{Qxd8} \) 8 0-0-0+ \( \text{Qd7} \) 9 \( \text{Qf3} \) is a comfortable endgame for Black; Dekker - Johansson, Dieren 1990) 7 c5 \( \text{Qf6} \) 8 cxd6 cxd6 9 \( \text{Qb5+} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 10 \( \text{Qd2} \) 0-0 11 \( \text{Qxc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 12 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 13 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Qa6} \) 14 0-0-0 d5 and Black's position is starting to look good; S. Nikolic - Koseanski, Yugoslav Ch 1991.

6 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Qce7} \) (128)

Although the knight has remained on g8, the set-up is classic King's Indian. White has
more space and free development of pieces, while Black’s counterplay rests on the ... f5 break. Unlike the KID, though, Black can gain time by playing ... f5 immediately and then bring the knight to f6, rather than having to move the knight first. The other dynamic option with the knight on g8 is the move ... Qh6 to trade off White’s good bishop.

In certain positions this is a useful idea. The main line continues 7 g4, a direct attempt by White to deter the ... f5 break. First, though, we will consider some seventh move alternatives for White: 7 f3 f5 8 c5 Qf6 (8 ... Qh6 is another plan) 9 Qb5+ Qf7 10 Qh3 h6 11 cxd6 cxd6 12 Qf2 f4 13 Qd2 g5 14 Qe2 Qg6 with a typical King’s Indian type position; Kraidman – Davies, Tel Aviv 1989. 7 c5 f5 8 cxd6 cxd6 9 Qb5+ Qd7 10 Qxd7+ Qxd7 11 f3 Qf6 12 Qh3 and now 12 ... fxe3 13 fxe3 Qg4 14 Qf3 Qf8 15 Qg3 Qxe3 16 Qxe3 Qg8 with an unclear position (Petrosian); Petrosian – Ivkov, Bugojno 1982. 7 Qd2 f5 8 f3 Qf6 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 Qd3 fxe4 11 Qxe4 Qf5 12 Qg5 Qxe4 13 fxe4 Qxg5 14 Qxg5 Qh6 and Black was doing fine in Schmidt – Schneider, Bundesliga 1988.

7 g4

Black now has to make a choice. 7 ... f5 has been the most popular move but White may have a good game after 8 gxf5. 7 ... Qf6 is a good way to mix things although it is not without its risks. 7 ... c5, adopting a Czech Benoni set-up, is quite solid for Black.

b1) 7 ... f5
b2) 7 ... Qf6
b3) 7 ... c5

b1)

7 ... f5 (129)

Now we have a further divergence since White must decide whether to bite the bullet with 8 gxf5, or try to consolidate with 8 f3.
b11) 8 gxf5
b12) 8 f3

b11)

8 gxf5 gxf5
9 Wh5+ Qf8 (131)

Black would really like to play 9 ... Qg6 but there are some difficulties with the move: 10 exf5 Wh4 (130)

Now 11 Wxh4 seems to be OK for Black; e.g. 11 ... Qxh4 12 Qb5 Qd8 13 Qa7 Qxf5 14 Qb5 Qh6 15 Qc3 Qxe3 16 Qxe3 Qf6 17 Qh3 Qe4 18 Qxe4 Qxe4 and Black has good compensation for the pawn; 19 Qg4? Qxg8 20 h3 h5 winning for Black, Sorosi - Arapovic, Bern 1987.

However, White has a stronger move against 10 ... Wh4: 11 Qf3!. Now 11 ... Qe7 12 Qd3 Qh6 13 f6 (13 Qxh6 Qxh6 14 Qb5 Qd8 15 Qe2 Qf8 16 Qg3 Qf4 and Black is very comfortable; Mestel - Webster, Hastings 1991) 13 ... Qf8 (13 ... Qxf6 14 Qe4 Qh5 15 Wh5+! Qd8 16 Qxf6 Qxf6 17 Qg5 Qg6 18 Qxg6 with an excellent position for White) 14 Qe4! (This move casts doubt on the whole idea of 9 ... Qg6; if 14 Qg3 Qxf6 15 Qe4 Qf7 16 Qg5 Wh5 17 Qe6 Qxe6 18 Qxg7 Qh5 19 Qg5 Qf7 and Black has achieved a pleasant position; Benjamin - Lakdawala, San Mateo Action 1989) 14 ... Qxf6 15 Qxf6 Qxf6 16 Qg3 Qe5 17 Qxh4 Qxh4 18 Qg3 and Black’s position is under considerable stress; C. Flear - Baudot, Bad Mondorf 1991.

10 Qh3

I'm not convinced by 10 Qg5 as tried in Vicanek - Vokac, Prague 1989. 10 ... Qf6 11 Qxf6 Qxf6 12 Qh3 Qe8 13 Qxe8 Qxe8 and Black should not be worse in the endgame. 10 exf5 Qf6 11 Qd1 Qxf5 and Black is becoming active.

10 ...
11 Wh3 f4
12 Qd2 (132)

Although we lack the benefit of recent examples the general assessment of this position is better for White. After the exchange of bishops Black will have serious light square weaknesses. It will also be hard to
make the g7 bishop into a relevant piece in view of the blocked c7-f4 pawn chain. White can double rooks on the g-file, or play for a c5 pawn break, and generally enjoy a pleasant game. e.g. 12 ... \textit{g8} 13 0-0-0 \textit{h8} 14 \textit{xc8} \textit{xc8} 15 \textit{e2} a6 16 \textit{f3} \textit{h3} 17 c5 \textit{f7} 18 \textit{b1} \textit{d7} 19 \textit{cxd6 cx}b6 20 \textit{cl} with an advantage to White; Hübner – Dresen, Bundesliga 1985.

Unless new ideas are found for Black, my feeling is that 7 ... f5 8 gxf5 should objectively give White a pleasant game – although to be fair, White must find a lot of accurate moves first!

But surprisingly, many players prefer instead:

\textit{b12)}

8 f3 (133)

A solid move, but it does not have the sting of 8 gxf5.

8 ... \textit{f6}

Here Seirawan tried 8 ... \textit{h6} with the idea of exchanging off White's powerful bishop. White declined the offer with 9 g5 \textit{g7} 10 h4 h6 11 \textit{h3} hxg5 12 hxg5 \textit{d7} with an unclear game because White's g5 pawn may become a target.

9 h3

Or 9 \textit{e2} c5 10 h4 fxg4 11 fxg4 h5! 12 g5 \textit{g4} 13 \textit{d2} 0-0 with a typical murky game; Fedorowicz – A. Ivanov, New York 1989.

9 ... h5

Or 9 ... c5 10 a3 0-0 (probably 10 ... h5 was more incisive; kingside castling seems to limit Black's chances for active counterplay) 11 b4 \textit{b6} 12 \textit{d3} \textit{d7} 13 \textit{b1} and White's space advantage is starting to show; Dlugy – Bereolos, Chicago 1989.

10 g5 \textit{d7}

11 h4 a5

12 \textit{d2} \textit{c5}

13 0-0-0 \textit{b6}

14 \textit{e2} 0-0

15 \textit{h3} \textit{d7}

16 \textit{c2} a4

This is a typical King's Indian type position with chances for both sides – my own preference
would be to play Black; Miles - Kohlweyer, Dortmund 1986.

b2)  

7 ... \( \mathcal{Q} f6 \ (134) \)

This provocative move seems like a good way to randomise. Of course, the immediate 8 \( g5 \), hitting the knight, is playable. After 8 ... \( \mathcal{Q} d7 \) 9 \( h4 \) Black can muddy the waters with 9 ... \( h5 \) or even 9 ... \( h6 \). There is also a near absence of theory on 7 ... \( \mathcal{Q} f6 \) so it's hard to give an assessment.

8 \( f3 \)

White is aiming to achieve a kind of Sämisch King's Indian. The alternative 8 \( h3 \) looks slightly strange; 8 ... \( c5 \) 9 \( \mathcal{Q} d3 \) \( a6 \) 10 \( \mathcal{Q} b1 \) 0-0 11 \( \mathcal{Q} ge2 \) \( \mathcal{Q} d7 \) 12 \( b4 \) \( b6 \) 13 \( \mathcal{Q} g3 \) with an unclear position; Lutz - Stangl, Wildbad 1990. Maybe Black could react to 8 \( h3 \) with 8 ... \( c5 \).

8 ... \( \mathcal{Q} d7 \)

I quite like 8 ... \( h5 \) in this position; e.g. 9 \( g5 \) \( \mathcal{Q} d7 \) with the plan of ... \( a5 \) and ... \( \mathcal{Q} c5 \) as in Miles - Kohlweyer above.

9 \( h4 \) \( f5 \)

10 \( h5 \) \( h6!? \)
11 \( gxf5 \) \( gxf5 \)
12 \( \mathcal{Q} d2 \) \( \mathcal{Q} f6 \)
13 0-0-0 \( f4 \)
14 \( \mathcal{Q} f2 \) \( b6 \)
15 \( \mathcal{Q} h4 \) \( \mathcal{Q} h7 \)
16 \( \mathcal{Q} h3 \) \( \mathcal{Q} f6 \)

Black went on to win this bizarre position in Petursson - Speelman, Hastings 1986/7.

In my opinion, 7 ... \( \mathcal{Q} f6 \) seems like a good try against 7 \( g4 \). The ensuing positions are quite fertile and Black's resources seem adequate. There is also the bonus that there is very little theoretical knowledge about the move.

b3)  

7 ... \( c5 \ (135) \)

This move fixes the pawn centre in true Czech Benoni fashion. This structure, although unwieldy, is very gritty for Black and White usually has to take risks in order to open up the position. Again, the lack of practical examples makes it difficult to talk con-
clusively.

8  h4

Or 8 Qd3 f5 9 f3 and now Nunn suggests 9 ... Qh6 10 g5 f4!? and the exchange of the dark-squared bishops will help Black's position.

8 ... h5

This may be inferior to 8 ... f5 as played in Bagirov - Davies, Cascais 1986. 9 gxf5 gxf5 10 Qh5+ Qf8 11 Qh3 Qf6 and now 12 Qd1 b5! turned out well for Black. Maybe 12 Qf3 is better but Black's position still looks fine.

9  g5  f5
10  f3  Qd7
11  a3  b6
12  b4

White is a little better since Black must waste time to bring the g8 knight into the game;


The general conclusion after 7 g4 is that although 7 ... f5 may be risky in view of 8 gxf5, both 7 ... Qf6 and 7 ... c5 are playable alternatives.

