A Strategic Chess Opening Repertoire for White

John Watson

A complete plan of attack with 1 d4 and 2 c4
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GAMBIT
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Symbols

x  capture
+  check
++ double check
#  checkmate
!! brilliant move
!  good move
!? interesting move
?!! dubious move
?  bad move
?? blunder
+-  White is winning
±  White is much better
±  White is slightly better
=  the game is equal
†  Black is slightly better
‡  Black is much better
→  Black is winning
corr. correspondence game
Ch championship
1-0  the game ends in a win for White
½-½  the game ends in draw
0-1  the game ends in a win for Black
(n)  nth match game
(D) see next diagram

Dedication

To my sisters Sarah, Barbara and Anne
And in memory of my mother (who once called me a ‘chess bum’ in the newspaper)
The book before you presents a set of opening systems beginning with the move 1 d4 and, in almost every case, 2 c4. I call it a 'strategic' opening repertoire to indicate that the proposed variations require an understanding of the overall contours of the positions that arise, as well as the significance of structural transformations and characteristic manoeuvres, to a greater extent than variations which require more tactical and computational skill. Which is not to say that we’ll ignore characteristic tactics and local skirmishing, which are simply part of chess; merely that the lines under consideration, unlike many of the better-known modern openings, are less demanding in terms of forcing play and immediate crises. They are also more forgiving of errors, which in this case tend to do no more than modestly change a position’s assessment, and less rewarding of one-move inspirations cooked up by either you or your opponent.

Standing back for a moment, let’s consider some typical forms that an opening repertoire for White usually takes. First, there is the ‘system’ repertoire, in which White plays a similar set-up versus as many defensive set-ups as possible. The King’s Indian Attack would be an example or, using 1 d4, the Colle or London systems. These don’t claim much space, and can be characterized as safe but unambitious. Their primary drawback has less to do with their intrinsic worth than with their narrowness; playing the same moves every game teaches you less about chess as a whole, and often results in dull and uncreative play. In stark contrast, we have the ‘Play and Win’ attacking repertoires, in which you throw everything at the opponent, offering pawns and pieces, hoping to win games based upon your superior knowledge of tactics, tricks and attacking motifs. The difficulty is that these lines are usually too easy to neutralize, risk leaving White with disadvantages, and can easily become boring.

A handful of other books want you to play offbeat or irregular moves, say, 1 f4, 1 b3 or 1 Qc3 (or, appallingly, 1 g4). These combine a wish to get off the beaten track and the hope for surprise value. Sadly, you eventually discover why such moves don’t attract a grandmaster following, although they may be of use as a secondary weapon. Finally, with the very opposite philosophy, some repertoire books instruct their readers to play ‘main lines’ because, after all, they consist of the ‘best’ moves. There are several problems with this, the most obvious being that, as any observer of modern chess knows, what is ‘best’ changes constantly, as openings and especially particular variations come in and out of fashion (and it is fashion, isn’t it?) as rapidly as you can set the pieces up. More importantly, these main lines tend to be dynamic and tactically-dependent, which requires a lot of memorization and then diligent monitoring of the latest developments, only to arrive at equality anyway. The necessity for this effort especially applies to the more enduring main lines; e.g., the Mar del Plata main line of the King’s Indian Defence; the Grünfeld Exchange Variation with 7 Qf3 and 8 b1 or 7 c4 and 8 Qe2; the 4 Qc2 Nimzo-Indian Defence, and the 5 Qg5 or Meran Semi-Slav. Even the professional probably won’t want to carry too many of these systems around as White, and certainly the average player won’t.

The repertoire variations I’m proposing are not tactically critical, and are designed to be relatively safe, but they are also not simple or unchallenging. With the use of 2 c4, often followed by e4, they all take a good chunk of central space and in doing so, expose White to counterplay. As a teacher, I feel that learning how to play 1 d4 and 2 c4 is of revolutionary importance for someone seeking to understand and play chess, just as for a student starting out, 1 e4 e5 is an essential source of knowledge and a way to get a feel for the game. You will notice that in Chapters 1 and 2 on the Queen’s Gambit Declined I recommend traditional systems. They expose White to little risk and are ideal for the strategic player. Against most other defences, I have avoided main lines and chosen
safer but at the same time distinctly unbalanced variations. From the standpoint of the amateur player, many will seem unconventional, but all are well-known to masters and reasonably well-established. Most importantly, they are sound. I generally try to avoid high theory (not always possible), but you can still study most of these systems at as dense a theoretical level as you want to. To that end, I've often gone into considerable technical detail. But even if you've only mastered the basic ideas of a system and learned a few essential variations (which requires some memorization, to be sure), you should be able to handle the resulting positions without getting into too much trouble, i.e., a surprise move probably won't throw you off balance.

The repertoire as a whole is a self-contained system. By featuring 3...c3 in the Queen's Gambit, Slav and Nimzo-Indian, it became easier to incorporate ambitious approaches into the rest of the repertoire. However, I don't view this primarily as a set of openings that you will adopt in its entirety. Rather, most readers will want to pick and choose lines to mix with other systems that they may already play or like. In fact, you may well want to play a few variations that are less complex than these, or even one or two fashionable main lines with massive theory attached to them. In any case, I think that you'll find it easier to fill in the cracks with some of my suggestions.

I've decided not to include a Bibliography because there would simply be a ridiculous number of titles. However, I've always credited analysis and suggestions in the text. If I had to pick out just a few of the many fine authors whose ideas have contributed significantly, they would include Richard Palliser, Boris Avrukh, Valeri Bronznik, Viacheslav Eingorn, David Vigorito and Viktor Moskalenko, with gratitude to the entire community of writers and theoreticians. I should also cite Stefan Bucker's *Kaissiber* magazine and Jeroen Bosch's *Secrets of Opening Surprises*, underappreciated gems in the world of chess theory.

Special thanks to John Hartmann for his assistance with the manuscript. And to Graham Burgess, who has done his usual yeoman's job of editing, and has improved the book at every stage with his advice.

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1 Queen’s Gambit Declined

The Queen’s Gambit Declined is one of the great classical openings that graced the early days of modern chess and still thrives today. Almost every World Champion has played the Queen’s Gambit Declined (‘QGD’) extensively, usually with both colours, and it is considered essential to a serious chess education. This chapter deals with the main lines of the Queen’s Gambit Declined. In a book for the strategic player, the author has no great problems choosing variations of the Queen’s Gambit Declined because it is an essentially strategic opening.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 (D)

Unorthodox Queen’s Gambit variations such as 2 ... ♗f5 (Baltic), 2 ... e5 (Albin) and 2 ... ♗c6 (Chigorin) are analysed in Chapter 3.

W

3 ♗c3 (D)

This natural move has more implications than might at first be evident. By beginning with 3 ♗c3, our repertoire will be consistent with 1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 (allowing the Nimzo-Indian move 3 ... ♗b4). While many players prefer to play 3 ♗f3 at that point, to avoid the Nimzo-Indian, they may then have to play against 3 ... d5 and be stuck with a Queen’s Gambit Declined in which they are committed to an early ♗f3. This has the drawback that White can’t play systems with ♗ge2 should he prefer to. For us, since we are playing ♗f3 later anyway, that’s not important. However, after 3 ♗f3 d5, White has to deal with learning many perfectly legitimate sidelines. For example, after 3 ♗f3 d5 4 ♗c3, Black can play 4 ... dxc4, when 5 e4 ♗b4 is the sharp Vienna Variation, while 4 ... ♗b4 can go in unique directions such as 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 ♗bd7 7 e3 0-0 8 ♗d3 c5. 3 ♗c3 saves us this trouble. Furthermore, even the normal looking sequence 3 ♗f3 d5 4 ♗c3 ♗e7 doesn’t ensure that we get to the positions we want to play. The gist of what I’m saying is that an early ♗f3 isn’t desirable. See also the note to White’s fourth move.

Since we are headed towards an Exchange Variation, that is, 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5, it’s worth pointing out that the immediate 3 cxd5 exd5 fails to transpose because, for example, Black can play 4 ♗c3 c6 5 ♗f3 (5 ♗f4 ♗d6!) 5 ... ♗f6 (5 ... ♗f5) 6 ♗g5 ♗d6 (or 6 ... ♗e7 7 e3 ♗f5), neither allowing White what he wants to do in this system. So you need to play 3 ♗c3 first. It may not be until you get further into this chapter that these distinctions make sense, and they aren’t very important until you understand the opening as a whole.

B

Black now chooses between:

1.1: 3 ... ♗f6 8
1.2: 3 ... ♗e7 22
3...c6 is a form of the Semi-Slav, dealt with in Chapter 5. The Tarrasch Defence, 3...c5, is examined in Chapter 2. For 3...\textit{\textbf{b}4} and other third moves apart from 3...\textit{\textbf{f}6} and 3...\textit{\textbf{e}7}, see Chapter 3.

1.1) 
3...\textit{\textbf{f}6} 4 cxd5 (D)

With 4 cxd5, we are playing the true Exchange Variation. 4 \textit{\textbf{f}3} (which is the same as 3 \textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{f}6} 4 \textit{\textbf{c}3}) can take us away from our intended path after 4...dx4 or 4...\textit{\textbf{b}4}, as described in the note to 3 \textit{\textbf{c}3}. But Black can also deviate by 4...c5 (a standard Semi-Tarrasch where we can't use the idea offered in the next note) or 4...\textit{\textbf{e}7} 5 cxd5 exd5 6 \textit{\textbf{g}5} c6, to meet 7 e3 with 7...\textit{\textbf{f}5} (when 8 \textit{\textbf{b}3} \textit{\textbf{b}6} is satisfactory), or 7 \textit{\textbf{c}2} g6 (intending ...\textit{\textbf{f}5}), although in that case 8 e3 \textit{\textbf{f}5} 9 \textit{\textbf{d}2} is still worth playing for White; see Section 1.2 (3...\textit{\textbf{e}7}).

4...exd5

An important alternative at this point is 4...\textit{\textbf{xd}5} 5 e4 (or 5 \textit{\textbf{f}3} c5 6 e4) 5...\textit{\textbf{xc}3} 6 \textit{\textbf{xc}3} c5. Now 7 \textit{\textbf{f}3} reaches a main line of a classic variation called the Semi-Tarrasch. With this sequence, 5 \textit{\textbf{f}3} c5 6 e3 is another Semi-Tarrasch line which is arguably easier for Black to play against than 5 e4. I mention this because if you don’t like what follows with e4, you can always play more conservatively with e3 and still get a highly interesting game, generally with the battle revolving around the isolated queen’s pawn (IQP) structure. At any rate, the main line after 7 \textit{\textbf{f}3} is 7...exd4 8 cxd4 \textit{\textbf{b}4}+ 9 \textit{\textbf{d}2} \textit{\textbf{xd}2}+ 10 \textit{\textbf{xd}2} 0-0; this is certainly full of energy, but requires assimilating loads of concrete theory. To make life easier, White can instead play the preventative move 7 \textit{\textbf{b}1}!?

This has the idea of winning the b-file and preventing ...\textit{\textbf{b}4}+ after the exchange of pawns on d4. Here are Black’s main options:

a) 7...\textit{\textbf{a}5}?! 8 \textit{\textbf{d}2}! \textit{\textbf{xa}2} 9 \textit{\textbf{f}3} leaves Black way behind in development and in central influence. \textit{\textbf{d}3}, 0-0, \textit{\textbf{e}2} and d5 or e5 can follow. White has more than enough for a pawn.

b) 7...\textit{\textbf{c}6}?! encourages the advance 8 d5; e.g., 8...exd5 9 exd5 \textit{\textbf{e}7}+ 10 \textit{\textbf{e}3} \textit{\textbf{e}5} 11 \textit{\textbf{b}5}+! \textit{\textbf{d}7} 12 \textit{\textbf{e}2} threatening \textit{\textbf{xc}5}.

c) 7...\textit{\textbf{e}7} 8 \textit{\textbf{f}3} 0-0 9 \textit{\textbf{c}4} \textit{\textbf{c}6} 10 0-0 \textit{\textbf{c}7} (D) is a normal-looking set-up. Then White has:

c1) 11 \textit{\textbf{e}2} b6 12 \textit{\textbf{d}1}! \textit{\textbf{a}5} 13 \textit{\textbf{d}3} (or 13 \textit{\textbf{b}5} a6 14 \textit{\textbf{d}3} \textit{\textbf{b}7} 15 d5 c4 16 \textit{\textbf{c}2} exd5 17 exd5 \textit{\textbf{fe}8} 18 \textit{\textbf{e}3} b5 19 a4 5) 13...\textit{\textbf{b}7} 14 d5!

\texttt{c4 (14...exd5? 15 exd5 \textit{\textbf{xd}5} 16 \textit{\textbf{hx}7}+ \textit{\textbf{xh}7}}

\texttt{\textbf{w}1)}
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17 \( \text{d}x\text{d}5 \) with a strong attack) 15 \( \text{c}2 \text{e}5! \) 16 \( \text{e}3 \) (or 16 \( \text{c}d2 \text{a}6) 17 \( \text{f}1 \text{d}7 18 \text{e}3) \) 16...\( \text{c}8 \) 17 h3 (17 \( \text{a}4! \text{d}8 18 \text{d}2 \pm) \) 17...\( \text{g}8 \) (Polugaevsky-Petrosian, USSR Ch playoff (3), Moscow 1970) and here White can activate his worst piece by 18 \( \text{a}4; \) for example, 18...\( \text{d}7 19 \text{xd}7 \text{xd}7 20 \text{d}2 \text{a}8 21 \text{g}4 with more space and the better game.

c2) 11 d5! \( (D) \) is the thematic advance, with the object of tearing open lines for the attack:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
11...\text{exd}5 (11...\text{d}8 12 \text{e}2 \text{exd}5 13 \text{xd}5 \pm; 11...\text{d}5 12 \text{d}3 \text{c}4 13 \text{c}2 \text{d}8 14 \text{d}4! \text{exd}5 15 \text{exd}5 \text{xd}5 16 \text{f}3 \pm 12 \text{exd}5? \) (or 12 \( \text{xd}5 \pm) 12...\text{e}5 (12...\text{d}8 13 \text{c}2 \text{a}5 14 \text{d}3 \text{xd}5 15 \text{hxh}7+ \text{h}8 16 \text{e}4 \text{d}8 17 \text{g}5! \text{xg}5 18 \text{xg}5 \text{f}6 19 \text{h}4 \pm 13 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 14 \text{e}1 \text{xc}3 15 \text{d}3 \text{f}6 16 \text{b}2 \text{d}6 17 \text{e}5 \text{xf}8 18 \text{d}6 \text{f}6 19 \text{c}2 \text{e}5 20 \text{xe}5 \text{g}6 21 \text{xc}5 with good prospects.

d) 7...\text{cxd}4 8 \text{cxd}4 \text{c}6 9 \text{b}5 (or 9 \text{f}3 \text{b}4+ 10 \text{d}2) 9...\text{a}6 (9...\text{d}7 10 \text{f}3 \text{b}4+ 11 \text{d}2 \text{xd}2+ 12 \text{wx}d2 0-0 13 0-0 \text{c}8, 1.\text{Sokolov-Miles, Amsterdam 1988}, and now White had 14 d5! \text{exd}5 15 \text{exd}5 \text{d}5 16 \text{d}3) 10 \text{c}6+ \text{bxc}6 11 \text{f}3 with a nice positional advantage. In 1.\text{Sokolov-J.Costa, San Bernardino 1988}, there followed 11...\text{c}5 12 0-0 \text{cxd}5 13 \text{b}2?! (13 \text{e}6? \pm) 13...\text{e}7 14 \text{xd}4 \text{d}7 15 \text{t}g4! \text{f}6 16 \text{fd}1 \text{w}7 17 \text{a}3 \pm; still better was the tactical shot 17 \text{xf}5! \text{exf}5 18 \text{xf}5, threatening \text{we}4+.

Interestingly, although I've played 7 \text{b}1 and believe in it, I notice that Lars Schandorff recommends 7 a3, with the same point of preventing ...\text{b}4+, and makes a good case for it, based upon the sequence 7...\text{e}7 8 \text{f}3 0-0 9 \text{d}3 \text{cxd}4 10 \text{cxd}4 \text{e}6 11 \text{b}2 \text{a}5+ 12 \text{fl}! \text{d}8 13 \text{h}4 with an attack. That gives you another option to look into if you need one.

5 \( \text{g}5 \) \( (D) \)

5 \( \text{f}4 \) is not a mistake, but Black can equalize straightaway by 5...\( \text{d}6; \) compare the move \( \text{f}4 \) in positions occurring later in this chapter.

\[\text{B}\]

The position after 5 \( \text{g}5 \) is the starting point of the main line of the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation. The paradox of this opening is that White voluntarily frees Black's problem bishop on c8. As it turns out, the problem of getting that bishop into play becomes one of the most important features of the position. White will essentially try to deny it the best squares by covering f5 with a bishop and/or queen, and making sure that there are drawbacks to ...\text{g}4. Why go to so much trouble? For one thing, as long as White keeps the tension (by avoiding exchanging on d5), Black will be able to play the central counter ...\text{c}5 in some positions with good effect. After the exchange on d5, Black's ...\text{c}5 can often be answered by dxc5, giving him an isolated pawn which happens to be weaker than in many other opening variations. In addition, by playing 4 \text{cxd}5, White opens the c-file; he hopes that it will be more valuable to him than the e-file is to Black, in part because it will be easier to break down Black's queenside position (usually held up by a pawn on c6) than it will be for Black to break down White's supporting pawn at e3. There are other considerations, of course, but these might be ones to keep in mind as the chapter proceeds. Now I'm going to split the material into two parts, in order to cover some very distinct systems. As you
can imagine, some of these lines can arise by a number of move-orders.

1.11: 5...e7 10
1.12: 5...c6 18

Other moves:

a) 5...d67 will usually transpose into one of the main lines; e.g., 6 e3 (don’t fall for one of the best-known traps in chess: 6 d5?? d5! 7 xxd8 b4+ 8 xd8 xxd8 and Black wins) 6...c6 7 d3 and now 7...e7 8 c2 0-0 9 e3 is Section 1.11. Instead, 7...a5 resembles the Cambridge Springs, a variation in which White’s knight is committed to f3. But here after 7...a5, White has the handy move 8 e2, neutralizing Black’s main point in the Cambridge Springs, which is to attack c3 by ...e4 and force concessions. After 8 e2, White can build up smoothly with 0-0, f3 and e4.

b) One well-known repertoire book suggests the idea 5...f5?!, to get to the position after 5...c6 6 e3 f5 7 f3 g6 8 xf6 xf6 (Section 1.12) without allowing 6 c2 (stopping ...f5). However, the author doesn’t look at the direct 6 xf6!.. Then 6...gxf6 is a very poor version of a doubled-pawn line that we will analyse in Section 1.12, all the more so since in one of those lines, White’s queen goes to f3 to force the doubled pawns and then back again to d1! But 6...xf6 7 e5 costs Black material; Black has the bishop-pair, but it hardly compensates for a whole pawn.

c) 5...b4 is a playable move which tends to give White only a modest pull, but Black can be stuck with passive defence. Then:

   c1) 6 c2 is actually a 4 c2 Nimzo-Indian variation! If you want to save effort and play for a small advantage, meet 6...h6 with 7 xf6 xf6 8 a3 xxc3+ 9 xf3 followed by e3 and f2-g3 or f3, as needed.

   c2) Another possibility, 6 e3, is a Ragozin Defence, close enough to equal that I don’t recommend White go that direction.

   c3) The most straightforward line is 6 e3 h6 (D) 6...d7 7 d3 c5 8 e2 0-0 9 0-0 c4 10 e2 is considered better for White, and his results have been excellent with the simple plan of f3 and e4; for example, 10...a5 11 f3 h6 12 h4 e8 13 d2 b6 14 a3 f8? 15 e4 ± dxe4 16 fxe4 b7 17 e5 a6 18 e3 h7 19 a5 and Black lasted only a handful of moves more in Barbero-Gerber, Swiss Team Ch 1995).

I’ll now give two moves, one direct and the other a bit messy:

   c31) 7 xf6 xf6 8 b3 d6 9 a3 xc3+ 10 xc3 0-0 11 d3 g4 (Keene-Inkiov, European Team Ch, Skara 1980) and one way to retain a positional edge is 12 c1 c6 h3 c6 and then 14 e2 followed by 0-0 and a minority attack (b4-b5); the more assertive 14 f4? is also promising after 14...e8 15 e3 f6 16 0-0 d7 17 h4, exploiting Black’s kingside light squares and preparing moves like f3, g6 and d3.

   c32) 7 h4 g5 8 g3 e4 9 e2 is solid. White can play f3 and get his central majority moving. Therefore Black sometimes tries to force the pace with 9...h5, leading to 10 h4 g3 11 g3 gxh4 12 xh4 g5 13 a4+ c6, Calvo-Ghitescu, Havana Olympiad 1966; now 14 f4! gives White a solid positional advantage and pressure on d5; e.g., 14...d7 15 b5! 0-0 0-0 16 bxd5.

1.11)

5...e7 6 e3 (D)
6...c6

As you will see, this move is useful in most lines and helps to prepare ...f5. The alternatives are instructive:

a) 6...f5?! 7 xf6 xf6 8 b3! costs Black a pawn. Hence the preparatory...c6.

b) 6...c5! 7 d3 c6 (or 6...h6 7 h4 0-0) 8 h4 (8 f4 is a good retreat, as is usual in the Exchange Variation; Black might try 8...c5 9...
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You may want to look into all that, but we don't really need it, since we can also play calmly with 8 \( \mathcal{Q}f3 \) (instead of 8 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \)), which transposes to our main lines after 8...0-0 9 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \), and to some extent neutralizes 8...\( \mathcal{Q}h5 \); e.g., 9 \( \mathcal{Q}xe7 \ \mathcal{W}xe7 \) 10 0-0 and there's no ...\( \mathcal{Q}f4 \). What's more, 10...0-0 can be met by 11 \( \mathcal{B}b1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \) 12 b4, with a ready-made minority attack, as in Kramnik-Timman, Belgrade 1995. At the same time, 8 \( \mathcal{Q}f3 \) allows 8...\( \mathcal{Q}e4 \). Then I like 9 \( \mathcal{Q}f4 \), but play almost always goes 9 \( \mathcal{Q}xe7 \ \mathcal{W}xe7 \), when 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \) 12 \( \mathcal{B}ab1 \) is one route, or White can try for the immediate 10 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \) 11 \( \mathcal{Q}e5 \) 0-0 12 0-0, having in mind f3. White has a typical edge in such positions.

You may want to look into all that, but we don't really need it, since we can also play calmly with 8 \( \mathcal{Q}f3 \) (instead of 8 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \)), which transposes to our main lines after 8...0-0 9 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \), and to some extent neutralizes 8...\( \mathcal{Q}h5 \); e.g., 9 \( \mathcal{Q}xe7 \ \mathcal{W}xe7 \) 10 0-0 and there's no ...\( \mathcal{Q}f4 \). What's more, 10...0-0 can be met by 11 \( \mathcal{B}b1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \) 12 b4, with a ready-made minority attack, as in Kramnik-Timman, Belgrade 1995. At the same time, 8 \( \mathcal{Q}f3 \) allows 8...\( \mathcal{Q}e4 \). Then I like 9 \( \mathcal{Q}f4 \), but play almost always goes 9 \( \mathcal{Q}xe7 \ \mathcal{W}xe7 \), when 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \) 12 \( \mathcal{B}ab1 \) is one route, or White can try for the immediate 10 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \) 11 \( \mathcal{Q}e5 \) 0-0 12 0-0, having in mind f3. White has a typical edge in such positions.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{dxc5 } \mathcal{Q}bd7 \ 10 \mathcal{Q}f3 \mathcal{Q}xc5, \text{ but 11 0-0! } \mathcal{Q}xd3 \\
12 \mathcal{W}xd3 \mathcal{Q}e6 13 \mathcal{Q}d1 \text{ prevents Black's pieces from becoming active and should therefore favour White, who can target the isolated pawn) 8...c5 9 dxc5 } \mathcal{Q}bd7 \ 10 \mathcal{Q}ge2 \ ? \mathcal{Q}xc5 11 ..i.c2 \\
\text{ } \mathcal{Q}e6 12 0-0 \mathcal{Q}ce4 13 \mathcal{Q}d3 \mathcal{Q}c8 14 \mathcal{Q}xf6 \mathcal{Q}xf6 \\
15 \mathcal{Q}d1 \mathcal{W}b6 16 \mathcal{Q}b3 \pm \text{ Gulko-Lputian, Tashkent 1984.}
\end{array}
\]

dxc5 \( \mathcal{Q}bd7 \) 10 \( \mathcal{Q}f3 \) \( \mathcal{Q}xc5 \), but 11 0-0! \( \mathcal{Q}xd3 \) \\
12 \( \mathcal{W}xd3 \mathcal{Q}e6 \) 13 \( \mathcal{Q}d1 \) prevents Black's pieces from becoming active and should therefore favour White, who can target the isolated pawn)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{8 } \ldots \text{c5 9 dxc5 } \mathcal{Q}bd7 \ 10 \mathcal{Q}ge2 \ ? \mathcal{Q}xc5 11 ..i.c2 \\
\text{ } \mathcal{Q}e6 12 0-0 \mathcal{Q}ce4 13 \mathcal{Q}d3 \mathcal{Q}c8 14 \mathcal{Q}xf6 \mathcal{Q}xf6 \\
15 \mathcal{Q}d1 \mathcal{W}b6 16 \mathcal{Q}b3 \pm \text{ Gulko-Lputian, Tashkent 1984.}
\end{array}
\]

c) 6...\( \mathcal{Q}bd7 \) 7 \( \mathcal{Q}d3 \) c6 offers Black the idea of meeting 8 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \) with 8...\( \mathcal{Q}h5 \)!? (D).

This is a unique defence by which Black tries to save a move by not castling. After 9 \( \mathcal{Q}xe7 \ \mathcal{W}xe7 \), 10 \( \mathcal{Q}f3 \) allows 10...\( \mathcal{Q}f4 \), which is considered awkward for White, although I should say that 11 \( \mathcal{Q}f1 \) 0-0 12 0-0 \( \mathcal{Q}e6 \) 13 \( \mathcal{Q}d3 \) is a rather more comfortable version of opposite-side castling than White often gets, with little risk. Nevertheless, 10 \( \mathcal{Q}ge2 \) is normal, and boatloads of theory follow 10...g6 11 0-0-0 (or White can play systems with 0-0, generally regarded as equal) 11...\( \mathcal{Q}b6 \) and either h3 and g4 or \( \mathcal{Q}g3 \) with \( \mathcal{B}b1 \) follows.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{This is a unique defence by which Black tries to save a move by not castling. After 9 } \mathcal{Q}xe7 \\
\text{\( \mathcal{W}xe7 \), 10 } \mathcal{Q}f3 \text{ allows 10...\( \mathcal{Q}f4 \), which is considered awkward for White, although I should say that 11 } \mathcal{Q}f1 \text{ 0-0 12 0-0-0 } \mathcal{Q}e6 \text{ 13 } \mathcal{Q}d3 \text{ is a rather more comfortable version of opposite-side casting than White often gets, with little risk. Nevertheless, 10 } \mathcal{Q}ge2 \text{ is normal, and boatloads of theory follow 10...g6 11 0-0-0 (or White can play systems with 0-0, generally regarded as equal) 11... } \mathcal{Q}b6 \text{ and either h3 and g4 or } \mathcal{Q}g3 \text{ with } \mathcal{B}b1 \text{ follows.}
\end{array}
\]
0-0 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 ad1 xe8 14 h4 db6 15 f2 wd7 16 h3, Østenstad-Mastrovasilis, Calvia Olympiad 2004; White is ready for central expansion, but in practice that’s double-edged.

a2) The other natural move is 8 de2, asking Black what his bishop is doing out there on g4. The best line appears to be 8...h5 (8...xe2 9 dx e2!? gives White the bishop-pair and the intention of playing dg3; on 9...de4, 10 f4!? wa5+ 11 fl 0-0 12 f3 db6 13 df2 ± looks nice, having in mind an eventual central advance) 9 0-0 g6 10 dg3 0-0 11 df5 ±.

b) I should mention that 7...bd7 is sometimes played with the intention of 8 dc2 db7 9 df3, and then ...de6, ...g6 and ...g7, to exchange bishops with ...f5! I think that White has good ideas against that, but probably the easiest thing to do is sidestep it (i.e., save a tempo by foregoing dc2) by 8 df3, when 8...f8 9 0-0 db6 10 dh4 g6 11 b4!?(this can also be prepared more slowly) 11...0-0 (11...xb4? 12 dx d5! ±) 12 bl puts White well along in his queenside strategy of playing b4-b5.

We now return to 7...0-0 (D):

8 df3

This move distinguishes the variation that I’m recommending. It can be played at various points; for example, with 8 wc2 db7 9 df3. In fact, sometimes White plays df3 on move 4 or 5 and then heads for this position. Fortunately, 4 cxd5 exd5 5 gh5 allows us to avoid many difficult lines brought on by too early a df3, as explained in the note to 3 dc3 above.

8 de2!? is the other way White develops (or with 8 wc2 first). Then White’s main plan is to expand in the centre with f3 and e4, either in conjunction with 0-0 or 0-0-0. Many great wins have resulted from this strategy, but I’m recommending a classical approach with df3, which is equally interesting and less subject to tactical issues and counterattack.

8...bd7

This time 8...g4 has a different flavour, since White can play 9 wb3 wb6 (9...xf3 10 gxf3 with 0-0-0 and a kingside attack to follow) 10 wc2 xf3 (White was threatening gh7+, and neither 10...bd7 11 de5 nor 10...h6 11 de4 xe8 12 de5 is desirable for Black) 11 gxf3 db7 12 gh1 gh8 13 0-0-0 and White can build up on the g-file with a strong attack, meeting ...g6 with f4-f5 if needed. The lesson here is that Black shouldn’t let White have the bishop-pair and a central pawn-mass without getting something in return.

9 wc2 (D)
after 10 0-0 $\mathcal{D}f8$ 11 h3) is to keep open options such as 0-0-0 and g4 (which is too risky in conjunction with 0-0). I wouldn't discourage anyone from playing this way; it has been rather successful and adds a new dimension to the play. But in this book I'll be emphasizing a calmer, positionally-based strategy, and 0-0-0 not only invites counterattack via ...c5 or ...b5, but it also makes a minority attack by b4-b5 out of the question. To be clear, 10 h3 $\mathcal{D}f8$ 11 0-0 transposes to our main line, and there are numerous lines in which 10 h3 is followed by 0-0 anyway (e.g., after 10...$\mathcal{D}f8$ 11 $\mathcal{D}f4$ $\mathcal{D}d6$ 12 $\mathcal{D}xd6$ $\mathcal{W}xd6$ 13 0-0), so any games that you may find with 10 h3 and 0-0 are worthy of study.

10...$\mathcal{D}f8$

The main move by far, setting up the position described above. Otherwise it's a little difficult to develop the other pieces; e.g.:

a) 10...h6?! 11 $\mathcal{D}f4$ just encourages White to put his bishop where it would have liked to go in the first place, had Black not had the opportunity to play ...$\mathcal{D}d6$ in one jump (from f8). After 11 $\mathcal{D}f4$, the only way for Black to make sense of 10...h6 would be to exchange the bishop by 11...$\mathcal{D}h5$?, but this allows the tactic 12 $\mathcal{D}xd5!$, since 12...$\mathcal{D}xd5$? 13 $\mathcal{C}c7$ wins the queen. Be aware of this trick – you might be surprised how often it comes up in other positions!

b) 10...g6 has a better idea than 10...h6, namely, to guard h7 so that Black can play ...$\mathcal{D}h5$, and also so that his other knight can go to b6 and help defend against a minority attack. White can probably gain an advantage, but it's not easy; for example, 11 $\mathcal{A}ab1$ $\mathcal{D}h5$ 12 $\mathcal{D}xe7$

(12 $\mathcal{D}h6$!? is interesting, to be followed by a central break with e4) 12...$\mathcal{W}xe7$ 13 b4 a6 14 a4 (14 $\mathcal{Q}a4$!? $\mathcal{D}g7$ 15 h3 $\mathcal{D}xe6$ 16 $\mathcal{A}fe1$ $\mathcal{D}g5$ 17 $\mathcal{W}e2$ $\mathcal{Q}xf3+$ 18 $\mathcal{W}xf3$ $\mathcal{D}e4$ 14...$\mathcal{D}b6$ 15 $\mathcal{Q}fe1$ $\mathcal{D}g4$ 16 $\mathcal{D}d2$ $\mathcal{A}d8$ 17 a5 $\mathcal{D}c8$ 18 f3 $\mathcal{L}e6$ 19 $\mathcal{Q}b3$ $\mathcal{D}d6$ 20 $\mathcal{Q}c5$ $\mathcal{A}c8$ 21 $\mathcal{B}bd1$ f5! 22 $\mathcal{W}f2$ $\mathcal{Q}b3$ (Sunye-Soppe, São Bernardo 1999) and now 23 $\mathcal{Q}a4$ $\mathcal{A}f6$ 24 $\mathcal{Q}b6$ $\mathcal{Q}d7$ 25 $\mathcal{Q}bd7$! $\mathcal{Q}xd7$ 26 $\mathcal{G}g3$ is the sort of position in which White can build up patiently.

We now return to 10...$\mathcal{D}f8$ (D):

11 h3 (D)

Karpov brought this modest advance to general attention with some nice wins. It is a
quintessential strategic move, which Yermolinsky describes as a “useful waiting” move, noting that it covers g4, provides a retreat on h2 for White’s bishop following its common redeployment to f4, and underlines how “Black’s ‘liberated’ c8-bishop suddenly finds itself deprived of activity.” The point about covering g4 is particularly important, because not only does Black no longer have the possibility of playing ... $\text{g}4-\text{h}5-\text{g}6$, but he also doesn’t have the move ... $\text{g}4$, which is a standard response to White’s move $\text{g}5$. On top of all this, White retains a flexible choice of plans, including the minority attack, breaking in the centre, and playing $\text{g}5$ followed by f3 or f4. A deep, fascinating position. At this point, we’ll examine:

1.111: 11...$\text{g}6$ 15
1.112: 11...$\text{e}6$ 17

Since this position is key to your entire practice and understanding, a study of the alternatives is strongly urged:

a) 11...$\text{e}4$ would be a successful simplification if it weren’t for 12 $\text{f}4$! (D).

Remember that this is in some sense where the bishop ‘wants’ to be. Now $\text{e}4$ is attacked three times, so Black has to react:

a1) I. Sokolov-Oll, European Team Ch, Pula 1997 continued 12...$\text{f}5$ 13 $\text{e}5$ $\text{g}6$ 14 $\text{x}g6$ hxg6 15 $\text{f}3$ $\text{f}6$ 16 $\text{w}f2$ $\text{h}5$ 17 $\text{e}5$ $\text{h}4$ 18 $\text{w}d2$ $\text{g}3$, and here Sokolov suggests 19 $\text{f}4$. After $\text{e}2$, White will have the possibility of advancing on either wing after preparation.

a2) 12...$\text{xc}3$ 13 $\text{xc}3$ is almost always a bad trade for Black, if only because, having strengthened $\text{d}4$, White can attack in the centre with either c4 or e4; for example, 13...$\text{g}6$ 14

b) 11...$\text{ab}1$ b6 15 $\text{fe}1$ $\text{d}6$ 16 $\text{xf}6$ $\text{xd}6$ 17 $\text{e}4$ $\text{dx}e4$ 18 $\text{xe}4$ $\text{d}7$ 19 $\text{c}4$.

a3) 12...$\text{g}5$ 13 $\text{x}g5$ (13 $\text{yg}5$ $\text{x}g5$ 14 $\text{h}2$ with the idea $\text{ab}1$ and b4 is an option) 13...$\text{x}g5$ 14 b4 $\text{e}7$ 15 b5 (a pure minority attack, as described above) 15...$\text{d}6$ (15...c5? 16 $\text{d}xc5$ $\text{xc}5$ 17 $\text{fd}1$ ± shows why ...c5 is so often unplayable in the pure Exchange Variation) 16 $\text{bxc}6$ $\text{bxc}6$ 17 $\text{f}5$! (D).

White has two points with this move: he wants to eliminate a piece from Black’s potential kingside counterattack, and he wants to trade off a possible defender of the c6-pawn. In the next few moves the theme of exploiting that pawn weakness is illustrated beautifully: 17...$\text{a}5$ 18 $\text{xc}8$ $\text{xc}8$ 19 $\text{ab}1$ $\text{e}6$ (19...$\text{c}5$ 20 $\text{edx}5$! $\text{cx}d4$ 21 $\text{wf}5$! $\text{a}6$ 22 $\text{yg}5$ f6 23 $\text{e}4$ is quite strong) 20 $\text{bb}7$ $\text{b}8$ 21 $\text{fb}1$ $\text{xb}7$ 22 $\text{xb}7$ $\text{xb}8$ 23 $\text{xb}8+$ $\text{xb}8$ 24 $\text{a}4$ $\text{wb}5$ 25 $\text{c}5$ $\text{g}6$ (after 25...$\text{xc}5$ 26 $\text{dxc}5$ $\text{g}6$ 27 $\text{wb}3$! White forces a highly favourable knight-versus-bishop ending) 26 a4! $\text{wc}4$ 27 $\text{wc}4$ $\text{xc}4$ 28 $\text{xe}6$
fexe6 29 \( \text{\#f1} \) -- and White won quickly in Djurić-Pfleger, Serbia-Bavaria match 1984.

b) 11...g6 has the idea of ...\( \text{\#e6-g7} \) and ...\( \text{\#f5} \): 12 \( \text{\#ab1} \) (12 \( \text{\#f4} \) might be worth a look; for example, 12...\( \text{\#e6} \) with the ...\( \text{\#g7-f5} \) idea can be countered by 13 \( \text{\#h2} \) or 13 \( \text{\#e5}!? \) \( \text{\#g7} \) 14 \( \text{\#ab1} \) \( \text{\#f5} \) 15 b4 \( \text{\#xd3} \) 16 \( \text{\#xd3} \) a6 17 \( \text{\#fc1} \) \( \text{\#f5} \) 18 \( \text{\#a4} \) \( \text{\#f} \) 12...\( \text{\#e6} \) (12...a5 13 a3 \( \text{\#e6} \) 14 \( \text{\#h6} \) \( \text{\#g7} \) 15 b4 axb4 16 axb4 \( \text{\#f5} \) 17 b5 \( \text{\#a3} \) 18 \( \text{\#a1} \) – Ivanchuk) 13 \( \text{\#h4} \) \( \text{\#g7} \) 14 b4 a6 15 a4 \( \text{\#f5} \) 16 \( \text{\#xf6} \) (16 \( \text{\#g5}!? \) is also interesting, because Black needs a plan, and 16...\( \text{\#e4} \) 17 \( \text{\#xe7} \) \( \text{\#xe7} \) 18 b5 yields a small but typical edge for White) 16...\( \text{\#xf6} \) 17 b5 axb5 18 axb5 \( \text{\#d6} \) (Gelfand-Lobron, Munich 1994) and here simply 19 bxc6 bxc6 20 \( \text{\#a1} \) \( \text{\#b7} \) 21 \( \text{\#a4} \) \( \text{\#a6} \) 22 \( \text{\#a6} \) \( \text{\#a6} \) 23 \( \text{\#c5} \) \( \text{\#xal} \) 24 \( \text{\#xal} \) puts Black on the defensive; e.g., 24...\( \text{\#c7} \) 25 \( \text{\#a4} \) \( \text{\#c8} \) 26 \( \text{\#a2} \).

c) 11...\( \text{\#h5}!? \) (Yermolinsky suggests that this might be Black’s best continuation; however, White has an enormous statistical advantage after it) 12 \( \text{\#xe7} \) \( \text{\#xe7} \) (D) (this stops b4 for a move).

\[ \text{c1) The clever 13 \#fe1 \#f6?! 14 \#e5! \#g6 15 f4! demonstrates a fairly typical plan. Yermolinsky-Hergott, North Bay 1994 saw 15...\#xe5 (it’s hard to find a good alternative) 16 fxe5, and White obviously stood better.} \]

\[ \text{c2) 13 \#ab1 \#e6 14 b4 \#ac8 15 \#fc1 g6 16 b5 (16 \#a4 \pm is more conservative) 16...c5!? (16...\#xb5 17 \#xb5 \#f5 18 \#d3 \#xd3 19 \#xd3 \#f6 20 \#d1 \#c7 21 \#b5 \pm) 17 dxc5 \#xc5 18 \#a4 \#ec8 19 \#e2 \#xc1+ (Kasimdzhanov-Jonkman, Wijk aan Zee 1999) and now 20 \#xc1! is straightforward; e.g., 20...\#xc1+} \]

\[ \text{1.111) 11...\#g6 (D)} \]

Black logically prevents a bishop retreat and covers e5.

\[ \text{12 \#xf6} \]

Not necessarily best, but proceeding with a clear strategic plan. You really should look at the alternatives:

\[ \text{a) 12 \#ab1 \#e4 is the typical freeing move for Black. Then a unique approach is 13 \#f4!?:} \]

\[ \text{a1) 13...\#d6 14 \#xe4 \#xf4 15 \#xf4 \#dxe4 16 \#xe4 \#xf4 17 \#xe7+ \#f8 18 \#e4 \#f6 19 \#fe1 \#e6 20 a3 g6 21 \#e3 and White is beginning to consolidate the extra pawn, Dydyshko-Grabarczyk, Lubniewice 2002.} \]

\[ \text{a2) 13...\#xf4 14 \#xf4 \#f5 15 \#e5 \#d6 16 \#h2 with the idea f3 yields a small advantage, as does 16 b4. But White can also play with two knights versus two bishops by 16 \#xe4!? fxe4 17 f3! \#xf3 18 \#xf3 \#e6! 19 \#f2 \#f6 20 \#e1, preparing to advance his kingside majority yet still reserving the right to play b4. The point is that there are all sorts of creative plans and} \]
White isn’t limited to a simple queenside advance.

b) 12  \( \text{Qe5} \) has done very well in this position, and is probably the most practical move: 12... \( \text{Qd7} \) (the standard reply) 13  \( \text{Qxe7} \)  \( \text{Wxe7} \) 14  \( f4 \) (\( D \)).