This concludes our survey of 4 ... Qc6. While it cannot be denied that it is a risky move, Black seems to be surviving in the highly tactical, interesting positions that ensue. Actually, I have a confession to make here. Unlike all the other variations discussed in this book, I have never actually played any 4 ... Qc6 lines. After writing this chapter though, I guarantee that I'll be trying out the move in the future!
5 3 ... c5

1  d4   g6
2  c4   g7
3  d3   c5

It should be noted that the systems which we will cover in this chapter can only be played if White plays 3 d3. For example, if White plays 3 e4, then 3 ... c5 4 d5 will lead to King’s Indian/Modern Benoni type positions. Black can of course move into Chapter 4 territory by playing 3 ... d6.

4  d5 (136)

If White wants to be a wimp, then both 4 d3 and 4 e3 are options. 4 d3 cxd4 5 cxd4 dxc6 poses the question to the knight on d4. If 6 dxc6 bxc6 Black has more central pawns and a comfortable position. Or 6 dxc2, trying to achieve a Maroczy Bind position; maybe 6 ... d6 7 e4 dxc3+ 8 bxc3 d6 is an interesting way to play for Black. 4 e3 is not a happy move for the c1 bishop. Black should play 4 ... d6 to meet 5 dxc5 with 5 ... a5 — no problem at all.

This chapter revolves around Black’s dynamic idea of playing ... dxc3. This is a very controversial move. Black’s has opened up the dark squares and the key to Black’s play appears to be the a1-h8 diagonal. Moreover, exchanging the bishop could leave squares like h6 and g7 perilously weak. On the positive side, ... dxc3 does double White’s pawns, and the immobile c3 and c4 pawns will be prone to attack. Black’s aim will be to slow down the game, steering towards a strategic struggle revolving around the control of squares. In contrast, White will seek to utilise the temporary initiative and space advantage, and make the bishop pair count.

There are two ways for Black to play this system: the
immediate 4 ... \textit{Qxc}3+ which we consider in the first part of the chapter, or Black can seek to delay this exchange with 4 ... \textit{f5} (Section B). The same positions will often occur with either move and I will not mention every transpositional opportunity. After 4 ... \textit{f5} White can, of course, prevent the doubling of the pawns with a move like \textit{Bc2}. This will alter the complexion of the game considerably. Black will keep the dark-squared bishop and develop with ... \textit{d6} and ... \textit{\textit{g}f6}, and the structure is similar to that of the Dutch Defence. This position is perfectly playable for Black but it is worth bearing in mind that White does have this option after 4 ... \textit{f5}.

A) 4 ... \textit{Qxc3+}
B) 4 ... \textit{f5}

A)

4 ... \textit{Qxc3+}

The Russian Grandmaster Dautov goes so far as to award this move an "!!".

5 \textbf{bxc3} \textit{f5 (137)}

The ... \textit{f5} advance is considered necessary in order to restrain \textit{e4}, e.g. 5 ... \textit{d6} 6 \textit{e4 \textit{d}d7} 7 \textit{f4 \textit{g}f6} 8 \textit{d3} and White is ready to start blasting.

After just five moves we have reached a highly unbalanced position which is difficult to assess. At first sight Black's position looks highly suspect. The ... \textit{f5} advance has created further kingside weaknesses. The dark squares \textit{f4}, \textit{g5}, \textit{h6} and \textit{g7} look vulnerable and \textit{\textit{e}6} is another hole in Black's camp. The \textit{f5}-pawn also restricts the \textit{c8} bishop which is probably dreaming about being a dark-squared bishop on the \textit{g7}-square. Black normally castles kingside in the Modern but here this is out of the question. Not only are the dark squares too weak but a \textit{h4}-\textit{h5} advance would blow away the monarch on this side of the board. So what is the point behind Black's position? As I mentioned earlier, Black must seek to slow the game down. White wants to keep the position blocked and keep the action at close quarters. The knight will go to \textit{f6} where it will restrain White's \textit{e4} break. The queen will go to \textit{a5} to put pressure on \textit{c3}. The \textit{b8} knight may go to \textit{d7} and then to \textit{b6} where it can hit the \textit{c4} pawn. The light-squared bishop may not be striking into the heart of White's position but it is a good defensive piece.
It will cover the e6 square and it is needed to support f5 since White is likely to play for e4 or g4. The king can also find safety with queenside castling. White does have the open b-file but the c3, c4 and d5 pawns prevent White from deploying enough pieces against the black king position.

It should also be noted that the exchange of queens will tend to favour Black since in the endgame the c3 and c4 pawns will be more vulnerable targets (as Black does not have to worry about being mated).

White has various different ways of playing this position and the sixth move options will divide this section.

a) 6 g4
b) 6 h4
c) 6 f3
d) 6 Qf3
e) 6 d6

The move 6 e4 will transpose into lines covered in Section B. The transposition after 6 g3 is also considered in B. For some reason these moves tend to be played after 4 ... f5 so that 5 ... Qxc3+ 6 bxc3 will transpose. But neither 6 e4 or 6 g3 are popular in the diagram position although it leads to the same thing!

a) 6 g4

This is White's most direct treatment. The aim is to open up the position before Black has time to consolidate the hold on squares like g4 and e4. White is prepared to sacrifice a pawn in order to open up lines so that bishops and rooks can terrorise the kingside.

6 ... fxg4

Spurning the pawn does not look right; e.g. 6 ... d6 7 gxf5 Qxf5 8 f3 and Black cannot prevent e4.

7 h3 (138)

The inferior 7 e4 was tried in Brenninkmeijer – Herigott, London 1987. 7 ... wa5!? 8 Qd2 d6 9 h3 gxh3 (9 ... f6; 9 ... g3 – both moves are possible) 10 f4?! (10 Qxh3 looks more testing) 10 ... f6 11 e5 Qe4 12 Qh3 Qd7? 13 e6 Qxf6 14 Qg2 Qxd2 15 Qxd2 Qa4 16 Qd3 b5! 17 cxb5 a6 and Black had exploited White's over-extended position.

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To capture on h3 would give White an ideal position after 7 ... gxh3 8 Qxh3 d6 9 Qf4 with multiple threats. The plan most in keeping with Black’s position
is to return the pawn, keep the files closed and try to control some squares.

7 ... g3

Holding on to the pawn with 7 ... d6 looks risky but it may be a good move; 8 hxg4 hxg4 9 f3 c8 10 e4 a5 11 c2 d7 12 h3 e5 13 f4 f7 14 b1 f6 15 d3 b6 16 b3 a6 17 f5 gxf5 18 exf5 d7 and Black must be doing well; H. Grünberg - Pekarek, Prague 1989. White must have improvements on this game but the positions are highly unclear. 7 ... d6 is probably worth a second try.

8 fxg3 a5

Or 8 ... d6 9 a4+ d7 10 b3 a5 11 d2 f6 12 f3 (presumably 12 xb7 is met by 12 ... 0-0 13 xa8 a6 - White gets two rooks and a pawn for the queen but may have difficulty with piece coordination) 12 ... a6 13 a4 f5 14 f3 bd7 15 h6 0-0-0 16 a5 b6? and the position was very messy in D. Gurevich - Dzindzishvili, USA Ch 1986.

9 d3 d6

White must have a slight advantage in this position since it is hard for Black to make e5 into an outpost. Black's position will become cramped; the c8 bishop and b8 knight cannot develop easily. In this game Black adopts the rather drastic plan of allowing a knight exchange on e5, which doubles the e-pawn. This must give White an advantage.

11 d2 bd7
12 f3 e5
13 xe5 dxe5
14 g2 c7
15 0-0 d6

Black eventually grovelled out with a draw in San Segundo - Dzindzishvili, New York 1990.

The conclusion is that 6 g4 is a very lively try for White and the resulting positions are very double-edged. Although the above game turned out better for White, Black has improvements on moves 6 and 7.

b)

6 h4 (140)
Like 6 g4, this is another direct attempt by White to exploit Black's weakened kingside structure. Black is faced by an immediate assault along the h-file with h4–h5 and hxg6.

6 ... \( \mathcal{f}6 \)

The alternative is 6 ... \( \mathcal{a}5 \) 7 \( \text{h5?!} \) (7 \( \mathcal{c}2 \) \( \mathcal{f}6 \) 7 ... \( \mathcal{x}c3+ \) 8 \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{g}7 \) 9 \( \text{h6} \) (9 \( \mathcal{f}3 \) is also interesting) 9 ... \( \mathcal{b}2 \) 10 \( \mathcal{h}3 \) \( \mathcal{f}6 \) 11 \( \mathcal{b}1 \) \( \mathcal{d}4 \) 12 e3 \( \mathcal{e}5 \) 13 \( \mathcal{f}3 \) \( \mathcal{c}7 \) 14 \( \mathcal{c}3 \) d6 15 \( \mathcal{g}5 \) and White had excellent compensation for the pawn in Douven – Befeki, Budapest 1989.

7 \( \text{h5} \) (141)

Black can react to this pawn thrust in three ways:

b1) 7 ... \( \text{gxh5} \)

b2) 7 ... \( \mathcal{hxh5} \)

b3) 7 ... \( \mathcal{g}8! \)  

b1)

7 ... \( \text{gxh5} \)

This is rather an ugly move. The f5, h5 and h7 pawns all look vulnerable and White will have lasting pressure along the h-file. My feeling is that Black should avoid 7 ... \( \text{gxh5} \).

8 \( \text{d6} \)

This move is probably not the best. White could maintain an advantage by playing simple chess: \( \mathcal{h}3–f4–h5 \). Playing 8 d6 seems to introduce a random element.

8 ... \( \mathcal{a}5 \)

9 dxe7 \( \mathcal{c}6 \)

10 e3 \( \mathcal{d}6 \)

11 \( \mathcal{e}2 \) \( \mathcal{e}7 \)

12 \( \mathcal{f}4 \) \( \mathcal{e}6 \)

13 \( \mathcal{b}1 \) \( \mathcal{b}6 \)

14 \( \mathcal{x}e6 \) \( \mathcal{x}e6 \)

15 \( \mathcal{h}5 \)

with a very murky position in Hergott – I. Ivanov, Canadian Ch 1987.

b2)

7 ... \( \mathcal{hxh5} \)

8 \( \text{e4} \)

Now the knight on h5 is embarrassed, since 8 ... \( \text{fxe}4 \) would be met by 9 \( \mathcal{x}h5 \) winning for White.