It’s hard for Black to defend against direct attack; e.g., 14... \( \text{Qgf8} \) 15  \( \text{Qae1} \) \( \text{Qb6} \) (White already stands considerably better; after 15... \( f6 \) 16  \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qb6} \), both 17  \( f5! \) and 17  \( e4 \) are strong) 16  \( f5 \) \( f6 \) 17  \( \text{Qf3} \)  \( \text{Qd7} \) (after 17... \( \text{Wc7} \), 18  \( e4 \)  \( \text{dxe4} \) 19  \( \text{Wb3+} \) favours White, or he can play the interesting attack 18  \( \text{Wf2} \)  \( \text{Qd7} \) 19  \( g4 \)  \( \text{Qad8} \) 20  \( g5 \), as in Maurisch-Wartlick, Wilsbach 1997) 18  \( \text{Wb3!} \) (threatening \( e4 \)) 18... \( \text{Wf7} \) 19  \( e4 \)  \( \text{dxe4} \) 20  \( \text{Wxf7+} \)  \( \text{Qxf7} \) 21  \( \text{Qxe4} \) ± Golod-Jonkman, Tel Aviv 2001.

12...  \( \text{Qxf6} \) 13  \( b4 \) (\( D \))

13... \( \text{Qe7} \)

Two fundamentally different strategies for White are illustrated by 13... \( a6 \):

a) 14  \( a4 \) looks natural, but it uses up a square for White’s knight. 14... \( \text{Qc7} \) 15  \( b5 \) and then:

a1) 15... \( \text{axb5?!} \) not only opens up a file on the queenside, but it also makes \( \text{Qa4-c5} \) possible; e.g., 16  \( \text{axb5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 17  \( bxc6 \)  \( bc6 \) and now White can play 18  \( \text{Qa4} \) with the idea \( \text{Qc5} \), but he does even better with 18  \( \text{Qd2} \), 19  \( \text{Qb3} \) and then placing a knight on \( c5 \).

a2) 15... \( a5 \) is a legitimate possibility, when White will need extra time to manoeuvre a knight to \( c5 \).

a3) 15... \( \text{Qd6} \) 16  \( bxc6 \) \( bc6 \) 17  \( \text{Qf5!} \) (a key move which is used time and again to neutralize a potential attack by Black on the kingside) 17... \( a5! \) (to stop \( \text{Qa4-c5} \)) 18  \( \text{Qab1} \) \( \text{Wf6} \) 19  \( \text{Qc8} \)  \( \text{Qxc8} \) 20  \( \text{b7} \) with a playable game for Black, although I’d rather be White.

b) In that example, White allowed Black to play... \( a5 \) and delay White’s queenside attack. 14  \( \text{Qa4!} \) (\( D \)) is a flexible alternative.

14...  \( \text{Qe7} \) (Black heads to his favourite post on \( d6 \)) 15  \( \text{Qab1} \) (or 15  \( \text{Qc5} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) 16  \( \text{Qf5!} \), and now White intends \( a4 \) and \( b5 \) without... \( a5 \) having a preventative effect) 15... \( \text{Qd6} \) 16  \( \text{Qfc1} \) \( \text{Wf6?!} \) (but 16... \( \text{Qb8} \) 17  \( \text{Qf5} \) ± fits in with White’s plans) 17  \( \text{Qb6} \) \( \text{Qxh3!} \) (the point; he can’t let this bishop be exchanged without losing all attacking hopes) 18  \( \text{Qxa8} \)  \( \text{Qxa8} \) 19  \( \text{Qe5!} \)  \( \text{Qe6} \) 20  \( f4! \)  \( \text{Qf8} \) 21  \( a4 \)  \( \text{Wf7} \) 22  \( b5 \) \( \text{cx5} \) 23  \( \text{axb5} \)  \( a5 \) 24  \( e4 \) and Black doesn’t have enough for the exchange, Ilinčić-Marcetić, Niš 1995.

14  \( b5 \)  \( \text{Qd6} \) 15  \( bxc6 \) \( bc6 \) (\( D \))

16  \( \text{Qb1!} \)

A pretty idea: White unblocks the c-file while rendering... \( \text{Wf6} \) and... \( \text{Qxh3} \) a harmless idea.

16... \( \text{Wf6} \) 17  \( \text{Qbd2} \) \( h6 \)
QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

17...\(\text{d7}\) 18 \(\text{ab1}\) h5?! 19 \(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{ad8}\) 20 \(\text{b7}\) \(\text{b8}\) 21 \(\text{cbl}\), Mangione-Insabato, Palermo 2004.

18 \(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{e7}\)

Yermolinsky-Gild.Garcia, St Martin 1993. Now 19 \(\text{ab1}\) is the easiest way to demonstrate White's superiority.

1.112)

11...\(\text{e6}\) (D)

Probably the most popular move, simply developing.

12 \(\text{e5}\)

White's strategy is straightforward: put a knight on e5 and support it with f4! It's an uncomplicated set-up that causes Black problems, but also not the only path to a conventional advantage. Here are a few alternatives that clarify some issues:

a) 12 \(\text{ab1}\) is played with the standard minority attack in mind, and in fact it's one of the fastest ways to get moving. But its theoretical reputation has been perhaps unfairly maligned by the idea that the freeing move 12...\(\text{e4}!\) equalizes straightaway after 13 \(\text{xex7}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 14 \(\text{xex4}\) (14 \(\text{b4}\) should give White a small advantage) 14...\(\text{dxe4}\) 15 \(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xa2}\) 16 \(\text{a1}\) \(\text{d5}\). Nevertheless, this is a position in which White can easily cause minor problems; e.g., 17 \(\text{xex5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) (17...\(\text{cxd5}\)?! 18 \(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{e6}\) 19 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 20 \(\text{c3}\) a5 21 \(\text{d1}\) with the idea \(\text{d3}\) is strong) 18 \(\text{a4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 19 \(\text{f1}\) \(\text{a6}\) 20 \(\text{a5}\) \(\text{e8}\) 21 \(\text{e5}\). This isn't much, but if Black's queenside majority is immobilized, then in the long run White's central majority might well prove useful.

b) 12 \(\text{f4}\) is very interesting and also promises a slight edge. Van Wely-Yusupov, Frankfurt rapid 2000 went 12...\(\text{d6}\) 13 \(\text{xd6}\) (13 \(\text{a1}\) affords good prospects in the case of 13...\(\text{xf4}\) 14 \(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{h6}\) 15 \(\text{f1}\) and now 15...\(\text{d6}!?\) 16 \(\text{e5}\) + or 15...\(\text{d7}\) 16 \(\text{e5}!\)?) 13...\(\text{xd6}\) 14 \(\text{ab1}\) \(\text{e7}\) (14...\(\text{a5}\)! is normal, with a very slight edge for White following 15 \(\text{e5}\) \(\text{d6}\) 16 \(\text{xd7}\) \(\text{xd7}\) 17 \(\text{a4}\); e.g., 17...\(\text{g6}\) 18 \(\text{b1}\) \(\text{f5}\) 19 \(\text{c5}\) \(\text{e8}\) 20 \(\text{f1}\) \(\text{d7}\) 21 \(\text{a4}\)) 15 \(\text{b4}\) \(\text{e8}\) 16 \(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{g6}\) 17 \(\text{b5}\) \(\text{c5}\) 18 \(\text{dxc5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) (D).

Scherbakov says: “White should be careful about his kingside – such ideas as ...\(\text{xh3}\) followed by ...\(\text{xf3}\) are hovering over the board”. Typically, however, White's much better minor pieces protect him against random attacks and here, for example, 19 \(\text{a4}!\) establishes a plus. And although the idea is not a fundamental feature of the position, 19 \(\text{e4}!\) is also strong: 19...\(\text{xe4}\) (19...\(\text{xc6}\) 20 \(\text{xf6}\) + \(\text{xf6}\) 21 \(\text{xc2}\) ± and \(\text{d4}\)?) 20 \(\text{xe4}\) (or 20 \(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 21 \(\text{xc5}\) ±) 20...\(\text{b6}\) 21 \(\text{g6}\) \(\text{hxg6}\) 22
12...c5 followed soon by d4 with an indisputable advantage.

c) Finally, 12...f1 is subtle and worth considering; White plays prophylactically against future kingside pressure, while also preparing to counter Black's plan to exchange pieces: 12...c5 13...f4! c6 14...c2 d4 15...e2 16...f1 17.e4! with the threat of d5 and a definite advantage, Yermolinsky-Yusupov, Chicago 1996.

12...c5 13...f1 wxe7

...c7 is a solid recapture, although White got the better of the situation in the game Kramnik-Renet, Clichy 1995 after 14 f4! (14...e5 keeps White's basic ideas intact, with the initial threat of c5) 14...f6 15...c2 d6 16...ae1!?! c8 17 g4 d6 18...d2 (18 f5 c7 19...h2 ± Kramnik) 18...d7 19...f7 20...h1 c7? (Kramnik gives 20...e8! 21 f5 g6 22...d8, but then 22 g5! is effective) 21...bl g5! 22...h6 23...d7...e8 24...g3!...h7 25...g2...g8 26...h5...hg5 27...h6...b6 28...e2...d8 29...h3 and White had a winning position.

14 f4! f6 15...f3 f7 16...ae1 c5 17 w2

(D)

This structure seems to favour White so long as he has enough control over e4. M.Gurevich-Akopian, Barcelona 1992 continued 17...b6 18...h4 (18...b5...e8 19...e4! works out to a modest advantage) 18...cxd4?! 19 exd4...c7 20...c1...d8, and now instead of 21...b5...c4!, White could have kept a meaningful advantage with several moves, including 21...d3 and 21...b5...e6 22...f5.

Probably the early...e5 and f4 plan isn't the very best, but it's dynamic and promises complex strategic play. These h3 systems are extremely flexible, so you'll never run out of ways to play them.

1.12)

5...c6 (D)

6 e3

With this move, White makes an important decision. If you don't like the queenless middlegame we see in our main line below, you can prevent 6...f5 with 6...c2; this is probably the best way to go if you absolutely can't afford a draw or want to avoid a long technical struggle. Then play will often transpose to Section 1.11, e.g. by 6...d7 e3 0-0 8...d3...d7 9...f3, but you have to be aware of two deviations:

a) 6...a6 (intending ...b4 and ...f5) 7 e3...b4 8...b1!?! g6 9...d1!...f5 10...c1 and White is doing well.

b) 6...e7 7 e3 (7...f3 g6! 8...f5 9...d3...xd3 10...xd3 is roughly equal, but not drawn) 7...d7 and now 8...d3...h5 9...e7...e7 10...f3 allows the bothersome 10...f4 (see note 'c' to Black's 6th move in Section 1.11). However, 8...f3! is more accurate, or at any rate much easier, if you play...f3 in the main lines (which we do). Then 8...h5 9...e7...e7 10...e2 ± is fine (or even 10 0-0-0-0?!, when I like White but the position is obviously complicated). On the other hand, 8...f8, intending...e6, ...g6, ...g7 and ...f5 is then slightly more effective than it is without...c2.

6...f5
QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

19

a) 6...\( \texttt{\textit{bd7}} \) 7 \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) transposes to note 'c' to Black's 6th move in Section 1.11, where we saw that White could sidestep Black's idea of meeting 8 \( \texttt{\textit{wc2}} \) with 8 \( \texttt{\textit{d5}} \) by playing 8 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \).

b) 6...\( \texttt{\textit{wb6}} \) 7 \( \texttt{\textit{wd2!}} \) (D) (for the record, I think that is the only effective move; Black can hold the balance versus 7 \( \texttt{\textit{wc2}} \), while 7 \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xb2}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textit{wc1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xcl+}} \) 9 \( \texttt{\textit{xcl}} \) \( \texttt{gxf6} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{a3}} \) ultimately results in approximate equality).

We now return to 7 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) (D):

\[ \text{7 \( \texttt{\textit{e4}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textit{dxe4}} \) dxe4 9 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{e3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{b4}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{a5}} \) 12 \( \texttt{\textit{h4}} \) (12 \( \texttt{\textit{f4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{d7}} \) 13 0-0 \( \pm \) 12...\( \texttt{\textit{d7}} \) 13 0-0 \( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 14 \( \texttt{\textit{c2}} \) (or 14 \( \texttt{\textit{f1}} \), when Henrichs gives 14...\( \texttt{\textit{c4}} \) '!' 15 \( \texttt{\textit{c2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xc3}} \), but then follows 16 \( \texttt{\textit{xc4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xc4}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{xe4+}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xc3}} \) \( \pm \) 14...\( \texttt{\textit{f5}} \) 15 a3 \( \texttt{\textit{xc3}} \) 16 bxc3 (or 16 b4?) \( \pm \) 16...\( \texttt{\textit{c4}} \) (16...\( \texttt{\textit{d4}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{fb1}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{fb1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xe2}} \) (17...\( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) 18 \( \texttt{\textit{xc4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xc4}} \) 19 \( \texttt{\textit{b4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) 20 c4 \( \pm \) 18 \( \texttt{\textit{xe2}} \) 0-0 (18...\( \texttt{\textit{xe3?}} \) is well met by 19 \( \texttt{\textit{h5+}} \) g6 20 \( \texttt{\textit{h6}} \) or 19 \( \texttt{\textit{a2}} \) 19 c4 \( \texttt{\textit{w6}} \) 20 \( \texttt{\textit{c1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{f7}} \) 21 \( \texttt{\textit{c2}} \) c5 22 d5 with a strong passed pawn and a comfortable advantage.

7 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \)

This forces an exchanging sequence that is usually regarded as the best way to play the position, and it makes sense. The idea is that Black can't be allowed to develop his c8-bishop and go unpunished. Nevertheless, some players may want to avoid the forthcoming queenless middlegame and might prefer:

a) 7 \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xd3}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textit{xd3}} \) is just a chess game. White is better developed and able, for example, to support central action and/or, with considerable care, to pursue a minority attack. Experience shows that Black can get complete equality (White shouldn't be too quick to play b4 and weaken squares like c4 when his bishop is gone), but this sort of position is an option when you're not interested in testing theory.

b) 7 \( \texttt{\textit{ge2}} \) with the idea \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) is also playable and similar to some lines we'll see below. It, too, is doubtless equal in the abstract, but there are plenty of pieces on the board, which means that you can create a game with fully-fledged chances.

We now return to 7 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) (D):

\[ \text{7...\( \texttt{\textit{g6}} \) 7...\( \texttt{\textit{g6}} \) doesn't control d3, but that isn't disastrous; for example, 8 \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) 9 \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{gxf6}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{d7}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{ge2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 12 \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \) 13 0-0-0?! (13 \f3?)! 13...0-0-0 14 \( \texttt{\textit{df5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{f8}} \) (14...\( \texttt{\textit{xf5}} \) 15 \( \texttt{\textit{xf5+}} \) would be horribly depressing for Black, since you'd probably be looking at another 70 moves of defending, or of course a loss along the way) 15 g4 \( \texttt{\textit{c7}} \) 16 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{c8}} \) 17 h3 \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \) 18 \( \texttt{\textit{fg3}} \) \( \pm \) A.Aleksandrov-Dokuchaev, Russia Cup, Smolensk 1997.

8 \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \)

8...\( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) should make White happy. I like 9 h4 h5 10 \( \texttt{\textit{ge2}} \) best, but the well-known game Petrosian-Barcza, Budapest 1955 went 9 \( \texttt{\textit{d1}} \) (always given an '!' - the idea is that otherwise White would have to answer ...\( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) with 0-0-0; actually, I doubt that 9...\( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) is really a problem, but \( \texttt{\textit{d1}} \) is a fairly useful move anyway) 9...\( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{d2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{a6}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) 0-0-0 12 a3 \( \texttt{\textit{c7}} \) 13 b4 \( \texttt{\textit{de8}} \) 14 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \) 15 \( \texttt{\textit{wa2}} \), and White is supposed to have a clear advantage, which I question; regardless, 8...\( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) is a poor idea.

9 \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) (D)

An awful lot of words have been expended over this position, but essentially they come
down to the same thing: Black has isolated and doubled f-pawns as well as an isolated h-pawn, but White, having no open file, has a difficult time exploiting these weaknesses. However, he might be able to occupy the traditionally strong outpost on f5 and do damage in that way; for a good example, see the game Aleksandrov-Dokuchaev in the note to 7...\textit{g6} above. For Black’s part, putting a knight on d6 will go a long way towards solving his problems, as that piece watches over f5 and exerts influence on the centre. This position is undoubtedly drawn with best play, and a leading grandmaster will draw the black position a large percentage of the time. On lower levels, however, all the way up to 2500, White has managed to win a reasonable percentage of the time, perhaps 35% on average, and importantly, he almost never loses. In practice, this has led to above-average performance rating leads for White (ironically, that is often the result of a ‘drawish’ line in chess). Presumably many players will still prefer to play 6 \textit{c2} (see above), but this is a handy position to know something about, and I’ll show a few sample lines.

10 h4

This move is the most likely to generate chances. In a database of modern games, it scored 18 wins of 44 games, with only 2 losses. The other main move is 10 \textit{d2}, but I’d like to examine two games with another move that has been disparaged a bit, i.e., 10 \textit{f3}. Then play has gone 10...\textit{d7} 11 \textit{h4} \textit{e7} 12 g3 \textit{db6} 13 \textit{f3} (D) with these ideas:

a) 13...0-0 14 \textit{f2} \textit{fe8} 15 \textit{d1} \textit{e8} 16 \textit{g2} \textit{d6} 17 h4 h5 18 \textit{f4} \textit{f8} 19 \textit{e1} \textit{h6} 20 b3?! \textit{g7} (20...\textit{xf4} 21 \textit{gxf4} gives White chances with the ideas \textit{h3} and \textit{e2-g3}, for example, although I admit that Black needn’t be overly worried) 21 \textit{g2} \textit{e7} 22 \textit{e2} \textit{ae8}. All pretty normal-looking so far, and fully equal, although White missed some opportunities to stir things up. The interesting part is that he still managed to create problems for Black: 23 \textit{he1} a5 (it was probably time for 23...\textit{xf4}!) 24 e4! \textit{xe4} 25 \textit{xe4} \textit{d8} 26 \textit{f3} \textit{e8} 27 \textit{d1} \textit{ed7} 28 d5! \textit{xd5} 29 \textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 30 \textit{exd5}. This has the threat of \textit{xh5}, so Black played 30...\textit{xd6}! 31 e5 \textit{xe5} 32 \textit{xe5} a4?! (but 32...\textit{e8} 33 \textit{xe8} \textit{xe8} 34 \textit{hxh5} gives White an extra pawn and an obvious advantage, as does 32...\textit{e8} 33 \textit{hxh5}+ \textit{xh5} 34 \textit{hxh5} \textit{c2+} 35 \textit{e2}) 33 \textit{bxa4} \textit{c8} and now 34 \textit{hxh5} was advantageous in V.Milov-Pigusov, New York Open 1998, but 34 \textit{hxh5+} and 34 \textit{gxg6} \textit{fxg6} 35 \textit{e7}+ \textit{f8} 36 \textit{e6} are even stronger.

b) Van Wely-Short, Wijk aan Zee 2005 went 13...a5 14 \textit{f2} a4 15 \textit{c1} \textit{c8}, and although White ultimately won after 16 \textit{e2} \textit{d6} 17 \textit{hd1}, Black had some easy improvements, so I’d suggest that White can cause more trouble with 16 \textit{g2} \textit{d6} (16...\textit{d6} 17 e4 \textit{dxe4} 18 \textit{dxe4} \textit{e7} with the idea 18...\textit{e7} 19 \textit{c5}) 17 \textit{f4}. For example, 17...0-0 18 h4 h5 19 \textit{d3} \textit{xd3} (19...\textit{h7} 20 \textit{c2!}) 20 \textit{xd3} and White is having all the fun.

We now return to 10 h4 (D):

10...\textit{d7}

The best players appear to avoid 10...h5, which may be playable but creates another target for White on h5. Instead, 10...h6 11 h5 \textit{f5} is similar to our main line, in that Black wants to get the bishop back to e6 before it can be
exchanged and give White an unchallenged outpost on f5.

11 h5 \( \Delta f5 \) 12 f3

12 \( \Delta f3 \) \( \Delta b6 \) 13 \( \Delta h4 \) \( \Delta e6 \) 14 \( \Delta d3 \) 0-0-0

"doesn't achieve a great deal for White" (Cox).

I find no games with this position, and grant his point, but can imagine that in a practical game White might have some chances; for example,

15 b3 \( \Delta b8 \) (15... \( \Delta b4 \) 16 \( \Delta c1 \) \( \Delta b8 \) 17 f3 \( \Delta c8 \) 18 \( \Delta f2 \) \( \Delta d6 \) 19 g4) 16 f3 \( \Delta e8 \) 17 \( \Delta f2 \) \( \Delta h6 \) 18 \( \Delta a e1 \) \( \Delta c8 \) 19 \( \Delta e 2 ! ? \) \( \Delta d6 \) 20 \( \Delta g3 \) \( \Delta f8 \) 21 \( \Delta c1 \) h6 22 \( \Delta g f5 \) \( \Delta x f5 \) 23 \( \Delta x f5 \) with just enough of an edge to bother Black. I don't doubt that Black can draw such variations with accurate play; I'm just not convinced how easy they are.

12... \( \Delta e 6 \) 13 \( \Delta d 3 \) f5 14 \( \Delta g e 2 \) \( \Delta d 6 \) 15 h6!?

Trying to set up the move \( \Delta h5 \) to put further pressure on e5. White has another possibility in 15 \( \Delta f4 \) (D); e.g.:

15... \( \Delta x f4 ! ? \) 16 exf4 \( \Delta b6 \) 17 b3 \( \Delta d 8 \) 18 \( \Delta d 1 ! \) \( \Delta c8 \) 19 \( \Delta e3 \) \( \Delta d 6 \) and now 20 \( \Delta f 2 \) or 20 h6 \( \Delta e 7 \) 21 \( \Delta h 5 \) \( \Delta f 6 \) 22 \( \Delta f 2 \). when White has a substantial advantage based upon a timely g4 – 22... \( \Delta a g 8 \) 23 g4 fxg4 24 f5 \( \Delta d 7 \) 25 \( \Delta x g 4 + \), for instance.

b) 15... \( \Delta g 8 \) 16 \( \Delta c e 2 \) 0-0-0 17 \( \Delta f 2 \) \( \Delta f 6 \) 18 \( \Delta h 3 \) \( \Delta d 7 \) 19 \( \Delta g 3 \) h6 20 \( \Delta h 1 \) \( \Delta d e 8 \) 21 \( \Delta x g 8 \) \( \Delta x g 8 \) 22 \( \Delta g 3 \) \( \Delta g 5 \) 23 \( \Delta f e 2 ! \), intending f4 and \( \Delta x f 5 \).

15... \( \Delta e 7 \) 16 \( \Delta f 2 \) \( \Delta a g 8 \) (D)

Cox says that it is "already apparent that Black was [is] not at all worse." But I still think that White has what chances there are.

17 \( \Delta f 4 \) \( \Delta f 6 \)

We just saw a line resembling 17... \( \Delta x f 4 ! ? \) 18 exf4 \( \Delta f 6 \) 19 \( \Delta d 1 \) \( \Delta b 6 \) 20 b3 \( \Delta c 8 \) 21 \( \Delta e 3 \) \( \Delta d 6 \) 22 \( \Delta h 5 \) \( \Delta a c 8 \) 23 \( \Delta e 1 \) \( \Delta e 8 \) 24 g4! fxg4 25 \( \Delta x g 4 \) \( \Delta e 4 + \) 26 \( \Delta f 3 \) ±.

18 \( \Delta h 5 \)

Here too White might try 18 \( \Delta c e 2 \); e.g.,

18... \( \Delta g 5 \) (18... \( \Delta d 7 \) 19 \( \Delta h 5 \) \( \Delta g 6 \) 20 \( \Delta g 7 \) \( \Delta g 8 \) 21 \( \Delta a g 1 \) \( \Delta g 5 \) 22 g4! fxg4 23 f4) 19 b4! a6 20 \( \Delta a b 1 \) \( \Delta d 7 \) 21 a4 b5 22 \( \Delta c 2 \) and Black is still alright, but will be defending for quite some time, having to keep an eye on the f-pawn and the queenside. He also has a bad bishop, which is a short-term asset defensively, but a potential problem in the long run.

18... \( \Delta x h 5 \) 19 \( \Delta x h 5 \) \( \Delta f 6 \) 20 \( \Delta e 2 \) b6

Now:

a) 21 f4 was played in Bacrot-Short, Albert (1) 2000, which proceeded 21...c5?! (21... \( \Delta g 4 ! \) 22 g3 c5 = is more accurate), when 22 dxc5 would have secured some advantage; for example, 22... \( \Delta x c 5 \) (22... \( \Delta b x c 5 \) 23 \( \Delta g 3 \) \( \Delta b 8 \) 24 \( \Delta b 3 \) c4 25 \( \Delta x f 5 \) cxb3 26 axb3 \( \Delta x b 3 \) and now 27 \( \Delta c 1 \) ± or 27 \( \Delta x e 6 \) fx e 6 28 \( \Delta a 6 \) ±) 23 \( \Delta c 1 \) \( \Delta c 8 \) 24 \( \Delta a 6 \) \( \Delta c d 8 \) 25 \( \Delta d 4 \). Overall, however, I
prefer White’s options in several of the notes above.

b) 21 \text{\textit{c2}} is more flexible; then another strategy for White is shown by 21...c5 22 \text{\textit{d1}} \text{\textit{c7}} 23 \text{\textit{b3}} \text{\textit{d8}} 24 f4 \text{\textit{hg8}} 25 \text{\textit{g1}} \text{\textit{xd4}} (25...c4 26 \text{\textit{c2}} with the idea \text{\textit{f3}}-h4) 26 \text{\textit{xd4}} with an admittedly small positional edge after 26...b5!, for example.

To be clear: I’m not suggesting that White can get a serious advantage in the main line if Black plays perfectly. But if players of the highest calibre get opportunities for a meaningful advantage, the implication is that there are enough strategic challenges to satisfy most players’ needs.

1.2) 3...\text{\textit{e7}} (D)

This move is specifically designed to discourage the Exchange Variation, indicating that Black prefers to play classical Orthodox lines (see the next note).

4 \text{\textit{xd5}}

White plays a sort of Exchange Variation anyway. Black’s first point is that after this pawn trade, White can’t play the immediate 5 \text{\textit{g5}} and consequently won’t be able to play the main lines of the Exchange Variation, at least those with \text{\textit{ge2}} instead of \text{\textit{f3}}. But because we are playing the Exchange Variation with \text{\textit{f3}}, I’m going to discuss the issues involved when White tries to reach the main line anyway. To begin with, play can go 4 \text{\textit{f3}} \text{\textit{f6}} 5 \text{\textit{g5}} (5 \text{\textit{xd5}} \text{\textit{exd5}} 6 \text{\textit{g5}} is the next note) 5...0-0 (incidentally, 5...h6 6 \text{\textit{h4}} 0-0 7 \text{\textit{xd5}} \text{\textit{xd5}} is similarly equal and has also led to a high percentage of draws among strong players) 6 \text{\textit{xd5}} (6 \text{\textit{e3}} is an Orthodox Queen’s Gambit Declined, not what we’re after as White), when 6...\text{\textit{d7}} 7 \text{\textit{xe7}} \text{\textit{xe7}} has produced many draws over the years, in part because 8 e4 (very seldom played; 8 \text{\textit{c1}} and 8 e3 are normal) 8...\text{\textit{xc3}} 9 \text{\textit{xc3}} c5 sets up the idea of ...\text{\textit{c6}} and an early ...\text{\textit{d8}} (...\text{\textit{e5}} is a theme as well), so Black has full equality. Thus 6 \text{\textit{xd5}} was too late for our purposes.

4...\text{\textit{xd5}} 5 \text{\textit{f4}}

It’s hardly a loss for White to play his bishop to f4 instead of g5; in fact, \text{\textit{f4}} is quite a desirable move, but after 3 \text{\textit{c3}} \text{\textit{f6}} 4 \text{\textit{xd5}} \text{\textit{exd5}} 5 \text{\textit{f4}}, Black can challenge the bishop forthwith by 5...\text{\textit{d6}}. In the position after the text-move, not only is 5...\text{\textit{d6}}? a bad move because of 6 \text{\textit{xd5}}, but even if Black were able to get ...\text{\textit{d6}} in, he’d be wasting a valuable tempo in so doing (...\text{\textit{e7}}-d6).

Now I’m going to take some time discussing 5 \text{\textit{f3}}, still attempting to get to our main line versus 3...\text{\textit{f6}}. There’s no compelling reason you can’t take this route. First, Black can proceed normally by 5...\text{\textit{f6}} 6 \text{\textit{g5}} 0-0, and then 7 \text{\textit{e3}} will indeed reach our desired position, since 7...\text{\textit{f5}}? is strongly met by 8 \text{\textit{b3}} or 8 \text{\textit{xf6}} \text{\textit{xf6}} 9 \text{\textit{b3}}. Therefore Black can cause the most trouble with 5...c6, intending ...\text{\textit{f5}} (and meeting \text{\textit{b3}} with ...\text{\textit{b6}}, usually a satisfactory resource). So White might want to play 6 \text{\textit{c2}} (D) preventing ...\text{\textit{f5}} and still aiming for a standard set-up with e3, \text{\textit{d3}} and 0-0.

There are two move-orders which Black can use to frustrate this, but if White doesn’t mind
getting away from the most-trodden paths and just playing chess, he might want to look into them:

a) 6...g6 is a standard remedy, reintroducing the idea of ...f5. Then 7 f4 f5 8 d2 d6 is normal, with equality, but I find the very rare 7 e4! dxe4 8 fxe4 interesting, with pressure based upon better development and Black’s kingside dark squares. For example:

a1) 8...f5 9 d3 e4 10 cxe4 b4+ 11 f1! and because of Black’s weak dark squares and White’s various ideas such as g5 and d5, White stands better; e.g., 11...d6 (11...d5 12 h6 gxe4? 13 xe4+ w7 14 d3 ± planning a and e1).

a2) 8...b4+ 9 c3 w7+ (9...f6 10 c4 0-0 11 0-0 b5 12 h3 g4 13 f6 ± with the idea 13...e8? 14 xf7+) 10 e2 f5 11 d1 d6 12 0-0 0-0 13 e1 wc7 14 b3 d6 15 h6 d8 16 e5 with a nagging initiative for White.

a3) 8...f6 9 xf6+ (9 h6!?) 9...xf6 (D) is probably the key position.

White can play 10 h6 f5 (10...a5+ 11 c3 xc3 xc3+ 12 bxc3 ±), and then:

a31) 11 d3 is fascinating; as often happens, simplification – in this case by ...xd3 – doesn’t help the side playing against the isolated pawn if it costs too much in terms of getting the pieces out. True, White’s superiority is limited if Black avoids the exchange by 11...e7+, but he’s still on top: 12 f1! e6! 13 e1 d7 14 c4 b6 15 xe6 fxe6 16 e4 intending w2, g3 and g2. Likewise 11...a5+ 12 d2xd3 13 xd3 wc7 14 h6!, etc., retains an edge for White.

a32) 11 w2 d7 12 e2 f8 13 0-0 e6 14 ad1 (14 c4!?) 14...e4! 15 e5! d5 16 g4. This is at any rate interesting and promising for White, in view of 16...xa2 17 xe6 xe6 (17...fxe6 18 g4 d5 19 w4 e7 20 g7 with control over e5, a useful e-file, and the safer king as compensation for a pawn) 18 f1 (threatening xf7) 18...w6 19 w4! (intending xf6 or xg6) 19...e7 20 d5 1-0-0! (20...xd5? 21 xc6! xc6 22 c1 and if the queen moves, 23 w5 follows) 21 w3! xd5 22 xf7.

b) 6...f6 and now:

b1) 7 g5 gives us a conventional position in which 7...g6 is the best way to avoid transposition into main lines. Then 8 e3 f5 9 d3 xd3 10 xd3 is well-known; the strategic player might not mind the fact that Black is on the verge of equality as long as he has weaknesses to work with and definite plans. Here White can play for positions with e5, for example, and/or use a minority attack beginning with b1 and b4.

b2) Nevertheless, I’d recommend 7 f4 g6 8 e3 f5 9 d3 xd3 10 xd3 is another, more effective, version of this idea. Again, you can’t expect too much, but 10...d6 (or 10...d6 11 0-0 0-0 12 d7 12 ab1) 11 h6 d4 12 g5 e7 (12...f6 13 h4) 13 f4 isn’t problem-free for Black; e.g., 13...d6 14 xd6 w6 xd6 15 e4!.

Well, playing this way is a matter of taste. You can always choose the staid and true 5 f4 (D), to which we now return:

Black has two logical continuations:

1.21: 5...c6 24
1.22: 5...f6 26
1.21)

5...c6

This is the same idea we just saw: Black wants to play an early ...\texttt{f}5 and disturb White's natural build-up with e3 and d3.

6 \texttt{wc}2 (D)

A calm continuation, frequently played but not outrageously theoretical. White simply stops ...\texttt{f}5 and makes a typical Exchange Variation move while he's at it.

The most popular move is 6 e3, when the main line goes 6...\texttt{f}5 (as usual, Black plays this when he gets the chance; otherwise 5...c6 wouldn't make much sense, since Black has forfeited the option of playing ...c5 in one move) 7 g4!? (7 \texttt{lg}e2 is more conservative) 7...\texttt{e}6 (7...\texttt{g}6 8 h4 has the trick 8...\texttt{x}h4? 9 \texttt{b}3! 10 \texttt{x}h4! \texttt{x}h4 11 \texttt{d}xe5! (+) 8 h4 (the most fun; 8 h3 used to be the main move) 8...\texttt{d}7 9 h5 \texttt{h}6!? This is a rich position, but a rather volatile one, and I'm not sure that White has any advantage when all is said and done.

6...g6

This prepares ...\texttt{f}5 before White can get e3 and d3 in. There are several alternatives for Black, and theory hasn't yet settled on which is best:

a) 6...\texttt{g}4!? looks to play ...\texttt{h}5-g6, but takes time; e.g., 7 e3 \texttt{h}5 8 \texttt{d}3 (8 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}7 9 \texttt{h}3 \texttt{g}6 10 \texttt{d}2 \pm Salov-Portisch, Linares 1990) 8...\texttt{g}6 9 \texttt{x}g6 (9 \texttt{g}e2 \texttt{f}6 10 0-0 is also played) 9...\texttt{x}g6 10 0-0-0 (10 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{f}6 11 0-0 \pm) 10...\texttt{f}6 11 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{b}d7 12 \texttt{g}e2 b5?! (12...\texttt{h}5 13 \texttt{e}5; 12...\texttt{b}6 13 e4 \texttt{c}4 might be best) 13 e4 b4 (13...\texttt{d}xe4 14 \texttt{fxe}4 \texttt{b}6 15 d5) 14 \texttt{d}a4 dxe4 15 \texttt{f}xe4 \texttt{a}5?! (15...0-0) 16 \texttt{b}1 (or 16 e5 \texttt{d}5 17 \texttt{xc}6 0-0 18 \texttt{xd}7 \texttt{fd}8 19 \texttt{h}3 \texttt{xa}4 20 \texttt{b}1) 16...0-0 17 h4!? \texttt{f}e8 18 e5 \texttt{d}5? (18...\texttt{g}4) 19 h5 \texttt{g}5 20 h6! ± Carlsen-Nakamura, Medias 2011.

b) Moving the bishop a second time by 6...\texttt{d}6 looks strange, but if White hasn't any pawn-breaks, Black can get away with this luxury. This is an important line to study and understand: 7 \texttt{xe}6 (7 \texttt{g}3 is also played, when 7...\texttt{e}7 8 e3 \texttt{f}5 might follow, and now 9 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{xe}6 10 \texttt{xd}3 or 9 \texttt{b}3) 7...\texttt{xd}6 8 e3 (D) and Black has three possibilities:

b1) 8...\texttt{g}6 9 \texttt{d}2 (9 \texttt{b}3 is a respectable option, and 9 \texttt{xb}6 \texttt{h}xg6 10 b4!? a6 11 f3 \texttt{d}7 12 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{xe}7 13 \texttt{g}e2 g5 14 \texttt{f}2 \texttt{f}6 15 g4 \texttt{d}8 16 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{d}7 17 a4 clearly favoured White in the game Nakamura-Ponomariov, Saint Louis (6) 2011; of course, Black can do much better than that) 9...\texttt{e}7 (after 9...\texttt{e}6, 10 \texttt{g}e2 with the idea \texttt{f}4 is also a good choice) 10 \texttt{g}e2 0-0 (10...\texttt{d}6 was met by 11 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{f}5 12 \texttt{xf}5 \texttt{xf}5 13 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{e}7 14 b4!? a6 15 \texttt{a}4 \pm in Dreev-Vaganian, Poikovsky 2002, while 11 e4!? is also promising) 11 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{d}6 (11...\texttt{d}7 12 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{h}6 13 0-0 \texttt{f}6 14 b4 \pm Azmaiparashvili-Gomez Esteban, Toledo 1991) 12 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{f}6 13 0-0 \texttt{d}7 14 \texttt{a}1 f5!? 15 \texttt{d}5 \texttt{f}7 16 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{f}6 17 f3 g5 18 \texttt{h}3 h6 19 \texttt{b}1 \texttt{ae}8 20 \texttt{f}2 \pm Azmaiparashvili-Petrosian, Erevan 1989.

b2) 8...\texttt{f}6 9 \texttt{d}d3 0-0 10 \texttt{f}3 (the \texttt{d}g2, f3 and e4 plan would be harder to implement with ...\texttt{e}8 coming, so White is better served by preparing a minority attack) 10...\texttt{bd}7 11
QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

0-0 \text{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}8 12 \text{\texttt{\textbackslash a}}ab1 \pm. This is easy to play for White.

b3) 8...\texttt{\textbackslash d}e7 prepares ...\texttt{\textbackslash f}5 again: 9 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d3 g6 10 \texttt{\textbackslash f}3! (after 10 f3, 10...\texttt{\textbackslash d}d7?! 11 \texttt{\textbackslash g}e2 \texttt{\textbackslash b}6?! 12 e4 \texttt{\textbackslash f}6f6 13 0-0 0-0 14 \texttt{\textbackslash a}el gave White an ideal centre in Onischchuk-Kovacs, European Clubs Cup, Ohrid 2009, but 10...0-0 with the idea ...\texttt{\textbackslash e}6, ...\texttt{\textbackslash d}d7 and ...c5 would have kept Black's disadvantage down) 10...\texttt{\textbackslash f}5 (D).