8 ... \( \mathcal{f}6 \)

9 \( \text{exf}5 \) \( \text{gxf}5 \)

10 \( \mathcal{g}5 \)

After this move Black cannot avoid the doubling of the f-pawns.

10 ... \( \mathcal{a}5 \)

11 \( \mathcal{x}f6 \) \( \text{exf}6 \)

12 \( \mathcal{d}2?! \) \( \text{d}6 \)

13 \( \mathcal{d}3 \) \( \mathcal{d}7 \)

Now: 14 \( \text{f}4 \)? \( \text{b}5 \) 15 \( \mathcal{x}b5 \) c4 16 \( \mathcal{xc}4 \) \( \mathcal{c}5 \) and Black has suddenly become active; Taylor – I. Ivanov, Canadian Ch 1985. Instead simply 14 \( \mathcal{h}5+ \) looks
good for White; 14 ... \( \mathbf{\text{d}} \text{d}8 \) 15 \( \mathbf{\text{x}} \text{f}5 \) and the black knight is tied to the defence of f6.

b3) 7 ... \( \mathbf{\text{g}} \text{g}8! \)

I like this move for two reasons:

i) It preserves the integrity of Black's kingside pawn structure. If these pawns become doubled and isolated then White seems to have too much pressure.

ii) It represents a policy whereby Black evacuates the h-file. Black's plan is to concentrate on developing the queenside with a view to long castling. When the rooks have been connected Black may then resume the struggle for the h-file.

8 \text{hxg6} \text{hxg6} (142)

9 \( \mathbf{\text{f}} \text{f}3 \)

Or 9 \( \mathbf{\text{a}} \text{a}4 \) \( \mathbf{\text{b}} \text{b}6 \) 10 \( \mathbf{\text{f}} \text{f}3 \) \( \mathbf{\text{a}} \text{a}6 \) (the endgames should be fine for Black) 11 \( \mathbf{\text{b}} \text{b}3 \) d6 12 \( \mathbf{\text{g}} \text{g}5 \) \( \mathbf{\text{bd}} \text{d}7 \) 13 \( \mathbf{\text{e}} \text{e}6 \) \( \mathbf{\text{a}} \text{a}5 \) 14 f3 \( \mathbf{\text{e}} \text{e}5 \) 15 \( \mathbf{\text{b}} \text{b}1 \) \( \mathbf{\text{f}} \text{f}7 \) 16 \( \mathbf{\text{d}} \text{d}2 \) \( \mathbf{\text{b}} \text{b}8 \) 17 \( \mathbf{\text{g}} \text{g}5 \) \( \mathbf{\text{d}} \text{d}7 \) with chances for both sides; Franic - Vokac, Prague 1990.

9 ... \( \mathbf{\text{d}} \text{d}6 \)

10 \( \mathbf{\text{g}} \text{g}5 \) \( \mathbf{\text{a}} \text{a}5 \)

11 \( \mathbf{\text{b}} \text{b}3 \)

Or 11 \( \mathbf{\text{c}} \text{c}2 \) \( \mathbf{\text{bd}} \text{d}7 \) 12 f3 \( \mathbf{\text{e}} \text{e}5 \) 13 e4 fxe4 14 fxe4 \( \mathbf{\text{d}} \text{d}7 \) 15 \( \mathbf{\text{f}} \text{f}4 \) 0-0-0 16 \( \mathbf{\text{xe}} \text{e}5 \) dx e5 17 \( \mathbf{\text{f}} \text{f}7 \) \( \mathbf{\text{df}} \text{f}8 \) 18 \( \mathbf{\text{xe}} \text{e}5 \) \( \mathbf{\text{a}} \text{a}4 \) 19 \( \mathbf{\text{bd}} \text{d}3 \) \( \mathbf{\text{xe}} \text{e}4 \) and Black has a crushing position.

11 ... \( \mathbf{\text{bd}} \text{d}7 \)

12 \( \mathbf{\text{f}} \text{f}4 \) (143)

In the game Dautov - Vokac, Dortmund 1992, Black went astray with 12 ... \( \mathbf{\text{b}} \text{b}8 \). The intention was to play for ... b5, but this is not a logical plan. Black should play against the doubled c-pawns and not try to open up the position. Dautov outlines the correct way for Black to play this position:

12 ... \( \mathbf{\text{b}} \text{b}6 \)
13 e3 Qd7  
14 Qd3 0–0–0

Black's patience has borne fruit and every piece is becoming active, e.g. 15 f3 h8 16 Qf2 g6+. Now both the c4 and d5 pawns are targets; Black threatens ... Qfxd5 winning a pawn, and also ... Qa4 winning the c4 pawn.

Note also that the king is quite safe on the queenside since White's mobility is restricted by the c3 and c4 pawns.

Conclusion: The latest analysis suggests that 7 ... g8 is a promising try for Black in this system. More practical examples are needed to test the durability of the move.

6 f3

Since the move 5 ... f5 is designed to prevent White from playing e4, 6 f3 is rather a logical counter by White. Although White can force through the e4 advance, Black can try to control the e5 square (after e4, fxe4 fxe4, there will not be an f-pawn to eject a knight from e5). Lack of practical examples makes it impossible to pronounce a verdict on 6 f3.

6 ... a5  
7 Qd2 Qf6  
8 c2 d6  
9 e4 fxe4

10 fxe4 Qbd7

Black's plan is to control e5 and this can only be done with both the knights.

11 Qf3 Qg4  
12 Qe2 Qde5

The problem with 12 ... Qge5 is that the bishop will remain hemmed in on c8.

13 0–0 Qd7  
14 h3 Qxf3+  
15 gxf3 Qf6 (144)

White has managed to achieve a mobile pawn centre by regaining an f-pawn. But White also has kingside weaknesses and Black has good chances for counterplay. 16 h2 0–0–0 17 f4 Qc7 18 a3 Qd8 19 Qg1 Qf7 20 Qg5 e5 21 fxe5 dxe5 22 Qd3 Qd6 and both sides had chances to win in Piket – Dzindzichashvili, Lucerne 1989.

d) 6 Qf3

This simple developing move appears logical but it does not really challenge Black's controversial system.

6 ... a5
7  \( \text{dc}2 \)  \( \text{\textalpha}f6 \)  
8  \( \text{\textalpha}f4 \)  \text{d}6  
9  \text{e}3  \( \text{\textalpha}bd7 \)  
10  \( \text{\textalpha}d3 \)  

Black could continue quietly with 10 ... \( \text{\textalpha}b6 \) and 11 ... \( \text{\textalpha}d7 \); or 10 ... \( \text{\textalpha}g4 \) intending ... \( \text{\textalpha}ge5 \) is possible. Instead Black tries to exploit the rather placid placing of White's pieces.

10 ...  \text{b5}  
11  \( \text{\textalpha}b1 \)  

Of course, 11 \text{cxb5} \( \text{\textalpha}xd5 \) is a disaster for White.

11 ...  \text{bxc4}  
12  \( \text{\textalpha}xc4 \)  \text{0–0}  
13  \text{0–0}  \( \text{\textalpha}b6 \)  
14  \( \text{\textalpha}b5 \)  \( \text{\textalpha}a4 \)  
15  \( \text{\textalpha}xa4 \)  \( \text{\textalpha}xa4 \)  

with a good endgame for Black. Black threatens ... \( \text{\textalpha}a6 \) and the \text{d}5 pawn is an easy target; Armstrong - Hergott, Ontario 1988.

e)  
6  \text{d}6  

I cannot find any examples of this move being tried in practice, but it is a definite possibility for White. By preventing Black from playing ... \text{d}6 White shuts the \text{c}8 bishop out of the game. White is going for a quick knock-out with 6 \text{d}6, so one has to be careful.

6 ...  \( \text{\textalpha}c6 \)  

This seems like a logical move. 6 ... \( \text{\textalpha}f6 \) seems to run into 7 \( \text{\textalpha}g5 \) when the bishop will cause havoc on the \text{h}4–\text{d}8 diagonal.  

7  \( \text{dxe7} \)  

Or 7 \( \text{\textalpha}f4 \) \text{e}5 and Black can seize the initiative and hit the vulnerable \text{c}3 and \text{d}6 pawns. 7 \( \text{\textalpha}f3 \) 8 \( \text{\textalpha}f6 \) 8 9 \( \text{\textalpha}g5 \) \( \text{\textalpha}e4 \) 9 \text{dxe7} \( \text{\textalpha}a5 \) looks fine for Black.

7 ...  \( \text{\textalpha}xe7 \)  
8  \( \text{\textalpha}f3 \)  

Instead 8 \( \text{\textalpha}f4 \) \text{e}5 9 \text{e}3 \( \text{\textalpha}f6 \) 10 \( \text{\textalpha}f3 \) \text{d}6 looks fine for Black.

8 ...  \( \text{\textalpha}e5! \)  

Or 8 ... \text{d}6 9 \( \text{\textalpha}f4 \) (9 \( \text{\textalpha}g5 \) \( \text{\textalpha}f6 \) 10 \text{d}2 \( \text{\textalpha}e6 \) is fine for Black) 9 ... \( \text{\textalpha}e5 \) and Black's position looks OK.

9  \( \text{\textalpha}xe5 \)  \( \text{\textalpha}xe5 \)  
10  \( \text{\textalpha}d3 \)  \( \text{\textalpha}f6 \)  
11  \text{h}6  

with an unclear position which should not be bad for Black.

It is hard to discuss 6 \text{d}6 with nothing to work on, but my hunch is that Black should be doing fine.

B)  
4 ...  \text{f}5 (145)  

This move is more versatile
than the immediate exchange 4 ... $\texttt{Q}x\texttt{c}3+$. By delaying this capture Black deters White from the more aggressive lines like 5 g4 and 5 h4. For this reason it seems preferable to adopt this move-order, rather than 4 ... $\texttt{Q}x\texttt{c}3+$.

We consider three plans for White:

a) 5 e4
b) 5 $\triangle f3$
c) 5 g3

a)  5  e4

This move will force the issue, since Black must react to the opening up of the position. Now 5 ... fxe4 6 $\triangle x e4$ $\triangle f6$ 7 $\triangle x f6+$ will be better for White whichever way Black recaptures. Or 5 ... d6 6 $\triangle g e2$ $\triangle f6$ 7 $\triangle g3$ is also good for White.