This has been called equal, but White stands better with the forcing sequence 11 \texttt{\textbackslash x}xf5! \texttt{\textbackslash x}xf5 12 0-0 (even 12 e4 dx e4 13 \texttt{\textbackslash xe}4 \texttt{\textbackslash b}4+ 14 \texttt{\textbackslash c}3 \texttt{\textbackslash x}c3+ 15 bxc3 gives White a minor edge because of his centralized pieces and Black's dark-squared weaknesses) 12...0-0 13 e4! dx e4 14 \texttt{\textbackslash xe}4 \texttt{\textbackslash d}8! (14...\texttt{\textbackslash x}xd4 15 \texttt{\textbackslash x}xd4 \texttt{\textbackslash x}xd4 16 \texttt{\textbackslash a}d1 \texttt{\textbackslash g}7 is obviously dangerous for Black; White can build up a great position by 17 \texttt{\textbackslash b}3 b6 18 \texttt{\textbackslash w}a3, preventing Black's knight from getting out; e.g., 18...c5 19 \texttt{\textbackslash d}6! \texttt{\textbackslash c}8 20 \texttt{\textbackslash f}6+ \texttt{\textbackslash h}8 21 \texttt{\textbackslash w}a4! a5 22 \texttt{\textbackslash e}1 \texttt{\textbackslash a}6 23 \texttt{\textbackslash e}7 c4 24 g3 +-) 15 \texttt{\textbackslash b}3 (or 15 \texttt{\textbackslash a}d1 \texttt{\textbackslash a}6 16 \texttt{\textbackslash f}el \pm) 15...\texttt{\textbackslash b}6 16 \texttt{\textbackslash w}a3 \texttt{\textbackslash d}7 17 \texttt{\textbackslash f}el \texttt{\textbackslash a}d8 18 \texttt{\textbackslash a}d1 \pm; h3 and g4 follows.

c) 6...\texttt{\textbackslash d}6f6 (D) is the most obvious move. White has some good options:

7 e3 \texttt{\textbackslash d}h5?! (7...0-0 8 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d3 \texttt{\textbackslash a}bd7 is also common and leads to positions similar to the 3...\texttt{\textbackslash f}6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 \texttt{\textbackslash g}5 main line if White plays \texttt{\textbackslash f}3 and h3) 8 \texttt{\textbackslash e}5 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d7 9 \texttt{\textbackslash e}2 \texttt{\textbackslash x}e5 10 dx e5 g6 11 \texttt{\textbackslash h}xh5 gxh5 12 0-0-0 f6 (Grischuk-Aronian, Candidates rapid, Kazan 2011) and now 13 e4! should lead to some advantage; e.g., 13...dx e4 14 exf6 \texttt{\textbackslash x}xf6 15 \texttt{\textbackslash d}f3 c5 16 \texttt{\textbackslash d}5 \texttt{\textbackslash e}6 17 \texttt{\textbackslash f}4 \pm.

c2) 7 h3!? gives White's bishop an escape-square in response to ...\texttt{\textbackslash d}h5. Then 7...g6 8 e3 \texttt{\textbackslash f}5 9 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d2 (rather than 9 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d3) was chosen by Carlsen versus Aronian at Wijk aan Zee 2012. What is interesting is that after 9...h5, White played 10 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d3 after all. The point is that Black's 'free' move...h5 is a weakening one. This is the same thing that happens in our main line.

7 e3

7 f3!? has been used a lot, but I'll stick to this solid approach.

7...\texttt{\textbackslash f}5 (D)

8 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d2! White was already ahead in development, so he can afford this loss of tempo. The idea is to chase Black's bishop away and seize territory by f3 and g4 or \texttt{\textbackslash e}2-g3 when appropriate. Of course, 8 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d3 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d3 9 \texttt{\textbackslash x}xd3 \texttt{\textbackslash f}6 is playable, if uninspiring.

8...\texttt{\textbackslash f}6

8...\texttt{\textbackslash d}7 9 \texttt{\textbackslash a}b6 10 e4 \texttt{\textbackslash e}6 11 e5! h5 12 \texttt{\textbackslash d}3 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d7 13 b3 (or 13 \texttt{\textbackslash g}e2) 13...\texttt{\textbackslash h}4+ 14
26 STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE

g3 e7 15 f2!± favoured White in Karpov-Kasparov, World Ch (7), London/Leningrad 1986.

9 f3 (D)

B

9...h5!?

To stop g4, as well as to prevent c2-g3 with the move ...h4. Of course, this is somewhat weakening. Other moves:

a) 9...c5 10 h6!? (White can also play 10 dge2 or 10 h5+ c6 11 h6) 10...cxd4 11 exd4 a6 (11...c6 12 b5!± Kasparov) 12 g4 c6 13 dge2 dbd7 (13...c6 14 g2 f8 15 0-0 dxe6 16 wxe6 w6 17 w7 c7 18 ad1 with the idea 18...h6?? 19 df4) 14 g2 db6 15 b3 c8 16 0-0 c6 17 h3 with a bind, Kasparov-Short, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988.

b) 9...0-0 is probably best, even if it risks walking into h4-h5: 10 g4!? (White gets only the slightest of advantages from 10 dge2 e8 11 g3 c6 12 c1) 10...e6 11 g2 c5!? 12 h4 h5 13 g 5 e8 14 dxc5 dxc5 15 0-0-0 wa5 16 a3 ± Benjamin-Schroer, Internet 2010. But this line is undoubtedly alright for Black.

10...d3

10 dge2 h4 11 g4 is another course.

10...xd3 11 w6 a6

11...bd7 12 dge2 0-0 (12...h4 13 h3 0-0 14 0-0 with e4 to come) 13 e4!? (good, but 13 0-0 first is more cautious) 13...dxe4 14 fxe4 d5!! 15 w3 f6 16 0-0-0! df4 17 df4 ± M.Gurevich-Geller, Moscow 1987.

12 dge2 c7 13 0-0 c6 14 d5 h4

14...0-0 15 f4!? ("!' Topalov; although 15 g6 is a good and perhaps preferable preparatory move) 15...g7 16 f5 c5 17...xf6 18 d4 dxe4 19 dxe4 ±) 17 xf5! gxf5 18 wxf5 with threats. After 18...g4!, 19 f1! g5 (19...dxe5 20 dxe5 ±) 20 d4 xf4 21 xf4 continues the attack.

15 hae1

Better is 15 xf4! with the idea 15...xf4 16 exf4 and f5.

15...0-0 16 g4

Given an exclamation point by more than one annotator, which is probably an incorrect assessment. 16 xf4 is still possible, when Topalov's 16...xf4 17 xf4 h5 18 h6 ae8 19 e4 g5!? might be improved upon by 18 de5!, but I'm not sure if White has anything meaningful.

16...hxg3!?

Now Black faces some real difficulties. After 16...c7!?, Topalov gives 17 f6 18 wxe6+ (18 e4 fxe5 19 exf6 xf6) ±

17 h6 ae8 can be answered with 19 f4!.

19 dxe5

White intends f4-f5. In the game Topalov-Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1998, White's attack triumphed after 19...w7 20 f4 21 wxe5 22 de5 23 gxf5! ±

1.22) 5...c6

This hasn't been as popular as 5...c6 over the years, but it's a serious option. White plays simply:

6 e3 0-0

6...f5!? is yet another attempt to get the light-squared bishop out. Then the obvious 7 b3 is met by the gambit 7...c6!?, which after a lot of study I've concluded is satisfactory for Black, and the play is certainly not strategic
in nature. So I’ll recommend the simpler 7 \( \text{Qg}2 (D) \) (naturally 7 \( \text{Qf}3 \) isn’t bad, but you’ll want to exchange bishops next by \( \text{Qd}3 \), which is essentially equal), and now:

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B
\]

\[
W
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a) 7...0-0 8 \( \text{Cc}1 \) (8 h3!? and 8 \( \text{Qg}3 \) have also been played here) 8...c6 9 \( \text{Qg}3 \) \( \text{Qe}6 \) (9...h6 10 h4 h6 11 h5 \( \text{Qh}7 \) 12 \( \text{Qd}3 \) ± favours White; not only does he have space, but he can exchange and put a knight on f5, from where it is very difficult to drive away) 10 \( \text{Qd}3 \) \( \text{Qe}8 \) (10...\( \text{Qbd}7 \) 11 0-0 a6 12 \( \text{Qf}5! ? \) 11 \( \text{Wb}3 \) \( \text{Wb}6 \) 12 \( \text{Wc}2 \) (this is beginning to look much more like a Queen’s Gambit again!) 12...\( \text{Qbd}7 \) 13 0-0 (13 \( \text{Qf}5 \) \( \text{Qf}5 \) 14 \( \text{Qf}5 \) g6 15 \( \text{Qh}3 \) 13...g6 14 a3 \( \text{Qd}8 \) 15 h4!? and White has a little extra space on each side of the board to work with.

b) 7...c6 8 \( \text{Qg}3 \) \( \text{Qe}6 \) 9 \( \text{Qd}3 \) can transpose, but in Istratescu-Z.Vuković, Bucharest 2000, White decided to forego the usual \( \text{Cc}1 \): 9...h6 (to control f5) 10 \( \text{Wc}2 \) \( \text{Qbd}7 \) 11 \( \text{Qd}1 \) (in order to discourage ...c5). Then he turned to a strategy of central expansion: 11...\( \text{Qbd}6 \) 12 f3 0-0 13 \text{Qc}8 14 \text{Qh}1 \( \text{Qfd}7 \) 15 \( \text{Qge}2 \) (versus ...g5) 15...f5 16 \( \text{Qh}6 \) \( \text{Qe}8 \) 17 e4! fxe4 18 fxe4 \( \text{Qg}5 \) 19 \( \text{Qxg}5 \) \( \text{Wxg}5 \) 20 \( \text{Qf}4 \) with a nice advantage. A wonderful demonstration of strategic insight.

\[
D
\]

An unusual counterstroke in this line, but perhaps more appropriate since the bishop is already on d3 blocking the d-file in case of dxc5.

a) Instead, 7...c6 8 \( \text{Wc}2 \) \( \text{Qbd}7 \) 9 \( \text{Qf}3 \) \( \text{Qe}8 \) 10 h3! is just like our 3...\( \text{Qf}6 \) main line with

White’s bishop already on the desirable square f4.

b) 7...b6 8 \( \text{Qf}3 \) c5 9 \( \text{Qe}5 \) \( \text{Qb}7 \) 10 0-0 \( \text{Qc}6 \) 11 \( \text{Wf}3 \) \( \text{xc}4 \)?! 12 \( \text{Qxc}6 \) \( \text{Qxc}6 \) 13 \( \text{exd}4 \) results in a bad bishop for Black and a standard positional advantage for White, Bocharov-V.Zaitsev, St Petersburg 2005.

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E
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8 \( \text{Qge}2 \)

As usual, White has various ways to set up, and in fact 8 \( \text{Qf}3 \) may appeal to you more. But \( \text{Qge}2 \) has the advantage of not allowing ...\( \text{Qg}4 \) without getting in the free and useful move f3.

8...\( \text{Qc}6 \) 9 0-0

9 dxc5 \( \text{Qxc}5 \) 10 0-0 is safe, but it’s more ambitious to maintain the tension.

9...\( \text{Qxd}4 \)

9...a6 10 dxc5! isolates the d-pawn at an opportune moment: 10...\( \text{Qxc}5 \) 11 \( \text{Cc}1 \) (or 11 \( \text{Qg}5 \), with the idea 11...\( \text{Qe}6 \) 12 \( \text{Qf}4 \) or 11...h6 12 \( \text{Qf}6 \) \( \text{Qxf}6 \) 13 \( \text{Qb}3 \)! 11...\( \text{Qe}6 \) (11...d4 12 \( \text{Qe}4 \) \( \text{Qxe}4 \) 13 \( \text{Qxe}4 \) \( \text{Qb}6 \) 14 \( \text{Qxc}6 \) \( \text{bx}c6 \) 15 \( \text{Qxd}4 \) ±; 11...\( \text{Qe}7 \) 12 \( \text{Qb}3 \) threatens \( \text{Qa}4 \) as well as \( \text{Qfd}1 \) 12 \( \text{Qa}4 \) \( \text{Qd}6 \) 13 \( \text{Qb}1 \) h6 14 \( \text{Qb}3 \)! \( \text{Qb}8 \) 15 \( \text{Qfd}1 \) puts a good deal of pressure on Black’s position. At this point the positionally desirable 15...d4 is answered by 16 \( \text{Wd}3 \) \( \text{Qxf}4 \) 17 \( \text{Qxf}4 \) with the idea 17...\( \text{dxe}3 \) 18 \( \text{Qxe}3 \) ±.

10 \( \text{Qxd}4 \) \( \text{Qxd}4 \) 11 \( \text{exd}4 \) \( \text{Qe}6 \)

Now Alatortsev-Stolberg, Kiev 1940 continued 12 \( \text{Cc}1 \) \( \text{Qc}8 \) 13 \( \text{Qe}1 \) (or 13 \( \text{Qb}3 \) ±) 13...a6 14 \( \text{Qb}3 \) b5 15 a4 ±, while 12 \( \text{Qb}5 ! \) looks good because \( \text{Qc}7 \) and \( \text{Qxe}6 \) can’t be prevented.
2 Tarrasch Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 \[c3 c5 (D) \]

This is the Tarrasch Defence to the Queen's Gambit. Black makes an immediate and radical challenge to White's centre.

4 \[x\]d5

Faced with the threat of 4 ... cxd4, White decides to resolve some of the tension in the centre. The move 4 e3 introduces a form of Symmetrical Tarrasch which can also transpose to Semi-Tarrasch lines where White has an isolated queen's pawn. This is a perfectly legitimate choice, although most players consider it a bit passive and lacking in ambition.

4 ... exd5

4 ... cxd4!? is the Hennig-Schara Gambit, which I've included in Chapter 3.

5 \[f\]f3 \[c6 \]

Black brings out a piece to bear pressure on d4. 5 ... \[f6 \] has tended to be considered weak due to 6 \[g5 \], when Black has to make concessions to defend his centre, but White's advantage in the resulting variations may have been overstated. For example, 6 ... cxd4 (6 ... \[e7 \] 7 dxc5 \[e6 \] 8 e3 and after 8 ... \[xc5 \] 9 \[xf6 \] \[xf6 \] 10 \[b5+ \] \[c6 \] 11 0-0 White threatens \[xd5 \] or, upon 11 ... \[d8 \], can reply 12 \[a4 \] ) 7 \[xd4 \] \[e7 \] 8 e3 (8 g3 0-0 9 \[g2 \] \[c6 \] 10 0-0 transposes to Section 2.3) 8 ... 0-0 9 \[e2 \] \[c6 \] 10 0-0 h6 11 \[h4 \] and White has only a moderate advantage, but the d-pawn will be a target and it's hard for Black to get his pieces into the aggressive positions which normally compensate for his isolated pawn. Of course, White can also ignore Black's move-order, and play simply 6 g3.

6 g3 (D)

White enters the 'Rubinstein Variation'. In fact, it's hard to find another move which makes a serious try for advantage. In bringing his bishop to g2, White aims at Black's pawn on d5 while indirectly controlling e4 and preparing to castle. By contrast with 4 e3 or 5 e3, he keeps a diagonal open for the development of his dark-squared bishop.

6 ... \[f6 \]

This is the most natural development. Black can also try to change the central structure or force its resolution by more direct means:

a) 6 ... \[g4 \] 7 \[g2 \] \[xf3 \] 8 \[xf3 \] is premature for Black: 8 ... cxd4 (8 ... \[xd4 \] 9 \[xd5 \] ) 9 \[xd5 \] \[ge7 \] 10 \[xf4 \] ! g6 11 0-0 \[g7 \] 12 \[d3 \] 0-0 13 \[g5 \] ± Mikenas.

b) 6 ... cxd4 7 \[xd4 \] \[b6 \] 8 \[xc6 \] \[c5 \] !? 9 \[d4 \] \[xd4 \] 10 e3 \[xc3+ \] 11 bxc3 \[e7 \] 12 \[a3 \] left White significantly better in Hübner-Penrose, Paignton 1970 because of his powerful bishops, and Black still has to get castled.

c) 6 ... c4 is a traditionally important move called the Swedish Variation. It comes close to
equalizing, but after many years, White found a way to break in the centre at the right moment and assert control over the position: 7 \_g2 \_b4 8 0-0 \_ge7 (8 \_f6 \_g5 \_e6 10 e4!? \_xe4 11 \_xe4 \_e7 12 \_xf6 \_xf6 13 d5! \_xd5 14 \_xf6+ \_xf6 15 \_wcl! intends \_d1 and \_h6 or \_f4 with a clear advantage) 9 e4! (D) and now:

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\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\end{array}
\]

\(c1\) 9...\_xc3 10 bxc3 \_xe4 11 \_d2. White wants to post his knight aggressively on e4 or c4 in conjunction with a passed d-pawn. The position after 11...f5 12 \_xc4 (12 \_wh5+ g6 13 \_wh6 is rather awkward for Black) 12...\_e6 13 \_e3 0-0 14 \_b1 \_wd7 15 \_a3! illustrates the combination of bishop-pair and centre, since 15...\_xa2?! 16 \_b2 \_xf7 (16...\_e6 17 c4!) 17 \_d3! \_xf3 18 \_xf3 gives White an abundance of compensation for a pawn.

\(c2\) 9...0-0 10 exd5 \_xd5 offers White two ways to claim an edge:

\(c21\) 11 \_xd5 \_xd5 12 \_e3 \_b5! (the best move; after 12...\_f5 13 \_e5 \_e4 14 \_xc6 \_xc6 15 \_xe4 \_xe4 16 \_wa4 a5 17 a3 White wins a pawn – Becerra; 12...\_g4 13 \_e5! \_g5 14 \_d2 \_xd1 15 \_xc6 bxc6 16 \_xf1 and one of the c-pawns falls) 13 d5 \_e7 14 \_d4 \_wa5 15 a3 \_d6 16 \_c1 17 \_e1 ±.

\(c22\) 11 \_g5 \_wa5 (11...f6 12 \_xd5 \_xd5 13 \_e5! \_b5 14 a4! \_wa6 15 \_xc6 bxc6, Tregubov-Moskalenko, Alushta 1984, and now 16 \_e3! followed by \_c2 and bringing the rooks to the centre should secure an advantage) 12 \_xd5 \_xd5 13 a3?! (13 \_c1! ±) 13...\_a5 14 \_e5 \_wb5 15 a4 \_wa6 16 \_xc6 bxc6 17 \_c2 ± Timoshchenko-Mi.Tseitlin, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

c3) 9...\_xe4 10 \_xe4 (D) gives White the typical active pieces that go with the isolani:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\end{array}
\]

c31) 10...\_g4 11 a3 \_a5 12 \_f4!? (or 12 d5! \_xd5 13 \_c5) 12...0-0 13 \_d6 \_c7 14 \_xb7 \_b8 15 \_xc7! and now 15...\_xb7 16 \_d6 or 15...\_xc7 16 d5! \_xb7 17 dxc6 \_xc6 18 \_wa4 ±.

c32) 10...0-0 11 \_c2 (11 a3 \_a5 12 \_wa4 ±) 11...\_g4 (11...\_d5!? 12 \_e3 ± 11...\_f5 12 \_h4! \_eb8 13 \_f6+! ± Lautier-O.Rodriguez, Barcelona 1992) 12 \_xc4 \_xf3 13 \_xf3 \_xd4 (13...\_xd5 14 \_g2 ±) 14 \_b3 ± S.Vukovic-Kostic, Yugoslav Ch, Zagreb 1946; White has an active bishop-pair on a wide-open board.

\(7 \_g2 \_e7\)

Over the years, other moves have fallen by the wayside:

a) 7...\_g4 8 \_e3 cxd4 (8...c4 9 \_d5) 9 \_xd4 \_b4 10 0-0 0-0 11 \_c1 \_e8 (Taimanov-Baumbach, European Team Ch, Kapfenberg 1970) and now a direct path to advantage is 12 h3 \_h5 13 g4 \_g6 14 \_b3 ±.

b) The g3 variation’s ‘founding game’ continued 7...cxd4 8 \_xd4 \_b6 9 \_xc6! (a standard resolution of the pawn-centre which works when White is ahead in development) 9...bxc6 10 0-0 \_e7 11 \_d4?! (11 e4! dx4 12 \_e3! ± is best, since 12...\_xb7 13 \_d4 \_a3 14 \_xe4 0-0 15 \_xf6+ \_xf6 16 \_xf6 \_xf6 17 \_xc6 leaves Black’s pawn-structure in poor standing) 11...\_b5 12 \_e3 0-0 13 \_c1 \_g4 14 f3 (14 \_e1) 14...\_e6 15 \_c5 \_f8 16 \_f2 \_d7 17 \_xe7 \_xe7 18 \_d4 ± Rubinstein-Salwe, Lodz 1908.

\(8 0-0 (D)\)
8...0-0

a) 8...c4? 9 Qe5 0-0 10 Qf4! with the idea 10...Qe6 11 Qxc4! Qxc4 12 d5 Qxd5 13 Qxd5 and it's hard for Black to hold on to his pawns without making concessions; e.g., 13...Qxd5 14 Qxd5 Qa5?! (14...Qf6 15 Qc1 Qxb2 16 Qxc4 Qc8 17 e4) 15 e4! Qf6 16 Qe2 ±.

b) Once again, 8...cx4 is premature due to 9 Qxd4 0-0 10 Qb3! Qe6 11 Qg5 (or 11 Qe3) 11...Qe8 12 Qc1 ± (Keilhack).

c) 8...Qg4 9 Qe5! Qxd4 10 Qxg4 Qxg4 (10...Qxc3 11 Qxf6+ Qxf6 12 Qxc3 0-0 13 Qbl ± Petersons-Arrosoimov, Latvian Ch, Riga 1970) 11 Qxd4 0-0 12 e3 Qf6 13 Qxe7+ Qxe7 14 e4 Qxd8 15 Qc3 Qd7 16 Qb3 ± Vogt-Baumbach, East German Ch, Frankfurt Oder 1977.

d) 8...Qe6 commits the bishop before Black has to do so. White can play 9 Qxc5, and then:

d1) 9...d4 10 Qb5 (10 Qa4 0-0 11 b4!) 10...Qxc5 11 b4! a6 (11...Qxb4 12 Qxf4 Qxh4 13 Qxd4 ± Kasparov) 12 Qc7+ Qxc7 13 Qxc7 Qb8 14 Qc4 Qa5 15 Qd6 ± Zhukovitsky-Pavlenko, Rostov-na-Donu 1969.

d2) 9...Qxc5 10 Qa4 (after 10 Qg5, 10...0-0 transposes to Section 2.1, while 10...Qe7 11 Qd4 is also undesirable for Black) 10...Qe7 11 Qe3 0-0 12 Qc1 (12 Qc5 Qe4 13 Qxe6 Qxe6 14 Qd4 ± Alekhine-Muffang, Paris 1923) 12...Qe4 13 Qd4 Qxd4 14 Qxd4 Qd7 15 f3! Qf6 16 Qc5 Qxc5 17 Qxc5 ±.

9 Qg5 (D)

The key position of the main-line Tarrasch Defence. Black has three important moves here, leading to very distinct types of positions:

2.1: 9...Qe6 30

2.2: 9...c4 32

2.3: 9...Qxd4 36

2.1)

9...Qe6

White has to play very accurately to gain any meaningful advantage against this simple developing move.

10 Qxc5 (D)

10...Qxc5

Black used to play numerous alternatives at this point, but several lose a pawn and others are positional concessions, so I'll just show three:

a) 10...Qc8 postpones recapture until White commits. The most effective answer is 11 Qc1!! h6 (11...Qxc5 12 Qxf6 Qxf6 13 Qxd5 Qxd5 14 Qxd5 ±) 12 Qxf6 Qxf6 13 Qc1 (13 Qa4 b6!?) 13...Qa5 14 Qd3 ±.

b) 10...h6 11 Qe3 Qg4 12 Qd4 Qxd4 13 Qxd4 Qxc5 14 Qb3 Qd6 15 Qxd5 Qe5 (Orlov-Mayka, Chicago 1994) 16 Qc5! Qb8 17 e4 Qf6 18 Qb3 ± (Grivas).

c) 10...d4 11 Qxf6 Qxf6 12 Qd4 Qe7 13 Qc1 (13 Qd2 Qf5 14 Qc1! Qg6 15 Qd3 gives...
White the ideal blockader; in De Jong-Schenkeveld, Hoogeveen 2006, Black got his pawn back after 15...f5 16 d6 xd6 17 cxd6 wxd6 18 aac1, but at the cost of weaknesses and superbly-placed enemy pieces) 13...f5 14 ed2 (14 d6 xd6 15 cxd6 wxd6 16 a4 ±) 14...f6 15 e1 a5 16 a4 g5 17 ed1 ± (Grivas).

11 xf6!
Beginning a forced sequence which leads to an enduring positional advantage.

11...wxf6 12 xd5 xb2 13 le7 db8 13...ac8?! 14 lxe6 fxe6 15 bl! (15 g5?!)
15...xa2 16 lb7 is quite strong.

14 cl! xc1 15 axel (D)

This is a fascinating ending that has arisen scores of times over the years. After capturing on e6, White will exert pressure upon Black’s weak pawns, but whether that translates into a win depends upon the circumstances. Why Black wants to suffer in this way is another matter.

15...e7
The alternatives all have similar positional problems; for example:

a) 15...b4 16 xe6 fxe6 17 c4 ± (Grivas).

b) 15...a3 16 xe6 fxe6 17 c4 (17 c3 b4?! 18 b3 a5 19 a3 a4, Gregorz-Gabbara, Chicago 1995, and White’s pieces will outweigh the rooks following 20 xb4 xb4 21 axb4 17 d6. Here Black’s pawns are vulnerable; for example, 18 g5!? (18 bl!) 18...h6 19 xc6 xc6 20 xc6 bxc6 21 xe6 (21 e4!!) 21...e8 22 d4 ±.

c) 15...b6 16 xe6 fxe6 17 c4 (D).

This rook-lift has become routine: White covers d4 and b4 versus knight intrusions, and can transfer the rook to e4 to put pressure on e6. The move also serves to free the b1-rook to double or go to b1. Notice that both bishops are unsupported by a counterpart, so they are more effective attackers. In this case White’s bishop has targets on c6 and e6: 17...h6 (17...f6 18 g5 h6 19 de4 f5 20 h3 e5 21 e3 ± Banas-Starke, Germany (team event) 1998/9; 17...d6 18 g5 f5 19 de4 ± 18 e4 fxe8 19 e3 d6 20 h4 d8 21 bl b6 22 f1! ± Lein-Farago, USSR-Hungary match, Moscow 1971.

d) 15...b6 16 xe6 fxe6 17 e3!? (this restricts Black’s bishop and knight; the alternative is 17 h3 fxe8 18 xd1 ± Grivas) 17...h6 18 c4?! d6 19 e4 (D).

Basically, Black is going to be tied to defence regardless of the specifics, so I’ll limit the material: 19...f5 (19...fd8 20 h3 f7 21 g2 g5?! 22 g4 f6 23 h1 bl b4?! 24 h4 g8 25...
h\textsubscript{xg5}+ \textsubscript{hxg5} 26 \textsubscript{h7} and White wins, V.Milov-Farina, Porto San Giorgio 1996; 19...\textsubscript{b4} 20 \textsubscript{e5}! \textsubscript{xa2} 21 \textsubscript{a4} \textsubscript{c3} 22 \textsubscript{xa7} \pm A.Petrosian-Espig, Erevan 1982) 20 \textsubscript{h4} \textsubscript{f7}. In the game Khuzman-Stripunsky, Simferopol 1990, White slowly gained the upper hand: 21 \textsubscript{b1}!? \textsubscript{f5}?! 22 \textsubscript{f1}! \textsubscript{f6} 23 \textsubscript{g2} \textsubscript{d1} 24 \textsubscript{xd1} \textsubscript{xd1} 25 \textsubscript{b5} \textsubscript{d6} 26 \textsubscript{h5} \textsubscript{e7}?! 27 \textsubscript{h4}! \textsubscript{d8} 28 \textsubscript{g6} ±.

16 \textsubscript{xe6} \textsubscript{fxe6} 17 \textsubscript{c4}

Once again we have the basic imbalance. It's remarkable how often White's minor advantages suffice to win.

17...\textsubscript{f6}

Now 18 \textsubscript{b1} has been played many times, while after 18 \textsubscript{h4}, Raetsky-Sedlacek, Schwäbisch Gmünd 2002 continued 18...\textsubscript{d5} 19 \textsubscript{b1} \textsubscript{fd8} 20 \textsubscript{h2} \textsubscript{d7} 21 \textsubscript{a4} \textsubscript{h6} 22 \textsubscript{e3} \textsubscript{f7} 23 \textsubscript{h3} \textsubscript{g6}?! (this creates weaknesses) 24 \textsubscript{bc1} \textsubscript{a5} 25 \textsubscript{c2} \textsubscript{ad5}?! 26 \textsubscript{h2}! \textsubscript{a5} 27 \textsubscript{xc6}! \textsubscript{bxc6} 28 \textsubscript{g4} ±. White threatens \textsubscript{xh6}+ and \textsubscript{f4}.

2.2)

9...\textsubscript{c4} (D)

This is a respectable move which, however, has traditionally been of secondary importance. Over the past decade or so, the standing of Black's position has steadily improved, and today it is arguably as important as the main lines with 9...\textsubscript{xd4} (although you will see it in your games far less often). Versus good play, White shouldn't expect more than a modest advantage, if indeed any at all, but the positions are full of content and most of the time Black has to tread more carefully than his opponent. To complicate matters, this 9...\textsubscript{c4} variation has become quite theoretical and requires me to present some dense technical material. That is something I generally try to avoid in this book. If you simply want to get a feel for the play, I'd start out by trolling around for interesting ideas, and then learn as many specifics as seem necessary to play comfortably.

10 \textsubscript{e5} \textsubscript{e6} (D)

Pretty much forced, to protect d5.

11 \textsubscript{b3}

I like this move; still, it leads to forced sequences in some lines, so you shouldn't be shy about looking at slower moves, such as 11 \textsubscript{e3}. 11 \textsubscript{xc6} \textsubscript{bxc6} 12 \textsubscript{b3} often transposes, but the immediate 11 \textsubscript{b3} bypasses certain branches and issues.

11...\textsubscript{wa5}

The alternatives are instructive and will introduce you to some key ideas:

a) 11...\textsubscript{xb3} 12 \textsubscript{xc6} \textsubscript{bxc6} 13 \textsubscript{axb3} (D).

11 \textsubscript{b3}

I like this move; still, it leads to forced sequences in some lines, so you shouldn't be shy about looking at slower moves, such as 11 \textsubscript{e3}. 11 \textsubscript{xc6} \textsubscript{bxc6} 12 \textsubscript{b3} often transposes, but the immediate 11 \textsubscript{b3} bypasses certain branches and issues.

11...\textsubscript{wa5}

The alternatives are instructive and will introduce you to some key ideas:

a) 11...\textsubscript{xb3} 12 \textsubscript{xc6} \textsubscript{bxc6} 13 \textsubscript{axb3} (D).
White aims for simple ideas such as the occupation of c5 by a knight supported by a rook or queen on the c-file. For example:

a1) 13...h6 14...xf6 hxg5 15...a4 and now 15...b8 16...c5 d7!? 17...c2 g4 18 e3 ± Alburt-Vooremaa, USSR Team Ch, Riga 1975, or 15...f5 16...d2...d6 17...c5 ± P.Nielsen-Rogers, Turin Olympiad 2006.

a2) 13...g4 14...c2...b6 15...e3...a8 16...f1...c8 17...a4...d8 18...c5 with a fine game for White, Vilela-Rica rdi, Havana 1986.

a3) 13...a5! 14...xf6!? (14...a4! is slightly better for White) 14...g4 15...f4...f5 16...c2...d6 17...c5 ±

b) 11...c8 is perhaps more interesting than has previously been thought: 12...xc6...c6 14...a5 15...e4!? 13...d4! (theory has always cited 13...a5 14...xc6...c6 15...d4...d8 16...b7 ±, as played, for instance, in Harika-Halkias, Kavala 2009) 14...xc6...c5! (but computer engines notice things like this) 15...f4 g5 (D) and now:

b1) 16...g5...e5 17...f4...e2+ (17...h5 18...c7 and the knight on d4 will fall) 18...e2...xd1 19...xd1...e4 20...e7...a2 21...h6...h4!? (21...c8 22...c7...b8 23...c5) 22...xf8...xf8 23...c7...f2 should be drawn.

b2) 16...e3 is probably a better choice. Then 16...e2+ 17...e2...e5 18 f4...f4 19...g4...g4 20...f2...h5 isn’t very clear, but it appears as though 21...h3!...f5 22...d1...d3 23...f3...f5 24...h1 with the idea...g1+ favours White; this may be the best he can do.

c) As I was nearing the end of this project, a new book by Aagaard and Ntirlis arrived which promotes 9...c4 in the Tarrasch. At this point it recommends 11...h6, to which it devotes 39 small-print pages of analysis! Let me hit upon some of the key issues. Play goes 12...xc6...xc6 13...xf6 (13...f4 is a sensible alternative; without going into too many details, the most interesting line to me is 13...xb3 14...xb3...d7 15...a4...e8 16...b2...f5 17...d3...b7 18...c2 a5 19...e1...e6 20...d1, which is more or less equal, but less forcing) 13...xf6 14...xc4...c4 15...e3 (D), and now:

B

cl) 15...c5!? is too early due to 16...e4...d4 17...xf6+...xf6 (17...gxf6 18...d4 with a positional advantage; e.g., 18...d5 19...g4+...h8 20...h5...g2 21...g2...xd4 22...e1...e8 23...ad1...b6 24...h6+...g8 25...f4 ±) 18...xa8...xa8 19...xd4...xd4 20...xd4...d8 21...f1 (21...f1!...f5! and...d3) 21...xd4 22...ad1...xd1 23...xd1 c3 24...c1...xa2 25...xc3 and the a-pawn falls.

c2) 15...a5 is correct, when even to make a brief recap, I’ll need one more division:

c21) 16...c2...c5! (this is the exchange sacrifice which the authors recognized would save Black; the computer actually recommended 16...c5 instantly, but it seemed to me, wrongly, that White was going to have a permanent nagging advantage, so I analysed 16...a8!?!) 17...xa8...xd4 18...d5 (18...d4...d4 19...e4...xc3 20...a1...f6 21...fd1 c3 is the key to this line, fully equal as long as Black plays accurately) 18...xd5 19...xd5...xd5, and a
snippet of their analysis is 20 exd4 ...xd4 21 
\[ \text{c22} \]\[ \text{16} \text{c1} \text{c8} 17 \text{wa4} (\text{while it probably}
\text{doesn't change the assessment, 17 wc2 c7 18}
\text{c2 might generate more of an imbalance; then}
\text{18...c5? is poor due to 19 d5) 17...xa4 18}
\text{xa4 c7 19 db2 a3 20 ec2 xb2 21 xb2}
\text{c7 reaches a position to which Aagaard and}
\text{Ntirlis devote seven pages of analysis! I've gone}
\text{over a good deal of it with the help of an analyti­}
\text{cal engine and I'd say the authors have done a}
\text{thorough and impartial job of arguing for equal­}
\text{ity. However, the resulting positions require con­}
\text{siderable accuracy from Black. He has to make}
\text{many good decisions to get to one drawish posi­}
\text{tion, including two ridiculously subtle moves}
\text{(they describe one as "the deepest move in the}
\text{book", and it was not even discovered by the au­}
\text{thors themselves!). The more general difficulties}
\text{faced by Black are indicated by the only test I've}
\text{seen of this line, a recent game by Aagaard him­}
\text{self in which Black was slowly outplayed: 22}
\text{c1 g5!? 23 d2 d8 24 h3 (or 24 f4 ±)}
\text{24...g7 25 g4 h5 26 gxh5 \text{f6} 27 f3 f5 28}
\text{h2 f4!? 29 e4! cd7 30 g4 xg4 31 hxg4}
\text{xd4 32 d2 ± (or 32 xd4 xd4 33 e5!) 32...d2? (32...xe4 ±)}
\text{33 xd2 xd2 34 g2}
\text{d4 35 e5 ± A.Rasmussen-Aagaard, Danish Ch,}
\text{Elsinore 2012. That's only one game, but it's}
\text{safe to say that, regardless of the ultimate theo­}
\text{retical verdict after 11...h6, you can deviate at}
\text{many points with alternate moves which will at}
\text{the very least pose practical difficulties and force}
\text{Black to think on his own.}

We now return to 11...wa5 (D):

12 wd2

The books had been rather kind to Black in
\text{this position until recently, when Lars Schand­}
\text{orff advocated the white side in his Queen's}
\text{Gambit book. Still, 12 \text{d2 is a reasonable al­}
\text{ternative; for example, 12...b4 (12...wb6 13}
\text{xc4 wd4 14 cxd5 ±) 13 xc6 cxb6 14 wc2}
\text{cxb3 15 axb3 wb6 16 e3 ± (Scherbakov).}

12 xc6 is also important. Then 13 a4 is a main line, when 13...ab8 14 wc2
\text{wc8 is considered equal. And 13 \text{d2 either}
\text{transposes into or resembles 12 \text{d2 lines. 13}
\text{wc2! (D) is the best follow-up to the knight}
\text{exchange, and I think produces a small but mean­}
\text{ingful advantage.}

\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}

\text{There has been a lot of practical experience}
\text{from this position, and the following non-ex­}
\text{haustive excerpts illustrate many of the major}
\text{themes of this variation:}
\begin{enumerate}
\item a) 13...h6 14 xf6 xf6 15 e3 ac8 16
\text{bxc4 dxc4 17 ab1 ±.}
\item b) 13...ad8 14 ac1 h6 15 xf6 xf6 16
e3 cxb3 17 axb3 ab8 18 a4 ±.
\item c) 13...ab8 14 bxc4 dxc4 15 de4 and
\text{Black's pawn-structure will be further dam­}
\text{aged.}
\item d) 13...ac8 14 bxc4 dxc4 15 de4 \text{wd8}
\text{(Zayats-Kovalevskaya, Russian Women's Ch,}
\text{Taganrog 2011) and now 16 xf6 xf6 17 e3}
\text{looks like the best way to stop counterplay and}
\text{secure the advantage.}
\item e) 13...fd8 is one of the better choices,
\text{when 14 f1 ac8 15 bxc4 dxc4 doesn't}
\text{seem to give White much. I'd recommend the}
\text{careful 14 e3 ac8 15 bxc4 dxc4 16 de4 c5}
\text{(16...f5 17 ab1 has the idea 17...c5 18 bb5}
TARRASCH DEFENCE 35

with an edge) 17 \( \text{xf6 gxf6} \) (17...\( \text{xf6} \) 18 d5 \( \text{xd5} \) 19 \( \text{xf6} + \text{gxf6} \) 20 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 21 \( \text{wc4} \) \( \text{cd8} \) 22 \( \text{ab1} \) with a modest advantage based upon Black's kingside structure) 18 d5! \( \text{xd5} \) 19 \( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 20 \( \text{xc3!} \) \( \text{g7} \) 21 \( \text{d5} \) and White is only slightly better, but the position has plenty of content.

f) 13...\( \text{b4} \) is like the main text, but with no pin: 14 \( \text{d2!?} \) (or 14 \( \text{fcl} \) \( \text{a3} \) 15 \( \text{cb1} \)) 14...\( \text{xb3} \) (14 ... c5 15 a3 \( \text{xc6} \) 17 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{wc7} \) 18 dxc5 \( \pm \)) 15 axb3 \( \text{wb6} \) 16 e3 \( \text{xc3} \) 17 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xc8} \) (Dorfman-Lputian, European Clubs Cup, CSKA-Trud 1986) and here 18 \( \text{a3} \) secures a meaningful advantage.

We now return to 12 \( \text{wd2} \) (D):

12...\( \text{ad8} \)

12...\( \text{b4} \) 13 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) is an important position which top players have tested that can also arise via 11 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 12 b3 \( \text{wa5} \) 13 \( \text{wd2} \) \( \text{b4} \) 14 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \). Play can continue

15 \( \text{fc1} \), when Black has:

a) 15...\( \text{a3} \) 16 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{f5} \) 17 e4 with a nice edge, based upon 17...\( \text{dxe4} \) 18 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 19 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{wd2} \) 20 \( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 21 axb3 \( \text{b4} \) 22 \( \text{d4} \) \( \pm \).

b) 15...\( \text{ac8} \) 16 bxc4 \( \text{dxc4} \) 17 a3 \( \text{e7} \) (after 17...\( \text{xc3} \), both 18 \( \text{wc3} \) and 18 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{fd8} \) 19 e3?! c5 20 d5 \( \text{xd5} \) 21 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 22 \( \text{wc2} \), as in Kotsev-Namir, Ha Long City 2009, give White a slight advantage) 18 e3, and although Black's position is tough to crack, he does have six isolated pawns, four of them doubled, and I suspect that the great majority of players would take White if given the choice!

c) 15...\( \text{ad8} \) 16 bxc4 (or 16 a3 \( \text{xc3} \) 17 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 18 \( \text{xc3} \) with a small but definite advantage) 16...\( \text{dxc4} \) 17 e3 c5 18 d5 \( \text{xc3} \) 19 \( \text{xc3} \) (or 19 \( \text{wc3} \) \( \pm \)) 19...\( \text{xd5} \) 20 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 21 \( \text{c2} \) \( \pm \) Gelfand-Grischuk, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2004.

13 \( \text{xc6} \)

13 bxc4 \( \text{xd4} \)! is supposed to be good, although 14 cxd5 \( \text{wc3} \? 15 \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xe2} \) 16 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 17 dxe6 fxe6 18 \( \text{xb7} \) still results in an interesting enough position with the bishop-pair.

13...\( \text{bxc6} \) 14 \( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{b4} \) (D)

The toughest move. 14...\( \text{wa6} \) 15 \( \text{a4} \) \( \pm \) has the nice idea 15...\( \text{wb5} \) 16 \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{xb3} \) (16...\( \text{fe8} \) 17 \( \text{dc5} \) 17 axb3 \( \text{xb3} \) 18 \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 19 \( \text{xc5} \) and after Black's pawns are doubled on f6, White gets distinctly the better game.

15 \( \text{ad1} \)

15 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \) 16 \( \text{dc1} \) \( \text{a3} \) 17 \( \text{e2} \) 18 c5 19 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xc4} \) and now 20 \( \text{wc3} \) gave White a slim advantage in Loginov-Evseev, St Petersburg 2002, but 20 \( \text{d1} \) looks more effective; e.g., 20...\( \text{b4} \) 21 \( \text{wc3} \) \( \text{fe8} \) 22 \( \text{db1} \) 15 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{bc4} \) \( \text{f4} \) 24 \( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{wb5} \) 25 \( \text{dc1} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 26 \( \text{wd2} \) \( \pm \), again because of Black's many weak pawns and mediocre bishop.