5  ...  $\texttt{Q}x\texttt{c}3+$

6  bxc3  fxe4

White has sacrificed a pawn in order to mount a rapid attack along the h-file.

7  h4  $\triangle f6$

8  h5  (146)

How should Black defend against the h4-h5 thrust? Obviously 8 ... $\triangle x h5$ will lose by force after 9 $\texttt{Q}x h5$ gxh5 10 $\texttt{Q}x h5$ $\texttt{Q}f8$ 11 $\texttt{Q}h6+$. Farago-Davies, Balatonbereny 1985 continued 8 ... gxh5 9 $\texttt{Q}g5!$ $\texttt{a}5$

10 $\texttt{Q}x f6$ exf6 11 $\texttt{Q}x h5+$ $\texttt{Q}d8$ 12 $\triangle e2$ d6 13 $\texttt{Q}f7$ $\texttt{Q}d7$ 14 $\texttt{Q}g7$ $\texttt{Q}e8$

15 $\texttt{Q}x h7$ $\texttt{Q}a3$ 16 g3! and the bishop is threatening to come to h3. Black tried to randomise with 16 ... e3, but the complications favoured White. This would suggest that 8 ... gxh5 is inferior to:

8  ...  $\texttt{Q}g8$

This move has finesse. Black sidesteps the problems along the h-file and reinforces the weak point g6.

9  $\triangle h3$

Or 9 $\triangle g5$ d6 and Black seems to have a perfectly fine position.

9  ...  d6

10  hxg6  hxg6

11  $\triangle g5$  $\texttt{a}5$

12  $\triangle d2$  $\texttt{b}d7$  (147)
This position occurred in the game Razuvaev – Ravikumar, Calcutta 1983 and was agreed drawn. Knowing that Ravikumar is fond of an early ceasefire and that he was up against a Russian GM, my hunch is that White is not doing too well in this position. Black intends simply ... \( \text{Qe5} \), ... \( \text{Qf5} \) and ... 0-0-0. If 13 \( \text{Bxc2} \) \( \text{Qe5} \) 14 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qf5} \) 15 \( \text{Bxf6+} \) \( \text{exf6} \) 16 \( \text{Bb3} \) 0-0-0 is excellent for Black. Unless White has an answer to 8 ... \( \text{g6} \) then this line looks quite comfortable for Black.

b) 5 \( \text{Qf3} \)

This is the steady option for White. An interesting question is whether Black should try to play an independent system, omitting ... \( \text{Qxc3} \) entirely.

5 ... \( \text{d6} \)

Giving White the chance to avoid the doubling of the c-pawns. 5 ... \( \text{Qxc3+} \) returns the game to normal lines. 6 \( \text{Bxc3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 7 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{a5} \) 8 \( \text{Bb2} \) \( \text{d6} \) 9 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) 10 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{g6} \) 11 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{e4} \) 12 \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{df6} \) 13 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 14 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) and Black is ready to castle queenside with a comfortable position; Tatai – Laco, Forli 1988.

6 \( \text{Bc2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 7 \( \text{e3} \) (148)

Since we have not had the exchange on c3, the complexion of the position is considerably different. Black is in less danger of succumbing to a rapid attack along the h-file or on the dark squares. The structure is quite similar to a Lenin-grad Dutch. Black's natural pawn breaks are ... b5 and ... e6 although they must be carefully prepared. For example, White could react to an ... e6 break with dxex6 and e4 opening up the position.

7 ... \( \text{a6} \) 8 \( \text{Qe2} \) 0-0 9 0-0 \( \text{c7} \) 10 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 11 \( \text{Qd2} \) h6 12 \( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 13 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{f7} \) 14 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15 \( \text{Bb3} \) g5

with a very tense middle-game position; Grünberg – Bischoff, Munich 1992.

c) 5 \( \text{g3} \)

At first sight this move appears too placid, but it does solve the problem of developing the light-squared bishop.

5 ... \( \text{d6} \)
6 Qg2 (149)

6 ... Qxc3+

Again there is the option of keeping the bishop: 6 ... Qf6 7 Qh3 Qa6 8 0-0?! (8 Qf4! 0-0 9 h4 with the idea of 10 h5 is good for White) 8 ... 0-0 with a Dutch-type position which should be a little better for White; Vokac – Petran, Stary Smokovec 1988.

7 bxc3 Qf6

If 7 ... Qd7 then 8 Qh3?! will transpose into Lukacs – Velez, Cienfuegos 1983. 8 ... a5 9 b3 Qb6 10 0-0 Qa6 11 b5+ Qd7 12 Qxa6 bxa6 13 Qf4 Qxc4 and Black was doing very well. The knight on h3 leaves White struggling to hold the c4 pawn.

8 Qf3 a5
9 c2 Qbd7
10 0-0 Qb6
11 Qd2 Qa4
12 Qd3 Qd7
13 e1 0-0-0
14 Qf1 h8
15 e4 e5
16 f3 f8

and Black had a very comfortable game in Wesseln - Bischoff, Bundesliga 1992.

The conclusion seems to be that 5 g3 is far from dangerous for Black. In fact, the deployment of the bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal makes it difficult to defend the c4 pawn.

The general conclusion is that 4 ... f5 may be a superior move order to 4 ... Qxc3+. It does not appear that White can take advantage of the delay in capturing the c3 knight. Moreover 4 ... f5 reduces White’s options of combating the system. Both moves, though, are perfectly playable for Black and I am surprised that this system is not more popular.
The natural way to play against the Modern is to occupy the centre. We have considered various methods for White to achieve this; by playing e4 and d4, d4 and c4, and e4, d4 and c4. In this chapter we concentrate on lines whereby White avoids the full occupation of the centre and omits 2 c4 (and also 2 e4). Objectively these systems cannot be dangerous for Black. Only by achieving central control can White demonstrate the vulnerability of the Modern system. But by refusing to occupy the whole centre, White has also deprived Black of the traditional target.

How else should White continue if c4 and e4 are to be avoided? One method is to attempt to "hack" against the g6 pawn. This is done by playing the immediate 2 h4. This move is hard to take seriously which makes it even more dangerous! Those who find this hard to believe should take a look at Hodgson – Norwood below.

White can also play more positionally. d4 can be used as the rock to limit the range of the g7 bishop. White adopts the ultra solid formation c3, d4 and e3. Obviously the dark-squared bishop belongs outside the pawn chain, on f4 or g5.

We categorise these plans as follows:

a) 2 h4
b) 2 c3
c) 2 \( \text{f}4 \)
d) 2 \( \text{c}3 \)

Modern players must appreciate that the king's fianchetto is a slow opening which gives White time to experiment with the bizarre. In some respects this flank advance is
more logical than 1 ... g6. Anyway, 2 h4 is a move to be taken seriously.

2     \[f6\]

Our usual 2 ... \[g7\] is not appropriate here. White pushes 3 h5 and 3 ... \[f6\] is met with 4 h6. White now has a choice.

a1) 3 \[c3\]

a2) 3 \[g5\]

a1)

3     \[c3\]     d5

Black could play a Pirc Defence with 3 ... d6 4 e4 \[g7\] (4 ... \[c6\] is an interesting idea since 5 d5 \[e5\] and if 6 f4 the knight has the g4 square) 5 \[e2\] c5 6 dxc5 \[a5\] 7 \[f1\] dxc5 8 \[e3\] \[a5\] 9 h5 \[xh5\] 10 \[xh5\] \[xc3\] 11 bxc3 g5 and Black is not worse; Llagyvasuren - Azmai-parashvili, Moscow 1986.

Another alternative is 3 ... c5 4 d5 (4 dxc5 \[a5\]) 4 ... \[g7\] 5 e4 d6 6 \[e2\] 0-0 7 a4 (presumably 7 h5 is met by the tactical 7 ... b5 - a useful trick in these Schmid Benoni positions and one to which this author has fallen. 8 \[xb5\] \[xe4\] 9 \[xe4\] \[a5\] 10 \[c3\] \[c3\] 11 bxc3 \[xb5\] and now 12 hxg6 is met by 12 ... fxg6. The open h-file will be of little use to White since kingside castling is the only haven for the king. 12 \[h6\] \[e8\] 13 \[e2\] e6 14 \[b1\] \[c4\] is good for Black) 7 ... e6 8 h5 exd5 9 exd5 \[e8\] 10 gxh6 gxh6 11 \[h6\] \[xh6\] 12 \[xh6\] \[a6\].

\[d2\] \[g4\]! 14 \[h1\] \[f6\] 15 \[h3\] \[b4\] with a double-edged position; Brandics - Horvath, Budapest Hungaroil 1991.

4 \[g5\] \[g7\]

5 \[d2\] h6

6 \[f4\] (151)

Black has equalised in this position. Black can play ... c6 and ... \[bd7\] and, if White plays e3, can castle. In this game Black decides to liven things up:

6 ... c5!?     

7 dxc5 d4

8 0-0-0

If 8 \[b5\] then 8 ... \[e4\] 9 \[c7\] \[xc7\] 10 \[xc7\] \[xd2\] 11 \[xd2\] \[a6\] and Black is better.

8 ... \[c6\]

9 \[b5\] \[e4\]

10 \[e1\]

Now 10 \[c7\] is met by 10 ... \[f8\] 11 \[e1\] e5 and White is busted.

10 ... \[xc5\]

The natural 10 ... e5 is answered with the powerful 11 e3! exf4 12 exd4 and the attack has turned round.

11 \[c7\] \[f8\]

12 \[xa8\] e5
13 \( \text{Qd2} \)  
14 \( \text{e3} \)  
15 \( \text{Qb5} \)  
\( \text{Qg8} \)

Black somehow managed to win this ridiculous game; Skembris - Mestel, Graz 1981.

White may have a better way to treat 6 ... \( \text{c5} \), but 6 ... \( \text{c6} \) is a safe way for Black to play.

\[ a2 \]

3 \( \text{Qg5} \)

This seems to be a better try for White, since if Black plays ... \( d5 \), the knight has the option of going to d2 rather than c3.