15...\( \text{c5} \)

Because of what follows, Schandorff thinks that Black should try 15...\( \text{a3} \), when he continues 16 \( \text{c2} \) 17 e4 (D).

He writes, "Black cannot play 17...\( \text{g6} \) 18 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 19 \( \text{xf6} + \text{gxf6} \) 20 \( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 21 \( \text{e3} \) \( \pm \). So it appears that Black must try 17...\( \text{dxe4} \) 18 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \), when there's way too much to look at, but one line is 19 \( \text{wb3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 20 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \)! (20...\( \text{g6} \) 21 \( \text{xb7} \) hxg6 22 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{fe8} \) 23 \( \text{f3} \) \( \pm \) 21 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 22 \( \text{e1} \)!?
A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPertoire FOR WHITE

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My overall impression is that White can achieve the better game by a number of routes after 11...\textit{a}5, although in some cases his advantages are limited. Now you might want to go back and investigate the 11...h6 lines! Even if that achieves theoretical equality, there are various ways to make it a normal game in which the better player that day may prevail.

2.3)

9...\textit{cxd}4 10 \textit{\textd}xd4 h6

This move is necessary to activate Black's pieces without constantly having to worry about $\textit{xf}6$.

a) For that reason, 10...\textit{e}8 is rarely seen: 11 \textit{\textw}a4 (11 \textit{\textc}1! is natural and correct) 11...\textit{d}7 12 \textit{\texta}ad1 h6 13 \textit{\textf}4?! (13 \textit{\texte}3 is one of the Tarrasch main lines) 13...\textit{c}5! 14 \textit{\textd}xc6 bxc6 15 e4 (Flear-J. Cooper, British Ch, Blackpool 1988) 15...\textit{c}8 is equal.

b) After 10...\textit{e}6, 11 \textit{\textc}1 is good, but 11 \textit{\textd}xe6 fxe6 12 \textit{\textb}3 with the idea \textit{h}3 also gives White some advantage. In general, if Black can simply defend the e-pawn with a rook on e8, this type of position has a better chance of working out for him; otherwise, it will be difficult.

11 \textit{\texte}3 (\textit{D})

11...\textit{e}8

This is the main move, but there is at least one important alternative, and several other instructive ones:

a) 11...\textit{g}4? is met by 12 \textit{\textd}xd5 \textit{\texte}3 13 \textit{\textd}xc6 bxc6 14 \textit{\textd}xe3.

b) 11...\textit{e}5 12 \textit{\textw}b3! \textit{\textc}4 13 \textit{\textf}4! (13 \textit{\textd}xd5 \textit{\textd}xd5 14 \textit{\textw}c4 \textit{\textd}xe3 15 fxe3 \textit{\textf}6 $\pm$)
13...\(\text{Ka5}\) 14 \(\text{Wc2}\) with a meaningful advantage based upon bringing a rook to d1 and/or \(\text{f}5\).

c) 11...\(\text{Ke6}\) is playable, but a little passive:
12 \(\text{Cc1} \ \text{Wd7}\) (12...\(\text{g4}\) 13 \(\text{f4}\) g5 14 \(\text{Exe6}\) fx6 15 \(\text{Kd2} \ \text{Cce5}\) 16 e3 \(\pm\) Smejkal-Ljubojević, Milan 1975) 13 \(\text{Cxc6}\) (13 \(\text{Exe6 fx6}\) 14 \(\text{h3}\) \(\pm\) with the idea \(\text{Db5-d4}\) ) 13...\(\text{bx6}\) 14 \(\text{C4}\). This is actually a subvariant of one of the known Tarrasch lines which is considered to be favourable to White because his control over c5 isn't counteracted by any activity from Black.

d) 11...\(\text{g4}\) is a very important variation which is considered equal by some and is a close competitor to 11...\(\text{Ke8}\). I think that 12 \(\text{Wd4}\) (D) is White’s most effective continuation.

Now the play becomes concrete:

d1) 12...\(\text{Ka5}\) 13 \(\text{Cxd4} \ \text{Cc4}\) 14 \(\text{Cc1} \ \text{Db6}\) (14...\(\text{Wc8}\) 15 \(\text{Wb5}\)! \(\text{Db6}\) 16 \(\text{Kf4!}\) \(\text{Dd8}\) 17 \(\text{Cc1} \ \text{Wd7}\) 18 \(\text{Exd7} \ \text{Exd7}\) 19 f3 \(\text{Ke6}, \ \text{Kasparov-Palatnik, Moscow 1981}\); White has a significant advantage, and one good course was 20 \(\text{Cxe6}\) fx6 21 \(\text{h3}\) f7 22 \(\text{C5}\) with the idea \(\text{C7 or d4}\) ) 15 \(\text{b3}\) (I think this is slightly better than 15 \(\text{Wb5}\) ) 15...\(\text{Wd7}\) (15...\(\text{Cc8}\) 16 \(\text{Cf4} \ \text{Wd7}\) 17 \(\text{Ke5} \ \text{Cc5}\) 18 \(\text{Cf3}\) with the idea \(\text{d4}\); Black's pieces are awkwardly placed) 16 \(\text{Ke3} \ \text{h3}\) ?! (16...\(\text{Cc5}\) 17 \(\text{Ed6}\) ! fx6 18 \(\text{Cxc5} \ \text{Cc8}\) 19 \(\text{C4}\) \(\pm\); 16...\(\text{Cac8}\) ? 17 \(\text{Db5}\) ) 17 \(\text{Exh3} \ \text{Cbx3}\) 18 \(\text{Cf6}\) \(\text{Cbx6}\) 19 \(\text{Cxb6}\) axb6 (19...\(\text{Cxb6}\) 20 \(\text{Cxb6}\) axb6 21 a3 \(\text{Fd8}\) 22 \(\text{C3}\) \(\pm\) 20 \(\text{Cxd4} \ \text{Wc8}\) 21 e3 \(\text{C5}\) 22 \(\text{Cde2}\) .

d2) 12...\(\text{Wd7}\) 13 \(\text{Exd5}\)! (the best capture, for concrete reasons) 13...\(\text{Cxd4}\) 14 \(\text{Wxd4} \ \text{Cf8}\) (14...\(\text{Cxd5}\) 15 \(\text{Cxd5}\) might transpose, and White can also play 15 \(\text{Wxd5}\) \(\pm\) 15 \(\text{Cf1} \ \text{Cxd5}\) and now:

16 \(\text{Wxd5} \ \text{Cc8}\) has been assessed as unclear. I suspect that White can maintain a decent advantage after 17 \(\text{Kf3}\), a few sample ideas being 17...\(\text{C8}\) (17...\(\text{Exd1+}\) 18 \(\text{Exd1} \ \text{Cc4}\) 19 \(\text{f4}\) ) 18 \(\text{C4}\) (18 \(\text{Ed5}\) \(\pm\) ) 18...\(\text{Cf6}\) 19 \(\text{Kf4}\) 19...\(\text{C4}\) ! (not 19...\(\text{Cxb2}\) ? 20 \(\text{C6}\) ) 20 \(\text{C2}\) \(\text{C6}\) (20...\(\text{a6}\) 21 \(\text{C3}\) \(\text{C6}\) 22 \(\text{C3}\) ) 21 \(\text{C3}\) with the idea 21...\(\text{Cf6}\) 22 \(\text{C4}\).

d21) 16 \(\text{Cxd5}\) \(\text{C6}\) 17 \(\text{Cf7+} \ \text{Cf7}\) 18 \(\text{Wd4}\) \(\text{Exd1+}\) (18...\(\text{b6}\) 19 \(\text{b3}\) ) 19 \(\text{Exd1}\) \(\text{Cc8}\) 20 \(\text{Cc1}\), Bodiroga-Jovančić, Pančevo 2005. White has a pawn-up ending with opposite-coloured bishops; probably not enough to win against accurate defence, but nevertheless giving chances in a real game.

12 \(\text{Cc1} \ \text{Cc4}\) (D)

This is the traditional main line of the Tarrasch Defence, played in thousands of games. I'm going to propose two little-played ideas, beginning with:

2.31: 13 \(\text{Wb3}\) 37

2.32: 13 \(\text{a3}\) 39

2.31)

13 \(\text{Wb3}\) \(\text{a5}\)

13...\(\text{Cc5}\) ! defends d5, but it's all held together with string. Play can continue 14 \(\text{Cfd1}\) (14 \(\text{a3}\) ? is also interesting, with the idea of 14...\(\text{Cxd5}\) 15 \(\text{a2}\) followed by \(\text{f1}\) – Black seems to be at a loss for a plan) 14...\(\text{C5}\) (14...\(\text{a6}\) 15 \(\text{Cc2}\) ? \(\text{C5}\) 16 \(\text{Cc6}\) \(\pm\)) 15 \(\text{C2}\). Black has to meet the threat of \(\text{f4}\), and 15...\(\text{g5}\) 16 \(\text{Cdb5}\) \(\text{C6}\) (16...\(\text{a6}\) ? 17 \(\text{C4}\) \(\text{Cc6}\) 18 \(\text{Cxf6}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 19
\( \text{Qxd5 axb5 and now 20 Qc7 wins, or the more exotic 20 \text{Wc7!} 17 \text{Wd2! a6 18 Qd4 Qg4 (18...Qa5 19 b3 \pm 19 Qxc6 bxc6 20 Qd4 \text{e8} 21 Qa4 Qb7 22 Qc3 Qd6 23 e4!)}; Black's position is crumbling.} \\
\text{14 Qb5! (D) This is a very unusual idea which, however, has scored six wins versus only two draws and a loss in my database. It's a simple and not too ambitious idea to keep more direct pressure on the d-pawn than the normal 14 Qc2, as well as staying off the open c-file.} \\

14...a6! \\
White is attacking d5 three times, which limits Black's choices:  

a) 14...Qc4? allows the lengthy forcing sequence 15 Qd5! Qxe3 (15...Qd5 16 Wxc4 Qxe3 17 fxe3 Qe7 18 Qc3) 16 fxe3 Qe5 (or 16...Qxe3 17 Qxe3 Qxd4 18 Qc3 a6 19 Qd3 Qa7 20 Qxf6) 17 Qxf6+ Qxf6 18 Qb3 Qc5 (18...Qb6?! 19 Wxb6 axb6 20 Qf2 Qg4 21 a3 \pm) 19 Qf4! Qe7 20 Qc3 Qe6 21 Qxe6 fxe6 22 Qg4+ Qf7 23 Qxc4 Qb6 24 Qc2 Qxe3 25 Qxe3 Qxe3+ 26 Qh1 \pm.  

b) 14...Qe6 15 b4 Qc4 16 Qxe6 fxe6 17 Qd4 (with the idea e4) 17...Qd6 18 Qd3 \pm.  

c) 14...Qd7 15 Qd3 Qg4 16 h3 Qh5 17 g4 Qg6 18 Qf5 Qc4 19 Qxd5 Qxd5 20 Qxd5 Qxe3 21 Qxe3 Qf6 \pm.  

15 Qd3 (D) This is the point of 14 Wb5. Now White has control over f5 and intends straightforward moves such as Qfd1 and Qb3. 

15...Qe6!  

15...b5 16 b3 Qe6 is rather passive: 17 Qfd1 Qc8 18 Qc2!? (18 Qxe6! fxe6 19 Qg6) 18...Qe7 19 Qd4 Qd7 20 Qe3 and the d-pawn soon falls for only minor compensation, Knott-Poulton, British League (4NCL) 2001/2. 

16 Qxe6!? 

This causes Black some problems and wins the bishop-pair. Tarrasch players are generally tolerant of this exchange because they acquire a 2-1 central majority; here it's not so easy. 

Other tries:  

a) 16 h3 Qc4 (16...Qc8 is roughly equal) 17 Qxe6! (17 Qd5? Qxd5 18 Qxc4 Qxc4 19 Qxc4 Qd7! 20 Qb3 Qe4 \mp K.Wang-A.Marshall, Virginia Beach 2008) 17...fxe6 18 Qd4 \pm with the idea 18...Qxb2 19 Qf3 e5 20 Qxd5 exd4 21 Qxf6+ Qxf6 22 Qb3+ Qh8 23 Qxb2 \pm.  

b) 16 b3 Qg4 17 Qf4 Qc6 18 Qa4 Qge5 19 Qd2 \pm.  

c) 16 Qf4 puts stress upon the black position, with Qa4 and Qfd1 coming: 16...Qd6 (16...Qc6! is playable although after 17 Qfd1 or 17 Qxe6 fxe6 18 Qfd1 Qc8 19 Qg6, White enjoys the better prospects) 17 Qxd6 Qxd6 18 Qxe6 fxe6 19 e4 d4 (19...Qc6 20 exd5 Qad8 21 Qe1) 20 f4! and White is for choice, particularly in view of 20...e5?! 21 Qd5!.  

16...fxe6 (D) White has nothing concrete, but Black has a few long-term worries because of the bishops. Now:  

a) 17 Qg6 is possible, although Black stands solidly enough after 17...Qc6 18 Qfd1 Qe5 19 Qb1 \pm.  

b) 17 Qa4 and then:  

b1) 17...Qc8 (probably slightly obliging) 18 Qxc8 Qxc8 19 Qc1 Qd8 20 Qc5 (20 f4 Qd4 21 Qd4 b5 22 b3) 20...Qxc5 21 Qxc5 Qc6 22 f4 \pm.
b2) After 17...c4!, best play appears to be
18 d4 e5 19 c5 e4 20 d4 b5 21 xf8 bxa4
22 b4 d7 23 c3.

As a whole, White is only able to put Black under a moderate amount of pressure in these lines; on the other hand, he gets the normal ‘white’ advantage with no risk.

2.32)

13 a3 (D)

Karpov seems to have introduced this move into tournament play. 13 a3 has never caught on at any level, primarily due to a few games between strong players in which Black didn’t have too many problems to cope with. It is one of those high-class waiting moves that appears to do little, but makes a few modest improvements without allowing the opponent anything concrete to latch onto. First, it prevents ...b4, a move which appears in several of the main lines and is relevant should White play c2.

Next, it creates an escape-hatch, so that if it were White’s move, he could play 14 b3! a5 15 a2 and keep attacking the d-pawn, answering 15...e6 with 16 cb5, for example. That’s a threat which has to be dealt with, but more importantly, White strengthens his grip on the dark squares, which is the issue in so many of the main lines of the Tarrasch. For example, in lines with xc6 bxc6, White can now play b4 to cement control over the c5-square, and the move ...a5 doesn’t attack the a-pawn as it sometimes does. Even taking those advantages into account, 13 a3 is hardly an intimidating or aggressive move, so in a sense it’s a real test of the nature of the Tarrasch Defence. That is to say: what exactly is Black doing in this opening (or in the main line, anyway)? I think you’ll find that, like many reputedly active defences, it’s White’s provocation that permits Black’s activity.

13...g4

Played in over 80% of the games, but naturally there are alternatives:

a) 13...e5? allows White to pursue the threat I mentioned: 14 b3! e6 15 d4! d7?! 16 xe6 fxe6 17 d4 and White is already winning; e.g., 17...f7 (17...d6 18 e4!) 18 xf6!? (18 e4! is even better; e.g., 18...e5 19 xd4 exd4 20 c7 e6 21 h3! xh3 22 xf6+ h8 23 xf7) 18...gxf6 19 e4 d4 20 b5 ec8 20...ac8 21 xc8 xc8 22 xd4 ± 21 xc8 xc8 22 xd4 d8 23 f3 g5 24 g4 winning, Niessen-Gambacce, email 1997.

b) 13...a5 can be countered by 14 c2 c4 15 f4, but 14 d3 (D) is a more direct idea.
14...a6! (14...c4? 15 Qxd5 Qxd5 16 Wxc4 Qxe3 17 fxe3 is winning for White; 14...g4 15 h3 h5 16 Qf5 g6 17 g4 Qc4 18 Qd4! with the idea 18...Qxb2? 19 Wb5 ± Qxf5 20 gxf5 Qxa3 21 Qc2) 15 b4 Qc6 16 Qxc6 bxc6 17 Qa4 (or 17 Qd4 ±), and White has excellent queenside pressure; for example, 17...a5 (17...Qg4 18 Qb6 Wxe7 19 Wc3) 18 Qb6 Qa6 19 Wd2 Qb8 (19...Qxe2?! 20 Wf1 Qa6 21 Qxa8 Wxa8 22 Qc5 ±) 20 Qxa5 Qe4 21 Qd4! intending 21...Qxe2 22 Wf1 Qa6 23 Qxc6 Qxa3 24 Qd1, which threatens, among other things, Qf4 and Qxd5.

c) 13...Qe6 is rarely played. It can be argued that without the move h3 in (i.e., the interpolation of ...Qg4 and h3), there are too many lines in which White can capture the d-pawn without having to worry about ...Qxh3. In addition, ...Wd7 won't come with tempo. Of course, h3 is also useful in some ways, but that's chess for you. One example: 14 Qxc6 (14 Wb4 Wd7 15 Qfd1 is a sound alternative) 14...bxc6 15 Qd4 (this move is a fundamental idea in the Tarrasch, to prevent ...c5 and ...d4; still, 15 Qa4 is perfectly good) 15...Qh7 (the popular plan we will see below) 16 e4!? (16 Qa4! ± is the best continuation; compare the lines below) 16...dxe4 17 Qxe4 c5! 18 Qe3 Qb8 (Genov-Jakovljevic, Herceg Novi 2007) and now the best way to go into an ending is 19 Qc6 Qb3! 20 Wxd8 Qxd8 21 Qd4, which shouldn't be enough to win, but at least makes Black work.

14 h3 Qe6 (D)

Or 14...Qd7 15 Wb3! Qa5 16 Wc6 Qc6 17 b4 Qc4 18 b5! Qxe3 19 fxe3 Qd7 20 Qxd5 Qe7 21 g4 ±.

15 Qxc6

The most thematic and frequently-played move, although I don't think it's quite as good as the following two continuations:

a) 15 Qxe6! fxe6 16 f4 ± restrains Black's centre and plans a slow build-up with perhaps Qf2 and e4 to follow, counting upon the bishop-pair. Smyslov played this basic idea, but with Qh1 and Qg1.

b) 15 Qa4 Qe4!? (15...Wd7 16 Qh2 Qad8 17 Qc5 Qxc5 18 Qxc5 is mildly in White's favour, but very pleasant for him because Black has nothing to undertake; 15...Qxd4 16 Qxd4 Qe4 is also solid, though White retains a somewhat favourable IQP position after 17 Qc3 Wd7 18 Qh2 f5 19 e3 Qec8 20 f3 Qd6 21 Qf2 a6 22 Qfc2) 16 Qxe6 (16 Qxe4 Qxd4! 17 Qg2 Qf5 18 Qc5 ±, but this isn't much) 16...Qxe6 (16...fxe6? 17 Qxe4 dxe4 18 Qc3 ±) 17 Qxe4 dxe4 18 Qc3 with the idea Wb3 or Wc2. This entire line is certainly playable for Black, but not yet fully equal.

15...bxc6 16 Qd4 (D)

Karpov's idea, which you will sometimes see in other Tarrasch positions. The point is to hold down...c5.

16...Qh7

This became the quasi-official 'solution' to 13 a3 after its use by Grischuk. Black threatens...c5 and avoids the drawbacks of...Qd7 (which doesn't protect d5); he also retains the possibilities of...Qg5 or...Qf8-e6. Nevertheless, White is well-developed and should get his normal advantage by clamping down on the dark squares. In fact, there are several plausible alternatives, among them:
a) 16...\U03C8d7 17 \U03C8d3 \U03C8h7 18 \U03C8e3 (18 f4 \U03C8 covers e5 and discourages ...\U03C8g5; e4 will follow) 18...\U03C8d6 (18...\U03C8g5 19 h4 \U03C8e6 20 b4 \U03C8; 18...a5! is best) 19 \U03C8fd1 \U03C8e6 20 b4! \U03C8f8 (20...\U03C8d7 21 b5 \U03C8) 21 \U03C8a4 (D).

A pretty picture of queenside domination. Black has dawdled too much. 21...\U03C8g6 22 \U03C8c3! \U03C8d7 23 \U03C8c5 \U03C8c5 24 \U03C8xc5! \U03C8xe2 (what else?) 25 \U03C8e3 \U03C8e7 26 \U03C8f1 \U03C8e3 27 \U03C8xe3 \U03C8xe3 28 \U03C8xe3 \U03C8e8 29 \U03C8f2 \U03C8e5 30 \U03C8c5 \U03C8e7 31 e4! and White wins, Karpov-Iglesias, Leon 1993.

b) 16...\U03C8d7 17 e4 gives White a structural advantage; e.g., 17...c5 (17...dxe4 18 \U03C8xe4 \U03C8; 17...\U03C8a5? 18 exd5 cxd5 19 \U03C8xd5! \U03C8xd5 20 \U03C8c3) 18 exd5 \U03C8f5! 19 \U03C8e3 \U03C8e5 20 \U03C8e4 c4 21 \U03C8d2 \U03C8d3 22 \U03C8c2 and Black lacks compensation.

c) 16...c5! is the move 16 \U03C8d4 was supposed to discourage, but it can and has been played: 17 \U03C8xf6 \U03C8xf6 18 \U03C8xd5!? (maybe 18 \U03C8xd5 is a better try: 18...\U03C8ad8 19 \U03C8a4 \U03C8xd5 20 \U03C8xd5 \U03C8xb2 21 e4 \U03C8b8 22 \U03C8c3; this is only very slightly better for White, but at least the contrast in minor-piece activity means there should be a fight to come) 18...\U03C8xb2 19 \U03C8a4 (this position has been assessed as clearly favourable for White, as has the position after 19 \U03C8c7 \U03C8ad8 20 \U03C8e1 \U03C8e7 21 \U03C8a5, but it's not true in either case; Black no problems in the second position after 21...\U03C8wb6!) 19...\U03C8ad8 20 \U03C8f4. Both Seipel-Turicnik, email 2000 and Peto-Blanco, email 1999 reached this position and Black played 20...c4?! instead of 20...\U03C8b3!

21 \U03C8xa7 \U03C8f6 with full compensation for the pawn, if not more. White needs to solve the line with 16...c5 if he is to demonstrate an advantage from 15 \U03C8xc6.

We now return to the position after Black plays 16...\U03C8h7 (D):

17 \U03C8a4

17 e4 has been tried a few times, but 17...dxe4 18 \U03C8xe4 \U03C8d5 19 \U03C8c3 \U03C8xg2 20 \U03C8xg2 \U03C8d7 leaves White with only a nominally better endgame.

17...\U03C8d7 18 h4! \U03C8f5

Now:

a) After 19 \U03C8e1, Gelfand-Grishchuk, Biel 2001 went 19...\U03C8e4 20 \U03C8c5 (20 e3 \U03C8) 20...\U03C8xg2 21 \U03C8xg2 \U03C8e4 (White has a smaller edge after 21...\U03C8d6 22 \U03C8xd6 \U03C8xd6 23 \U03C8c5 \U03C8f6 24 \U03C8d4) 22 e3 \U03C8f5?! Now 23 \U03C8c2! would threaten both f3 and \U03C8xf8, so 23...\U03C8c8 24 b4 \U03C8e6 25 e4! might follow, with significant pressure.

b) 19 e3 \U03C8 is a bit more accurate; that move will probably be played anyway, and it discourages 19...\U03C8c4: not only does 20 b4 then establish a bind, but 20...\U03C8e4 \U03C8xe4 21 \U03C8c3 \U03C8e8 22 \U03C8e2 affords White better prospects.

16...\U03C8h7 isn't the cure-all it's cracked up to be, and I think the notes indicate that White has an instructive plus in these structures, in fact, more than he gets from the traditional main lines of the Tarrasch. But from a theoretical point of view, 16...c5 looks satisfactory, and White's 15th-move options are apparently the way to secure an advantage.
1 d4 d5 2 c4

In this chapter we examine variations of the Queen’s Gambit Declined which are out of the mainstream but in some cases quite respectable:

3.1: 2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{f5}} \) (Baltic) 42
3.2: 2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{c6}} \) (Chigorin) 46
3.3: 2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \) 54
3.4: 2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{c5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{cxd4}} \) (Schara) 59
3.5: 2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{c5}} \) (Austrian) 64
3.6: 2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{f6}} \) 3 \( \texttt{\textit{c3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{cxd5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{cxd4}} \): Irregular Lines 65

The only other plausible 2nd move for Black is 2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{f6}} \)!, the Marshall Defence, which is considered inferior because it surrenders the centre with tempo after 3 cxd5 (D).

I’ll cover this in some detail, as it occurs relatively often in lower-level chess:

a) The attempt to switch to a Grünfeld by 3 ... \( \texttt{\textit{g6}} \) runs into the disruptive check 4 \( \texttt{\textit{a4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{d7}} \) 5 \( \texttt{\textit{wb3}} \) b6 6 \( \texttt{\textit{c3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{g7}} \) e4 ±.

b) 3 ... \( \texttt{\textit{xh5}} \)?! 4 \( \texttt{\textit{c3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{a5}} \) 5 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e4}} \) 6 \( \texttt{\textit{d2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xh2}} \) 7 \( \texttt{\textit{ad2}} \); Black has the bishop-pair but no development, and the centre is all White’s.

c) 3 ... \( \texttt{\textit{xd5}} \) 4 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) (this is the only finest that White needs to know; the natural 4 e4?! gives Black counterplay after 4 ... \( \texttt{\textit{xf6}} \) 5 \( \texttt{\textit{c3}} \) e5! with the idea 6 d5 \( \texttt{\textit{c5}} \) or 6 dxe5 \( \texttt{\textit{xd1}} \) + 7 \( \texttt{\textit{xd1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{g4}} \) hitting f2 and e5) 4 ... \( \texttt{\textit{f5}} \) (4 ... \( \texttt{\textit{g6}} \)

heads for Grünfeld territory, but after 5 e4, Black can’t exchange on c3, and 5 ... \( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 6 h3! (preventing ... \( \texttt{\textit{g4}} \) 6 ... \( \texttt{\textit{g7}} \) 7 \( \texttt{\textit{c3}} \) transposes to note ‘b’ to Black’s 5th move at the start of Chapter 9, which is very pleasant for White) 5 \( \texttt{\textit{wb3}} \)! (D).

Now Black has these options, all insufficient:

b1) 5 ... \( \texttt{\textit{c6}} \) 6 \( \texttt{\textit{bd2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 7 e4 gives White a clear advantage.

b2) 5 ... \( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 6 \( \texttt{\textit{bd2}} \) intends e4, and if 6 ... \( \texttt{\textit{f6}} \), then 7 e4! anyway, with a fun variation going

7 ... \( \texttt{\textit{xh4}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \) e6? 9 \( \texttt{\textit{b5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{d7}} \)!! and not only does White threaten \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) but Black can hardly move.

b3) 5 ... \( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 6 \( \texttt{\textit{c3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) 7 e4 \( \texttt{\textit{g4}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \) with the centre and initiative: 8 ... \( \texttt{\textit{h5}} \) 9 g4! \( \texttt{\textit{g6}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{e3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xd7?}} \) 11 0-0-0! \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \) 12 f4 with a winning game for White.

3.1)

2 ... \( \texttt{\textit{f5}} \) (D)

This is called the Baltic Defence. Black gets a piece out and if he can play ... e6 with no drawbacks he gets a Queen’s Gambit Declined with his bishop in front of the pawn-chain. White can either allow this or immediately change the central situation:
UNORTHODOX QUEEN’S GAMBIT

3.11: 3 Qf3 43
3.12: 3 cxd5 45

3.11)
3 Qf3
The alternative move-order 3 Qc3 e6 4 Qf3 transposes.
3...e6 4 Qc3 e6 4...Qc6!? (D), hoping for a ...Qb4 sortie at some point, needs to be considered.

Now Black has:
3.111: 6...Qc7 43
3.112: 6...Qxb3 44

3.111)
6...Qc7 7 Qf4! (D)

Now:

a) 5 Qg5 Qe7 6 cxd5 exd5 7 Qxe7 Qxe7 8 e3 0-0 gives White a choice. Firstly, 9 Qe2 resembles a Queen’s Gambit Declined except that Black’s knight on c6 is misplaced. He can also play 9 Qd3!? Qxd3 10 Qxd3, an idea that is harmless in the Queen’s Gambit Declined main lines, but also a little irritating for Black with the knight on c6. White can put some pressure on the queenside due to his half-open file and potential minority attack, whereas Black has no counterplay. This is a practical choice without theoretical pretensions.

b) A straightforward answer is 5 Qf4 Qf6 6 e3 Qe7 7 cxd5 Qxd5 (7...exd5 8 Qb5 ±, e.g., 8...0-0 9 Qd6 10 Qg5! Qe6 11 Qxc6 Qxc6 12 Qe5 c5 13 f4 with excellent attacking chances) 8 Qg3 0-0 9 Qe2!? (9 Qd3 ±) 9...Qb4 10 Qc1!? Qd6 11 0-0 Qxg3 12 hxg3 Qxd6 13 Qd2! Qg6 14 Qf3 (14 Qce4 Qe7 15 Qc5!? 14...Qce7 15 Qd1 c6 16 Qc4 Qc7 17 e4 Qb6 18 Qe5 Qac8 19 Qe3 Qfd8 20 Qac1 Qb8 21 Qe2 Qd7 22 f4 ± with ideas of g4 or Qxg6 and e5 (or 22 Qd3), Kramnik-Short, Horgen 1995; White is building up a substantial advantage.

5 Qb3 Qb6 6 c5! (D)
This is a common time-gaining tactic with this set-up.

7...\(\text{\textit{xc8}}\)

7...\(\text{\textit{xf4}}\)? 8\(\text{\textit{xb7}}\) is winning for White, since Black can’t even dream of trapping White’s queen in the corner.

8\(\text{\textit{dh4}}\)

White prefers taking the bishop-pair to 8 e3 h6 9 \(\text{\textit{e5}}\)! ±.

8...\(\text{\textit{g6}}\)

Maybe 8...\(\text{\textit{d7}}\) is better, but 9 \(\text{\textit{xf5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf5}}\) 10 e3 \(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{d3}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{wc2}}\) g6 13 0-0-0-0 14 b4 gave White a very pleasant game in P.Schlosser-Khalifman, Bundesliga 1997/8.

9 \(\text{\textit{dxg6}}\) hxg6 10 e4! \(\text{\textit{g6}}\)

10...\(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 11 exd5 exd5 12 \(\text{\textit{d3}}\)! ±.

11 exd5

11 \(\text{\textit{d3}}\) dxe4 12 \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\), as in Kramnik-Short, Dos Hermanas 1997, is optically better for White, but this standard ‘restraint structure’ is often drawish, and Black had a fairly easy time splitting the point.

11...\(\text{\textit{xd5}}\)

Not 11...exd5? 12 0-0-0 and \(\text{\textit{xe1}}\).

12 \(\text{\textit{xd5}}\) cxd5 13 \(\text{\textit{b5}}\)+ \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) 14 0-0-0 \(\text{\textit{e7}}\)

15 h4! (D)

White plans b4-b5 to put pressure on Black’s queenside.

7...\(\text{\textit{a6}}\)

A nice variation runs 7...\(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 8 b4 (after 8 \(\text{\textit{xf4}}\)!? \(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) 9 b4 ± Black can’t stop b5) 8...\(\text{\textit{a6}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{xa6}}\)!? bxax6 10 \(\text{\textit{d5}}\) ± \(\text{\textit{c8}}\) 11 e4!, and now 11...\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{xa6}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 13 b5 \(\text{\textit{xc3}}\) 14 bxc3 cxb5 15 \(\text{\textit{xb5}}\)+ \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 16 \(\text{\textit{c6}}\)+ or 11...\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{xa6}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 13 f3 \(\text{\textit{c2}}\) 14 b5! ±.

8 \(\text{\textit{d4}}\) (D)

8 e4!? has the idea 8...\(\text{\textit{dxe4}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{xa6}}\) bxax6 10 \(\text{\textit{d5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{a6}}\) ±. Instead 8...\(\text{\textit{b4}}\)! 9 \(\text{\textit{a4}}\) dxe4! 10 \(\text{\textit{xb4}}\) exf3 11 \(\text{\textit{xb7}}\) e5! 12 d5! ends in only a very slight advantage for White.

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

8...\(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 9 e3 (9 \(\text{\textit{xa6}}\)!? bxax6 10 \(\text{\textit{d5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{a6}}\) ±. Instead also be favourable for White; compare the note to Black’s 7th move above) 9...\(\text{\textit{b4}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{d3}}\)!!? (10...\(\text{\textit{a5}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{xd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd3}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{c5}}\) \(\text{\textit{g6}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{b4}}\) begins a lengthy forcing sequence: 13...0-0-0 14 0-0 \(\text{\textit{h5}}\) 15 \(\text{\textit{a1}}\) a6 16 \(\text{\textit{xc6}}\) bxc6 17 \(\text{\textit{b8}}\)+ \(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{b7}}\)+ \(\text{\textit{e8}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) \(\text{\textit{c8}}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{d3}}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{b6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc7}}\) 22 \(\text{\textit{xc7}}\) \(\text{\textit{b5}}\) 23 \(\text{\textit{ma7}}\) f5 24 \(\text{\textit{a8}}\)!! ±.

9 e4!!
9 e3 d4 b4 10 a4 d3+ 11 xxd3 xxd3 12 d2 a6! ±.

9...d4

Not 9...dxe4?! 10 xxa6 bxa6 11 d2, or 9...xe4 10 xe4 dxe4 11 xxa6 bxa6 12 d2 with a significant advantage.

10 a4 c2+ 11 d1 dxe4 12 h4 d4 13 xxd4 xc5 14 xf5 xf5 15 d2

Black has three pawns for the piece but none of them are passed and White’s pieces coordinate well; e.g., 15...g5 16 e3 xe3 17 fxe3 d6! 18 e2 e7 19 h4 g4 20 c2 hd8 21 xxd8 xxd8 22 b4 a6 23 f1 with the idea a4.

3.12)

3 cxd5 (D)

An easier line to learn than 3 f3. I’ll give it as an option, but with few details.

3...xb1

This exchange is positionally forced, as otherwise 3...xd5?! 4 c3 allows White to gain time and control the centre. 3...f6?! is also poor (compare the Marshall Defence, 2...f6?!).

Among other ideas White can play 4 c3 (4 a4+!? c6?! 4...xd5 5 xb3 (or 5 f3 xc3 6 bxc3 e5!? 7 e4 xxe6 8 b1l!) 5...xc3 6 xc3 xeb8 (6...b6 7 d3 c6 8 d2 g6 9 g3 e5! 10 g2 e7 12 f6) 7 f3! e5 8 f4 e6 9 d2! cxd4 10 cxd4 g6 11 e4 with a fine game.

4 a4+

This is nearly always played. Actually, the gambit 4 xbl xxd5 5 e3 xxa5 6 d2 is unlikely-looking (Black has no weaknesses!), but has really grown on me; e.g., 6...e6 7 f3 f6 8 e1 (or 8 d3) 8...xb2 (8...c6? 9 c4 xxb2 10 a3 d6 11 d3 b7 d7 12 c5! 9 xbl xxa2 10 xxb7 c7 d6 11 d3 b7 12 e4 e5 13 xe5 xe5 14 dx5 xe5 15 b5! with far more than enough compensation.

4...c6

After 4...d7 5 xd7+ xd7 6 xbl g6 Black recovers the pawn, but leaves White with the bishop-pair and an ideal centre.

5 dxe6??

Rare, but moderately advantageous and extremely safe. 5 xbl xxd5 is normal, when Bronznik makes a strong case that the old line 6 f3 e7 7 b4! is best.

5...xc6 6 xbl (D)

B

6...e5!

Black should be aggressive unless he wants to struggle with a slightly worse position for a long time: after 6...xd4 7 xd4 xe4 White can use his bishops, or exchange one to gain time, as in 8 e3 c6 9 b5 c8 10 d2 (or 10 f3 e6 11 0-0 a6 12 xc6 xc6 13 b4!)
STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE


7 .d2

7a3 has the same idea, and may be more precise. Compare what follows.

7... .xd4

7...exd4 is transparently better for White; e.g., 8...c5 9 g2 .e7 10 b4 b6 11 b5 .e5 12 .xb7.

8 .xd4

Now:
a) 8...exd4?! 9 g3 .f6 10 .g2 ± .e7 11 b4! is no fun for Black. White's score after 9 g3 has been superb.
b) After 8... .xd4, 9 .f3 .c6 10 e3 ± is fine, but 9 e3! is better still for White: 9... .c6 10 .b5 .e8 (10...d6 can be met by 11 .f3 or 11 .xc6+ bxc6 12 .f3 ±) 11 .f3 .d6 12 .c3 f6 13 .e2 (or 13 .d2 ± Shipov) 13... .e7 14 .hd1 .d8 15 .d2! a6 16 .e4 ± Shipov-Radmacher, Berlin 1992; upon a bishop retreat, .c4 can follow.

3.2

2... .c6 (D)

The Chigorin Defence is a very respectable opening which has been played by many strong grandmasters and has numerous books devoted to it. It can also be difficult to play against, as in the main lines, Black is often ahead in development and has attacking chances in return for White's better pawn-structure and bishop-pair. Rather than attempt to refute the Chigorin Defence, we' ll explore playable lines which are strategic in nature, cut down on Black's counterplay, and aim for a small but durable advantage. I' ve chosen two related systems with that in mind; in both cases, White gets his queen's bishop outside his pawn-chain before playing e3. Then the position resembles a traditional Queen's Gambit, but the knight on c6 is not always ideally placed since it prevents Black's freeing move ...c5. Both lines begin with:

3 .f3 .g4

This is the move that has sustained the Chigorin for well over a century. Other moves are less frequently played:
a) After 3...e5, 4 dxe5 transposes to the Albin (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5 - Section 3.3) if Black replies 4...d4, but there's also a complicated theoretical line after 4...b4+ 5 .bd2 dxe5 6 .c2 .e6 7 e3, which should be somewhat better for White. It might be easier to play 4 .xe5 .xe5 5 dxe5 (D) with these ideas:

a1) 5...dxc4 6 .xd8+ .xd8 7 e4! .e6. This is given as '=' by NCO and is approved for Black by Dunnington, but that appears to be wrong, because White has both better development (Black's king position hurts him) and targets of attack; e.g., 8 f4 (or 8 .c3 .b4 9 f4 g6 10 .e3) 8...b5 (8...g6 9 .e3; for example, 9...c6 10 .c3 .b4 11 0-0-0+ .c7 12 f5! gxf5 13 exf5 .xf5 14 .xc4 with a clear advantage, and there are other good ways for White to play it) 9 a4 c6 10 f5 (or 10 .e3 ±) 10...d7 11 .e3 .b4+ 12 .c3 followed by .e2 and 0-0 or in some cases 0-0-0. Black is badly restricted.
a2) 5...d4 (D) and then:

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W
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47

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B
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4...e6
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Easily the best move. As for the alternatives, the following analysis (from various sources and the author's own input) makes fascinating reading, but as all of it greatly favours White, you may not want to get too enmeshed in the particulars. Still, they're important to document:

a) 4...Be6?! leads to trouble after 5 cxd5 Bxd5 (D):

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B
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al) 6...Bb6? 7 d5 Be5? (7...Bxf3 8 gxf3 Bxe5 9 f4 Bxd7 10 a4 ±) 8 Bxe5! Bxd1 9 Bb5+ c6 10 dxc6 and White wins.

a2) 6...Bxf3?! 7 gxf3 Bxc3 (7...Bb6 8 d5 Bb8 9 Bf4 ±) 8 bxc3 e5 9 Bb1!? (White also

(compare the main line, in which Black at least has ...Bg4 in) 6...g5 7 Bg3 h5 8 h3 dxc4 9 e3 Bd5 (9...Bb5 10 a4) 10 Bd2! (10 Bc2) 10...Bxc3 11 bxc3 e5 12 Bc2 and Black's weaknesses are hurting him.