3  
\( \ldots \)  
\( \text{Qg7} \)

4 \( \text{\&d2} \)

Both 4 ... \( d6 \) and 4 ... \( d5 \) are fine for Black, e.g. 4 ... \( d6 \) 5 e4 (5 e3 is just equal) 5 ... \( \text{h6} \) 6 \( \text{Qf4} \) (6 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) is not worrying for Black) 6 ... \( \text{Qc6} \) 7 d5 e5! 8 dxc6 exf4 9 cxb7 \( \text{Qxb7} \) and Black's bishops will be very powerful. Instead Black sees a chance to exploit White's move order.

4  
\( \ldots \)  
\( \text{c5} \)

5 \( \text{c3} \)  
\( \text{cxd4} \)

6 \( \text{cxd4} \)  
\( \text{\&b6?} \)

Expecting to win a pawn. 6 ... \( d5 \) had to be played.

7 \( \text{\&c4!} \)  
\( \text{\&b4+?} \)

Now I'm expecting to win a piece.

8 \( \text{Qd2} \) (152)

8  
\( \ldots \)  
\( \text{\&xc4} \)

I've won my piece ...

9 \( \text{\&c1} \)

... but I've lost my queen;


However, if you are careful and take care of your queen, 2 \( h4 \) should not be too dangerous for Black.

\[ b \]

2 \( \text{c3} \)

This is not the kind of move to get the crowds flocking to watch your game but tranquil openings often ignite in the middlegame.

2  
\( \ldots \)  
\( \text{Qg7} \)

3 \( \text{Qg5} \)

Black can now allow White to keep the game dull by playing 3 ... \( \text{c5} \) or try to liven things up with the Norwood method 3 ... \( \text{h6} \).

\[ b1 \]

3  
\( \ldots \)  
\( \text{c5} \)

4 \( \text{\&f3} \)  
\( \text{\&a5} \)

1 don't really like this move since the queen will become a target when knights start
hopping into c4.

5 e3 d6

If 5 ... cxd4, then 6 exd4 and White will develop with d3, 0–0 and e1 with pressure on the e-file.

6 d2 d6
7 dxc5 dxc5
8 c4 c7
9 f4 d7
10 c2 0–0
11 d1 e8
12 e4

and White had the initiative in the game Cifuentes – Quinteros, Rio Hondo 1987.

b2)

3 ... h6

Necessity is the mother of invention. Needing to win for a grandmaster norm I found myself facing 3 g5. I suddenly discovered a way to unbalance the position.

4 h4

Or 4 f4 d6 and Black can play 5 d7 and 6 e5 with a pleasant position.

4 ... f5!

This is the point; Black switches the game into a favourable Dutch Defence.

5 e3

To meet the threat of 5 g5 and 6 f4.

5 ... d6
6 d2

Black’s castling could be delayed by 6 c4. Black could then react with 6 d5 with a Stonewall structure. Alternat-

tively 6 ... e6 with the idea of 0–0, ... d6 and slowly preparing the ... e5 advance.

6 ... 0–0
7 d3 d6 (153)

Black already has a comfortable game with a clear plan of playing for ... e5 and then a kingside attack. White’s next move is rather drastic, but 8 g3 e8 9 0–0 e5 is good for Black.

8 f4 c6
9 g3 e8

The ... e5 break is still coming, so White concedes the bishop pair.

10 xf6 xf6
11 d5 d8
12 0–0 e5

Now White should probably try to simplify with 13 dxe6 x6 14 c4 when Black is only slightly better.

13 fxe5? dxe5
14 e4 f4

White has a central pawn majority but this is more than matched by Black’s chances for a direct kingside storm.

15 e1 f7
16 \( \text{Qe2} \) h5
17 \( \text{Qd3} \) h6
18 a4 \( \text{Qe7} \)
19 b4 \( \text{g5} \! \)

A temporary pawn sacrifice which leaves Black clearly better. 20 \( \text{Qxh5} \) g4 21 \( \text{Qc5} \) \( \text{Qg7} \)
22 \( \text{Qe6} \) \( \text{Qxe6} \) 23 dxe6 \( \text{Qg5} \) 24 \( \text{Qf7+} \) \( \text{Qxf7} \) 25 exf7 \( \text{Qxf7} \) and Black continued the attack on the kingside; Kovacevic – Norwood, Toronto 1989.

**Conclusion:** 3 ... h6 looks like a lively way to challenge the plan of 2 c3 and 3 \( \text{Qg5} \).

c)

2 \( \text{Qf4} \)

This is a fairly harmless idea which is sometimes tried against the King's Indian.

2 ... \( \text{Qg7} \)
3 \( \text{Qf3} \) d6
4 e3 (154)

\[ \text{Qg5} \text{Qg6} \text{Qf6} \text{g5} \] and Black has equalised. This seems like the most sensible plan, but you can also transpose to the King's Indian treatment as follows:

4 ... \( \text{Qf6} \)
5 h3 0–0
6 \( \text{Qe2} \) c5
7 c3 \( \text{Qb6} \)

According to Ivan Sokolov this move solves Black's problems.

8 \( \text{Qb3} \)

Or 8 \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) 9 0–0 \( \text{Qd5} \) 10 \( \text{Qh2} \) cxd4 11 exd4 e5 and Black is taking the initiative, since 12 c4 is met by 12 ... \( \text{Qxd4!} \) 13 \( \text{Qxd4} \) exd4 14 cxd5 d3.

8 ... \( \text{Qe6} \)
9 \( \text{Qxb6} \) axb6
10 a3 \( \text{c6} \)

and Black was not worse in Dreev – I. Sokolov, Groningen 1991.

**Conclusion:** 2 \( \text{Qf4} \) will not cause sleepless nights.

d)

2 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qg7} \)
3 h4

The point of 2 \( \text{Qc3} \) was to delay the h4 advance. Now 3 ... d5 is met by 4 h5; also after 3 ... \( \text{Qf6} \) 4 c4 Black is forced to play the Pirc line with 4 ... d6 - although this is not such a bad thing!

3 ... c5
4 dxc5 \( \text{Qa5} \)
5 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qxc5} \)
6 h5 d5
7 h6 \( \text{Qf6} \).
I do not really see what White is trying to achieve; Radlovacki – Grigorov, Pancevo 1989.

**Conclusion:** After 2 \( \mathcal{Q}c3 \) \( \mathcal{Q}g7 \), 3 e4 is the only move that should cause Black problems.

Although there are occasional pitfalls to watch out for, there is little evidence to change the initial premise that White has to occupy the centre to prove any advantage against the Modern.
The majority of this book has naturally been concerned with White’s two most popular opening moves, 1 e4 and 1 d4. This final section considers other first moves for White, and will hopefully attest to the versatility of the Modern against virtually any opening move.

Obviously the most important alternative to 1 e4 and 1 d4 is the English Opening, arising after 1 c4. Hence this section conveniently divides into two parts:

Chapter 7 1 c4
Chapter 8 Others; 1 f3/1 g3, 1 f4, 1 b3

The only way for White to prevent 1 ... g6 and 2 ... Qg7 is to seek to occupy the a1-h8 diagonal immediately by opening with the b-pawn. This nefarious strategy was once used against me during a tournament in Toronto 1985. Knowing of my fondness for the king’s fianchetto my opponent prepared a nasty surprise for me.

Pajak - Norwood
Toronto 1985

1 b3 e6

In fact, Black can still play a king’s fianchetto, e.g. 1 ... g6
2 Qb2 Qf6 (2 ... Qg7?? 3 Qxg7 and our dark squares are weak). See Chapter 8.

2 Qb2 Qf6
3 e3 d5
4 f4 c5
5 f3 c6
6 b5 d6
7 e5 c7
8 0-0 0-0
9 Qxc6 bxc6
10 f3 e8
11 h3 g6! (155)

Now if my knight were on d7 rather than on e8, 12 h5 would be a brilliant move in
view of 12 ... gxh5 13 g3+ and 14 xf7 mate.

12 h5?? gxh5
0–1

It was fitting that the queen was captured by my g6 pawn.

One might point out that this game has little relevance to a book on the king’s fianchetto. But it does serve as a lesson to those who would thwart a Modern player from playing the Modern.
The English is not the most inspiring opening known to man but everyone has to be prepared to face it. We will take the following position as our starting point.

1 c4
2 d3 g7

The main continuation is 3 g3 after which Black has some very different ways to continue. For example, 3 ... c5 is a popular move which transposes into a main line Symmetrical English. In this book, however, I intend to cover only the lines where Black plays for ... e5 rather than ... c5. This is not because ... e5 is a superior plan, but since it is more in the spirit of the Modern Defence.

3 g3

The other way to continue is 3 d3 e5 with an eventual transposition to lines below when White plays g3. White really has to fianchetto to prove any advantage, since the point of the opening is to control the d5 square and expand on the queenside. This can only be done with the bishop's support along the h1-a8 diagonal.

3 ... e5

This pawn advance really draws the battle lines. Black concedes the d5 square in order to stake a claim to the centre. Much of the ensuing strategy often revolves around Black's attempts to expand on the kingside/centre and White's efforts to control and utilize the d5 square.

4 g2 (157)

This is a very well known position. The most common way for Black to play is 4 ... c6, and after 5 d3 d6 we have the standard starting position for the Closed Sicilian Reversed. Since this position has been well analysed, I propose to avoid discussion of 4 ... c6
altogether. Instead, this chapter will deal with three alternative ways for Black to play. This fourth move divergence divides the chapter as follows:

A) 4 ... d6  
B) 4 ... f5  
C) 4 ... \( \underline{\text{d}} \text{e}7 \)

A)

4 ... d6 (158)

This is the most common of the three. Now White's normal continuation is 5 d3 below, but we must first consider the option of 5 e4. Now 5 ... \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}6 \) (or 5 ... \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}7 \) 6 \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}2 \) 0-0 7 d4?! \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}6?! \) (7 ... exd4 8 \( \underline{x} \text{xd4} \) \( \underline{\text{b}} \text{c}6 \) 9 \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}3 \) \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}5 \) is good for Black) 8 d5 \( \underline{x} \text{d4} \) 9 \( \underline{x} \text{xd4} \) cxd4 10 \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}2 \) c5 with an unclear position; Rasmussen - Kupreichik, Esbjerg 1988) 6 \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}2 \) d7 7 d3 c6 8 b4 \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}7 \) 9 \( \underline{\text{b}} \text{b}1 \) 0-0 10 0-0 b5 11 cxb5 cxb5 12 \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}3 \) \( \underline{\text{b}} \text{c}6 \) 13 a4 bxa4 14 b5 d4 15 \( \underline{x} \text{xa4} \) \( \underline{x} \text{xe2}+ \) 16 \( \underline{x} \text{xe2} \) a6 with complete equality; King - Chiburdanidze, Geneva 1990.

5 d3 f5!? (159)

À la Kasparov. Of course, there are other ways for Black to play but it seems sensible to emulate the World Champion.

6 e3

This move is designed to restrain Black's aggression on the kingside. The f4-square, the likely target for a black pawn advance, is well secured. Now it is White who has ideas of challenging the centre with f4. We will take 6 e3 as the main line but there are two other moves.

i) 6 \( \underline{\text{f}} \text{f}3 \) \( \underline{\text{f}} \text{f}6 \) (6 ... \( \underline{\text{c}} \text{c}6 \) returns the game to familiar territory) 7 0-0 (7 c5 \( \underline{\text{c}} \text{c}6 \) 8 cxd6 cxd6 9 \( \underline{\text{b}} \text{b}3 \) \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}7 \) 10 \( \underline{\text{g}} \text{g}5 \) \( \underline{\text{e}} \text{e}6 \) 11 \( \underline{\text{x}} \text{xf6} \) \( \underline{\text{x}} \text{xf6} \) 12 \( \underline{\text{x}} \text{d}5 \) \( \underline{\text{x}} \text{xd5} \) 13 \( \underline{\text{h}} \text{xd5} \) \( \underline{\text{f}} \text{f}7 \) with an equal
position; Timman – Ree, Amsterdam 1977) 7 ... 0–0 8 b5 (8 c1 e2! cd7?) 8 ... a5 9 a3 cd5 10 cc2 f4 11 b4 axb4 12 axb4 cd4!? with an unclear position in Isaksen – Kristiansen, Esbjerg 1977.

ii) 6 e4 cd6 7 cd2 0–0 8 cd3?! (8 0–0 is the normal continuation) 8 ... cd6 9 cd3 cd6 10 cd2?! (according to Kasparov, 10 exf5 gxf5 11 f4 is equal) 10 ... fxe4 11 dxe4 dxe4 12 cdxe4 d5 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 cd5 cd6 15 0–0 cd7 16 cd2 d4! 17 cd5 cd5 and Black had the advantage in Ljubojevic – Kasparov, Linares 1992.

6 ... cd6

Or 6 ... cd6 7 cd2 cd6 8 0–0 cd6 9 b3 (9 b4?!) 9 ... 0–0 10 cd3 cd8 11 cd1 cd7 12 cd2 ca6 and Black was doing fine in Ehlvest – Leriche, French League 1991.

7 cd2 0–0

Kasparov prefers the move order 7 ... a5 8 0–0 0–0, on the grounds that White can answer 7 ... 0–0 with 8 b4?!

8 0–0 (l60)

Delaying castling does not benefit White: e.g. 8 cd1 a5 9 b3 cd6!? 10 cd2 b6 11 0–0 cd7 12 cd2 cd7 13 cd5 cd6 14 cd6+ cd6 with a balanced position; Foisor – Lupu, Hajduszoboszlo 1991.

The remarkable feature of this position is that Black has played the king’s fianchetto and still has more pawns in the centre than White! In compensation, White has control of d5 and the possibility of expanding on the queenside. There are several ways for Black to continue:

a) 8 ... a5
b) 8 ... cd6
c) 8 ... cd8

d) 8 ... cd7!?

a) 8 ... a5

Since this is how Gazza plays, it seems wise to recommend this move.

9 b3 cd6 (l61)

10 cd2

The alternatives are:
i) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{d2}} \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) (Kasparov prefers the bishop on d7 in these positions, where it supports the ... b5 advance) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{b2}} \texttt{\textit{f7}} \) 12 f4 exf4 13 \( \texttt{\textit{xf4}} \texttt{\textit{bd7}} \) 14 \( \texttt{\textit{ae1}} \texttt{\textit{c5}} \) 15 d4 \( \texttt{\textit{ae4}} \) 16 \( \texttt{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xe4}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{xe4}} \) fxe4 18 \( \texttt{\textit{db2}} \) 19 \( \texttt{\textit{xb2}} \) cxd5 20 \( \texttt{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{Qxd5}} \) 21 \( \texttt{\textit{cxd5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) and the complex middlegame has simplified into an equal endgame; Andersson - Nikolic, Reykjavik 1988.

ii) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{aa3}} \texttt{\textit{a6}} \) 11 d4 \( \texttt{\textit{b4}} \) 12 \( \texttt{\textit{dd2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{c7}} \) 13 \( \texttt{\textit{b2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) 14 a3 \( \texttt{\textit{a6}} \) 15 \( \texttt{\textit{ac1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{f7}} \) 16 \( \texttt{\textit{fd1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{ae8}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{c2}} \) e4 with the typical scenario where Black storms the kingside and White will push on the queenside; Ledger - Mestel, Hastings 1991.

10 ... \( \texttt{\textit{a6}} \)

The 10 ... d5 push must be avoided, since after 11 \( \texttt{\textit{c2}}! \) with the idea of \( \texttt{\textit{fd1}} \), it is Black's central pawns that become the target.

11 \( \texttt{\textit{d2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{d7}}! \)

Now Black has a clear plan of playing ... \( \texttt{\textit{c8}} \) and ... b5.

12 \( \texttt{\textit{h1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{c8}} \)

13 \( \texttt{\textit{ae1?!}} \) (162)

Better to play 13 f4 with an unclear position after Black replies 13 ... b5.

13 ... b5

14 e4

Black has no problems after 14 cxb5 cxb5 15 \( \texttt{\textit{d5}} \) (15 \( \texttt{\textit{b7}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{c7}} \) 16 \( \texttt{\textit{xa6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{a8+}} \) regains the piece with an excellent position) 15 ... \( \texttt{\textit{xd5}} \) 16 \( \texttt{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{h8}} \) and Black's greater space gives him an edge.

14 ... \( \texttt{\textit{c5}} \)

15 cxb5 cxb5

16 exf5 \( \texttt{\textit{xf5}} \)

17 \( \texttt{\textit{e4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{b4!}} \)

Keeping the e2 knight out of the action.

18 \( \texttt{\textit{c1}} \)

Now simply 18 ... \( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) would have left Black with a comfortable position in M. Gurevich - Kasparov, Reggio Emilia 1991/2. Black has more space and the e2 knight and d3 pawn are potential problems in White's camp.

b) 8 ... c6

Preparing to play for ... d5. The drawback is that it allows White to expand rapidly on the queenside.

9 b4 a6

10 a4

Another plan is to play 10 \( \texttt{\textit{b2}} \) with \( \texttt{\textit{d2}} \) and f4 to follow. This is probably a superior way for White to play than in the text.

10 ... \( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \)
11 $\textsf{Qb2}$ d5  
12 cxd5 cxd5 (163)

163 

W

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

Is 13 f4 worth considering? After 13 ... e4 (13 ... $\textsf{Qg4}$ 14 $\textsf{Qd2}$ and 15 h3) 14 $\textsf{Qd4}$ $\textsf{Qf7}$ I do not see a good way for White to proceed. White can also continue slowly with 13 $\textsf{Qd2}$ to meet 13 ... $\textsf{Qc6}$ with 14 $\textsf{b5}$. Instead White embarks on a double-edged plan:

13 $\textsf{a5}$ $\textsf{Qc6}$  
14 $\textsf{Qa4}$ $\textsf{Qf7}$

Obviously 14 ... $\textsf{Qxb4}$ 15 $\textsf{Qb6}$ and 16 $\textsf{Qxe5}$ is excellent for White.

15 $\textsf{Qd2}$ $\textsf{Qe8}$  
16 $\textsf{Qfc1}$

Probably 16 $\textsf{Qc5}$ first is a more accurate way to play.

16 ... $\textsf{Qd7}$

17 $\textsf{Qc5}$ $\textsf{Qxc5}$ 18 $\textsf{bxc5}$ $\textsf{Qc8}$ 19 $\textsf{d4}$ e4 20 $\textsf{Qc3}$ g5 21 $\textsf{Qf1}$ and White’s position was starting to look difficult in Frias – Romero, Wijk aan Zee 1991.

c)  

8 ... $\textsf{Qh8}$

Instinctively this move does not appeal, since there is no reason to move the king yet.

9 $\textsf{b4}$ e4

A common feature in these positions is the exchange of White’s d-pawn for Black’s e-pawn. White gets the d4 square and pressure on the d-file; Black has the e5 square and the e-file.

10 $\textsf{Qb2}$ $\textsf{Qc6}$

Or 10 ... exd3 11 $\textsf{Qf4}$ $\textsf{Qc6}$ 12 $\textsf{Qxd3}$ with an edge to White.

11 $\textsf{dxe4}$ $\textsf{Qe5}$

If 11 ... $\textsf{Qxe4}$ 12 $\textsf{Qb3}$ $\textsf{Qxc3}$ 13 $\textsf{Qxc3}$ $\textsf{Qe5}$ 14 $\textsf{Qf4}$ gives White a grip on the position.

12 $\textsf{Qc1}$

Because 12 $\textsf{Qb3}$ is well met by 12 ... $\textsf{Qe6}$ 13 $\textsf{Qxd5}$ $\textsf{Qxe4}$ with active play for Black.

12 ... $\textsf{Qxc4}$  
13 $\textsf{Qa1}$ (164)

This position looks suspect for Black since all White’s pieces are actively placed. 13 ... $\textsf{fxe4}$ 14 $\textsf{Qxe4}$ $\textsf{Qxe4}$ 15 $\textsf{Qxc4}$ gives White pressure along the diagonals and the c- and d-files.