4 Dc3 (D)

a21) 6 e4 is the traditional move, a sort of main line going 6...Be7 (6...c6!? 7 Bd3 Bxa5+ 8 Bd2 Bxe5 0-0 with the idea f4 or Bd3 and a clear advantage) 7 f4 Bc6 (7...Bg6 8 a3 ±) 8 Bd3 Bh4+ 9 g3 Bh3 10 Bf1 Bg4 11 Bd2, which is a bit better for White, who still has his extra pawn, Maksimenko-Barle, Geneva 1996.

a22) I'm not sure that there's anything wrong with 6 e3. There might follow 6...Bc5 (this seems right; 6...Bb4+ 7 Bd2 dxe3 8 Bxa4+ Bd7 9 Bxb4 exd2+ 10 Bxd2 ±) 7 Ba3!? (7 exd4 Bxd4 8 Bc3! Bxc3+ 9 Bxc3 Bxd1+ 10 Bxd1 Bf5 11 Be3 0-0+ 12 Bc1 ± is worth a look) 7...dxe3 (7...Be7 8 Bc2 ±) 8 Bxd8+ Bxd8 9 Bxe3 Bxe3 10 fxe3 c6 11 c5! Bc7 12 Bc4 ±; his e-pawns are suspicious-looking, but I don't think there's any doubt that White gets the nod.

b) 3...Bf6?! 4 cxd5 Bxd5 (after 4...Bxd5 5 Bc3 White gains time and wins the centre; this is one of the points of 3 Bf3 - compare 3 cxd5 Bxd5 4 Bf3 e5!) 5 e4 Bf6 6 d5 (or simply 6 Bc3) 6...Bb8 7 Bc3 e6 8 Bg5 Be7 9 Bb5+ c6 10 dxc6 Bxc6 (10...Bxc6 11 Bxd8+ Bxd8 12 Bc4 and Black's position is in tatters) 11 Bxd8+ Bxd8 12 e5 (or 12 Be5) 12...Bd7 13 Bxc6 bxc6 14 Bxd8 Bxd8 15 0-0-0 Bc7 16 Be4 and White controls the play - Black's dark squares are terribly weak and his c8-bishop is bad.

c) 3...e6 is passive and shuts in the queen's bishop. An uncomplicated response is 4 Bc3 Bb4 (4...dxc4?! 5 e4 Bb4 6 Bxc4 Bf6 7 Bd3 0-0 0-0-0 with an ideal centre and development) 5 Bg5 (5 e3 also favours White) 5...f6 (5...Bge7 6 e3 0-0 7 Bh2 f6 8 Bh4 Bf5 9 Bg3) 6 Bh4

has the better game after 9 d5) 9...\(\text{Wf6}\) (9...\(\text{exd4}\) 10 \(\text{Wxa4}\)! and the moves \(\text{AXB7}\) and \(\text{h5}\) or \(\text{h3}\) will give White a huge advantage) 10 \(\text{AXB7}\) \(\text{exd4}\) 11 \(\text{h5}\) (or 11 \(\text{Wad4}\) 11--0-0 12 \(\text{Wxa6}!\) \(\text{Wd7}\) 13 \(\text{cx}d4\) \(\text{Wxd4}\) (13...\(\text{cx}d4\) 14 \(\text{W}a4+\) 14 \(\text{W}b3\)!), winning.

a3) 6...\(\text{Wxc3}\) 7 \(\text{bxc3}\) (\(D\)) was a topical line for a while in the 1980s.

b) 4...\(\text{dx}c4\)? 5 d5 \(\text{Wxf3}\) (or 5...\(\text{Wb8}\) 6 \(\text{Wd5}\) ±) and now 6 \(\text{exf3}\)! (\(D\)) is very strong, since White’s minor pieces develop rapidly.

6...\(\text{Wxc3}\) 7 \(\text{Wf4}\) \(\text{Wg6}\) (7...\(\text{Wd}3+\) is also depressing: 8 \(\text{Wxd}3\) \(\text{cx}d3\) 9 \(\text{Wb}5\) \(\text{Wc}8\) 10 \(\text{Wxa7}\) \(\text{Wxa8}\) 11 \(\text{Wb}5\) \(\text{Wc}8\) and simply 12 \(\text{Wxd3}\) with advantage, or 12 \(\text{Wc}1\) \(\text{c6}\) 13 0-0!, which gives White a vicious attack) 8 \(\text{Wxc4}!\) \(\text{Wxf6}\) (not 8...\(\text{Wxf4}\)! 9 \(\text{Wb}5+\) \(\text{c6}\) 10 \(\text{Wd}6\) \(\text{Wxd1}\) with an immediate win) 9 \(\text{Wg3}\) \(\text{a6}\) 10 0-0 \(\text{b5}\)?? (but 10...\(\text{Wd}7\) 11 \(\text{Wb}3!\) is awful for Black) 11 \(\text{Wxb5}\) \(\text{axb5}\) 12 \(\text{Wxb7}\) 13 \(\text{c1}\) \(\text{Wb7}\) (versus \(\text{Wc7}\)?) 14 \(\text{Wd}4\) \(\text{Wb8}\) 15 \(\text{Wxa7}\)! \(\text{Wxa7}\) 16 \(\text{Wc7}\) \(\text{Wc7}\) (16...\(\text{Wxa8}\) 17 \(\text{Wxd7}\) 17 \(\text{Wxc7}\) \(\text{Wd}4\)

This may not look so bad, but White has fast development and the pin on \(\text{c6}\) is awkward for Black:

b1) 7...\(\text{a6}\) 8 \(\text{Wxa2}\) (8 \(\text{Wxa4}\) is a calm response, since 8...\(\text{Wb5}\) is weakening after 9 \(\text{Wb3}\) \(\text{b4}\) 10 \(\text{a4}\) 8...\(\text{Wd7}\)?) (8...\(\text{Wef7}\) 9 \(\text{Wxd5}\) \(\text{Wxe2}\) 10 \(\text{Wxe2}\) 0-0-0 11 \(\text{Wd6}\) \(\text{bxc6}\) 12 \(\text{Wc3}\) \(\text{Wxd4}\) 13 \(\text{Wxd4}\) 9 \(\text{Wxe3}\) ±) 9 \(\text{Wc6+}\) (9 \(\text{Wxa4}\) \(\text{b5}\) 10 \(\text{Wd1}\) \(\text{Wd4}\) 11 \(\text{Wd3}\) \(\text{c5}\) 12 \(\text{Wc6}\) ±) 9...\(\text{Wxc6}\)!! 10 \(\text{Wxe2}!\) \(\text{Wb6}\) 11 \(\text{Wb3}\) \(\text{Wxa7}\) 12 \(\text{Wxd5}\) ±.

c2) 7...\(\text{Wd7}\) 8 0-0 and Black’s king has to go to the queenside, but will find it uncomfortable there as well: 8...\(\text{Wd6}\) 9 \(\text{Wb1}\) 0-0-0 10 \(\text{Wg5}\) \(\text{f6}\) 11 \(\text{Wd3}\) \(\text{Wb8}\) 12 \(\text{Wc1}\) \(\text{g5}\)?? 13 \(\text{Wd4}\) with
a strong attack, Andersson-Calvo, Palma de Mallorca 1972.

We now return to the position that arises after 4...e6 (D):

We consider two related systems:

3.21: 5 \( \text{g5} \) 49
3.22: 5 \( \text{f4} \) 52

5 cxd5 exd5 6 \( \text{g5} \) is also playable, but so as not to clutter things up, I'll only talk about the exchange cxd5 and ...exd5 in conjunction with specific lines below, and in the context of 5 cxd5 exd5 6 \( \text{f4} \) in Section 3.22.

3.21)

5 \( \text{g5} \) (D)

This is my main recommendation. White develops with a threat. His goal is to achieve the standard pressure that comes from a d4/c4 structure versus ...d5/...e6. This can be particularly effective because Black's knight on c6 prevents ...c5, his most important freeing move. White can normally prevent the move ...e5 by maintaining pressure on d5, so Black has to do without his two key liberating ideas. All this only ensures a small advantage to White in most lines, but it is the kind of risk-free approach that I like to recommend. Perhaps surprisingly, White can boast of a well-above-average superiority in both results and performance rating when using 5 \( \text{g5} \). We come to a further split:

3.211: 5...\( \text{f6} \) 49
3.212: 5...\( \text{e7} \) 51

Or:

a) 5...\( \text{d7} \) is a bit odd because it loses time. White can gain the edge by playing the natural 6 cxd5 (or 6 e3) 6...exd5 7 e3 h6 8 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 9 \( \text{b5} \)!? (9 h3 \( \text{xh3} \) 10 \( \text{xh3} \) a6 11 \( \text{d3} \); e.g., 11...\( \text{d6} \) 12 0-0 \( \text{f4} \) 13 \( \text{xh4} \) 0-0 14 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 15 \( \text{xh6} \) cxd6 16 \( \text{d1} \) g6 17 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{a8} \) 18 a3 \( \pm \) with the idea b4 and in some cases \( \text{a2} \) 9...\( \text{b4} \) 10 \( \text{b3} \)!! (10 \( \text{c1} \) 10...\( \text{xh5} \) 12 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xc3} \)+ 13 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xc6} \) 14 \( \text{e5} \) and White has the better of it due to play down the c-file.

b) 5...\( \text{ge7} \) is almost never played, perhaps because 6 e3 limits Black's options. Now 6...h6 7 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 8 \( \text{g3} \) doesn't seem to help matters, nor does 6...f6 7 \( \text{f4} \); e.g., 7...\( \text{g6} \) 8 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 9 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{xh3} \) 10 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xc3} \)+ 11 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \pm \), when 11...0-0 is best met by 12 cxd5! exd5 13 h4!.

3.211)

5...\( \text{f6} \) (D)
At the cost of creating a small weakness on e6, Black counters White’s threat without losing time.

6...exd5

This is a clear way to proceed, if not necessarily the best one; in general, it’s easier for White to play the positions that arise after this central exchange. Another good — but somewhat messier — approach is 6...h4:

a) A variation that might transpose into other lines is 6...Ge7 7 e3 (or 7 cxd5 with the idea 7...exd5 8 e4 xf3 9 gxf3 ± dx3?! 10 bxc3 and the bishops will cause further damage) 7...xf5 8 g3 b4 9 wb3! gxf3?! (9...wd7 10 cxd5 exd5 11 c1 is slightly better for White) 10 hxg3. Black has got rid of White’s bishop, but he still has no freeing pawn move in the centre and the h-file is very nice for White; for example, 10...0-0 11 d3 h6 and here 12 d2 and 12 0-0 are both safely in White’s favour, but I can’t resist showing some fantasy analysis I did in my old book with 12 0-0-0! Ge3 (12...dxc4 13 bxc4 xd3 14 bxc3 xe3 15 gxf3 ± 13 wc3 dxc4 e4) 14 dxe4 c6 15 cxd5

b) 6...b4 (D) and now:

b1) 7 e3 is safe and should yield White a small advantage: 7...Ge7 8 cxd5 exd5 9 h3 Ge6 (Bronznik prefers 9...f5, but I’m not sure if there’s a fundamental difference following 10 g3) 10 g3 f5 11 h2 ± intending b5 or d3, as in Kumaran-Miladinović, World Junior Ch, Matinhos 1994.

7...exf5!? (an aggressive move, attacking Black’s g4-bishop) 7...xf5 (7...h5 8 cxd5 bxc6 9 af4 xc3+ 10 bxc3 de7 11 ef3 0-0 12 d3 gives White a small but effortless edge) 8 dxe5 c6 9 cxd5 (D) and now:

b2) 9...exd5 10 wb4 (hitting both bishops) 10...wa5 11 f3 is strong for White; for example, 11...e6 12 ef6 xf6 13 xf6 gxf6 14 wb6 af8 15 g7+ ef7 16 0-0-0 – Onischuk.

b21) 9...xf5 10 wb4 hitting both bishops

b22) 9...ef5 10 e4 whether or not queens are exchanged, White’s bishop-pair gives him some advantage: 12...ef5 (12...xd1+ 13 xd1 xe3 14 h3 bxc3 15 gxf3 0-0 15 ec4 ef7 16 ec2 ef8 17 0-0 and White’s bishops are extremely strong) 13 wb2 0-0 14 ed2 fxe4 15 0-0 ef5 16 ed5 ef2 de2 17 ac1 gf6 (17...xe3 18 bxc5 bxc5 19 ed7 ±) 18 ed4! ± V.Ivanov-Ulko, Moscow 1995.

These examples are all terribly instructive.

6...exd5

6...fxg5? 7 dxc6 xc3 (to prevent de5) 8 xf3 bxc6 9 ec4 (other moves are also good) 9...wd7 10 wb3 ef7 11 ef3 h6 12 0-0-0 ef6 13 xf6 xf6 14 ed1 ef8 15 de2 threatening xe6+ and d1el.

7 af4 (D)

The computer likes 7 d2??, which is too bizarre for words, although admittedly supportive of White’s queenside endeavours.

7...b4
7...\textit{\texttt{Q}}xe7 8 e3 g5 9 \textit{\texttt{Q}}g3 h5 10 h3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e6 (de Vita-Miladinović, Genoa 2004) 11 \textit{\texttt{W}}b3! \textit{\texttt{Q}}a5 (11...\textit{\texttt{Q}}b8 12 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d3) 12 \textit{\texttt{W}}a4+ (12 \textit{\texttt{W}}c2 \textit{\texttt{Q}}f5 13 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h2 \pm \textit{\texttt{Q}}d6?! 14 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d3!) 12...c6 13 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d2 (where's that \textit{\texttt{Q}}d2 when we need it?) 13...\textit{\texttt{Q}}f5 14 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h2 is not disastrous for Black, but his position is awkward.

8 e3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}ge7 9 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e2

Or 9 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d3 with a small advantage, when 9...\textit{\texttt{W}}d7 10 0-0-0-0 11 \textit{\texttt{Q}}c1 \textit{\texttt{A}}ae8 12 a3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xc3 13 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xc3 is a typical position. White has queenside pressure and Black's knight on c6 has no move for the moment.

9...\textit{\texttt{W}}d7 10 \textit{\texttt{Q}}c1 g5

Black has developed naturally but has weaknesses and few good squares for his pieces. So he lashes out, which is also the computer's recommendation.

11 \textit{\texttt{Q}}g3 h5 12 h3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e6 13 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d2?! (D)

This attacks the h-pawn and prepares to swing over to the queenside.

13...\textit{\texttt{W}}f7 14 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d3

Or 14 \textit{\texttt{Q}}b5 \textit{\texttt{Q}}a5 15 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h2 a6 16 \textit{\texttt{Q}}c3 \pm.

14...\textit{\texttt{Q}}h4 15 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h2 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d6 16 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xd6 cxd6!?

Harikrishna-Morozevich, FIDE World Cup, Hyderabad 2002. At this point, 17 \textit{\texttt{W}}a4! would prevent 17...0-0-0??, a move which happened in the game, due to 18 b4 intending 18...\textit{\texttt{Q}}xb8 19 b5 and White wins. Black should of course play otherwise, perhaps with 17...0-0, but White has an edge regardless. Overall, this line looks difficult for Black to handle.

3.212)

5...\textit{\texttt{Q}}e7 6 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xe7 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xe7 7 e3 0-0 (D)

8 cxd5

8 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d3 may also yield the better game:

a) 8...h6 (preventing \textit{\texttt{Q}}xh7+) 9 h3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h5 (9...\textit{\texttt{Q}}xf3 10 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xf3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}b4 11 \textit{\texttt{Q}}bl dxc4 12 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xb7 \pm Rogozenko-Bigaliev, Budapest 1995; this has been assessed as clearly better for White, but in fact it's only a modest edge after 12...\textit{\texttt{Q}}bd5 13 \textit{\texttt{W}}a6 \textit{\texttt{Q}}b8! 14 0-0 with the idea 14...\textit{\texttt{Q}}xb2 15 \textit{\texttt{Q}}a4 \textit{\texttt{Q}}a3 16 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xc4) 10 0-0 dxc4 11 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xc4 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d5 12 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e4?! \textit{\texttt{Q}}ce7 13 \textit{\texttt{Q}}c1 with a small but definite advantage, Palliser-Keeling, Sheffield 1999.

b) 8...f5?! is possibly the best move, and a rather ingenious idea: set up a Stonewall after your bishop has got out in front of the pawn-chain. On the other hand, the 'bad' bishop behind lines is a valuable defender of the Stone-wall pawns. There might follow 9 0-0 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h8 (White is for choice after 9...\textit{\texttt{Q}}f6?! 10 h3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h5 11 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e2 \textit{\texttt{Q}}d6 12 c5 \textit{\texttt{W}}d7 13 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e5?! \textit{\texttt{Q}}xe5 14 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xh5 \textit{\texttt{Q}}f7 15 f4, while 9...f4? fails to 10 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xh7+) 10 h3 \textit{\texttt{Q}}h5 11 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e2 intending \textit{\texttt{Q}}g5;
e.g., 11...h6 12 cxd5 exd5 13 Qe1 Qxe2 14 Qxe2 ± with the idea 14...f4?! 15 Qd3.

8...exd5
8...Qxd5 9 Qe2 Qe7 10 0-0 (or 10 Mc1 ±) 10...Qg6 11 Qb3 gave White a persistent queenside edge in K.Hansen-Grabher, Werfen 1998.

9 Qe2 (D)

This is a deceptive position. Superficially, White’s advantage seems slight indeed, since the problem c6-knight can simply move. But it’s worth remembering that without ...c5, Black will tend to be reduced to a Queen’s Gambit Declined position in which White has a standard queenside attack. At the same time, without the availability of ...Qd6, it’s going to be difficult to scare up prospects on the kingside. For example:

a) 9...Qd6 10 0-0 Qad8 11 Mc1 Qg6 12 Qa4! Qe7 13 Qc5 with annoying pressure on the queenside, Lingnau-Haag, Germany (team event) 1996/7.

b) 9...Qc8 10 0-0 Qb6 11 Mc1 Qe8 12 Qa4 Qxa4 (12...Qb8 13 Qc5) 13 Qxa4 Qd6 14 Mc5 Qe7 15 Qfc1 c6 16 Qc2 Qg6 17 b4 (17 h3 Qxf3 18 Qxf3 ±) 17...Qxf3 18 Qxf3 Qxf8 19 Qb3 Qe6 20 Qc5 Qe2 Qa6 21 a4 with a classic minority attack that gives White the advantage.

3.22) 5 Qf4

I originally wrote this up as a very lengthy section, but that isn’t justified due to its similarity to 5 Qg5. So I’ll provide an outline emphasizing examples and lines with unique themes. Like 5 Qg5, 5 Qf4 contains the proverbial drop of poison: Kramnik, for example, has used it on several occasions against the world’s top players (Carlsen, Ivanchuk, Morozevich and Short), which indicates that this is a safe and strategic variation with good chances of achieving a slight edge.

5 exd5 exd5 6 Qf4 is a close variant on this line which Kramnik has tried as well. Overall, I’d rather keep the pawn-structure flexible, but it helps that the d5-pawn becomes vulnerable. A typical continuation is 6...Qd6 7 Qg3 Qg7 8 e3 Qf7 (8...0-0 9 Qd3 h6 10 a3 Qxg3 11 hgx3 Qd6 12 Mc1 Qf6 13 Qe2 Qad8 14 Qc5 a6 15 Qc3 Qe8 16 Qa4 Qf5 17 0-0 a5 18 Qc5 b6 19 Qd3 ± Bosboom-Lanchava — Botsari, Greek Team Ch, Ermioni Argolidas 2005; an example of the unhurried style!) 9 a3 0-0 10 Qd3 a6 11 Qxd6 Qxf3 12 Qxf3 Qxd6 13 Qg3 Qf6 14 b4 ± Kramnik-Short, Dresden Olympiad 2008.

We now return to the position that arises after 5 Qf4 (D):

Black has many options, but these are most logical:

3.221: 5...Qxf3 53
3.222: 5...Qf6 54

Two of several sensible alternatives, briefly:

a) 5...Qb4 6 Qe5! Qxe5 7 Qxe5 Qxc3+ (7...Qf6?? 8 Qa4++; 7...Qf8 8 Qb3 ±) 8 bxc3 Qf6 was played in Aseev-Morozhevich, Russian Ch, Elista 1995. A good idea for White is then 9 Qb3! h6 10 Qxf6! Qxf6 10...Qxf6 11 Qb5+ Qe7 12 Qxd5 exd5 13 Qxd5 ± 11 cxd5 exd5 12 Qf3 Qf5 13 e4! dxe4 14 Qb5+ Qf8 15 Qc6 exf3 16 0-0! with many threats.
b) 5...d6 6 g3 (6 exd6 w xd6 and now 7 dxe5!? or simply 7 e3) 6...f6 7 e3 0-0 8 a3 d7 9 wb3 b6 (Kramnik-Carlsen, London 2010) and now 10 cxd5 exd5 11 h4!? ± keeps the game interesting.

3.221)

5...xf3 6 gxf3 (D)

6...d6

Black logically tries to eliminate the bishop-pair, but White also has a space advantage to count upon. Here is an instructive glimpse of the alternatives:

a) 6...f6 7 e3 d8?! 8 cxd5 (8 d5 is promising) 8...exd5 9 g3 dxe3 (this opens the h-file; the exchange can wait, but without it ...d8 doesn’t make much sense) 10 hgx3 d7 11 wb3 b8 (Baumbach-Thormann, Weimar 1968; not 11...b6? 12 b5+ c6 13 dxd5!) and now 12 wa4+! c6?! (else White takes on a7) 13 b5 wins material.

b) 6...ge7 7 e3 g6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 g3 is better for White, who has nice moves like wb3, b5 and/or c1 at his disposal.

c) 6...xc4 7 e3 d6 (7...d5? comes up short after 8 wa4+! c6 9 b4 cxb3 10 axb3 wb6 11 wxa5 wxa5 12 wxa5 b4 13 c5!) 8 g3 dge7 9 xc4 0-0 10 wc2! and White would like to castle queenside and advance in the centre to take advantage of his bishop-pair. Black’s freeing move 10...e5?! runs into 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 e2! with 0-0-0 to come.

d) 6...b4 7 e3 f6 has several replies. A challenging one is 8 wb3 0-0 9 g5?! (to prevent ideas involving ...xc4 and after xc4,

...xc3 followed by either ...a5 or ...d5) 9...xc4 9...h6 10 h4 10 xc4 wd6!?? (or 10...wd7 11 b5!) 11 dxd6 a5 12 g1! g6 13 wc2 xe4 14 a3 xe3+ 15 wc3 wb6 16 e5 wd7 17 e4 f6 18 xf4 with 0-0-0 and White has a bind.

7 g3

7 cxd5 exd5 can also be played, and then, e.g., 8 wd2.

7...ge7 8 e3 wd7

8...f5! can be met in two ways:

a) 9 wb3 d4 (Breutigam) falls short of equality after 10 h4, threatening c5 and preparing 0-0-0 and e4.

b) 9 c5! dxc5 10 hgx3 should also favour White, because the only freeing move, 10...e5, is dubious in view of 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 g2 and now 12...c6 13 wd4 or 12...df7 13 e4!.

9 wc2 f5 10 xc6 wxc6 11 0-0-0 0-0 12 f4 a6 13 b1 (D)

Black’s position is in decline. Now:

a) Breutigam’s line 13...dxc4 14 xc4 a5 15 e2 c5 16 dxc5 favours White, but 16 wa4! wc7 17 dxc5 xc5 18 wd7 is better still.

b) After 13...d8, Kramnik-Morozevich, Frankfurt rapid 2000 continued 14 g1 c6 15 d2 (heading for c5 or e5 via c1, although this was a good time for 15 c5!) 15...f7 16 c1 c8 17 g3 wc7 18 c5 wc7 19 e2 h8 20 d1 g8 21 d3 d7 22 h4! g6 23 h5 g7 (Black can’t free himself: 23...gxh5 24 b4 xc3 25 xc3 w f8 26 wd1! h6 27 d5 exd5 28 g5! wc8 29 wh1 and the queen penetrates) 24 hxg6 dxg6 25 h1 cag8 26 g3 and White was winning but lost the thread and eventually had to settle for a draw.
3.222)

5...d6 6 e3 b4 (D)

White still hopes for his standard queenside play, Black for the take-over of central squares and destruction of White's queenside.

7 c1

White still hopes for his standard queenside play, Black for the take-over of central squares and destruction of White's queenside.

7...0-0

This has been the main move, but 7...e4 has been played as well. A direct answer is 8 h3 (or 8 d3) 8...h5 (8...xf3 9 xf3 e7 10 exd5 exd5 11 b5 0-0 12 e2 ±) 9 d3 0-0 10 cxd5 xd5 (10...exd5 11 e2!? ) 11 e4 xe4 12 0-0 xc3 13 xc3 xf3 14 xf3 ±. White stands better in this kind of endgame.

8 h3 xf3 9 xf3 xc3+

9...e7 10 g5 xc3+ 11 xc3 wb4 12 xf6 xb2 (12...gxf6 13 we2 leads to a slight advantage for White) 13 cb3 cl+ (13...xa2? 14 g4 g6 15 wd1 ±) 14 wd1 xd1+ 15 xd1 dxc4 16 xb7 gxf6 (Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Linares 1998) and here Dolmatov gives 17 c2! with a pleasant advantage (look at Black's pawns); 17 d2 might be even better.

10 bxc3 we7

10...e4 11 d3 f5 12 we2 a5 13 cxd5 exd5 14 c4! ± Donchenko-Kahn, Naumburg 2002.

11 e2

This position has been reached many times in the past six or seven years, but two other moves grant White slight advantages: 11 d3 and 11 cxd5 with the idea 11...xd5 12 d3.

11 e4

a) The worth of the bishops is illustrated after 11...a3 12 0-0 de4 13 cxd5 cd2 14 wg3 xf1 15 xf1 de7 16 dxe6 wa2 17 ef7+ xf7 18 d3 and White is for choice.

b) 11...e5 12 g5 wa3 13 0-0 de4 14 cxd5 dxg5 15 de7 16 wxg5 dxg5 17 wxg5 xc3 18 f3 affords White the better prospects.

12 cxd5 exd5 13 0-0

White is a little better. Ness-Gronemann, Internet 2009 continued 13...a3?! (13...a5 14 d3 c6 15 we2! ef8 16 wc2 g6 17 f3 cd6 18 e4 ±) 14 c4 db4 15 fe1 cd2 16 wg4 f5 17 wh5 dxc4 18 xdxc4 19 xc4 ac8 20 xc7 xc7 21 xc7 wxa2 22 d6 dxg5 23 xe2 wb1+ 24 h2 g6, when the clearest way to a convincing advantage was 25 wf3! ef7 26 wd5.

3.3)

2...e5 3 dx5 d4 (D)

The Albin Counter gambit has received a great deal of attention over the last decade, as the traditional lines with 4 dxe3 cd6 5 g3 have offered Black the opportunity for active and sound play. 5 g3 itself is rather slow, and I want to recommend a line which rapidly puts pressure on the advanced d-pawn.

4 dxe3

Incidentally, be sure not to fall for the trap after 4 e3? b4+ 5 d2 dxe3! (D).

6 xb4?? (6 wa4+? d6 7 xb4 doesn't help at all: 7...exf2+ 8 xf2 wh4+ 9 g3 wh4+;
6 fxe3! is best, but then White’s e-pawns are both weak and isolated; e.g., play might go 6...c6 7 e3 ge7, intending ...xd2+ and ...g6) 6...exf2+ 7 e2 fxe1+! 8 e1 (8 xg1 g4+ 8...Wh4+ and Black wins. Not the sort of thing you want to happen in the first 8 moves!

4...c6

This is the only move that gains some compensation for Black’s pawn. It develops and attacks the pawn on e5. Otherwise:

a) 4...c5?! 5 b2 c6 6 b3 d4+ 7 d2 e7 e3! with the idea 8...d3? 9 b4!.  

b) 4...c5?! 5 e3 c6 6 exd4 cxd4 7 d3! gets White’s pieces out quickly and keeps the pawn: 7...g4 (7...exe5? 8 e2 f6 9 f4 d6 10 c5! a5+ 11 b2 xc5 12 0-0 is overwhelming) 8 0-0 c7 9 h3 xf3 10 xf3 exe5 11 e1 d6 12 f4 (Black has regained his pawn but is behind in development) 12...e7 13 exe5 (or 13 g3!) 13...exe5 14 a3 a6 15 c5! f6 16 c4 xc5 17 xb7 0-0 18 b6 ab8 19 e4 d6 20 d7 is winning for White, Grünfeld-Tartakower, Karlsbad 1923.

5 b2 (D)

Avoiding the main lines (which now extend into 20 or more moves of theory). Developing the knight creates its own set of problems for Black and is generally less risky because Black can’t simply mechanically proceed by ...f5, ...d7, ...h3 and ...h5-b4 without losing his d-pawn to b3. With 5 b2, White would also like to expand on the queenside by a3 and b4, or play g3 sooner, depending upon what Black is doing. Moreover, White will sometimes return the pawn for the initiative or other advantages. After 5 b2, Black has tried just about everything:

3.31: 5...g4 56
3.32: 5...ge7 57
3.33: 5...f5 58

An assortment of alternatives:

a) 5...h4 6 a3 d2+ 7 d2 (or 7 b2! g4 8 b4) 7...g4 8 b3! (8 a5 7 xf3 9 xf3 a5 10 f4 c6 11 g2 ±) 8...b8 9 g5 ge7 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 e3 e8 (Marshall-Sho­walter, USA Ch (8), Lexington 1909) and now 12 exd4 xf3 13 xf3 xd4 14 g4 c5 15 f6 g6 16 g5! is virtually winning.

b) 5...e7 6 g3 (6 a3 exe5 7 exe5 exe5 8 h4 a5+ 9 d2 wb6 10 b4 c5 11 g3 ±) 6...g4 7 g2 0-0-0 8 0-0 d3!? 9 exd3 xd3 10 e2 wd8 11 b3 ± Szigeti-Balogh, Tatatovo­varos 1935.

c) 5...f6 6 exf6 (D) makes it a permanent gambit:

3 c1) 6...xf6 has several good answers; e.g., 7 g3 (or 7 a3, or 7 b3 g4 8 a3, threatening g5) 7...g4 8 g2 0-0-0 9 h3 f5 10 0-0 g5
11 \textit{\texttt{w}a4} h5? (Teichmann-Mieses, Berlin 1910) 12 \textit{\texttt{b}b3} threatens \textit{\texttt{x}xg5}, but after 12...\textit{\texttt{h}h6} 13 \textit{\texttt{c}c5}! intending \textit{\texttt{x}xg5} White wins on the queenside.

c2) 6...\textit{\texttt{d}d6} 7 \textit{\texttt{a}a3} a5 (7...\textit{\texttt{e}e6} 8 b4) 8 \textit{\texttt{b}b3} \textit{\texttt{e}e6}! 9 \textit{\texttt{w}d3}! (9 \textit{\texttt{e}e3} \pm) 9...\textit{\texttt{f}f7} 10 \textit{\texttt{b}bxd4} \textit{\texttt{xd}d4} 11 \textit{\texttt{xd}d4} \textit{\texttt{c}c5}?! 12 \textit{\texttt{b}b3} (12 \textit{\texttt{w}e3}+! \textit{\texttt{e}e7} 13 \textit{\texttt{f}f5}) 12...\textit{\texttt{b}b6} 13 \textit{\texttt{e}e3} 0-0 14 \textit{\texttt{w}x}d8 \textit{\texttt{x}d}d8 15 \textit{\texttt{x}x}b6 cxb6 16 e3 and Black had no compensation for the pawns in Burmakin-Halser, Graz 1997.

d) 5...\textit{\texttt{e}e6} (D) and White has:

d1) 6 a3 \textit{\texttt{d}d7} (6...\textit{\texttt{d}ge7} transposes to note 'a' to White's 6th move in Section 3.32) 7 b4 \textit{\texttt{d}ge7} 8 b5 \textit{\texttt{a}a5} 9 \textit{\texttt{w}a}4 b6 10 \textit{\texttt{b}b2} c5 11 bxc6 \textit{\texttt{x}xc6} 12 \textit{\texttt{d}xd4} \textit{\texttt{xd}d4} 13 \textit{\texttt{w}x}d7+ \textit{\texttt{x}d}d7 14 \textit{\texttt{d}xd4} \textit{\texttt{xc}c4} 15 \textit{\texttt{xc}c4} \textit{\texttt{xc}c4} 16 e3 \textit{\texttt{x}xf}1 17 \textit{\texttt{x}xf}1 \pm (Raetsky); most of these moves are essentially forced.

d2) 6 \textit{\texttt{b}b3}?! also yields White a slight edge. Skipping a lot of details, a main line is 6...\textit{\texttt{e}xe}4 (6...\textit{\texttt{b}b}4+ 7 \textit{\texttt{a}a2} \textit{\texttt{e}e}7 8 \textit{\texttt{d}xd}4 \textit{\texttt{xd}d}4 9 \textit{\texttt{xd}d}4 0-0-0 10 \textit{\texttt{f}f}3 \pm with the idea \textit{\texttt{w}a}4, Isaksson-Muir, corr. 1960) 7 \textit{\texttt{b}bxd4} \textit{\texttt{c}c5} (7...\textit{\texttt{d}d7} or 7...\textit{\texttt{w}d}5 is countered by 8 \textit{\texttt{d}xc6} \textit{\texttt{xc}c6} 9 \textit{\texttt{d}d}2!) 8 e3 (8 \textit{\texttt{e}e3} and 8 \textit{\texttt{w}a}4 are good alternatives) 8...\textit{\texttt{x}xf}1 9 \textit{\texttt{x}xf}1! \textit{\texttt{w}d}7?! (9...\textit{\texttt{xd}d}4 \pm) 10 \textit{\texttt{d}xc6} \textit{\texttt{xc}c6} 11 \textit{\texttt{d}d}2 \textit{\texttt{b}b}6 (11...a5 is better according to Raetsky, but it's not clear why after 12 \textit{\texttt{w}c}2! and 0-0-0) 12 \textit{\texttt{b}b}1 \textit{\texttt{g}g}6 13 \textit{\texttt{w}c}2 \textit{\texttt{g}x}g? 14 \textit{\texttt{w}a}4+ \textit{\texttt{f}f}8 15 \textit{\texttt{w}e}4 and White won in Dzhevlan-Furhoff, Stockholm 1992.

3.31)

5...\textit{\texttt{g}g}4

This is Black's most popular move, developing quickly and preparing ...0-0-0 after ...\textit{\texttt{w}c}7 or ...\textit{\texttt{w}d}7.

6 \textit{\texttt{a}a}3 (D)

b) 6...\textit{\texttt{w}e}7 Or:

a) 6...\textit{\texttt{d}ge7} 7 h3 \textit{\texttt{h}h}5 8 b4! \textit{\texttt{w}d}7 9 \textit{\texttt{b}b}2 \pm.

b) 6...a5 is a normal move in this variation. Here White can reply with 7 h3 \textit{\texttt{h}h}5 (7...\textit{\texttt{d}xf}3 8 \textit{\texttt{d}xf}3 \textit{\texttt{c}c}5 and now 9 \textit{\texttt{g}g}3 \pm is one idea, while h4?!?, anticipating ...\textit{\texttt{d}ge7}-g6, has also been recommended) 8 \textit{\texttt{w}a}4 (a typical move once Black's bishop can't get back to defence of the queenside) 8...\textit{\texttt{w}d}7 9 \textit{\texttt{b}b}5! (threatening 10 e6, winning the bishop) 9...\textit{\texttt{g}g}6 (Duz Khotimirsky-Marshall, Hamburg 1910) 10 \textit{\texttt{b}b}3! ±.

7 h3

7 b4 0-0-0 8 \textit{\texttt{b}b}2 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}5 9 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}5 (not 9 \textit{\texttt{d}xd}4?? \textit{\texttt{d}d}3# — you wouldn't be the first to fall for this idea!) 9...\textit{\texttt{w}e}5 10 h3 (10 \textit{\texttt{b}b}3 \pm) 10...\textit{\texttt{h}h}5 11 g4 \textit{\texttt{g}g}6 12 \textit{\texttt{g}g}2 \textit{\texttt{f}f}6 13 \textit{\texttt{d}f}3 ± Gelfand-Radjabov, Almaty blitz 2008.

7...\textit{\texttt{h}h}5

After 7...\textit{\texttt{d}xf}3 8 \textit{\texttt{d}xf}3 0-0-0, White has several good replies, including 9 \textit{\texttt{d}g}5 (9 \textit{\texttt{g}g}3 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}5 10 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}5 \textit{\texttt{w}xe}5 11 \textit{\texttt{g}g}2 \pm) 9...f6 10 exf6 gxf6 11 \textit{\texttt{d}d}2! (11 \textit{\texttt{d}f}4 \pm) 11...\textit{\texttt{h}h}6 12 \textit{\texttt{w}a}4 (12 \textit{\texttt{c}c}2 d3 13 \textit{\texttt{c}c}3 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}2 14 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}2 \textit{\texttt{d}f}5 15 \textit{\texttt{f}f}1 \pm appears risky but this sequence helps White's pieces become active) 12...\textit{\texttt{b}b}8 13 0-0-0 with a nice edge; e.g., 13...\textit{\texttt{f}f}5 14 \textit{\texttt{w}e}2 \textit{\texttt{w}e}6 15 g3 \textit{\texttt{c}c}5 16 \textit{\texttt{d}e}1! \textit{\texttt{d}e}5 17 \textit{\texttt{d}d}3.

8 \textit{\texttt{w}a}4

8 g4 \textit{\texttt{g}g}6 9 \textit{\texttt{g}g}2 0-0-0 10 b4 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}5 11 \textit{\texttt{d}xe}5 \textit{\texttt{w}xe}5 12 \textit{\texttt{f}f}3 \pm.

8...0-0-0 (D)
9 b4 \(\text{\&}b8\)

9...\(\text{\&}xe5\) 10 \(\text{\&}xe5 \text{\&}xe5\) 11 g4 (\(\text{\&}a\text{\&}n\))

11...d3 12 \(\text{\&}a2!\) dxe2 (\(\text{\&}\text{\&}\text{\&}\text{\&}\)) 13 \(\text{\&}xe2!\) \(\text{\&}g6\) 14 \(\text{\&}f3\) followed by \(\text{\&}xa7\) and Black is lost.

10 g4 \(\text{\&}g6\) 11 \(\text{\&}h2 \text{\&}xe5\)

11...f6 12 \(\text{\&}g2\) leaves Black without a convenient way to continue since 12...fxe5 loses a piece to 13 b5 while 12...d3 13 exd3 \(\text{\&}xd3\) 14 0-0-0 leaves White far better developed and still a pawn ahead.

12 \(\text{\&}xe5 \text{\&}xe5\) (\(D\))

13 \(\text{\&}f3!\)

13 \(\text{\&}g2!\) isn’t bad either: 13...\(\text{\&}e6\) 14 0-0 \(\text{\&}f6\) 15 \(\text{\&}d1\) \(\text{\&}d6\) 16 \(\text{\&}b5\) \(\text{\&}e4\) 17 c5 \(\text{\&}f4\) 18 \(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}xe4\) 19 \(\text{\&}xe4 \text{\&}xe4\) 20 \(\text{\&}d3\) ±.

13...\(\text{\&}e4\)

Now in Goldin-Mengarini, New York 1991, White played 14 \(\text{\&}xd4\) \(\text{\&}xd4\) 15 \(\text{\&}xd4\) and Black missed that 15...\(\text{\&}f6!\) hits both d4 and h1, so 16 \(\text{\&}f3\) \(\text{\&}xc4\) \(\frac{\text{f}}{\text{f}}\) follows. But White has a strong move in 14 \(\text{\&}g2!\), having in mind 14...d3 15 0-0! dxe2 16 \(\text{\&}e5!!\) exf1 \(\text{\&}w+\) 17 \(\text{\&}xf1\) +–.

This gives White a choice of solid continuations:

6 \(\text{\&}b3\)

6 a3 is good and worth knowing, but much more complicated. Briefly:

a) 6...\(\text{\&}e6\) 7 \(\text{\&}b3\) \(\text{\&}xc4\) 8 \(\text{\&}xd4\) offers White a choice between 9 \(\text{\&}xd4\), intending \(\text{\&}a4+\), and 9 \(\text{\&}xd4\) \(\text{\&}xd4\) 10 \(\text{\&}xd4\) 0-0-0 11 e3 \(\text{\&}d5\) 12 \(\text{\&}d2\) ±.

b) 6...\(\text{\&}f5\) 7 \(\text{\&}e4!?\) \(\text{\&}h4\) 8 \(\text{\&}g5\) (or 8 \(\text{\&}f4\)) 8...\(\text{\&}e7\) 9 \(\text{\&}xh4\) \(\text{\&}xh4\) 10 \(\text{\&}d3\) 0-0 11 g3 ± (Stoica).

c) 6...\(\text{\&}g6\) 7 \(\text{\&}b3\) \(\text{\&}xe5\) (7...\(\text{\&}e7\) 8 \(\text{\&}xd4\) \(\text{\&}xc5\) 9 \(\text{\&}xc5\) \(\text{\&}xe5\) 10 \(\text{\&}f4\) \(\text{\&}f6\) 11 e3 ± 0-0 12 \(\text{\&}c2\) and Black lacks full compensation) 8 \(\text{\&}xe5\) \(\text{\&}xe5\) 9 \(\text{\&}xd4!\) \(\text{\&}xd4\) 10 \(\text{\&}xd4\) \(\text{\&}xc4\) 11 \(\text{\&}f4\) \(\text{\&}e5\) 12 \(\text{\&}b5?!\) (12 f4) 12...\(\text{\&}d8\) 13 \(\text{\&}e3\) (13 \(\text{\&}f4\) \(\text{\&}f6\) 14 \(\text{\&}d1+\) \(\text{\&}d7\) 15 \(\text{\&}e2\) \(\text{\&}c8\) 16 0-0 a6 17 \(\text{\&}d3\) ± 13...c6 14 \(\text{\&}d1+\) \(\text{\&}d7\) 15 \(\text{\&}e3\) \(\text{\&}c7\) 16 \(\text{\&}f4\) \(\text{\&}g4\) 17 \(\text{\&}d4\) with a moderate but definite advantage.

6...\(\text{\&}f5\)

Some people consider this to be Black’s best chance versus 5 \(\text{\&}bd2\), perhaps correctly; still, there are two good replies that keep some advantage.

7 e4!

A strange move, allowing doubled isolated pawns on the e-file, but it appears to be quite strong. 7 a3 is the other main line: 7...\(\text{\&}e7!\)

(7...a5 8 e3! dxe3 9 \(\text{\&}xd8+\) \(\text{\&}xd8\) 10 \(\text{\&}xe3\) \(\text{\&}e6\)

11 \(\text{\&}d2\) a4 12 \(\text{\&}bd4\) ± 8 g3 0-0 (8...a5 9 \(\text{\&}h3!\)) 9 \(\text{\&}d3\) a5 10 \(\text{\&}h3\) g6 10...\(\text{\&}h4\) has...
been recommended, but 11 gxh4! \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xh3}}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g1}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{h8}}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bxd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd4}}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xh4}}} \) 15 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f4}}} \) looks good for White) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f4}}} \) a4! 12 g4 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{h4}}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bxd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf3+}}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd3}}} \) 15 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{exd3}}} \) \( \pm \). White is two pawns up but it’s not easy; in the end, he will probably give back one or even both in exchange for a modest advantage.

7...dxe3 8 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd8+}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd8}}} \)

Black’s king position after 8...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd8}}} \) 9 fxe3 makes it difficult to get his rooks coordinated. One example is 9...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4+}}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f2}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e7}}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d7}}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{h4}}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g6}}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xc6+}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xc6}}} \) 15 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d5}}} \) \( \pm \) Jojua-Adnani, Manama 2009. Still, strong players have used 8...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd8}}} \), so it deserves attention.

9 fxe3 \( \text{(D)} \)

Cox recommends 7 e4 leading to this position in his repertoire book, and Raetsky also has it as a small advantage for White. I was a bit sceptical until I noticed that in my database games between higher-rated players (on either or both sides of the board), White has a ridiculously strong record: 10 wins and 3 draws before finally running into a loss. Not bad for a risk-free variation. There are a few reasons for this success. White’s pawns are exposed, but the e5-pawn cramps Black’s game and the e3-pawn anchors pieces on d4. White is also ahead in development, and it turns out that his remaining pieces have good squares; e.g., bishops on c3 and d3 or e4, and rooks on the d- and f-files. Finally, it’s a peculiarity of the position that Black has a difficult time targeting the e5-pawn, whose capture is the most important way to get back into the game.

9...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{c6}}} \)

This is the consistent move, attacking e5 and clearing the way for...0-0-0.

a) 9...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{e7}}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d2}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{c6}}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d7}}} \) is slow; e.g., 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4}}} \) 13 0-0-0 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd2+}}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd2}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4}}} \) 15 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bl}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d6}}} \) 16 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{hd1}}} \) \( \pm \) Maksimenko-Antoniewski, Wysowa 2007.

b) 9...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4+}}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f2}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e7}}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bd4}}} \) 0-0 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{h4}}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{c2}}} \)? \( \pm \) Jojua-Adnani, Manama 2009.

10 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d3}}} \)

10 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bd4}}} \) is also good; e.g., 10...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4+}}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f2}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{fxd4}}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{exd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g4}}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e3}}} \) 0-0 14 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{cl}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf3}}} \) 15 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{gxf3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd4}}} \) 16 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{h3+}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{b8}}} \) 17 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{hd1}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{c6}}} \) 18 a3 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e7}}} \) 19 \( \text{\texttt{f4}} \) g5! 20 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d5}}} \) ?

10...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4+}}} \)

a) 10...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{e6}}} \)?! 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d2}}} \) a5 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4}}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f2}}} \) 0-0 14 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{hd1}}} \) gives White a very comfortable game.

b) 10...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{fe7}}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g4}}} \) and now 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e4}}} \) is strong, while 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{h3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf3}}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g6}}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g5}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{hf6}}} \) 15 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g5}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f8}}} \) 16 a3 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{d6}}} \) 17 c5 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f4}}} \) 18 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf4}}} \) 19 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e3}}} \) ?

3.33)

5...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{f5}}} \) 6 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{b3}}} \) \( \text{(D)} \)

6...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{b4+}}} \)!

Considered best. There are some weaker alternatives:

a) 6...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{a5}}} \)?! 7 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{a3}}} \) and 8 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bxd4}}} \) follows unless Black ventures upon 7...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{d3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{e3}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{dxe2}}} \) 9 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd8+}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd8}}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xe2}}} \) ?

b) 6...\( \text{\texttt{\textit{g6}}} \)?! 7 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{bxd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd4}}} \) 8 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd4}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{g7}}} \) 9 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf5}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd1+}}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xd1}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textit{xf5}}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{f4}}} \) 0-0-0+ 12 \( \text{\texttt{\textit{c2}}} \) ? Gaier-Heckmann, Ladenburg 1992.
7...\textit{lb}e7

\textit{a)} 7...\textit{ge}7?! 8 \textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 9 \textit{bxd}4 0-0 10 a3 \textit{bc}6 11 e3 gives Black nothing for his pawn.

\textit{b)} 7...d3?! exd3 8 \textit{xd}3 9 \textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 10 \textit{b}d4 \textit{xf}1 11 \textit{wa}4±.

8 \textit{b}xd4

Or 8 a3 \textit{xd}2+ 9 \textit{xd}2.

8...\textit{xe}5 9 \textit{xe}5 \textit{xd}2+ 10 \textit{xd}2 \textit{xe}5 11 \textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 12 \textit{xd}1 \textit{f}6 13 \textit{e}3+ \textit{f}8 14 \textit{g}3 \textit{a}5+ 15 \textit{wd}2 \textit{xa}2 16 \textit{b}4+ \textit{g}8 17 \textit{g}2

White has a large advantage.

3.4)

2...\textit{e}6 3 \textit{c}c3 \textit{c}5 4 \textit{cxd}5 \textit{cxd}4 (D)

The Hennig-Schara Gambit (we’ll refer to it as simply the ‘Schara’, for convenience) is one of the better gambits around, and isn’t subject to an easy response, much less a refutation. While it is an offshoot of the Tarrasch Defence, it has little in common strategically with that opening, which is why we cover it separately in this chapter on unorthodox Queen’s Gambit lines.

It’s an opening about which reams of theory have been written (along with an excellent recent book by Bronznik). That’s alright, but makes it nearly impossible to play something calm and unpretentious against it without getting the worse of it or having to play other sharp positions as a consequence. Here I’ve offered some lines that can lead to dangerous positions, but at least they will avoid the craziest of tactical brawls. To begin with, we have two moves (5 \textit{xd}4 and 5 \textit{a}4+) which ultimately aim for the same position (i.e. the one arising after 5 \textit{xd}4 \textit{c}c6 6 \textit{d}1 \textit{exd}5 7 \textit{xd}5 \textit{d}7 or 5...
60  A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE

\[ \text{wa4+ } \& d7 \ 6 \text{wdx4 exd5 } 7 \text{wdx5 } \& c6 - covered in Section 3.43). I think it's worth treating them separately because of recent discoveries; this will help you choose which direction you want to head in:

\begin{align*}
3.41: \ & 5 \text{wdx4} & 60 \\
3.42: \ & 5 \text{wa4+} & 60 \\
3.43: \ & \text{Schara Main Line} & 61
\end{align*}

3.41)

\[ 5 \text{wdx4} \]

The direct approach, frowned upon by theory as complicating matters (by comparison with 5 \text{wa4+}), but in fact simplifying matters in other ways:

\[ 5...\text{c6} 6 \text{wd1 exd5} 7 \text{xd5} (D) \]

With this move-order, White has sidestepped the dangerous gambit 5 \text{wa4+ } \& d7 6 \text{wdx4 exd5} 7 \text{wdx5 } \& c6!? . The downside is that he has to face...

\[ 7...\text{d6}! ? \]

This is far more interesting than the older 7...\& e6?! , which has been under a cloud for some time. The main line, in broad brush, is 8 \text{wdx8+ } \& x d8 9 e3 (9 \& g5! is also good, according to analysis by Bucker and Winds, and in fact renders irrelevant a few questions about the old main line) 9...\& d b4 10 \& b5+ \& e7 11 \& f1! \& f6 (11...\& a6 12 \& e2 \& f6 13 \& f3 \& f5 14 \& d2 \pm) 12 \& f3 \& c2 13 \& b1 \& f5 14 \& d2 \pm Smyslov-Estrin, Leningrad 1951.

\[ 7...\& d7 \] is the standard main line of the Schara, which we cover separately in Section 3.43.

\[ 8 \& g5 \& ge7 9 \text{wd2 h6} \]

\[ \text{This is Bucker and Winds's new idea. Without going into a lot of detail, one line they give is...} \]

\[ 10 \text{d1 hgx5} 11 \text{wdx6 wb6} 12 \text{wa3 } \& e6 13 \text{e3 0-0} 14 \text{xf3} \]

\[ 14...g4 15 \& d4 \& xd4 16 \text{xd4 } \& c6 17 \text{xe4 a5 (D)} \]

\[ \text{W} \]

\[ \text{B}\]

Bucker and Winds call this position 'unclear'. Developing quickly is best: 18 \& e2 \& d4 (18...\& ad8 19 0-0 \& d2 20 \& x g5 \& xg5 21 \& x g4 \text{wdx2} 22 \& c5 \& fd8 23 h3 \& z d3 24 \& c4 and Black's compensation seems insufficient; it's not clear what his plan is for increasing the pressure, whereas White has combinations of a4 and \& e4 or \& b1 to consolidate) 19 0-0 \& c2 20 \text{we7 and again Black has definite compensation, but I think he falls short of equality after, say, 20...\& ae8! (20...\text{wx} b2 21 \& x e6! fxe6 22 \text{we6}+ \& h8 23 \& e5 with a serious attack and the forthcoming capture of a second pawn for the exchange) 21 \text{wg5} \text{wdx} b2 22 \& b5! \text{bd4} (22...\text{xa2}? 23 \& c7 \& c8 24 \& x e6 fxe6 25 \text{wxg4}) 23 \& d4 \pm \& d7 24 \& e7! \& xe7 25 \text{xe7 } \& c8 26 \text{wc7} \pm (or 26 \& c4 \pm). Obviously the last word hasn't been said here, but you need to face this kind of thing versus the Schara and this should help to get you started.

3.42)

\[ 5 \text{wa4+ (D)} \]

This is the other method of picking up the pawn, which sidesteps some lines (like 5 \text{wdx4 } \& c6 6 \text{wd1 exd5} 7 \text{wdx5 } \& d6?! ), but also subjects White to another interesting pawn sacrifice.
5...\texttt{d7}

5...b5?! 6 \texttt{xd4!} hasn't ever panned out for Black:

a) 6...b4 7 f6 (7...a6 8 dxe6!; 7...exd5 8 \texttt{xd5}) 8 d6 \texttt{c6 9 c4} and White is already winning.

b) 6...a6 7 \texttt{f3 b4 8 f3}, again with an enormous advantage.

c) 6...\texttt{c6 7 d2 exd5 8 xd5 d7 9 g5 f6 10 xf6 (or 10 \texttt{d2 e7 11 e6 a6 12 f3} with a slight advantage to White) 10...xf6 11 e3 (Bareev), when 11...b4?! 12 \texttt{d1! d8 13 e4+} looks good for White.

6 \texttt{xd4 exd5 7 xd5}

Now 7...\texttt{c6} is the standard move, reaching the main-line position of the Schara, which we examine in Section 3.43. With this move-order, White has to cope with a further pawn sacrifice: 7...f6!? (D)

3.43)

5 \texttt{a4+}

As explained earlier, 5 \texttt{xd4 c6 6 d1 exd5 7 xd5 d7} is a more or less equally valid path to the same position, just offering different options for Black to deviate.

5...\texttt{d7 6 xd4 exd5 7 xd5 c6 8 f3}

Here the move-order can be crucial. Sometimes 8 e3 is played first, when a line such as 8...f6 9 b3 doesn't run into 9...e6? (as it would were the knight on f3 and pawn on e2) because 10 \texttt{xb7 b4} fails to 11 b5.

8...f6 (D)

Then 8 \texttt{d1} is a more-or-less 'normal' version of the gambit, but White can also take the offered pawn by 8 \texttt{xb7 (8 d3 a6) 8...c6}

8...\texttt{c6 9 b3 d7 also gives some compensation, but it is two pawns and 10 f4 seems like a good idea; the text-move has the capability of producing more direct threats} 9 \texttt{b3} (simpler may be 9 f4 b4, when 10 e3 or 10 f3 offers a moderate advantage), and Bucker and Winds like 9...b8 10 \texttt{d1 a5 11 f3 a3! 12 bxa3 xc3+ 13 d2 xa3. Then a possible line is 14 e3 xe4 15 e2 0-0 16 f8 \texttt{c2 f5 (17...xd2 18 xd2 \pm) 18 xc6 xd2 19 xd2 xd2 20 c4 \pm. Both sides have many options, however.}

Now the path divides depending on where White puts his queen. 9 \texttt{d1} is the traditional main line, but we shall focus on two alternative locations for the queen:

3.431: 9 \texttt{b3} 62

3.432: 9 \texttt{d3?!} 64

My main recommendation is 9 \texttt{b3}, long the main alternative to 9 \texttt{d1}. 9 \texttt{d3} is a little-analysed move which I only noticed recently.
Both moves avoid the complex theory that has built up over many years in the lines following 9 \( \text{d}1 \).

3.431)

9 \( \text{b}3 \)

This move is somewhat irregular, although well-known to Schara advocates.

9...\( \text{c}5 \)

Unfortunately, with the pawn on e2 and knight on f3, 9...\( \text{e}6 \) (D) is also possible (compare my comments above on 8 e3 and regarding 9 \( \text{d}3 \) in Section 3.432), and that requires some specifics:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \( a \) 10 \( \text{xb}7 \)?? \( \text{b}4 \) leads to a draw after 11 \( \text{b}5 \+ \text{d}7 \) (11...\( \text{d}7 \) 12 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \pm \)) 12 \( \text{c}5 \+ \text{e}6 \) (12...\( \text{e}7 \)?? 13 \( \text{d}4 \) 0-0 14 a3 \( \text{c}6 \) 15 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 16 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \pm \)) 13 \( \text{b}5 \+ \text{d}7 \) 14 \( \text{e}5 \+ \text{e}6 \) (when White must avoid 15 \( \text{d}4 \)?? \( \text{xd}4 \)), etc.

  \item b) 10 \( \text{c}2 \) seems playable to me (I like preventing ...\( \text{f}5 \)), but I can only find two games in my entire database. Here's one: 10...a6!! 11 a3 \( \text{c}5 \) 12 e3 \( \text{e}7 \) 13 \( \text{e}2 \) g5?? 14 0-0 (Black probably doesn't have much after 14 \( \text{d}xg5 \) either) 14...g4 15 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 16 b4 \( \text{xd}4 \) 17 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 18 \( \text{b}2 \)\( \text{g}8 \)?? 19 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) + Nenashev-Truta, Groningen 1994. Obviously not very relevant, but I certainly wouldn't dismiss 10 \( \text{c}2 \) out of hand.

  \item c) 10 \( \text{a}4 \) (D) is the main move.

An overview:

\begin{itemize}
  \item c1) 10...\( \text{e}7 \) is too slow: 11 e4 (or 11 \( \text{e}5 \)) 11...0-0 12 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 13 0-0 gives White a slight advantage.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item c2) 10...\( \text{d}7 \) 11 \( \text{d}4 \)! \( \text{c}8 \) (11...\( \text{xd}4 \) 12 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \pm \)) 11...\( \text{c}5 \) 12 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 13 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 14 e4 a6 15 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \pm \) 12 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 13 g3! \( \text{c}5 \) 14 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \pm \).

  \item c3) 10...a6 11 \( \text{g}5 \) (11 a3 b5 12 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{c}8 \) =) 11...\( \text{b}4 \) 12 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 13 \( \text{g}5 \) 0-0 14 e3 \( \text{c}7 \) 15 \( \text{xf}6 \) (15 \( \text{f}4 \)??) 15...\( \text{xf}6 \) 16 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \pm \) with the idea 16...\( \text{d}4 \) 17 0-0 \( \text{xc}3 \) 18 \( \text{exe}4 \) \( \text{xb}2 \) 19 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{c}3 \) 20 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) \( \pm \).

  \item c4) 10...\( \text{e}5 \) is again the most popular continuation: 11 e3 0-0 (11...\( \text{e}7 \) 12 \( \text{e}5 \) 0-0 13 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 16 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \pm \) Peralta-Airando, Buenos Aires 1999; 11...a6 12 \( \text{e}5 \) 0-0 13 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{bxc}6 \) 14 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \pm \) 12 \( \text{e}2 \) a6 (12...\( \text{e}7 \) 13 0-0 \( \text{d}8 \) 14 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \pm \)) 15 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{b}6 \), Van der Sterren-Kuijf, Dutch Ch, Hilversum 1987, and here 16 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 17 \( \text{ge}4 \) limits Black to inadequate compensation) 14...\( \text{c}8 \) 13 0-0 \( \text{d}8 \) 14 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 15 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 16 \( \text{e}3 \) is strong, but 16 g3 \( \text{e}7 \) 17 \( \text{e}1 \) also gave Black almost nothing for the pawn in Kar­ppov-Hector, Haninge 1990) 13 0-0 b5 14 \( \text{c}2 \) (14 \( \text{h}4 \) is also promising: 14...\( \text{c}8 \) 15 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{b}6 \), Van der Sterren-Kuijf, Dutch Ch, Hilversum 1987, and here 16 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 17 \( \text{ge}4 \) limits Black to inadequate compensation) 14...\( \text{c}8 \) 14...\( \text{b}4 \) 15 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{h}6 \) \( \pm \) 16 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{g}4 \) and now 17 \( \text{d}4 \) is even stronger than 17 \( \text{e}1 \)! \( \text{c}7 \) 18 a3 \( \text{c}6 \), when White has untangled and re­mains a pawn ahead, Hort-Dankert, Porz 1981) 15 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 16 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \), Hort-Cuartas, Dort­mund 1982 now went 17 a3 \( \text{c}6 \) (17...\( \text{d}5 \) \( \pm \)) 18 b4 \( \text{d}6 \) 19 \( \text{b}2 \) and White was consolidat­ing, though 17 \( \text{exe}6 \)! \( \text{exe}6 \) 18 a4 is more accu­rate.

We now return to 9...\( \text{c}5 \) (D):

10 \( \text{g}5 \)

Often this piece is best-placed on d2 for defensive purposes, but here the element of
simplification helps White to develop quickly and avoid weaknesses. 10 e3 has a lengthy history and really should be known, because 10 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) is not yet worked out. I’ll go straight to the main line: 10...\( \text{\textit{e7}} \) (10...0-0 II \( \text{\textit{a3}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) 14 b4) 11 \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) (Bronznik likes the move-order 11 \( \text{\textit{d2}} \) 0-0-0 and now 12 \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) or 12 \( \text{\textit{c1}} \) \( \text{\textit{b8}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{e2}} \), because it renders ...g5 plans less effective) 11...0-0-0?? (D) (11...g5?? 12 \( \text{\textit{d2}} \) g4 13 \( \text{\textit{h4}} \) ±) and now it’s all a matter of specifics:

\[ W \]

a) 12 \( \text{\textit{d2}} \) \( \text{\textit{b8}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{c1}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{a4}} \) \( \text{\textit{hg8}} \) 15 0-0 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{fd1}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) (16...g4 17 \( \text{\textit{dd4}} \) ± Bormida-Sasata, corr. 1997), and here Bronznik likes 17 \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) for White, with the idea 17...g4 18 \( \text{\textit{e1}} \) (18 \( \text{\textit{h4}} \)?) 18...\( \text{\textit{b6}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{a4}} \) \( \text{\textit{dd4}} \) 20 \text{\textit{exd4}} \( \text{\textit{xa4}} \) 21 \( \text{\textit{xa4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{e3}} \) \( \text{\textit{dd5}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{dd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{wa6}} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{xa6}} \) bx\( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 25 \text{\textit{d3}} ±.

b) 12 0-0 is the normal move. It exposes White to attack by 12...g5, when 13 \( \text{\textit{d2}} \) may be best, because captures on d4 are disadvantageous. Bronznik suggests the amazing attack 13...g4 14 \( \text{\textit{dd4}} \) h5! 15 \( \text{\textit{ac1}} \) \( \text{\textit{b8}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{fd1}} \) g3!! 17 hxg3 h4 18 g\( \times h4 \) \( \text{\textit{hxh4}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 20 \text{\textit{exd4}} \( \text{\textit{e6}} \). Here instead of 21 \( \text{\textit{wa3}} \), I’d propose 21 \( \text{\textit{wb5}} \), and offer the lengthy line 21...\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{e5}} \) + 23 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf3}} \) + 24 gxf3 \( \text{\textit{g8}} \) 25 \( \text{\textit{xb5}} \) \( \text{\textit{dd7}} \)?? 26 \( \text{\textit{g3}} \) \( \text{\textit{gd5}} \) 27 \( \text{\textit{c8+}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc8}} \) 28 \( \text{\textit{wg5}} \) \( \text{\textit{hh8}} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{g3}} \) \( \text{\textit{hgg8}} \) 30 \( \text{\textit{c7+}} \) \( \text{\textit{b8}} \) 31 \( \text{\textit{xe6+}} \) \( \text{\textit{gg3+}} \) 32 \( \text{\textit{fxg3}} \) \( \text{\textit{fxe3}} \) 33 \( \text{\textit{xd7}} \), when Black has serious problems due to the passed g-pawn.

There’s a lot of analysis in this note, probably flawed in parts, but my overall impression is that Black hasn’t fully adequate compensation for the pawn.

We now return to 10 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) (D):

\[ B \]

\[ 10...\text{\textit{e6}} \]

Or:

a) 10...0-0 11 \( \text{\textit{dd1}} \) (11 e3 \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{wa4}} \) has also been played) 11...\( \text{\textit{a5}} \)! 12 \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 13 e3 \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{d5}} \)! \( \text{\textit{b5}} \)!! \( \text{\textit{ff7}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{wd3}} \) is winning for White, Valenzuela Fuentealba-Sommerbauer, Elista Olympiad 1998.

b) 10...h6 11 \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) (11 \( \text{\textit{h4}} \)) 11...\( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) and here 12 \( \text{\textit{dd1}} \)! strikes me as an improvement upon 12 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{e7}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) 14 e3 \( \text{\textit{c8}} \)!! (Bronznik’s move).

\[ 11 \text{\textit{wb5}} \]

11 \( \text{\textit{xb7}} \)?? isn’t played for some reason, hopefully not 11...\( \text{\textit{b4}} \)?? (11...\( \text{\textit{c8}} \)) because then 12 \( \text{\textit{wb5}} \) \( \text{\textit{dd7}} \)?? 13 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c2+}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{dd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{xa1}} \) 15 e3 (15 \( \text{\textit{dd4}} \)) wins.

\[ 11...\text{\textit{e7}} \] 12 e3 a6 13 \( \text{\textit{wa4}} \) h6 14 \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) (D)

This position has been reached in several games.

15 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \)!
Again with the theme of simplification. 15 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{e}2 \) and 15 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{d}3 \) have been less effective.

15...\( \text{\textit{a}} \text{d}7 \)

15...\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}4 \) 16 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{c}6 \) \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a}3+ \) 17 \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{c}3 \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{xf}3+ \) 18 \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}2 \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{xe}6 \) 19 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a}1 \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{d}8 \) 20 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}4 \) ± (Ftačnik).

16 0-0-0 (D)

Now:

a) Ftačnik proposes 16...\( \text{\textit{a}} \text{c}8(?) \), but then 17 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{xd}7! \) \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{xd}7 \) 18 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{d}1+ \) \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{e}8 \) 19 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{e}4 \) \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{c}7 \) 20 \( \text{\textit{h}} \text{d}5 \) ±.

b) 16...\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{d}4(?)! \) 17 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a}5 \) \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}6 \) 18 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{e}4(18 \text{\textit{d}d}5 \) is also good) 18...\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{bxa}5 \) 19 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{xd}6+ \text{\textit{g}} \text{xf}6 \) 20 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{xd}4 \) with a clear advantage for White, Babula-Biolek, Olomouc 2004.

c) 16...\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}5 \) improves, when there could follow 17 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{d}5 \) (17 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{d}3 \) ±) 17...\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{d}8 \) 18 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}4 \) with the idea 18...\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}7(18...\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{c}8 \) 19 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{d}3 \) ±) 19 \( \text{\textit{h}} \text{d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{h}} \text{d}7 \) 20 \( \text{\textit{h}} \text{d}1 \).

3.432)

9 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{d}3(?) \) (D)

The queen covers the bl-h7 diagonal and it can't be attacked by ...\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{e}6 \) as in the \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{b}3 \) lines. I find this an attractive option.

9...

9...\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}5 \)

The most aggressive reply. Other moves:

a) 9...\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{e}7 \) 10 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}4 \) (10 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}4 \) is possible too; e.g., 10...\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{b}4 \) 11 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{b}1 \) or 10...\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{c}7 \) 11 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}8 \) 12 0-0 ±) 10...\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}4 \) 11 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{b}1 \) \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{bd}5 \) 12 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{e}5 \). ±

b) 9...\( \text{\textit{a}} \text{b}4 \) 10 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{b}1 \) \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}5 \) 11 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a}3 \) \( \text{\textit{g}} \text{c}6 \) 12 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}3 \) (12 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}4 \)?) 12...\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}7 \) 13 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}8 \) 14 0-0 0-0 15 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}1 \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{d}8 \) 16 \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}4 \) \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{d}6 \) 17 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{b}2 \) ± Van Beek-Vander Wijk, Dutch Team Ch 2011/12.

10 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a}3 \)

Or 10 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}3 \) 0-0 11 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}7 \) 12 0-0 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{d}8 \) 13 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a}3 \) \( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g}4 \) 14 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{c}2 \) \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}5 \) 15 \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}4 \) \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{b}6 \) 16 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{b}2 \). ±.

10...0-0

10...\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{b}6 \) 11 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}3 \) 0-0-0(?) 12 \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}4 \) \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}7 \) 13 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{c}2 \) \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}8 \) 14 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}4 \) !.

11 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}3 \)

11 \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}4 \) \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{b}6 \) 12 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{g}5 \) \( \text{\textit{h}} \text{h}6 \) 13 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{h}4 \) ±.

11...\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}7 \) 12 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{d}8 \) 13 0-0 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}5 \)

Now in M.Helbig-Kuijf, Germany (team event) 2007/8 White could have played 14 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{xe}5 \) 15 \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{d}1 \) \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{c}7 \) 16 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{c}2 \) ±. In these positions Black still has compensation and chances to fight for the initiative; I just don't think they're worth a pawn. If you don't feel comfortable defending at all, however, it's going to be hard to play for any advantage against the Schara.

3.5)

2...\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}5(?) \)

This symmetrical move is called the Austrian Defence. Although there's no outright refutation, White will get the better of things with natural moves.
3 cxd5 Qf6

a) 3...cxd4 4 Qxd4 leaves White a pawn ahead: 4...e6 5 e4 Qc6 6 Qd1 exd5 7 exd5 Qb4 8 Qc3 Qf6 9 Qb5+ Qd7 10 We2+ We7 11 Qxd7+ Qxd7 12 Qe3 ±.

b) 3...Qxd5 4 Qf3 intends Qc3, and then 4...cxd4 Qc3! Qd8 (5...Qa5 6 Qxd4; for example, 6...e5 7 Qdb5 Qc6 8 Qd2 Qd8 9 Qd5! Qd6, Bilobrk-Novak, Varazdin 2004, and now White stands much better after 10 e4! with the idea 10...Qge7 11 Qg5! 6 Qxd4 Qxd4 7 Qxd4 offers White active development; for example, 7...e5 8 Qdb5 Qa6 9 Qd5 (or 9...e3 b6 10 Qd5 Qd8? 11 Qxa7!) 9...Qd8 10 Qd2 ±.

4 e4! (D)

White restores material equality, but with a cramping pawn on d5. 4 dxc5 also secures an edge following 4...Qxd5 5 Qxd5 Qxd5 6 e4 Qb4 7 Qa3 e5 8 Qd2 ±.

3.6)

2...e6 3 Qc3

In this section we’ll inquire into some rarely-played Queen’s Gambit lines.

3...Qb4

With this move Black is playing a sort of Ragozin/Nimzo-Indian idea without committing his knight to f6. In the end, this offers White the choice of a development that renders Black’s increased flexibility moot. But first, let’s look at a row of other irregular third moves:

a) 3...b6?! weakens the light squares, and a line that shows this up is 4 Qf3 Qb7 5 cxd5 exd5. Here many moves have been played, but 6 e4! (D) is very strong:

a1) 6...Qf6 7 e5 Qe4 8 Qb5+ (8 Qd3 ± g6? 9 We2 Qxc3 10 bxc3 Qc6 11 0-0 ± E.Cohn-Schlechter, St Petersburg 1909) 8...c6 9 Qd3 Qxc3 10 bxc3 (Larsen).

a2) 6...Qe7 7 Qb3! g6 8 exd5 Qg7 (not 8...Qxd5?? 9 Qb5+! c6 10 Qxd5 cxb5 11 Qxb5+ Qc6 12 We2+ and White wins due to

White has aggressive development and a lasting advantage.

8...Qe7+

a) 8...Qe7 9 Qxd8+ Qxd8 10 Qe3 Qba6 11 Qb5+ Qd7 12 Qxd7+ Qxd7 13 0-0-0 Qdc5 14 Qxc5! Qxc5 15 Qhe1+ (every white piece is in play) 15...Qe6 16 Qd4 0-0 17 Qxe6 Qxe6 18 f3! ± Gleizerov-Berkell, Stockholm 2002. Black has a weak isolated pawn on a half-open file.

b) White brings his pieces out very rapidly after 8...Qxd5 9 Qxd5 Qe6 10 Qe3; e.g., 10...Qd6 11 0-0-0 Qc6 12 Qb5 Qb8 13 Qhe1 0-0 14 Qxc6 bxc6 15 Qe7+ Qh8 16 Qxc8 Qxc8 17 Qd7.

9 Qe3

Black has problems:

a) After 9...Qf6?, the game Portisch-Bronstein, Monte Carlo 1969 went 10 Qb5 Qd7 11 0-0 Qe6 12 Qe5 (12 Qf6!! is even stronger) 12...Qxe5 13 Qxe5 Qxb5 14 Qxb5 a6 15 Qad1! Qd8 16 Qb6! Qxd1 17 Qxd1 f6 18 Qf5 Qg6 19 Qc7+ Qf7 (19...Qxc7 20 Qc8+ Qf7 21 Qd7) 20 Qd5 1-0.

b) 9...a6 10 Qg5 h6 11 0-0-0! Qbd7 (not 11...hxg5?? 12 Qxc5) 12 Qxc5 Qxg5+ 13 Qe3 Qxd5 14 Qxd5 Qd6 15 Qb6! Qxb6 16 Qxd6 offers White the bishop-pair and the initiative.
the idea 12...\textit{e}7 13 \textit{d}f6+ \textit{f}8 14 \textit{h}6#) 9 \textit{c}4 0-0 10 0-0 ±.

a3) 6...\textit{dxe}4 7 \textit{d}e5 \textit{d}6 8 \textit{g}4 \textit{f}8 9 \textit{c}4 \textit{d}xe5 10 \textit{dxe}5 \textit{d}4?! 11 \textit{d}5! \textit{c}6 12 \textit{x}e4! (12
\textit{xe}4?! \textit{w}xe4+ 13 \textit{xe}4 ± [Larsen]) 12...\textit{xe}5?
(12...\textit{d}7 13 \textit{e}3 \textit{x}e5 14 \textit{w}xg7+ \textit{w}xg7 15
\textit{xd}4 \textit{f}6 16 0-0-0 ±) 13 \textit{f}4 \textit{d}6 14 \textit{h}4 (14
\textit{xf}3!) 14...\textit{e}7? 15 0-0-0 \textit{e}8 16 \textit{g}3 with a
winning advantage for White, Pill sbury-Swi-
derski, Hanover 1902.

b) 3...a6 4 \textit{cxd}5 \textit{exd}5 5 \textit{d}f3 (D).

This is really just a Queen’s Gambit Ex-
change Variation with the less-than-optimal
move ...a6: 5...c6 (5...\textit{e}7 6 \textit{f}4 \textit{d}f6 7 \textit{e}3 0-0
\textit{d}3 ±; 5...\textit{d}f6 6 \textit{g}5) 6 \textit{f}4 (in view of the slow
...a6, I think 6 e4?! should be considered;
e.g., 6...\textit{dxe}4 7 \textit{d}xe4 \textit{b}4+ 8 \textit{c}3 \textit{d}f6 9 \textit{c}4
0-0 10 0-0 c5?! 11 \textit{g}3?! \textit{xc}3 12 \textit{xc}3 ±)
6...\textit{d}6 and now 7 \textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}6 8 e4! is good,
but the strategist will prefer simply 7 \textit{g}3 \textit{e}7
8 e3 \textit{f}5 9 \textit{d}3 \textit{gx}3 10 hxg3 \textit{w}b6 11 \textit{w}c2
\textit{xd}3 12 \textit{w}xd3 \textit{d}7 13 0-0-0 \textit{h}6 14 e4 ±

Averbakh-Antoshin, USSR Team Ch, Moscow
1959.

c) 3...f5 is rather artificial. Now 4 e3 \textit{c}6
would transpose to Section 6.1, but there’s no
reason to block in the \textit{c}1-bishop, and 4 \textit{d}f4! is
one of several good moves. 4...\textit{d}f6 5 e3 (D)
and now:

c1) 5...\textit{c}6 6 \textit{d}f3 \textit{d}6 (it’s illogical to let
White’s powerful bishop go unopposed or un-
exchanged when Black has weakened so many
dark squares) 7 \textit{d}d3 \textit{xf}4 8 \textit{exf}4 0-0 9 0-0. Ward
says it well: “Taking stock of the situa-
tion here, White has a handy half-open e-file
and a juicy outpost on e5. He also possesses
the significantly superior bishop and is boss
on the queenside too.” One example is 9...\textit{d}e4
10 \textit{e}1 \textit{d}7 11 \textit{e}1 \textit{h}8 12 \textit{g}3 \textit{d}f6 13 \textit{e}5
\textit{w}b6 14 \textit{xf}4! \textit{fxe}4 15 \textit{c}2 \textit{d}8 16 \textit{f}3 \textit{e}3 17
\textit{xf}3 \textit{w}d6 18 \textit{c}5 \textit{w}c7 19 \textit{g}4 \textit{d}7 20 \textit{d}3 ±

c2) I don’t know why, but Black loves the
sequence 5...\textit{e}7 6 \textit{d}f3 \textit{c}6 7 \textit{d}3 0-0 8 \textit{w}c2
(now one idea is \textit{h}3 followed by \textit{g}4, while even
the immediate \textit{h}3 is quite good, since it also
provides an escape-square for the bishop on \textit{h}2;
Chris Ward suggests this in similar positions).
By 8...\textit{d}e4 Black finally plays this typical
Stonewall move, but he is far from getting his
pieces out and White proceeds to break open
lines: 9 \textit{g}4! \textit{a}5 (D) (9...\textit{h}8 doesn’t help
much; in Tan-Hoang Thi Bao, Olongapo City
2010, White simply pursued the attack by 10
\textit{g}1 \textit{f}6 11 \textit{g}5 \textit{e}7 12 \textit{g}6!, preparing \textit{e}5, but
12...\textit{d}7 13 gxh7 opened lines against the
king, and 13...\textit{f}6 14 h4! \textit{w}e8 15 \textit{c}xd5 \textit{exd}5 16
0-0-0 \textit{b}5 17 \textit{d}g5! followed).
There have been a simply amazing number of games from this position, including scads from the past three years. Black may be improvising, because he loses nearly every game! In fact, White wins in both the middlegame and endgame. 10 \textit{e2}! (just about everyone plays this, but 10 \textit{gx5 exf5} 11 \textit{e2}?! \textit{xc3}+ 12 \textit{bxc3} \textit{e6} 13 \textit{wb3}, as in Rustemov-Schaffarth, Bad Wiessee 1999, is also good) 10...\textit{d6} (10...\textit{d7} 11 \textit{gx5} \textit{xc3}+ 12 \textit{wc3} \textit{e6} 13 \textit{wb3}, as in Rustemov-Schaffarth, Bad Wiessee 1999, is also good) 10...\textit{d6} 11 \textit{a3} \textit{dxc4} 12 \textit{xc4} \textit{b5} 13 \textit{b4} \textit{b6} 14 \textit{xc3} \textit{xc3}+ 15 \textit{wb3} \textit{exf5} 14 \textit{cx5} \textit{cxd5} 15 \textit{c4}! is another example of how a strong grandmaster isn’t afraid of the ending: 15...\textit{d6} 16 \textit{hc1} \textit{d7} 17 \textit{b1} b6 18 c5 \textit{bxc5} 19 \textit{xc5} with a clear advantage for White, Yermolinsky-Privman, Ledyard 2009.) 11 \textit{a3} \textit{xc4} 12 \textit{xc4} b5 13 b4 \textit{b6} 14 \textit{xc3} \textit{xc3}+ 15 \textit{xc3} \textit{fxg} 16 \textit{d5} and White dominates, Poluljak-Chigvintsev, Russian Team Ch, Smolensk 2000.

Now we return to the position after 3...\textit{d4} (D):

\textit{4 cxd5}

Naturally, 4 \textit{e3} can’t be bad either, with the Nimzo-Indian ideas which we see in Chapter 7. Indeed, 4...\textit{d6} transposes to Section 7.4.

\textit{4...exd5} 5 \textit{xf4} \textit{f4}

5...\textit{d7} is playable, but the knight isn’t targeting \textit{e4} and thereby collaborating with the bishop on \textit{b4}, so White can develop comfortably: 6 \textit{xf3} (or 6 \textit{e} 3 0-0 7 \textit{d3} \textit{f5} 8 \textit{f3} \textit{f6}) 6...0-0 7 \textit{e} 3 \textit{f5} (7...\textit{c5} 8 \textit{e2} \textit{bc6} 9 \textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 10 0-0 \textit{g4} 11 \textit{c1} \textit{b6} 12 \textit{h3} \textit{h5} 13 \textit{d4} \textit{c6} 14 \textit{d5} (Touzane-Godena, Mitropa Cup, Portorož 1998) and now 11 \textit{d6}! is very interesting and probably good, waiting to play \textit{xd6} until \textit{e4} is fully prepared; e.g., 11...\textit{xf4} 12 \textit{exf4} \textit{d6} 13 \textit{g} 3 \textit{d7} 14 \textit{e} 2 \textit{f6} 15 \textit{a} 1 \textit{a} 8 16 \textit{c5}.

\textit{6 e3 c5}

The freeing move. Graf correctly suggests that 6...\textit{d7} 7 \textit{c1}! is better for White.

\textit{7 d3}

This stops...\textit{f5}. 7 \textit{xc5} \textit{d6} 8 \textit{c1} is a reasonable alternative.

\textit{7...c6} 8 \textit{d2} \textit{xd4}

8...\textit{c4} 9 \textit{c2} 0-0 10 0-0 forces Black to devote forces to stopping \textit{f3} and \textit{e4}.

\textit{9 exd4 0-0 10 0-0 \textit{g} 4}

10...\textit{e} 8 11 a3 \textit{f6} (Hertneck).

\textit{11 f3}

Alternatively 11 a3 \textit{e7} 12 \textit{c2} \textit{w} 7 13 \textit{c5} \textit{h5} 14 \textit{f3} \textit{e8} 15 \textit{h} 1 \textit{d8} 16 \textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} (Mohota-Gvetadze, World Girls Ch, Erevan 2000) and now 17 \textit{f4}! \textit{g6} 18 \textit{fxd5} is good, with the idea 18...\textit{xd4} 19 \textit{a} 4! and a slight advantage for White.

\textit{11...d5}

11...\textit{d6} 12 a3 \textit{e7} 13 b4?! \textit{e8}?! 14 \textit{a} 4 \textit{f6} (Hertneck-Lautier, Munich 1993; 14...\textit{d6} is consistent, to get to \textit{c4} or \textit{f5}, but then 15 \textit{c5} is strong) and now 15 \textit{d5}! \textit{xd4} 16 \textit{h} 7+ \textit{h} 8 17 \textit{xd4} \textit{h} 8 keeps White on top.

\textit{12 a3 \textit{e} 7 13 \textit{c1} \textit{c8}}

Bareev-Lautier, Paris blitz 1991. Here 14 \textit{f5}! \textit{a} 8 15 \textit{b} 3 \textit{a} 5 16 \textit{a} 2 is promising.
4 Queen’s Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 (D)

The Queen’s Gambit Accepted is a well-respected opening which has been employed by many World Champions. At first 2...dxc4 seems illogical, because Black gives White a 2-1 central majority for free. But in a sense it resembles the Slav Defence in that, by the time White has both set up his pieces and recovered his pawn, Black is ready to strike back in the centre, assisted by the fact that ...dxc4 has opened the d-file with Black’s queen already hitting d4.

3 \( \text{\textit{f3}} \)

I’m advocating the traditional main line, which is both safe and strategically rich. White brings a piece out, prevents the move ...e5, and prepares 4 e3 and 5 \( \text{\textit{x}} \)xc4. After that he plans to castle and advance his centre pawns.