13 ... c6  
14 b5! $\textsf{Qe8}$
15 exf5 Qxf5
16 e4!
This pawn cannot be taken due to the tactics involving Qxg7+ and Qd4+.
16 ... Qe6
17 bxc6 bxc6
18 Qd4
White has the advantage; C. Hansen – Ljubojevic, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

d)
8 ... Qbd7?!
Yusupov’s novelty, although the big guy annotates it as dubious – so I won’t argue.
9 Bb1 Bh8
10 b4 a6
11 Qb2?!
According to Yusupov, 11 Qc2 would give Black more problems; e.g. 11 ... Qh5? 12 c5! with a plus to White. Or 11 ... g5 12 f4 gxf4 13 exf4 Qg4 14 h3 Qh6 15 Qe3 with the idea of Qd2 and White has a nice position.
11 ... Qh5 (165)

There is obviously a strong chance that this move will transpose into 4 ... d6 lines, so we will only consider the variations with independent significance.

a) 5 d3
b) 5 e3

White can try to exploit Black’s move order immediately with 5 d4!? The point is that
after 5 ... exd4 6 cxb5 c6 7 f3 White will round up the d-pawn, and the f5 pawn is starting to look silly. Perhaps 5 c6 is playable, with the idea 6 dxe5 dxe5 and White must take time to defend the c-pawn. The game Miles - King, Moscow 1990, continued 5 ... e4 6 g4!? (6 h3 would be a normal way to play, with an edge to White) 6 ... c6 7 gxf5 gxf5 8 h3!? xd4 9 d5 d6 10 g5 d7 11 e3 xb2 12 b1 g7 13 h5+ f8 14 f3; White is two pawns down but has an excellent initiative. 5 d4 deserves further tests.

a) 5 d3 f6 6 e4

After 6 e3, Black might continue 6 ... c6 7 ge2 0-0 8 0-0 a6 intending to play ... d5 in one move. The drawback to this is that the knight is less useful on a6 than c6 after ... d5, cxd5 and cxd5. Perhaps it is best to return to lines in "A" with 6 ... d6. An interesting way for White to play is 6 f4, with the idea 6 ... exf4 7 xf4. Instead 6 ... d6 7 f3 c6 8 0-0 0-0 e3 h8 10 b1 exf4 11 gxf4 d5 12 cxd5 xd5 13 xd5 xd5 14 b3 d6 15 b2 was slightly better for White in Hodgson - King, London 1990. 6 e4, though, is a tricky move. White intends to capture on f5 and Black is obliged to recap-
ture with the pawn, rather than the bishop.

6 ... 0-0
7 exf5 gxf5

White concedes Black a central pawn majority in the hope that the grip along the h1-a8 diagonal will render this centre immobile.

8 ge2 c6
9 0-0 d6
10 d4!

This move causes Black some problems: pushing with 10 ... e4 leaves Black’s centre immobile since White has complete control of e3 and f4. 10 ... e7 is possible, but I do not trust Black’s position.

10 ... xd4
11 xd4 exd4
12 xd4 e6
13 d3 d7
14 b3 e5
15 e2 d7
16 d2 ae8
17 f4 g4
18 d3 f7
19 e1

White is starting to consolidate his grip on the position; Sher - Panchenko, Belgorod 1991.

b) 5 e3

The point behind this move is to retain the option of playing d4 with a direct challenge to the centre.

5 ... f6
6 ge2

Or the immediate 6 d4 d6 7
\( \mathcal{g} \text{ge2} \) (White will not achieve any advantage in the endgame after 7 \( \text{dxe5} \text{dxe5} 8 \text{\text{wxd8} \text{xd8}} \) since Black can play 9 ... \( \text{c6} \) and the king will sit comfortably on \( \text{c7} \)) 7 ... 0-0 8 0-0 \( \text{\text{dh8}} \) (I still do not see why everyone is in a rush to play this move) 9 \( \text{b3} \) 10 \( \text{\text{d2} \text{\text{c6} 11 \text{\text{b2} e4}} 12 \text{\text{f4} \text{\text{d8} 13 \text{\text{cd5} \text{\text{xd5}} 14 \text{\text{xd5 ef7} 15 \text{f3 c6} 16 \text{\text{f4 exf3}} 17 \text{xf3 e6}} with a level position; Züger – Mestel, Lucerne 1982.}

6 ... 0 0
7 0-0 \text{c6} (167)

8 \text{d4} \text{d6}
9 \text{b3} \text{e4}

This move is double-edged. Black could keep the tension in the centre with 9 ... \( \text{\text{e7}} \), and then perhaps ... \text{a5} and ... \( \text{\text{a6}} \).

10 \text{\text{b2} \text{\text{e6} 11 \text{\text{c2} \text{\text{f7}} 12 \text{\text{ad1} \text{\text{a6}} 13 \text{f3} \text{exf3} 14 \text{\text{xf3 ef7} 15 \text{c1} \text{d5!}}}

Black's position is suddenly starting to look good; Bjarnson – Watson, Reykjavik 1989.

Although the move 4 ... \( \text{f5} \) is certainly playable for Black, it does not seem to be as smooth an option as 4 ... \( \text{d6} \). Certainly, I cannot see any benefits for Black in choosing the move-order 4 ... \( \text{f5} \). My advice would be to prefer 4 ... \( \text{d6} \) and keep 4 ... \( \text{f5} \) as a surprise weapon.

C)

4 ... \( \text{\text{e7}} (168) \)

This move keeps White guessing. Black retains the option of playing ... \( \text{d6} \) and ... \( \text{f5} \), or ... \( \text{c6} \) and ... \( \text{d5} \). The drawback is that in some positions the knight is less effective on \( \text{e7} \) than on \( \text{f6} \). White has two methods of play:

a) 5 \( \text{d3} \)
b) 5 \( \text{e3} \)

a)

5 \( \text{d3} \)
5 ... 0-0

This is the most active way to play. 5 ... \( \text{d6} \) is solid enough, but it forfeits the option of playing a rapid ... \( \text{c6} \) and ... \( \text{d5} \).
5 ... d6 6 d3 b1 0-0 7 f3 bc6 8 0-0 h6 9 b4 with a standard Closed Sicilian Reversed position; Hickl – Hug, Munich 1987.

6 e4

This move does not promise much for White, so alternatives should be explored. 6 h4!? c6 7 h5 d5 8 hxg6 hxg6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 f6 xh6 11 cxd5 g7 12 d2 d4! 13 e4 bc6 14 f3 a5 and the exchange of queens signifies the end of White’s pressure on the h-file. White can also meet 5 ... 0-0 with 6 f3; 6 ... c6!? 7 0-0 d5 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 d4 e4 10 e1 bc6 and Black cannot be doing badly; Aarland – Krasenkow, Gausdal Peer Gynt 1991.

6 ... d6

Having provoked the concessionary 6 e4, this move can be played with a clear conscience.

7 a3 c6

An interesting alternative is 7 g4 to provoke 8 f3 a6 9 0-0 c6 10 b3 d5 11 a3 d4 12 a4 a6 13 f4 f6 and Black’s position looked OK in Izeta – Pastor, Eruma 1990.

8 0-0 e6 (169)

9 b3 d5

10 a3 d4

11 a4 d7

12 f4 f5!? 13 d6 f7

with a messy position that eventually turned out good for Black; Daudzvardis – Malishauskas, Groningen 1991.

b) 5 e3 (170)

In practice this move has been serving White better than 5 d3. White also retains the option of pushing the d-pawn forward two squares.

5 ... 0-0

Or Black can carry on regardless: 5 ... c6!? 6 b3!? a6 7 a2 c5 8 c2 e6 9 b3 d5 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 a3 d4 12 e7 x7 13 d5 d6 14 exd4 exd4 15 c1 0-0 16 0-0 d7 and Black is comfortable; Karlsson – Speelman, Thessaloniki OL 1984.

6 a3

I do not really believe that 6
h4 is dangerous in this position. 6 ... c6 7 b3 a6 8 ge2 c5 9 c2 e6 and now White played 10 b3 which is a strong indicator that something has gone wrong with his position; Karlsson - Suba, Hastings 1983/4.

6 ... bc6

Returning the game to orthodox lines. The only question remaining is whether Black can try 6 ... c6 in this position.

7 0-0 a6

This looks dubious. 7 ... d6 is the normal way to play, and after 8 d3 Black can play ... e6 and ... d7.

8 b1 b8
9 b4 b5
10 cxb5 axb5
11 a4! a7

Black is already on the defensive; Terteriants - Murey, Podolsk 1991.

This concludes our analysis of the fourth move possibilities for Black, and hence our survey of the Modern against the English. 4 ... d6 seems to be coping well even at the highest international levels. 4 ... d7 is a tricky little move which has the benefit of being less well known in opening theory.
In this final chapter we consider the odds and ends. White avoids the main lines of 1 e4, 1 d4 and 1 c4. Although the classical notion that White should use the first move to control the centre is still valid, these unorthodox lines are useful ways to take Black out of opening theory. These lines also contain dynamic transpositional possibilities so that the Black player can often be tricked into main lines which he/she does not play. For example: Black is a King’s Indian player well versed in the latest theory. The game opens 1 g3 \( \triangle f3 \) 2 \( \triangle g2 \) g6 3 e4. Now the routine 3 ... \( g7 \) runs into 4 e5 and the knight must retreat. So most players continue 3 ... d6 but after 4 d4 Black is now playing a Pirc Defence.

The golden rule when White tries these “quieter” systems is to make sure that any transpositions will be into territory with which you are familiar.

We consider three ways of playing for White. Other moves can be treated with common sense!

A) 1 \( \triangle f3 \)/1 g3
B) 1 f4
C) 1 b3

A)

1 \( \triangle f3/g3 \)

We treat these moves together as both are ways for White to play the King’s Indian Attack. Of course after 1 \( \triangle f3 \) g6 White could transpose into main lines with 2 e4, 2 d4 or 2 c4 but we have covered these in earlier chapters. Likewise, after 1 g3 g6 2 c4 we are back into the English. The only independent way for White to play after 1 \( \triangle f3/1 \) g3 is, however, the King’s Indian Attack.

1 \( \triangle f3 \) g6
2 g3 \( g7 \)
3 \( g2 \) e5 (171)
Black has many different ways of playing against the KIA but we will consider one of the more active systems.

4 0-0 d6
Not 4 ... e4 because after 5 \( \text{c}e1 \) d5 6 d3 Black’s pawns rapidly become a target.

5 e4
This move could be delayed, with 5 d3, but Black might be able to continue with 5 ... f5!? White could also transpose back into lines in Chapter 8 by playing 5 c4.

5 ... c5
This move gives our system its character. Black advances another pawn to increase control of the centre. 5 ... c5 denies White the option of expanding in the centre with d2-d4. The weak point in the black camp is the d5 square but the move e2-e4 blocks the fianchettoed bishop along this diagonal.

6 d3 \( \text{c}c6 \) (172)

\[ \text{Diagram 172} \]

Black’s position is very flexible with a variety of plans at hand. The most aggressive is to play for ... f5 and a kingside attack. Queenside expansion is also possible with ... a6 and ... b5, or more positionally with ... b6 and ... \( \text{b}b7 \). Black should also bear in mind the possibility of a central thrust with ... d5, although this must be prepared carefully.

7 \( \text{e}e1 \)
Alternatively 7 \( \text{e}e3 \) \( \text{g}e7 \) 8 \( \text{d}d2 \) 0-0 9 \( \text{h}6 \) f5 10 \( \text{x}g7 \) \( \text{x}g7 \) 11 \( \text{c}3 \) f4 12 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{g}4 \) and already Black seems to be on the offensive; Lazić – Damljanovic, Yugoslav Ch 1990. I do not like White’s plan of exchanging off the dark-squared bishops since Black’s pawns are all on dark squares! More promising is 7 c3 \( \text{f}6 \)? 8 \( \text{bd}2 \) 0-0 9 a3!? d5 10 b4 with a complex position in Loginov – Madl, Budapest 1991. Black could also meet 7 c3 with 7 ... \( \text{g}e7 \), which retains the option of an ... f5 advance.

7 ... \( \text{g}e7 \)

8 c3
Bringing out the bishop still seems to lend force to ... f5, e.g. 8 \( \text{e}3 \) 0-0 9 \( \text{c}1 \) f5 10 c3 \( \text{b}8 \) 11 \( \text{h}6 \) f4 12 \( \text{x}g7 \) \( \text{x}g7 \) 13 \( \text{bd}2 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 14 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 15 h4 \( \text{g}8 \) 16 \( \text{h}3 \) h6 and White’s position is distinctly shaky; Stratil – Ulybin, Oakham 1990.

8 ... 0-0

9 \( \text{bd}2 \) (173)

This position cannot be bad for Black. 9 ... f5 is an aggressive way to continue, but there are more positional plans available such as ... b6 and ...
B)  

1 f4

The Bird’s Opening, popular with those who favour the obscure, and those who want to avoid main-line theoretical duels.

1 ... g6
2 ∅f3 ∅g7 (174)

3 g3

The most common way to play. This move is for those who, as Black, are addicted to playing the Dutch. Like most reversed openings though, the extra move does not really compensate for the fact that White is, in effect, playing as Black.

Other moves for White are not dangerous:

3 d3 d5 (3 ... c5 will usually transpose to a Closed Sicilian, even though White can delay e4 for a few moves, e.g. 4 g3 e6 5 ∅g2 ∅c6 6 0-0 ∅ge7 7 c3 0-0 and now 8 e4 would transpose to the game Malaniuk-Schneider, Kherson 1989, and Black has a comfortable Closed Sicilian position) 4 c3 ∅f6 5 ∅c2 0-0 6 e4 c5 7 a4 ∅c6 8 ∅e2 b6 9 0-0 ∅b7 and Black was doing fine in Oberlin - Strauss, Los Angeles 1991; or:

3 e3 d5 4 ∅e2 ∅f6 5 0-0 0-0 6 d3 (6 d4 is a Reversed Stonewall which should be slightly better for Black!) 6 ... c5 7 w.e1 b6 8 a4 ∅b7 9 c3 ∅c7 10 ∅a3 a6 11 ∅b1 ∅bd7 12 b4 ∅e8 13 ∅d2 ∅d6 with equal chances; Huisl - Nicolaiczuk, W. Germany 1978.

Note that White can also return the game to a king’s pawn opening with 3 e4. Black can play 3 ... c6 (see Introduction, Section I) or even immediately 3 ... d5.

3 ... d6

Again 3 ... c5 will lead to a Closed Sicilian type position, e.g. 4 g3 ∅c6 (4 ... d5?? is also fine: 5 c3 ∅c6 6 d4 w.b6 7 e3 ∅h6 8 w.b3 e6 with an equal position; Nasir Ali - Dorfman,
New Delhi 1982) 5 0-0 d6 6 d3 e5!? 7 c3 c6 8 h1 h6 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 e4 b6 11 h4 g5 12 xg5 hgx5 13 xg5 d6 and Black was doing well in Ostojic - Pavlovic, Belgrade 1992.

\[4 \text{ g2 e5 (175)}\]

This is the direct approach. Black challenges the centre immediately. Now 5 e4 c6 6 0-0 c6 will lead to an unbalanced position. Instead White decides to continue along the obscure path.

\[5 \text{ c3 c6}\]
\[6 \text{ d3 h6}\]
\[7 \text{ a3 e6}\]
\[8 \text{ c2 d7}\]

I would be very happy with this position as Black after eight moves. Black's control of the h3-c8 diagonal encourages White to forego kingside castling; the result is not a success.

\[9 \text{ g1? b8}\]
\[10 \text{ d2 b5}\]
\[11 \text{ 0-0-0 e7}\]
\[12 \text{ e4 b4}\]
\[13 \text{ c4 exf4}\]
\[14 \text{ gxf4 bxc3}\]
\[15 \text{ xxc3 b4!}\]

\[16 \text{ b1 xc3}\]
\[17 \text{ bxc3 xd3+!}\]
\[18 \text{ xd3 a4}\]

Black has more than enough compensation for the piece; Wall - Summerscale, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990. As usual, the best way to deal with the slightly bizarre is to play sensibly. If Black develops normally then White should achieve little with 1 f4.

C)

\[1 \text{ b3}\]

An opening once favoured by the veteran Danish Grandmaster, Bent Larsen, the insidious nature of this system is that it prevents our beloved move order 1 ... g6 and 2 ... g7. Do not despair, however; it does not prevent our kingside fianchetto.

\[1 \ldots \text{ g6!?}\]
\[2 \text{ c2 f6 (176)}\]

On tactical grounds, 2 ... g7 cannot be recommended.

\[176 \text{ w}\]

White has various ways to continue, and we consider:
a) 3 \(\text{Qxf6}\)
b) 3 e4
c) 3 c4
d) 3 g3

a) 3 \(\text{Qxf6}\)

This is a direct attempt to exploit Black's move order. White exchanges bishop for knight in order to double Black's pawns. In compensation, though, Black will have pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal (especially since 1 b3 has weakened White's queenside dark squares) and after ... f6-f5 Black can hold the e4 square and utilise the semi-open e-file. Play may become double-edged, but Black's chances are quite adequate.

3 \(\ldots\) exf6
4 g3 \(\text{Qg7}\)
5 e3 f5
6 d4 d6 (178)

If Black had played 6 \(\ldots\) d5, this pawn could have become a target after \(\text{Qxe2-f4}\) and c2-c4. In such positions White's superior pawn structure is more important than Black's pair of bishops.

7 \(\text{Qg2}\) \(\text{d7}\)
8 \(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{f6}\)
9 c4 0-0
10 \(\text{Qbc3}\) c6
11 0-0 \(\text{Qd7}\)
12 b4 \(\text{Qe8}\)
13 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qe7}\)
14 b5 \(\text{Qe4}\)
15 bxc6 bxc6
16 \(\text{Qb1}\) \(\text{Qc8!?}\)

The position is unclear; Kovacevic - Damljanovic, Ljubljana 1989.

b) 3 e4

This move is tricky, but Black can cope without much worry.

3 \(\ldots\) d6 (178)

(Editor's note: 3 \(\ldots\) \(\text{Qg7}\) 4 e5 \(\text{Qxd5}\) transposes to a minor variation of Alekhine's Defence which gives Black no real problems - see the Batsford book The Complete Alekhine).
here) 4 ... $g7 5 $g2 0-0 6 $e2 e5 (this seems the best way to challenge the centre, since 6 ... c5 would do little to limit the scope of White's bishop on b2)
7 0-0 $c6 8 h3 $h5!? 9 g4 $f4 10 $xf4 exf4 11 $xg7 $xg7 12 d4 h5! 13 f3 $f6 14 c3 b5 and Black had the initiative in Haagen Haagen - Hoi, Copenhagen 1991.

4 ... $g7
5 $f3 0-0
6 d3 e5!

A very effective way to challenge the centre; White's bishop on b2 rapidly starts to looks misplaced. Note that with 3 e4 White was trying to exploit the pin along the a1-h8 diagonal - now with 6 ... e5 Black returns the compliment!

7 fxe5 $g4
8 $d2 $xe5
8 ... $c6 is an interesting way to play.

9 $xe5 dxe5
10 $e2 $h4+?! 10 ... $c6 was better.
11 g3 $h3
12 $f1 $d7
13 $g2 $c6
14 0-0 $d4
15 $c3 c6
16 $f1 $e7
17 $af1 $g4!


The positional option for White. Black's best choice now is probably to transpose into a reversed Closed Sicilian position.

3 ... $g7
4 g3 0-0
5 $g2 d6
6 $c3 e5 (179)

The only slight drawback with this line is that Black does not have the option of playing a quick ... f5 since the knight is on f6.

7 d3 $bd7

Perfectly fine for Black is 7 ... $c6 transposing to normal lines. Instead Black embarks on a dubious string of moves.

8 e3 $e8
9 $ge2 c6
10 $d2 $f8
11 d4 e4
12 h3 h5
13 d5

and White had the advantage in Spraggett - Nogueiras, Clermont Ferrand 1989.

c)

3 c4

d)

3 g3
This move was employed by Michael Adams against fellow prodigy Alexei Shirov. Adams’ placid opening was probably prompted by an earlier loss against Shirov’s beloved Sicilian Dragon. In any case, White achieves absolutely nothing from the opening.

3 ... \( \text{g}7 \\
4 \text{g}2 \text{d}6 \\
5 \text{d}4 \text{c}5! (180)

Already Black seems to be on the offensive. If 6 \text{dxc}5, then 6 ... \( \text{a}5+ \) with an excellent position. The lesson seems to be that in most positions the double fianchetto is not a good idea.

6 \text{d}5 0–0
7 \( \text{h}3 \\
8 ... \text{g}4!?
9 \text{c}1 \text{d}7 \\
10 \text{c}6 \text{f}6 \\
11 \text{c}3 \text{f}5 \\
12 \text{e}3 \text{e}5

With complications; Adams - Shirov, Hastings 1991/2.

This concludes our survey of 1 \text{b}3 and hence our final chapter on irregular first moves for White. The conclusion must be that the Modern is a very versatile defence which can be relied upon to counter virtually any system White may adopt.
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