At this point 3...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) is the main move by a wide margin, but a few other third moves are important enough to merit their own section:

4.1: 3...a6 69
4.2: 3...c5 71
4.3: 3...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 72

In addition, Black has a variety of lesser third moves, most involving tricky attempts to exploit White’s delay in recovering the pawn on c4:

a) 3...\( \text{\textit{g4}} \)?! 4 \( \text{\textit{e5}} \)h5 5 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) e6?!. (5...\( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 6 \( \text{\textit{x}} \)

Two responses suggest themselves:

b) 3...b5 4 a4 b4 (4...\( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 5 \( \text{\textit{e3}} \) \( \text{\textit{b6}} \) 6 \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) 7 \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) favour White) 6 b3 \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) (6...\( \text{\textit{xc3}} \) 7 \( \text{\textit{axb3}} \) gives White obvious compensation in terms of centre, c-file pressure, and free and rapid development; White is
QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED

for choice) 7 d2 cxb3 8 b2 c7 9 c3 (or 9 axb3, again with an excess of compensation) 9...bxa2 10 d5! d7 11 dxc6 cxc6 12 xb5 c6 13 b2 (threatening d6+) 13...xc8 14 c3 d6 15 e5! e6 (15...xe5 16 xe5 b5 17 d4 c6 18 a7=) 16 e2 e7 17 exd7 18 0-0 0-0 19 b1=.

c2) 5 d3 b5 (5...d6 transposes to Section 4.31) 6 e2?! d6 7 0-0 and Black has to unwind while White begins to operate in the centre; e.g., 7...d5 (7...e4 b4 9 d5 e6 95! bxc3 11 exf6 gxf6 12 xc4) 8 c2 b4 9 d5 exd5 10 e4! dxe4 (10...b5 11 d5 e7 12 b3=) 12 d5 13 b3 14 c6 15 d7 16 d2 a5 (13...e7 14 g5!) 14 a3 bxa3 15 cxb5 e6 16 a4 e7 17 c4 0-0 18 c1 with a modest advantage.

d) 3...d7 4 e4 b6 is another way to hold the c-pawn. Then:

d1) 5 xc4 dxc4 6 a4+ b7 6 c4 is probably a bit better for White, in spite of the bishops, due to his ideal centre. After 7...d5, 8 d2 is quite interesting, because White maintains a view of the c-file and both c4 and b3 are possibilities. The main line goes 8 c3 e6 (Flear considers 8...b5?! unsound due to 9...d7 and now 10 b7 or 10 c5) 9 d3 g6 10 0-0 g7 11 h3 0-0 12 c3 and naturally White stands a little better.

d2) 5 a4 a5 6 c6 (D) and now:

B

- d21) Flear proposes 6 g6, to gain a tempo attacking d4 after 7 xc4 xc4 8 c4 g7. Actually, 9 c3! xd4 10 xb5 is rather good for White, with the idea 10...c5 11 c3 xe3?? 12 xf7+, but in any case 9 c3 keeps an edge.

d22) 6 f6 7 c3 f7 8 xc4 g6 9 f4!? (9 xb6! xb6 10 f4; 9 c3 is also played) 9...c6 10 b2 (10 xb6 xb6!=) 10...g7 11 f6 0-0 (Gavrikov-Gulko, USSR Ch, Frunze 1981) and now the most accurate continuation is 12 xg7 xg7 13 d1 with a modest advantage.

e) 3...e6 4 e4 b5 (4...c5 5 xc4 a6 6 0-0 f6 is the main line of this chapter, i.e. Section 4.332) 5 a4 c6 6 axb5 cxb5 7 b3! (D).

White is going to recover his pawn with a significant positional advantage:

e1) 7...xb7 8 bxc4 b4 is called 'equal' in one source, but I like White following 9 c5! with ideas of a4+ and b5, and e5 when called for. That threat can be stopped by 9...e7, but then 10 b2 6 c6 (10...c6 11 b5) 11 c4 e7 12 e4 0-0 13 c3 clearly favours White.

e2) 7...b4+ 8 d2 xd2+ 9 xd2 a5 (9...f6 10 bxc4 bxc4 11 xc4 0-0 12 d3 with freer development and the better pawn-structure) 10 bxc4 b4 11 e5 (after 11 c5 f6 White can play 12 d3 or 12 e4 0-0 13 d3) 11...f6 12 a4+ (12 e2 0 and f3) 12...d4 13 b7 bxd7 14 g3 0-0 15 g2 a6 16 0-0 and White is in control.

4.1)

3...a6 4 e3

4 e4 is also good, but messy.

4...g4

Black takes a unique tack; mixing ...a6 and ...g4 is unusual. Instead, 4...b5 has some strong advocates, but I believe it ultimately
favours White: 5 a4 \( a \_b7 \) 6 axb5 axb5 7 \( \text{xa}8 \_x_\text{a}8 \) 8 b3 cxb3!? (called the Haberditz Variation; instead 8...\( \text{f}6 \) 9 bxc4 bxc4 10 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \pm \) is pleasant for White) 9 \( \text{xb}5+ \) c6 (D) and now:

a) 10 \( \text{c}4 \) ?! (since the bishop will retreat later, it is better to move it back to d3 or e2) 10...e6 11 0-0 \( \text{d}7 \) 12 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 13 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{gf}6 \) 14 \( \text{c}1 \) (this is Semkov and Sakaev's main line) 14...0-0 (Cox refutes their suggestion 14...\( \text{a}5 \) ? with 15 \( \text{x}e6! \) fxe6 16 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 17 d5, when White wins) 15 \( \text{e}2 \) (there's that lost tempo) 15...c5 16 dxc5 \( \text{e}4 \) and now they give 17 c6, but what about 17 \( \text{b}5 \) instead? Then 17...\( \text{c}7 \) 18 c6 \( \text{d}c5 \)! 19 \( \text{d}4! \) \( \text{b}8 \) 20 \( \text{w}4 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 21 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 22 \( \text{f}3 \) looks favourable to White, who will probably end up with a superior ending.

b) Given the tempo-loss we have just seen, I recommend 10 \( \text{e}2 \)! to simplify matters (10 \( \text{d}3 \) is also interesting). Then 10...e6 11 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 12 0-0 \( \text{e}7 \) 13 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{gf}6 \) 14 \( \text{c}1 \) leaves White a full tempo ahead of the line with 10 \( \text{c}4 \), and anyway, I suspect that with the bishop on e2, playing \( \text{a}4 \) in conjunction with \( \text{e}5 \) on moves 12-14 is going to give Black fits. Overall, it appears that Black's positional disadvantages will show in a bad light.

5 \( \text{x}c4 \) e6 6 h3 \( \text{h}5 \) 7 \( \text{c}3 \)

This position can arise via 3...\( \text{f}6 \) 4 e3 \( \text{g}4 \) 5 \( \text{x}c4 \) e6 6 h3 \( \text{h}5 \) 7 \( \text{c}3 \) a6, and it should be noted that 7...a6 isn't normally played there.

7...\( \text{c}6 \) (D)

8 g4

I like this move, but White doesn't have to pursue the bishop-pair; 8 0-0 is a perfectly acceptable alternative. For example:

a) 8...c5!? 9 dxc5 \( \text{xd}1 \) 10 \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 11 gxf3 \( \text{xc}5 \) has been called equal, but I think Black will suffer against the bishops for a long time after, e.g., 12 b3 \( \text{c}6 \) 13 \( \text{b}2 \) 0-0 14 f4. And of course White isn't forced to capture on c5.

b) 8...\( \text{c}6 \) 9 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}6 \) is a standard set-up. Pelletier-Brynell, Istanbul Olympiad 2000 went 10 \( \text{d}2 \) ?! \( \text{xe}2 \) 11 \( \text{xe}2 \) 0-0 12 f4?! (12 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \pm \)) 12...\( \text{d}5 \) 13 \( \text{b}3 \) f5 14 e4 fxe4?! (14...\( \text{b}6 \)) 15 \( \text{xe}4 \) ?

8...\( \text{g}6 \) 9 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{bd}7 \)

9...c5 has a few answers, including the pawn sacrifice 10 d5?! (10 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 11 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \pm \)) 10...b5 11 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) (11...\( \text{xd}5 \) 12 g5 \( \text{e}4 \) 13 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \pm \)) 12 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 13 \( \text{xd}5 \)! (Raetsky gives only 13 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{a}7 \) 14 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \)! 15 a4 exd5 16 axb5 axb5 17 \( \text{b}8 \) \( \pm \) when [White] clearly has some play for the pawn, but just how much is not so clear.)” 13...\( \text{xd}5 \) (13...\( \text{f}5 \) 14 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{a}7 \) 15 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \pm \), when 15...\( \text{d}7 \) 16 e4 doesn't really help Black) 14 \( \text{xd}5 \) exd5 15 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 16 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 17 \( \text{e}2 \) (17 a4 b4 18 \( \text{c}4 \) a5 19 e4 \( \pm \)) 17...\( \text{f}5 \) 18 e4 \( \text{xe}4 \) 19 \( \text{c}6+ \) \( \text{f}7 \) 20 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 21 \( \text{ad}1 \) ?

10 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 11 \( \text{f}1 \)? (D)

A clever move, the idea of which is that White has the two bishops and now need only consolidate to retain an advantage. On g2, the bishop gains strength whether Black plays the freeing move...c5 or...e5.

11...c6

What is apparently the original game with 11 \( \text{f}1 \) went 11...\( \text{d}6 \) 12 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{b}8 \) ?! 13 g5?! (13 0-0 and 13 h4?! are alternatives) 13...\( \text{d}5 \) 14 \( \text{e}4 \)! (14 h4!) 14...\( \text{d}7 \) 15 h4 c5! 16 dxc5 \( \text{xc}5 \) 17 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 18 \( \text{d}2 \)! \( \text{b}4 \)? (Pytel
gives "18... wb6! 19 wb3! ±", but 19 wa4+ is better) 19 ... c3! 0-0 20 wxd8 fxd8 21 he2 with a significant advantage for White, Pytel-Pokojowczyk, Polish Ch, Poznan 1971.

12 g2 wc7

Black preferred 12...xd6 13 we2 (after 13 0-0 e5?!), as in Elianov-Turov, St Petersburg 2000, White has 14 g5! Dh5 15 De4 e7 16 d5 ±) 13...we7 14 Ld2 Db6 15 0-0-0 Db5 16 wb1 Dxc3+ 17 bxc3 e5! in the game Sakaev-Aleksenko, St Petersburg 2011. Then I think 18 g5 Dd7 (18...Dd5 19 c4) 19 h4 ± is a good way to establish some space for the bishops, when 19...exd4 20 cxd4 Dd6 21 wd3 watches over the queenside.

13 0-0

Now 13...Dd5 14 wf3! Dd8 15 Dd1 intends e4 retaining an edge, while 13...Le7 was played in Kasparov-Petrosian, Tilburg 1981. Then simply 14 e4 keeps a small advantage, since after 14...e5 15 d5, White's bishops can slowly exert influence over the board.

4.2)

3...c5 (D)

An important alternative to the 3...Df6 main line.

4 e3

I recommend White play this way, content to get back to our main lines after 4...Df6 5 Lxc4. Black can, and often does, try to avoid this transposition. But before getting to that, a quick word on the traditional replies. First, 4 d5 is the move which directly tries to prove that 3...c5 is wrong. After 4...e6 (or 4...Df6 5 Dc3 e6) 5 Dc3 Df6 (the ending following 5...exd5 6 wxd5 wxd5 7 Dxd5 Dd6 has been claimed to be equal, but at any rate White can still play it for a win) 6 e4 exd5 7 e5, there are serious complications including various tactical skirmishes that need to be memorized. What's more, current theory holds that Black stands satisfactorily, so there's not much incentive to recommend this.

4 Dc3 is a more appropriate option. White aims for an endgame with better development. Nevertheless, 4...cxd4 5 Dxd4 (5 Dxd4?! e5!) 5...wxd4 6 Dxd4 e5 7 Ddb5 Da6 is regarded as equal, and 4...Df6 5 e4!? (5 e3 cxd4 6 exd4 Dc6 transposes to the note to White's 5th move below) 5...cxd4 6 wxd4 Dxd4 7 Dxd4 e5! is also held to be satisfactory, based upon 8 Ddb5 Dd8! (and much analysis). It's perfectly alright to play this way (with a little study), but it will be difficult to extract any advantage from the opening.

Returning to 4 e3, Black can play uniquely, beginning with...

4...cxd4 (D)

After 4...Df6 5 Lxc4, the flexible 5...e6 transposes to our main line with 3 Df3 Df6 4 e3 e6 5 Lxc4 c5 (Section 4.33). 5...cxd4 6 exd4 e6 gives White extra options, but 7 0-0 is simplest, transposing to Section 4.331.

5 Lxc4

5 exd4 is relatively unambitious, but still of interest; then 5...Lc6 6 Dc3 Lf6 has a good reputation. White can try to stir up some action by 7 wa4+ wd7 (7...Dc6 8 De5 wb6 9 Le2 with the idea Df3 gives chances for both sides, and of course there are other options) 8 Db5! Dc6 (8...Dd8? 9 De5 we8 10 Lxc4! Lxc4 11 Lxc4 leaves Black's king seriously vulnerable)
9 \(\text{dxe5! } \text{exd5} \) 10 \(\text{c7+ } \text{d8} \) 11 \(\text{xe6+ } \text{xe6} \)
12 \(\text{dxe5 } \text{xe5}+ \) 13 \(\text{xe5} \) with an excellent attack for the two pawns; e.g., 13...\(\text{e6} \) 14 0-0-0+ \(\text{d6} \) 15 \(\text{g3! } \text{d5} \) 16 \(\text{d4 } \text{f5} \) 17 \(\text{g2} \) with ideas of \(\text{he1} \) and \(\text{xd5} \), as shown by 17...\(\text{c8} \) 18 \(\text{he1} \) c3 19 \(\text{e4 } \text{xb2++??} \) 20 \(\text{xb2 } \text{h5} \) 21 \(\text{xd5 } \text{exd5} \) 22 \(\text{gh}7, \) winning.

5...\(\text{w}c7!!? \)

By attacking the bishop, Black tries to avoid the main lines introduced by 5...\(\text{e6} \). Naturally not 5...\(\text{dxe3??} \) 6 \(\text{xf7+} \).

6 \(\text{wb3! } \text{e6} \) (D)

7 \(\text{exd4} \)

White can also play the pawn sacrifice 7 0-0, and if Black replies 7...\(\text{dxe3} \) 8 \(\text{xe3} \), White has compensation due to his huge lead in development.

7...\(\text{g6} \) 8 0-0

Piket-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 1996 went 8 \(\text{g5} \) \(\text{e7} \) 9 0-0 \(\text{c6} \) 10 \(\text{c3} \) 0-0 11 \(\text{d3} \) \(\text{d7} \) 12 \(\text{fe1} \) \(\text{g4} \) 13 \(\text{xe7} \) \(\text{xe7} \) ½-½. This may be roughly equal, but with this kind of imbalance there’s plenty to play for; one idea is 14 \(\text{wb4} \), to prevent 14...\(\text{c6??} \) due to 15 \(\text{d5} \), or White can simply play 14 \(\text{h3 } \text{f6} \) 15 \(\text{e5 } \text{c6} \) 16 \(\text{ac1} \) with a typical isolated-pawn position.

8...\(\text{dxc6} \) 9 \(\text{dxc3} \) \(\text{a6} \)

This seems to be Black’s favourite idea. First, it threatens 10...\(\text{a5} \) without allowing the response 11 \(\text{b5+} \); in addition, ...b5 with ...\(\text{b7} \) is a good way to mobilize. Instead, 9...\(\text{e7} \) 10 \(\text{d5! } \text{exd5} \) 11 \(\text{xd5} \) \(\text{xd5} \) 12 \(\text{xd5} \) 0-0 13 \(\text{e3} \) favours White because of his active development.

10 \(\text{d3} \)

Moving out of the ...\(\text{a5} \) fork, while also placing the bishop on its best diagonal.

10...\(\text{e7} \) 11 \(\text{e3} \) 0-0

Now instead of the strange sequence 12 \(\text{ae1 } \text{g4} \) 13 \(\text{d4} \)? (Pavlovic-Stojanovic, Serbian Ch, Budva 2003), which could have been met by 13...b5! 14 \(\text{c5 } \text{xc5} \) 15 dxc5 \(\text{c5} \), White can play 12 \(\text{ac1} \), when moves like \(\text{a4} \) or \(\text{e4} \) can follow, as well as a well-timed \(\text{e5} \); White has the better prospects.

4.3)

3...\(\text{f6} \) 4 \(\text{e3} \) (D)

White prepares to recover his pawn. Now the main lines are:

4.31: 4...\(\text{b6} \) 73
4.32: 4...\(\text{g4} \) 74
4.33: 4...\(\text{e6} \) 75

These other moves shouldn’t be ignored:

a) 4...\(\text{bd7} \) 5 \(\text{xc4 } \text{b6} \) 6 \(\text{b3} \) (or 6 \(\text{d3} \) with a slightly better position for White) 6...\(\text{c6} \)
7...c3 Qbd5 (Oll-Bellon, Dos Hermanas 1992) and now 8...c2 or 8...d3 intending an early e4 leaves White comfortably on top.

b) 4...g6 can’t be too bad, but gives White a free hand in the centre; for example, 5 dx5 Qg7 6 0-0 0-0 7 c3 Qf5?! (7...a6 8 e4 b5 9 Qd3 Qb7 10 c5 Qd5 11 Qe4 =) 8...e2 Qb6 9 Qb3 Qc6 10 Qd1 ± Kramnik-Kamsky, Amber Rapid, Monaco 1996.

c) 4...a6 5 Qxc4 b5 is an attempt to get around some of the main lines of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. After White’s reply 6 Qd3, however, White is playing the system I’m recommending anyway, and Black has played ...b5 early on, which is generally unfavourable. There can follow 6...b7 7 a4! b4 (this surrenders the c4-square) 8 0-0 e6 9 Qbd2 Qb7 (9...c5 can be met by 10 Qc4 or 10 Qe2) 10 Qe2 (now White is ready for e4-e5) 10...c5 11 e4 (the calm 11 Qc4 gives White a small advantage, if you don’t like what follows) 11...cxd4 12 e5 Qd5 13 Qb3! Qc5 14 Qg5 Qd7 (14...Qe7?? 15 Qxc5) 15 Qfxd4!! (15 Qxc5 Qxc5 16 Qf1=) 15...h6 16 Qxc5 Qxc5 17 Qb3 Qb6 (17...Qxf2+!!?) 18 Qd2 Qe7 19 a5 Qd7 20 Qac1 0-0 21 Qe4 f5 22 exf6 Qxf6 23 Qh7+ Qf7 24 c4 with a powerful attack, Topalov-Narciso Dublan, Barcelona 2000.

5 Qc3

This has a large amount of theory attached to it, but is more likely to achieve something substantial than 5 Qbd2. On the other hand, this more modest knight move is easier to play, and should offer some advantage:

a) 5...e5?! 6 Qc2! e6?! 7 e4 Qc6 8 Qxc4 Qe7 9 0-0 a5 10 Qe1 with a solid advantage for White, Miles-Larsen, Linares 1983.

b) After 5...Qd6 6 Qxc4 g6 7 Qd3 Qg7 8 0-0 0-0 9 a3 a5 10 Qc2, White has a better grip on the centre, although admittedly this isn’t anything to shout about.

c) 5...b5 6 a4 c6 7 axb5 cxb5 8 b3 ± establishes a queenside advantage.

d) 5...c5 is thematic, but it gives White time to gain some central control: 6 Qxc4 (6 dx5??) 6...Qxc4 7 Qxc4 Qc6 (7...Qxd4 8 Qb3) 8 Qb3 (possibly better is 8 Qa4, or 8 0-0! 9 exd4 8 e4 10 Qb3 =) 8...c7 19 0-0 10 Qd2 Qe7 11 dxc5 Qe4?! (11...Qc8 12 Qd6) 12 Qc2 (12 Qa5 is also strong) 12...dxc5 (12...f5 13 b4) 13 b4! Qxd7 14 Qac1 with a nice pull.

We now return to 5 Qc3 (D):

4.31)

4...Qe6 (D)

This move has enjoyed a certain popularity among some strong players. Now 5 Qa3 is a fairly good move, but I’ll focus on two other ideas:

5 Qc3

This has a large amount of theory attached to it, but is more likely to achieve something substantial than 5 Qbd2. On the other hand, this more modest knight move is easier to play, and should offer some advantage:

a) 5...e5?! 6 Qc2! e6?! 7 e4 Qc6 8 Qxc4 Qe7 9 0-0 a5 10 Qe1 with a solid advantage for White, Miles-Larsen, Linares 1983.

b) After 5...Qd6 6 Qxc4 g6 7 Qd3 Qg7 8 0-0 0-0 9 a3 a5 10 Qc2, White has a better grip on the centre, although admittedly this isn’t anything to shout about.

c) 5...b5 6 a4 c6 7 axb5 cxb5 8 b3 ± establishes a queenside advantage.

d) 5...c5 is thematic, but it gives White time to gain some central control: 6 Qxc4 (6 dx5??) 6...Qxc4 7 Qxc4 Qc6 (7...Qxd4 8 Qb3) 8 Qb3 (possibly better is 8 Qa4, or 8 0-0! 9 exd4 8 e4 10 Qb3 =) 8...c7 19 0-0 10 Qd2 Qe7 11 dxc5 Qe4?! (11...Qc8 12 Qd6) 12 Qc2 (12 Qa5 is also strong) 12...dxc5 (12...f5 13 b4) 13 b4! Qxd7 14 Qac1 with a nice pull.

We now return to 5 Qc3 (D):

5...Qe6 (D)

This is the solid approach. Black can also try 5...h6 6 Qe5 c5 7 Qa4+ Qbd7 8 Qxc4 (8 e2 may be better; e.g., 8...a6 9 dx5 Qc7 10 Qxc4 Qxc5 11 0-0! ±) 8...Qxc4 9 Qxc4 e6 (Szwiercz-Nava, Czech Team Ch 2010/11), when 10-0-0 might give White a small advantage; for example, 10...Qc8 (10...Qe7 11 Qxd7 Qxd7 12 dx5) 11 Qd1 cxd4 12 Qxd4 Qxe5 13 Qxe5 Qb6 14 Qg3 ±.

6 Qg5 (D)
This knight advance is the best try. 6 a4 is a Slav Defence position, when one important line goes 6...g6 (6...d5 7 d4! – Burgess; 6...h6 7 e5 dxe5 8 dxe5 f5, Topalov-I.Sokolov, Sarajevo 1999, 9 f3 ± and there’s no good way to prevent e4 or disrupt White’s centre). After 7 d5?! d5, both 8 f3 h6 and 8 h3 h6 have been tested a lot and are satisfactory for Black, so the calmer 7 e2 g7 8 e4 might be preferred, when it’s just a game.

Upon 6...xf3?! 7 xf3, White has the bishop-pair and a strong centre for essentially nothing. One example is 7...e6 8 0-0 e7 9 xe3 0-0 10 d1 c8 11 e4 d6 12 f4 d8 13 ac1 (the classical stereotype of an ideal opening position for White) 13...d7, as played in the game Heyken-Schoppmeyer, 2nd Bundesliga 1988/9. Now almost any move is good, but 14 d5! is absolutely killing. 7 e3 (D)

Now (after 6 d5):

a) After 6...d7, 7 e2 has had some success, but the simplest course appears to be 7 e4 h6 8 cex6 xe6 9 e5 (Gelfand-Zilberman, Tel Aviv 1999) when Gelfand gives 9...bd7 10 we2 d5 11 xc4 ±. Avrukh points out that Flear’s 9...f6 10 e2 b6 11 0-0 d7 can be answered with 12 a4! intending 12...a5 13 b3! cxb3? 14 xb3 xc7 15 e6.

b) 6...c8 can also be met strongly by 7 e4, but this time 7 e2 is another way to exploit the passive queen position and gain the upper hand; e.g., 7...h6 8 cxe6 xe6 9 c2 with the idea 9...b5 10 a4 b4 11 b1, or 7...d5 8 e4 h6 9 exd5 hxg5 10 dxc6 xe6 11 d5 e5 12 xg5 ±.

c) 6...d5 7 e4 h6 8 exd5 hxg5 9 dxc6 dxc6 10 d5 c5 (10...a5 11 a4+ d7 12 xg5 “followed by 0-0-0 gives White a fantastic position” – Avrukh) 11 d4 f6 12 xg5 (Akopian-Kirov, Palma de Mallorca 1989) and now 12...b6 may be best, but not equal after 13 e3.

4.32)

4...g4 5 cxe4 e6 6 h3 h5

We have reached the basic position for the 4...g4 line. White will happily develop and advance his centre, so Black needs to disturb things there. He usually aims for ...e5.

7...bd7

a) We already saw the continuation 7...a6 under the move-order 3...a6 4 e3 g4 5 cxe4 e6 6 h3 h5 7 c3 d6 (Section 4.1); it wasn’t very good.

b) 7...c6 8 b5 is a standard pin that makes life uncomfortable for Black; for example, 8...d6 9 e4 d7 10 e3 0-0 11 e2 (11 e5 c7 12 c1 ±) 11...f5 12 g4! f7 13 gxf5 exf5 14 e5 b4 left White obviously better in W.Rohde-S.Korolev, corr. 2002. Two good continuations are 15 g1 and 15 g5.

8 0-0 d6

Black wants to play ...e5. Otherwise he is seriously short of space after White plays e4.

9 e4 e5?

This leads to some forcing play which favours White throughout. So 9...xf3 10 xf3 e5 11 d5 ± is probably the best that Black can do.

10 g4! (D)

10...g6
The tactics after $...\text{exd4? II}\text{tDxd4 (II e5 and II }\text{tDxd4 are also good)}$ work out well for White:

a) $11...\text{tDxg4? II }\text{tDf5!}$ is winning for White: $12...\text{th2+ (12...tDe3 13 }\text{tDxg7+ tDe7 14 }\text{tDxh5}+\text{-}) 13 \text{tDh1 tDxf2+ (13...tDe5 14 }\text{hxg4 tDg6 15 }\text{tDf4) 14 }\text{tDxh5 tDxd1 15 }\text{tDxg7+ tDe7 16 }\text{tDf6} 17 \text{tDe3! and Black will get mated or lose everything, the first major threat being mates beginning with 18 }\text{tDf5+ or 18 }\text{tDxd1+).}$

b) $11...\text{tg6 II }\text{tDf4! tDc5 12 f4! tDc5 13 f5 tDe5 14 }\text{tDf4 c6 15 }\text{tDxh5! tDxh5 16 }\text{tDxe4}!\text{ tDxc6! bxc6 18 }\text{tDxe6+ c6 19 }\text{tDxe6}-$.  

$11 \text{dxe5 tDxe5 12 }\text{tDxe5 }\text{tDxe5 13 f4}$  

Forcing the pace; Black is in danger of losing a piece to f5. Now:

a) $13...\text{f6} 14 \text{tDh2 xxc3 15 bxc3 }\text{tDxd1+ 16 }\text{tDxd1 xxe4 17 g5 and the best Black can do is 17...tDd7! 18 }\text{tDe1 f5 19 }\text{tDxg6 tDxf6 20 }\text{tDxh3}$  

b) After $13...\text{tDd4+},$ the game Atalik-Meins, Bad Wiessee 2003 continued $14 \text{tDxd4 }\text{tDxd4+ 15 }\text{tDh2 xxc3 15 bxc3 }\text{tDxd1+ 16 }\text{tDxd1 xxe4 17 g5 }\text{tDf5 18 }\text{tDe1+ xf8 19 }\text{tDxd5 a6 (19...tDd7 20 }\text{tDxc4 tDxe4 21 }\text{tDc3+ tDg8 22 c4 tDf3 23 }\text{tDc3 tDh5 24 }\text{tDf3 e6 25 }\text{tDxh5}+\text{-}) 20 \text{tDc4 b5 21 }\text{tDh3+ }\text{tDg8 22 gxf6 bxa4 23 }\text{tDxe5! c6? (23...tDc6 24 f5+) 24 }\text{tDxh6 (or 24 }\text{tDf3) 25 }\text{tDxh6}!\text{ tDxe4 26 c4! tDc4 27 f5 f6 28 }\text{tDc4 }\text{tDh5 29 }\text{tDxc4} 24...g6 25 }\text{tDg7} \text{tDd8? 26 f5 1-0).}$

**4.33)**

4...e6 5 ...xc4 c5 ($D$)

5...a6 doesn't hold much independent significance for us. After 6 0-0 b5 7 ...d3, 7...c5 directly transposes to note ‘b’ (7...b5) to Black’s

This is the main line: Black strikes back in the centre. He has ideas of ...exd4, when White is likely to reply exd4 with an isolated queen’s pawn. Alternatively or in addition, Black will expand on the queenside with ...a6 and ...b5, winning time and placing his bishop on the powerful long diagonal. One drawback to this is that it takes time, and White will end up with a bigger lead in development. Another is that his queenside pawns, sometimes a strength, are also subject to attack (usually by a4). Finally, whether White has a large centre or an isolated pawn, his pieces will naturally have somewhat more freedom than Black’s.

6 0-0

Now we have a fork:

4.331: 6...exd4 76
4.332: 6...a6 79

6...tDd7 will usually transpose to Section 4.3323 (6...a6 7 ...d3 tDd7), but Black has an obvious alternative in 6...tDc6 ($D$).

This appears natural but can have drawbacks:

a) 7 ...c3 creates certain problems for Black:

a1) 7...exd4 8 exd4 transposes to note ‘b’ to Black’s 7th move in Section 4.331. The fact that Black is committed to ...tDc6 if nothing else discourages lines with ...a6 and ...b5.

a2) 7...tDd7 8 ...xc5?! (8 a3 and 8 ...e2 are good alternatives) 8...tDxc5 (8...tDxd1 9 ...xd1 ...xc5 10 a3 0-0 11 b4 tDd7 12 ...b2 ±) 9 ...xd8+ ...xd8 10 e4 (10 a3 with the idea b4 is also somewhat better for White) 10...tDc6 and now
both 11 e5 \(\square_{d7} 12 \square_{f4}\) and 11 \(\square_{f4}\) give White a modest advantage.

a3) After 7...a6, 8 \(\triangle_{d3}\) transposes to Section 4.3322. Black also has to be concerned that 8 dxc5 might be a good version of the 6...a6 7 dxc5 line, since Black's queen's knight should almost always go to d7 in that case. A sample line: 8...\(\square_{xd1}\) (8...\(\triangle_{xc5}\) 9 \(\triangle_{xd1}\) 8d8+ \(\triangle_{xd8}\) 10 a3 or 10 \(\triangle_{d2}\) intending \(\triangle_{ac1}\) ) 9 \(\triangle_{xd1}\) \(\triangle_{xc5}\) 10 \(\triangle_{d2}\) 0-0 11 \(\triangle_{ac1}\) \(\triangle_{e7}\) 12 \(\triangle_{a4}\) \(\triangle_{d8}\) (12...\(\triangle_{b8}\) 13 \(\triangle_{xa6}\) ) 13 \(\triangle_{b6}\) \(\triangle_{b8}\) 14 \(\triangle_{d4}\) ? \(\triangle_{xd4}\) 15 \(\triangle_{d6}\) (15...\(\triangle_{xd4}\) 16 \(\triangle_{b4}\) !) 16 \(\triangle_{e2}\) ± \(\triangle_{d5}\) 17 \(\triangle_{c4}\) \(\triangle_{e7}\) 18 \(\triangle_{f3}\) with a very slight edge; White has ideas of \(\triangle_{xd5}\) and/or \(\triangle_{e3}\).

b) 7 \(\triangle_{e2}\) (with the idea dxc5 and e4-e5) prepares to get \(\square_{d1}\) and \(\square_{c3}\) in quickly. This is a conventional strategy in the Queen's Gambit Accepted, given extra bite by the fact that Black has already played ...\(\triangle_{c6}\), which is not his most respected set-up. After 7...cxd4 8 \(\square_{d1}\) \(\triangle_{e7}\) 9 exd4 0-0 10 \(\square_{c3}\), Avrukh has done considerable analysis to demonstrate White's advantage, one key line beginning 10...\(\square_{a5}\) 11 \(\square_{d3}\) b6 12 \(\triangle_{e5}\)! ? \(\triangle_{d6}\) (12...\(\triangle_{c6}\) 13 \(\triangle_{g3}\) ±; 12...\(\triangle_{b7}\) 13 \(\triangle_{g3}\) g6 14 \(\triangle_{h6}\) \(\triangle_{d8}\) 15 \(\triangle_{e5}\) \(\square_{h5}\) 16 \(\triangle_{e3}\) \(\triangle_{f8}\), Drozdevsky-Bogdanovich, Odessa 2006, 17 \(\triangle_{xf8}\) \(\triangle_{xf8}\) 18 b4! \(\triangle_{c8}\) 19 \(\triangle_{e2}\) ±) 13 \(\triangle_{g5}\) \(\triangle_{b7}\) 14 \(\triangle_{e5}\) with a kingside attack.

4.331)

6...cxd4

An irrevocable decision. Black isolates the white d-pawn immediately, rather than leave open the possibility of dxc5 (for example, 6...a6 7 dxc5 or 6...\(\triangle_{c6}\) 7 \(\triangle_{c3}\) \(\triangle_{e7}\) 8 dxc5). In return, this liberates White's queen's bishop, and the possibility of a timely ...\(c4\) disappears.

7 exd4 (D)

After the important move 7...\(\triangle_{c6}\), White can develop normally with \(\square_{c3}\), \(\triangle_{e1}\), a3 and/or \(\triangle_{g5}\), but he has these options, reminiscent of the choices that presented themselves after 6...\(\triangle_{c6}\):

a) 8 \(\triangle_{e2}\) seeks a transposition to the variation discussed under the move-order 6...\(\triangle_{c6}\) 7 \(\triangle_{e2}\) cxd4 8 \(\square_{d1}\) \(\triangle_{e7}\) 9 exd4 (note 'b' in Section 4.33). Grabbing the pawn is quite risky: 8...\(\triangle_{xd4}\)! ? (8...\(\triangle_{e7}\) 9 \(\square_{d1}\) the line just mentioned) 9 \(\triangle_{xd4}\) \(\triangle_{xd4}\) 10 \(\square_{d1}\) \(\triangle_{b6}\) 11 \(\triangle_{b5}\)+ \(\triangle_{d7}\) (Pelletier-Arencibia, Ubeda 1995) and now 12 \(\triangle_{xd7}\)+ \(\triangle_{xd7}\) 13 \(\triangle_{c3}\) \(\triangle_{e7}\) 14 \(\triangle_{e3}\) provides excellent compensation.

b) When play goes 8 \(\triangle_{c3}\) \(\triangle_{e7}\) 9 \(\triangle_{e1}\), it's instructive to see how ...a6 and ...b5 is too slow: 9...a6 10 a3 b5? 11 d5! exd5 12 \(\triangle_{xd5}\) \(\triangle_{xd5}\) 13 \(\triangle_{d5}\) \(\triangle_{b7}\) 14 \(\triangle_{d4}\)! ±. Therefore Black should settle for 9...0-0, transposing to our main line.

8 \(\triangle_{c3}\) 0-0

8...\(\triangle_{c6}\) transposes to line 'b' of the previous note, where it was best for Black to castle soon in any case.

9 \(\triangle_{e1}\) (D)

White has been extremely successful from this position. The structure with an isolated queen's pawn (IQP) can also arise from openings such as the Nimzo-Indian Defence, Caro-Kann Panov Attack and the Alapin Sicilian. We shall see many typical themes in the following lines, especially involving ...a6 and ...b5 and White's d5 advance. This central thrust is also...
an important idea when Black plays the more modest ...b6, as our main line demonstrates.

9....bd6

This is a bad position for the move 9...bd7, although it is often played, because if the knight goes to b6 it will prevent Black from fianchettoing and put no pressure on d4, giving White a free hand to build up. But if Black plays ...b6 and the knight doesn’t move, it has little influence and no place to go without other problems arising. White can play 10.bd3 (this is the easiest method, although 10.b5 and 10.a3 are also good) 10...bd6, with these options:

a) 11.wd3 bd7 12.c2 bd6 (12...bd5 13.exd5 exd5 14.wg5 is a well-known structure favourable to White; then 14...g6 can be met by 15.ed5 or 15.wb3) 13.wg5 g6 14.bh6 wd8 15.exd5 (15.ad1 bd5 16.bd3) 15...bd5 16.bd3 ± Pelletier-Domont, Zurich 2007.

b) 11.xg5 fd5 12.exd5 exd5 13.wd3 with ideas of 13.c2 and/or 13.g5, combined with h4 and an attack, or simply 13.e5, wd6, ad1, etc.


10.a3

10.wg5 is only slightly advantageous, but very instructive in light of the common tactical idea 10...a6 11.cc1 b5 12.d5! (D).

Then:

a) 12...exd5 13.exd5 exd5 14.wd5 with an edge for White.

b) 12...a5 13.wd3! with the idea 13...exd5? 14.ex7! we7 15.exd5 or 13...exd5? 14.ex7 ex7 15.exh7+! xh7 16.xg5+ xg6 17 wg4 f5 18.wxg3, winning.

c) 12...wb4 13.b3 xbd5 14.xd5 exd5 15.wxe2!? (15.b4! de7! 16.wf3 ± 15...a4! 16.xe6 (Anand-Adianto, Manila Olympiad 1992) and now 16...b5! 17.xd4 xe8 18.wf3 wd8 achieves a level position.

10...b6 (D)

10...a6 11.a2 wd6 (11...b5 12.d5!) 12.e3 (12.g3!? with the idea xf4 looks promising, since White will strike before the weakened long diagonal becomes an issue) 12...d8 (not 12...b5? 13.d5!) 13.wc2 (13.xc6 might be better, to discourage 13...b5 due to the tricky 14.d5 exd5 15.bd6! ad7 16.xd5 xd5 17.ac5! and xd5) 13...b5?! (13...g6 14.ad1 xd5 ±)

14.xf6 exf6 (14...b7 15.d5!) 15.wc7 exd5 16.xg5 xg5 17.xg5 g6 18.wd4 ±.

11.d5!?

This is the most direct method, and it secures a moderate advantage by thematically breaking down Black’s blockade square and increasing the range of almost all of White’s pieces. There are good alternatives in this position, from
which White has been winning games for years. For example, 11  a7 d3 with the idea of a7 d3 and a6 d3 is similar to our 6...a6 7  a7 d3 main line (Section 4.332). But 11  a6 d3! may be objectively the best move, and certainly the most dangerous: 11...a5 12  a5  a5 13  a7 d3!  a5 x g5 (13... e x d5 14  a7 d3  e x d3 is the classic positional advantage for White) 14  a7 d4 h6 15  a4 d1 (15...  a4 d1 is better still) 15...e7 f6 16 exd5 17  a5 b1!  a c8!? 18 dxe6  fxe6 19  a b7 18  a c8 20  a c6 21  a c6 22  a c6 g6 23  a c6 b6 24  a c6 b5! (with a slight advantage for White) 22  a c6 b5! and White is winning too much material, Gurchumalidze-Balkhamishvili, Georgian Girls Ch, Tbilisi 2002.

We now return to 11 d5!? (D):

11...a5 12  a2 exd5?!

It's surprising that after all these years, this inferior move is played most often. Probably Black finds that the better 12...exd5 13  a7 d5 exd5 14  a7 d5 is too depressing (even 14  a7 d5 a7 b7 15  a b7  a b7 16  a f4 is slightly in White's favour, but not enough to be a deterrent). Play has gone:

a) 14...a7 b7!! 15  a h5!? (15  a f5!  a x f3 16  a b1 g6 17  a x f3  e x d5 18  a7 d3 too is strong) 15...  a f6? 16  a x f5  a f5 16  a x f5  a f5 17  a x f5  a b2 18  a d1  a f6 19  a d6  a c3 20  a e3  a c5 21  a e7  a x a3 22  a x f7+  a h8 23  a h5 with an attack) 16  a g5  a x g5 17  a x g5  a d4 18  a e7 g6 19  g5  a e7 20 b4  a c6 21  a f6  a x e1 + 22  a x e1  a d6 23 h4! 1-0 Korneev-Hanssen, Oslo 1994.

b) 14...  a e6! 15  a x d8  a f x d8 16  a x e6  f x e6 17  a g5  a x g5 18  a x g5  a d2? (18...  a b3 19  a b1 h6 20  a x e6  a d2 ±) 19  a b3 19  a b3! 19...a7 b3! 20  a b1 e5 21  a f3 ± 20  a x e6  a x a3 21  h3  a c2? (21... a h6 22  a x a3  a x g5 23  a x b7  a x f2! 24  b5! with a slight advantage for White) 22  a c8 + and White is winning too much material, Gurchumalidze-Balkhamishvili, Georgian Girls Ch, Tbilisi 2002.

13 b4!

13  a x d5  a x d5 14  a x d5 a7 b7 15  a x b7  a x b7 16  a f4 favours White, but not by very much.

13...a4

White is also in charge following 13...a4 14  a b2, as well as 13...a6 14  a x d5  a x d5 15  a x d5 a7 b7 16  a b5!  a a5 17  a x d8  a x d8 18  a e5  a f6 19  a d2  a c8 20  a b4  a x e5 21  a x e5  a e8 22  a x e8+  a x e8 23  a d1 ±.

14  a x d5  a x d5 15  a x c4 (D)

Now:

a) 15...a6 is a sacrifice that doesn't work out, since White wins material for insufficient compensation: 16  a x d5  a x d5 17  a x e7  a x e7 18  a x d5  a f d8 19  b b3  a d6 (Black tried to improve in Riazantsev-Yagupov, Miass (team event) 2007 by 19...a c2 20  a e3  a d3, but 21  a d4!  a b3 22  a x e2  a d8 23  g3 h6 24  a e4  a d3 25  a c6  a b d7 26 a4 is winning) 20  a e3  a c8 21 h3 h6 22 b5  a x d 23  a x b2 and White had consolidated in the game Serper-Becerra Rivero, Internet 2006.

b) 15...a c7 isn't satisfactory either: 16  a f4  a g4 (16...a e6 17  a x c7  a x c7 18  a x e6 f x e6
19 \(\text{Bc1}\) 17 \(\text{Wxd8} \text{Bxd8}\) 18 \(\text{Ad1} \text{xf3}\) 19 \(\text{gxf3} \text{De6}\) 20 \(\text{d6} \text{e8}\) 21 \(\text{b5} +\).

4.332)

6...\(\text{a6}\) 7 \(\text{Ad3}\) (\(D\))

This is my recommendation versus 6...\(\text{a6}\). Apart from the defensive idea of avoiding \(\text{b5}\) with tempo, White strengthens his control of e4 and in many lines plans to gain the initiative on the kingside with e4-e5. \(\text{Ad3}\) also discourages Black's thematic move \(\text{b5}\) as White can reply with \(\text{a4}\) and force concessions in Black's queenside structure. Of course, this comes at the cost of a tempo so, not surprisingly, strategically double-edged positions result. After 7 \(\text{Ad3}\), Black has a big decision to make:

4.3321: 7...\(\text{cxd4}\) 80
4.3322: 7...\(\text{De6}\) 81
4.3323: 7...\(\text{bd7}\) 82

Alternatively:

a) 7...\(\text{b6}\) allows the interesting 8 \(\text{dxc5}\)!? (8 \(\text{e4}\) is also played, with the idea 8...\(\text{cxd4}\) 9 \(\text{e5}\) 8...\(\text{xc5}\) 9 \(\text{a3} \text{b7}\) 10 \(\text{wxe2}\) 0-0 11 \(\text{db2} \text{bd7}\) 12 \(\text{b4} \text{c7}\) 13 \(\text{b2 a5}\) 14 \(\text{bxa5} \text{xa5}\) 15 \(\text{b5} \text{wb8}\) 16 a4 \(\text{ac8}\) (16...\(\text{a7}\) 17 \(\text{dc4}\) ± Baburin-Godena, Havana 1999) 17 \(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{a7}\) 18 \(\text{xc8}+\) \(\text{xc8}\) 19 \(\text{cl} \text{wa8}\) (Kramnik-Kasparov, Moscow rapid 2001) 20 \(\text{cc4}\) 19 \(\text{d5}\) 21 \(\text{fe5}\) ± (Kasparov). One idea is 21...\(\text{exe5}\) 22 \(\text{xb6}\)! (22 \(\text{exe5} \text{xe2}?! 23 \text{f3}) 22...\(\text{wb7}\) 23 \(\text{c8}+\) \(\text{f8}\) 24 \(\text{exe5} \text{xb6}\) 25 \(\text{xf6}\) ±.

b) 7...\(\text{b5}\) and now:

b1) It's worth noting that 8 \(\text{dxc5}\) is sometimes given an '!'. Then 8...\(\text{b7}?!\) 9 \(\text{b4}\) is unattractive for Black, so a main variation is 8...\(\text{xc5}\) 9 \(\text{e4}\) with \(\text{e5}\) to follow; e.g., 9...\(\text{b7}\) 10 \(\text{e5} \text{d5}\) – therefore 8 \(\text{dxc5}\) is an option to think about which might simplify White's life.

b2) 8 \(\text{a4}\) (\(D\)) forces a queenside structural concession (this is a major point of playing 7 \(\text{Ad3}\)). Then we have:

B

b21) 8...\(\text{bxa4}\) 9 \(\text{e5}\)! is awkward for Black; e.g., 9...\(\text{b7}\) (9...\(\text{cxd4}\) 10 \(\text{exd4} \text{b7}\) 11 \(\text{xa4}+\) \(\text{bd7}\) 12 \(\text{dc3}\) \(\text{d6}\) 13 \(\text{e4}\) and now 13...\(\text{c7}\) 14 \(\text{wa3}\) or 13...\(\text{c7}\) 14 \(\text{a5}!\) ±) 10 \(\text{wa4}+\) \(\text{d7}\) (10...\(\text{bd7}\) 11 \(\text{c6}\); 10...\(\text{fd7}\) 11 \(\text{dxc5} \text{xc5}\) 12 \(\text{d2}\) with the idea 12...0-0 13 \(\text{xd7}+\) 11 \(\text{xd7}\) 11...\(\text{xd7}\) 12 \(\text{b5}\) 12 \(\text{dxc5} \text{xc5}\) 13 \(\text{wc2}\)!? (or 13 \(\text{d1}\) with the bishop-pair) 13...0-0 14 \(\text{xa6} \text{c8}\) 15 \(\text{c3}\) and Black is short of compensation for the pawn.

b22) 8...\(\text{b4}\) 9 \(\text{e4}\) (9 \(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{b7}\) 10 \(\text{c4}\) is quite a safe way to play which still gives plenty of chances) 9...\(\text{b7}\) 10 \(\text{bd2}\) (\(D\)) (10 \(\text{e5} \text{d5}\) 11 \(\text{b2}\) may well favour White slightly, but the theory is messy) and here:
b221) 10...\(\text{d}c6\) 11 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{d}d7\) and now 12 \(\text{a}e4\) \(\text{cxd}4\) 13 \(\text{d}b3\) is the safe course, whereas 12 \(\text{a}e4\) \(\text{cxd}4?!\) 13 \(\text{d}f4\) \(\text{w}a5\) 14 \(\text{e}e1\) \(\text{a}e7\) 15 \(\text{d}c1\) \(\text{d}d8\) 16 \(\text{a}d6+\) \(\text{x}d6\) 17 \(\text{e}xd6\) ± \(\text{d}f6\)? 18 \(\text{d}e5!\) ± Krivoshei-Simacek, Prievidza 2009 is a typical example of mixing it up.

b222) 10...\(\text{cxd}4\) 11 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{d}d7\) 12 \(\text{d}c4\) \(\text{c}6\) 12...
(12...
\(\text{d}c5\) 13 \(\text{g}5!\) \(\text{xf}3!\) 14 \(\text{w}xf3\) \(\text{w}d5\) 15 \(\text{w}d5\) \(\text{e}5\) 16 \(\text{b}6\) \(\text{d}x3\) 17 \(\text{d}x8\) \(\text{d}7\) 18 \(\text{d}fd1\) \(\text{x}b2\) 19 \(\text{e}xd4\) ± is a confusing line) 13 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{b}8\) 13...
(13...
\(\text{c}7\) 14 \(\text{f}4\) ±) 14 \(\text{e}1\) \(\text{b}3\) 15 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{h}6\) 16 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}4\) 17 \(\text{e}2\) (17 \(\text{d}6+!\) ±) 17...
18 \(\text{d}x4\) \(\text{d}x4\) 19 \(\text{w}d4\) with an edge for White, Anand/Koneru-Aronian/Danielian, Moscow (consultation blitz) 2011.

4.3321)

7...\(\text{cxd}4\) 8 \(\text{exd}4\) \(\text{a}e7\) (D)

9 \(\text{d}c3\)

Or:

a) A thematic idea is shown by 9 \(\text{g}5\) \(b5\) (9...
\(\text{d}c6\) 10 \(\text{d}c3\) 0-0 transposes to the main line) 10 \(\text{d}c3\) \(\text{b}7\) 11 \(\text{d}c1\) 0-0 12 \(\text{a}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 13 \(\text{d}x6\) \(\text{x}f6\) 14 \(\text{e}4\) ±. Not forced, but a manoeuvre to remember when \(c5\) is an outpost.

b) 9 \(\text{e}5\) is an important alternative that has been successful in some highly-rated games (likewise 9 \(\text{d}c3\) 0-0 10 \(\text{d}e5\)). Apart from the fact that 9...
\(b5?!\) runs into 10 \(\text{w}f3\) \(\text{w}d5\) 11 \(\text{w}g3\) with the initiative, the idea is that after...
\(\text{d}c6\), \(\text{d}c6\) weakens Black's pawns. Normally the isolated \(d4\)-pawn versus the isolated \(c6\)-pawn is an even trade-off, but it appears that in this position, with accurate play, White tends to get pressure on \(c6\) and a solid outpost on \(c5\), whereas both Black's play against \(d4\) and his outpost on \(d5\) are less efficacious. Here are some examples:

b1) 9...
\(\text{d}d7\) 10 \(\text{d}c3\) 0-0 11 \(\text{f}4\) and White stands better (Khzuman); Black's knight is passive.

b2) 9...
(12...
\(\text{f}4\) is another approach) 12...
12...
(12...
\(\text{f}8\) 13 \(\text{w}d5\) 14 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 15 \(\text{e}5\) ±) 16 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 17 \(\text{d}c5\) ± Malaniuk-Zlochevsky, Münster 1995) 13 \(\text{f}4\) (or 13 \(\text{d}c5\) ±) 13...
\(\text{w}a5\) and now 14 \(\text{w}c2\) gave White a good game in Dreev-Xu Jun, Taiyuan 2004, but better still is 14...\(\text{d}c5!\) with the idea 14...
\(\text{d}c5!?\) 15 \(\text{d}c5\) ±.

b3) 9...
\(\text{d}c6\) 10 \(\text{d}c6\) \(\text{b}6\) 11 \(\text{d}e3\) (D) is a standard sort of position in which White has only a minor edge.

This has been contested by some high-level players:

b31) 11...
(12...
\(\text{c}5\) 12 \(\text{d}c3\) (12 \(\text{d}d2!\) 0-0 13 \(\text{f}3\) ±) 12...
(12...
\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{dxe}3\) (Khuzman's move 13...
\(\text{a}5!\) can be met by 14 \(\text{w}d5\) \(\text{c}5\) 15 \(\text{w}c2\) \(\text{h}6\) 16 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 17 \(\text{f}1\) ±) 14 \(\text{x}c5\) c5? (14...\(\text{h}6\) 15 \(\text{d}e4!\) \(\text{e}5!\) 16 \(\text{e}6!\) \(\text{e}4\) 17 \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}6\) 18 \(\text{d}e6\) \(\text{f}6\) 19 \(\text{f}8\) \(\text{f}8\) 20 \(\text{e}4\) offers White a minimal edge at most) 15 \(\text{d}c5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 16 \(\text{d}h7+\) \(\text{d}h7\) 17 \(\text{w}h5+\) \(\text{d}g8\) 18 \(\text{w}x\) ±.

9...
\(\text{d}c6\)
Again, 9...b5 allows 10 a4 (10 g5 is a good alternative), weakening Black’s pawn-structure; e.g., 10...bxa4?! (10...b4 11 e4 b7 12 w e2 0-0 13 d1 was only slightly better for White in Karpov-Short, Linares 1995) 11 e5! 0-0 12 w f3 a7 13 c4 b7 14 g3 leaves White clearly on top.

10 g5 (D)
For 10 e5, compare 9 e5.

The text-move introduces a standard and highly instructive isolated queen’s pawn position, in which White tends to keep the better chances.

10...0-0

10...b4 11 a1 0-0 12 e5 (12 a3 gbd5 13 e5 d7 14 e1 c5 15 g3 ±) 12 a7 (N.Farrell-Shaw, Scottish Ch, Troon 1992) and now simply 13 a3 gbd5 (13...c6 14 g3 g6 15 h6 c5 16 g3 ± with very active pieces) 14 g3 g6 15 a2 is the stereotyped reorganization that gives White a small but dangerous advantage.

11 c1 b4

This is considered best. 11...gbd5 12 gxd5?? (12 gxe7! gxe7 13 e1 is another and probably better way to approach the position) and then:

a) Black must avoid 12...gxd5?? 13 xc6! gxe5 14 xc5.

b) 12...g5 13 gxe7 gxe7 14 e1 g6 15 e2 (or 15 g5?); White doesn’t have much.

c) 12...gxe5 13 g5 (White can get a little something from 13 e3 f6 14 g4 e7 15 e1 (±) 13...gxe5 14 d6 b8 15 xc2 with a marginal advantage at best (g5 might follow), Riazantsev-Kariakin, Biel 2003.

14 g3

Quite a few games have taken the safe route 14 g3 gxd5 15 w d3 (15 xe7 wxe7 16 e4 b7 17 e5 f6 = Grischuk-Dreev, Moscow blitz 2007) 15...g6 16 a4 c8 17 e5 a7 (17...g5 18 g5 g5 g5 19 w f3 and e4 also leaves Black under some pressure) 18 w f3 a6 19 a4 w e7 20 gxd5! (after 20 d1 a8, in spite of his nice-looking pieces, White can’t claim anything from such a position) 20...gxd5 21 w f4 g8 (21...g7 22 g4) 22 g4 f6 (22...e5?! stops c7, when White still gets some chances from 23 dxe5 c5 24 w d2! a8 25 g5 g6 26 a1 e6 27 w c5! 28 w e6 25 h3 exd4?? (25...g8 26 a5 ±) 26 c6 f8!! c8 27 w c5 1-0 Giri-Laznicka, French Ch, Mulhouse 2010.

14...xc3

Now the game Lev – Har-Zvi, Israeli Team Ch 2002 continued 15 bxc3?! g6! 16 a4 b7 with equal chances. Raetsky proposes 15 xc3 instead, when after 15...g6, I think 16 e5! b7 17 w d2 yields the best chance for success, with an impending rook transfer to the kingside or simply probing of the dark squares. Then 17 c8 (17...e4? 18 e4 e4 19 e7 w x e 7 20 w f4 c5 21 e1 leads to a clear advantage for White) 18 c x c 8 w c 8 19 h6 d8 20 c1 b 8 21 w f4 ± is annoying, though hardly something that Black can’t hang in there against.

4.3322)

7...c6 8 c3 (D)
8...\texttt{c7}

Black doesn’t commit to a central exchange. Instead, 8...\texttt{cxd4} 9 \texttt{exd4} \texttt{e7} transposes to Section 4.3321.

8...\texttt{e7} is considered dubious by Eingorn. Black has played both ...\texttt{a6} and ...\texttt{e7}, which is a clue that 9 \texttt{dxc5} will be good: 9...\texttt{xc5} 10 a3 (or 10 \texttt{e2} 0-0 11 \texttt{e4} \texttt{xe4} 12 \texttt{xe4} with a slight advantage for White) 10...0-0 11 \texttt{b4} \texttt{d6} (11...\texttt{e7} 12 \texttt{b2} \texttt{c7} 13 \texttt{c1} \texttt{d7} 14 \texttt{e4} with a healthy advantage) 12 \texttt{b2} (“already 12 \texttt{e4} would have been good” – Eingorn) 12...\texttt{xe4} (12...\texttt{xe5} 13 \texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 14 f4 \texttt{d6} 15 \texttt{e4} \texttt{xe4} 14 \texttt{xe4} e5 15 \texttt{c1} \texttt{d7} (Eingorn-Dokhoian, Kharkov 1985) and now Eingorn suggests 16 \texttt{d3} f5 17 \texttt{d5}+ \texttt{h8} 18 e4, with White standing better.

9 \texttt{a3} \texttt{b6} (D)

9...\texttt{e7}? is even worse now because of 10 \texttt{dxc5} \texttt{xc5} 11 b4! \texttt{e7} 12 \texttt{b2} 0-0 13 \texttt{c1}± Polugaevsky-Barlov, Haninge 1988.

Or:

a) 10 \texttt{xe4} is a good choice: 10...\texttt{xe4} 11 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{b7} 12 \texttt{dxc5} bxc5 (12...\texttt{xc5} 13 b4 \texttt{d6} 14 \texttt{b2} \texttt{d8} 15 \texttt{e2}, threatening \texttt{e1}, is not what Black wanted when he played \texttt{c7}?) 13 \texttt{d2}±; Black’s isolated c-pawn is a target on a half-open file and White is better developed.

b) 10 \texttt{dxc5} bxc5 11 \texttt{e4} was the same idea in Kasparov-Kamsky, New York rapid 1994. M.Gurevich’s recommendation 11...\texttt{b7} can be met by 12 \texttt{xf6+}! \texttt{xf6} 13 \texttt{e4}, with a pleasant advantage, while after 12 \texttt{e2}, Black should play 12...\texttt{xe4} 13 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{d6} 14 \texttt{d2}, when White has only a minor edge. After Gurevich’s 12...\texttt{e5}(!), 13 \texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 14 \texttt{xf6+} \texttt{gxf6} (14...\texttt{xf6} 15 \texttt{e4}+) 15 e4 leaves White in charge.

10...\texttt{b7} 11 \texttt{c1}

11 \texttt{e4} should again produce a small advantage; e.g., 11...\texttt{xe4} 12 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{d6} 13 \texttt{c1} 0-0 14 \texttt{b4} or 1...\texttt{cxd4} 12 \texttt{xf6+} \texttt{gxf6} 13 \texttt{d4}±.

11...\texttt{cxd4} 12 \texttt{exd4} \texttt{e7} 13 \texttt{e4}

13 d5!? \texttt{exd5} (13...\texttt{dxe5} 14 \texttt{dxe5} \texttt{dxe5} 15 \texttt{d4} leaves Black with too much hanging) 14 \texttt{c1} 0-0 15 \texttt{g5} \texttt{d6} 16 \texttt{b1} offers White interesting play for a pawn. For example, 16...\texttt{f8} 17 \texttt{d3} g6 18 \texttt{e2} \texttt{d8} 19 \texttt{d1} d4 20 \texttt{xh7} \texttt{f6} 21 \texttt{e4} \texttt{f4} 22 \texttt{b3} \texttt{e7} 23 \texttt{xh6}, but even this isn't clear.

13...\texttt{d7} 14 \texttt{g5}

This is the game M.Gurevich-Speelman, French League 1994. Here, instead of 14...\texttt{d5} (which I think is only nominally worse for Black), Gurevich analyses 14...\texttt{d8} 15 \texttt{xf6+} \texttt{gxf6} 16 \texttt{e3} \texttt{g8} 17 \texttt{h7} (17 \texttt{g3}??) 17...\texttt{g7} 18 \texttt{e4} f5 19 d5! as ‘unclear’. 10 \texttt{e4} or 11 \texttt{e4} seems the most straightforward way to achieve something in this variation.

4.3323)

7...\texttt{bd7} (D)

Several theoreticians lean towards this as the best line. In some ways, that’s a compliment to 7 \texttt{d3}, as White should never stand worse and can achieve a modest advantage in a few different ways.

8 \texttt{e1}

This move is most frequently played by exponents of 7 \texttt{d3}. The idea is to follow up with \texttt{e4} and \texttt{e5}. Since the knight is rather passively
placed on d7, there are always safe moves; e.g.,
you can get interesting play from 8 a4, prevent­
ing ...b5 and avoiding the looseness which re­
sults from a e4-e5 plan. 8...b6 9 we2 b7 10
ed1 wc7 11 h3?! (worried about 11...eg4, ap­
parently, although that would lose time; e.g., 11
b3 eg4 12 h3 xf3? 13 wxf3 wh2+ 14 wf1
wins material) 11...e7 12 ec3 0-0 13 ed2
d6 (maybe h3 was handy, after all) 14 ac1
e5?! and instead of the passive 15 ab1 (as
played in the game Eingorn-Ehlvest, USSR Ch,
Moscow 1988), White might try 15 dxc5 xc5
(15...xc5 can be met by 16 e4 with the idea
ac4, controlling d5, or even 16 b4 with an
edge) 16 e4?! White’s idea is 16...exd3?! 17
wdx3 we7 (the queen has a hard time avoid­ing
attack, and 17...wb8 18 wh4! leaves it far from
defence of the kingside) 18 wh4 and White gets
af5 in, or enjoys 18...g6? 19 ag5. Instead,
16...ab3 17 ec2 edx2 18 edx2 we7 19 ac4
offers White only a slight advantage, but there
are positive plans such as af3-e3.

8...b5
Black’s alternatives are playable, but not ter­
rribly impressive:

a) 8...wc7 9 e4 (9 b3?!)...cxd4 10 e5 cd5
(10, eg4?! 11 af4) 11 ec4 de7?! (11...ac5
12 ab2 0-0 13 ab3 ±; 11...ac5?! 12 edx5
exd5 13 edx4 with a significant positional ad­
vantage; best is 11...eb6 12 edx4 ec5 13
d3 ±) 12 edx4?! (12 edx4?! 12...eg6 13 f4
c5 (Piket-Van der Sterren, Dutch Ch, Rotter­
dam 1998) 14 c3 ec7 15 ec3 0-0 16 mc1
with more space and freer development.

b) 8...b6 is solid but a bit restricted. White
gets an edge from 9 e4 cxd4 10 e5 cd5 11
dx4 ec5! (not 11...b7? 12 xd6! fx6 13
wh5+ 12 af1 ab7 13 cd2 ec7 14 wg4!?
(14 db3 ± has the idea ecx5 followed by
ec4 or cc4, and leaves White with a small
structural advantage after 14...ebx3 15 ebx3
0-0 16 ec4) 14...0-0 (14...g6 15 cd3lightly
favours White, and more so after 15...b4?!
16 wh6, as in Filippov-Donchenko, Russia
Cup, Smolensk 1997) 15 cd3 wh8 and now
16 g5?! gave away any advantage in Kram­
nik-Kasparov, Linares 2003. 16 a3! a5 17 ad2
affords some play, with the idea of b4 or, after
17...a4, 18 ed1 followed by ad1 and possibly
ag5 or ab5, depending upon how Black
plays it.

c) 8...ec7 9 ecxd4 10 e5 ed5 11 ac4 (11
edx4 is normal) 11...ec5 12 edx4 0-0 13 b3
(13 edx5?! with the idea 13...wxd5 14 df5!
±) 13...wd7 14 edx5! wxd5 15 dc3 wd8 16
e3 (here 16 ec3!, thinking about wg4 and
ac3, and 16 af4 are minor improvements)
16...wa5?! (16...wc7 17 ac1 wxe5 18 b4 ad7
19 ed6 bxc6 20 ec5 wxe1+ 21 wxel edx5 22
bxc5 ecx5 is obscure) was played in Gel­
fand-Lautier, Belgrade 1995. Then Gelfand rec­
mends 17 b4? (17 ed2 ±) 17...wbx4 18 df5
ed8! 19 ab1!, claiming an edge for White.
19... ecx3 20 ac1 wxel+ 21 wxel ed3 22
wd1 xc1 23 dh6+ gxh6 24 edx6 ed2+ 25
wxe2 f5 26 dxf8 dx8 27 wh5 is wild stuff,
but I can’t see this as being more than equal for
White.

We return to 8...b5 (D):

At this point there’s a big decision and a final
split:

4.33231: 9 e4 84
4.33232: 9 a4 85
4.33231)

9 e4 cxd4 10 e5 Ʌd5 11 a4

Apart from trying to open the a-file, White wants to win the c4-square for a knight in the case of ...bxa4 or ...b4.

11...bxa4

This looks anti-positional, but isolated a-pawns don't mean much in the middlegame and White's b-pawn becomes vulnerable. Black's goal is to give himself space and not lose time. 11...b4 transposes to the note to White's 10th move in Section 4.33232 (i.e. 9 a4 b4 10 e4 cxd4 11 e5 Ʌd5).

12 Ʌxa4 (D)

B

12...b4!?

A good move in that it develops with tempo and swaps off an attacking piece, but of course it also weakens Black's dark squares. 12...Ʌc5 is an obvious alternative because it makes it difficult for White to recover the d-pawn: 13 Ʌbd2 Ʌb6 14 Ʌa1 Ʌb7 15 Ʌe4 0-0 16 Ʌfg5! (this attack is more interesting than 16 Ʌxc5, even with the small trick 16...Ʌxf3 17 Ʌxh7+! Ʌxh7 18 Ʌd3+ Ʌg8 19 Ʌxd7 Ʌxd7 20 Ʌxf3 ±) 16...h6 (16...g6 17 Ʌg4! h5) 17 Ʌh7 Ʌxe4 (17...Ʌe8 18 Ʌh6+! Ʌxf6 19 Ʌxc5) 18 Ʌxe4 Ʌe8 19 Ʌxh6! gxh6 20 Ʌg4+ Ʌh8 21 Ʌh5 Ʌg7 22 Ʌed1!!!, preparing Ʌd3; this pretty move simply wins.

13 Ʌd2 Ʌxd2

Rizzitano analyses 13...Ʌc5 14 b4 (14 Ʌa5!) 14...Ʌb6? (Black should continue 14...Ʌe7 15 Ʌxd4 Ʌc7, though 16 Ʌb5 Ʌb8 17 Ʌd6+! Ʌxd6 18 exd6 Ʌxd6 19 Ʌg4 is dangerous) 15 Ʌa3 Ʌb7 16 Ʌc4 Ʌc7 17 Ʌxd4 Ʌb5 18 Ʌg4! Ʌxa4 19 Ʌxg7 Ʌf8 20 Ʌg5 with a winning attack.

14 Ʌbd2 Ʌc5 15 Ʌxd4

15 Ʌb5+ Ʌd7 16 Ʌxd7+ Ʌxd7 (16...Ʌxd7 17 Ʌxd4 Ʌb5 18 Ʌb1! 0-0 19 b4 Ʌa4 20 Ʌh4 gives White a slight advantage) 17 Ʌxd4 0-0 18 Ʌc4 Ʌb8 (Gelfand-Rublevsky, Polanica Zdroj 1997) and there isn't much happening, but after 19 Ʌe2, White is the one who wants to play on.

15...Ʌxd3 16 Ʌxd3 0-0 (D)

w

17 Ʌc4

17 Ʌe4(!) is seldom played, but may be better and should be taken seriously. White got the advantage in Lomineishvili-Shumiakina, St Petersburg 2009 after 17...a5 (17...Ʌb8 is met by 18 Ʌd2 or 18 b3 Ʌb7 19 Ʌfd2!? ± with ideas of Ʌc4 and/or swinging the queen and rook to the kingside) 18 Ʌd4 Ʌf4 (18...Ʌd7 19 Ʌg3 Ʌb8 20 Ʌd2 Ʌh8 21 Ʌd6 ±) 19 Ʌd2 (or 19 Ʌg3!) 19...Ʌb6 20 Ʌf3 Ʌg6 21 Ʌd6 Ʌa7 and here 22 Ʌg3! gives every indication of being better for White.

17...a5

With the idea ...Ʌa6. White's space advantage is apparent in the continuation 17...Ʌb8 18 Ʌd2 Ʌe7 (Shariyazdanov and Lysenko's suggestion 18...f6 can be effectively answered by 19 Ʌd4! fxe5 20 Ʌxe5) 19 Ʌd6 Ʌb7 20 Ʌd4 Ʌa8 21 Ʌg3 with a serious initiative, Shariyazdanov-Feletar, Pula 2000.

18 Ʌa3 Ʌa6

Now:

a) 19 Ʌxa5 seems to yield a slight advantage following 19...Ʌb4 20 Ʌa4! Ʌd3 (20...Ʌe7!?) 21 Ʌeaxb6 22 Ʌd4 Ʌxd4 23 Ʌxd4 Ʌxe5 24
b4 2c8 25 2f1! with the better ending for White (Rizzitano); the b-pawn is a bother.

b) 19 2d6 and then:

b1) After 19...f6!?, 20 2d4 2b8 21 b3 is assessed by Avrukh as slightly better for White, but is actually equal after Rizzitano’s 21...2b4.

But White might try 20 2e4 ± instead; e.g., 20...2b7 (20...fxe5 21 2xe5 ±; 20...2b4 21 exf6 2xd1 22 2xd1 gx6f 23 2c5 ±) 21 2c5 2e7 22 2xb7 2xb7 23 exf6 2xf6 24 2b3 2c7 25 2g5 2f4 26 2e4 with a slight but definite positional edge.

b2) 19...2b8 20 2d2 2b4 21 2g5!? and here:

b21) 21...h6?! 22 2ge4 2b6 23 2g3 and now 23...2h8?? 24 2f6! was winning for White in Avrukh-Rublevsky, European Clubs Cup, Rethymnon 2003. One pretty line is 24 2xb2 25 2h6+! gxh6 26 2xf7+! 2xf7 27 2g8#. Black should play 23...2d4! 24 2xd4 2xd4, when, for example, 25 2a3 2b8 26 2xa5 2d3 leaves White a pawn up after 27 2c5 2xb2 28 2a8+ 2h7 29 2f8, although this can result in endings that are very hard to win.

b22) 21...2b6 22 2c2 g6 23 b3 f6! 24 exf6 2xd6 25 2xe6 2f4 26 f7+! 2g7 27 2xg6+! hxg6 28 2e6+ 2xf7 29 2xf4 2xf4 30 h3 ± Avrukh; Black has good activity, so this may not amount to much.

4.33232)

9 a4 (D)

This gets an ‘!’ from Raetsky. Although I like 9 e4, this is less forcing and affords White more choices.

B

9...b4

9...bxa4 would transpose to Section 4.33231 after 10 e4 2cxd4 11 2e5 2d5. However, now that ...bxa4 is in, White can deviate by 10 2bd2 (with the idea 2c4; 10 2xa4 2b7 11 2d5 is also interesting, with the points 11...2e7 12 2c6, 11...2c7 12 2d2! and 11...2d6 12 2d2) 10...2cxd4 11 2c7 2b7 12 2xa4 2d6 13 2c4 2b8 14 2f5 0-0 15 2a5!.

10 2bd2

This is easier to play than 10 e4 2cxd4 11 2e5 2d5; nevertheless, 12 2bd2! 2b7 13 2xd4 2c5 14 2c4! preserves some advantage; e.g., 14...2xd3 15 2xd3 2b6 16 2g5 2d7 17 2d6+ (or 17 2d5!?, intending 17...2d5!? 18 2g3!) 17...2xd6 18 2xd6 0-0 (18...2xd6!? 19 2xe6 2xd3 20 2c5+ ±) 19 2g3! 2h8 20 2b3 2xa4 (20...2fc8 21 2a5) 21 2e7 2fc8 22 2e5!, having both an attack and the move 2a5 in mind.

10...2b7

10...2e7 11 2c4 0-0 12 2e4! (only now, when developed) 12...2cxd4 13 e5 2d5 14 2xd4 2b7 15 2g4 and now instead of 15...2e8?! 16 2h6 2f8 17 2ad1 ± Shariyazdanov-Giertz, Biel 1999, 15...g6 or 15...2c5 would lose the exchange after 16 2h6, for which Black gets some, but not full, compensation.

11 2c4 2e7 12 2e4 2cxd4

12...0-0 13 e5 2d5 14 2c2 (14 2e2!? 2xd4 15 2e4 g6 16 2xd4 may be objectively best) 14...2c8?! (premature; 14...2c7 15 2g5 also gives White a pleasant attacking set-up according to Raetsky, but 14...2cxd4 15 2xd4!? 2xc8 16 2g4 2e8 17 2h6 2e8 18 a5 produces chances for both sides) 15 2d3 g6 16 2h6 2e8 17 a5!? 2c7 (Sashikiran-Markowski, Moscow 2004) and here 18 2a4! ± would avoid a tactical melee.

13 e5 2d5 14 2g5! 0-0 15 2c6! 2xg5

15...2c5 16 2xe7 2xe7 17 2xh7+! 2xh7 18 2xc2+ 2g8 19 2xc5 ±.

16 2xb7

White stands better. Shariyazdanov-Rustemov, Nizhny Novgorod 1998 went 16...2f7 17 2e4 2h6 18 2xd5! (18 2xd4 2xe5 19 2xd5 exd5 20 2xe5 2xb7 21 2xd5 ±) 18...exd5 19 2a5! “and White has maintained his advantage thanks to Black’s weak d-pawns and the awkwardly placed bishop on h6” (Scherbakov, whose analysis proved invaluable in this section).
5 Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6

This is the Slav Defence, one of the most effective d-pawn defences. Black stakes out a direct claim to the centre and secures it in a way that only minimally restricts his development. That is, he leaves a diagonal open for his light-squared bishop, a piece which is the bane of his existence in the Queen’s Gambit Declined lines. The price for this is to deny the theoretically ideal square c6 to his knight, but in most lines d7 is not a bad substitute. Perhaps the main drawback of 2...c6 is that in a 1 d4 d5 opening, the ...c5 break is one of Black’s best weapons, and here it takes two moves to achieve.

3 \( \text{c3} \) (D)

I’m going to recommend this move in order to reach the desired main lines without running into some very difficult and highly theoretical lines which can stem from 3 \( \text{d3} \) (White’s most popular move). The goal is to reduce Black’s options in the Slav and to meet the Semi-Slav (where Black plays ...c6 on move 3 or 4) with an ‘Anti-Meran’ system. That is, we are aiming for the position that can arise from either 3 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 4 e3 e6 5 d3 or 3 \( \text{c3} \) e6 4 e3 \( \text{d5} \) 5 d3. That position won’t actually be dealt with until the next chapter, so this chapter will be exploring the many alternatives that Black has to going into the Semi-Slav. For the most part, my designation of this chapter as the ‘Slav Defence’ indicates that Black doesn’t play ...e6 before bringing his queen’s bishop out or playing ...dxc4.

Here are the major sections of this chapter:
5.1: 3...\( \text{dxc4} \) 87
5.2: 3...e5 90
5.3: 3...\( \text{d6} \) 91

Again, 3...e6 enters into the realm of the Semi-Slav and will be treated in the following chapter. As with every opening, Black has other available moves, but most of them don’t make much sense. For one thing, White is getting ready to play e4, either immediately or after 4 \( \text{d3} \). The most sensible irregular alternative is 3...a6, which fits in well if White plays the Exchange Variation with 4 \( \text{cxd5} \) and can easily transpose into the Chebanenko Slav (see Section 5.34 below). Many players answer 3...a6 with 4 \( \text{d3} \) or 4 e3, trying to transpose into familiar lines, and in our case the latter would be a sound and conservative way to enter into the basic structure with which we’ll be operating. Still, the reason that 3...a6 isn’t more popular must be the forthright 4 e4, when after 4...\( \text{dxe4} \) 5 \( \text{cxe4} \), strong players have actually used two moves to justify their third-move extravaganza:

a) 5...\( \text{f5} \) 6 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 7 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d7} \) occurred in Hernando Rodrigo-Roos, French Team Ch 2002/3 and several other contests. It seems to me that the normal Caro-Kann sequence 8 h4 h5 9 h5 h7 10 h3 d3 d3 11 \( \text{xd3} \) favours White, because although ...a6 isn’t useless here, I think c4 is more valuable.

b) 5...e5?! 6 dxe5 \( \text{a5} \) + (6...\( \text{xd1} \) + 7 \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{f5} \) 8 d3 gives Black no compensation) offers White a pleasant choice between 7 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 8 \( \text{d3} \) 5 \( \text{d3} \) ! (9 c3?! \( \text{xe6} \) 10 \( \text{h5} \) g6 11 \( \text{xe2} \) fxe4 12 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f6} \) was about equal in Ward-Velička, Maidstone 1994) 9...\( \text{we7} \) 10-0 fxe4 11 \( \text{xe4} \), a piece sacrifice for a massive attack, or 7 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 8 \( \text{xe2} \), establishing a comfortable advantage; e.g., 8...\( \text{f6} \) (8...\( \text{g4} \) 9
..te3 !) 9 lt:lf3 'ii'd6 10 w:c2 'ii'c7 11 0-0 0-0 12 'ii'c1 'ii'c7 13 g3 with the idea ..tf4.

5.1)

3...dxc4

This seeks to highlight a drawback to 3 ...c3: Black can grab a pawn, and White has to reorganize at the cost of time to recover it.

4 e4 (D)

Seizing the centre is thematic, although some leading players have had considerable success of late with 4 e3 b5 5 a4 b4 6 'ii'c4 'ii'd5 7 'ii'e2, and upon 7...dxc6, 8 'ii'e2!. This is worth investigating if you're not satisfied with what follows.

4...b5

5 a4

I think that the obscure 5 e5 is very interesting and much better than most gambits of this type. Without going into the many issues and variations, you will note that one obvious challenge is 5...dxe5, developing the bishop before playing ...e6, to which White should reply 6 a4 (6 g4!? 'ii'g6 7 'ii'g2 is also possible) 6...b4 7 'ii'c2 'ii'd3 (7...e6 8 'ii'd3 ± and the c4-pawn falls; 7...'ii'c6 8 'ii'c4 'ii'e6 9 'ii'c5 'ii'd5 10 'ii'e2 'ii'e1 c6 11 'ii'e2!? c7 12 'ii'c4 'ii'xe4 13 'ii'xe4 'ii'c4 14 bxc3 bxc3 15 'ii'xe4 'ii'd5 16 0-0 ±; 7...'ii'd7 8 'ii'c3 'ii'e6 9 'ii'f3 'ii'd5 10 'ii'e2 c3 11 'ii'xc6 'ii'c6 12 'ii'e4 ±) 8 e5! (8 'ii'h3 e6 9 'ii'f4 'ii'e4 10 'ii'c3 'ii'd5 11 'ii'e2 is worth a pawn but unclear) 8...fxe5 9 'ii'f4 'ii'xf1 (9...'ii'xd4 10 'ii'xe3 cxd3 11 'ii'xd4 'ii'd5 12 'ii'e4 is also very good for White) 10 'ii'xf1; e.g., 10...'ii'c6 11 'ii'e3 intending 'ii'f2 and White has the better of the situation.

5...b4

Again Black can try 5...e5, but for one thing, I think White can play the nice piece sacrifice 6 axb5! (6 'ii'c3 exd4 7 'ii'xd4 'ii'xd4 8 'ii'c4 transposes to note 'a' to Black's 4th move above) 6...exd4 (6...cxb5? 7 'ii'xb5 ±; 6...'ii'xd4 7 'ii'f3! 'ii'xd1 ± 8 'ii'cxd1 'ii'd5 7 'ii'e4! with the idea 7...dxc4 8 'ii'xf7+ 'ii'f7 9 'ii'c3 'ii'f1 10 e5 ±) 8 'ii'f3 9 'ii'f4 'ii'xf1 10 'ii'c4 'ii'xe4+ 11 'ii'e2 'ii'f6 12 'ii'a4! 'ii'c6 13 'ii'f4 'ii'xb5 14 'ii'b4 ±.

6 'ii'c2 (D)

This is the most ambitious move, because White delays getting his pawn back to put his pieces on active squares. In particular, this knight will usually go to g3 to protect the e-pawn, although occasionally it goes to f4 or d4, or even returns to c3! For those who find this move unsatisfactory, you can get your pawn back straightaway with 6 'ii'c2 'ii'f6 7 e5 'ii'd5 8 'ii'c4, when Black is able to equalize with the plan ...a5 and ...'ii'c6, but there's an interesting game ahead.

6...e6

a) Sometimes 6...'ii'f6 is played first. There can follow 7 'ii'g3 'ii'c6 (7...e5!? 8 'ii'c4! 'ii'xd4 9 'ii'b3 'ii'd7 10 'ii'e3! is quite strong), and apart from 8 'ii'c3 e6, transposing into our main line, White can play the dramatic attack 8 e5 'ii'd5 9 e6!? Whether or not that works, Black has no reason to give White the extra option.
b) 6...e5 7...d3?! 8...g3 (8...xe5 gxe4 9...f4 d6 10...xc4 is also good) 8...xd4 9...xc4 and White will win the d-pawn back with advantage, even in the case of 9...c5 10 e5 d5 11 e4.

c) 6...a6 7...f3 and now 7...e6 transposes to note 'b' to Black's 7th move below, while 7...d6 8...g3 e6 brings us back to the main line.

d) 6...a5 7...f3 d6 8...g3 a6 9...e5 d5 10...xc4!? (or 10...xc4 with a slight advantage for White) 10...e5 11...xa6 12...e7 13...f4 14...e2! c5 15...xe5 g5 16...xf6 e5 17...g4! 18...e2 c4 19...e4! 20...e5...f6 21...e3...e6 22...f4= Nikolić-Van Wely, Dutch Ch, Rotterdam 1999.

b) 7...a6 8...g3 c5 (after 8...d7 9...e2 g6 10 0-0...e7 11...d5 12...e4), as in Ward-N.Berry, British League (4NCL) 2002/3, I think 12 d5 exd5 13 e5 is good, intending 13...g8 14...f5 g6 15...e3!; Black is three pawns up, but after either the c- or d-pawn falls, his position will be a mess) 9 d5?! (but this seems a little crazy! On the other hand, the World Champion is playing White) 9...g7?! (9...exd5 10 exd5...f6 11...g5!...xd5 12...xd5 13 0-0-0 h6! is murky; maybe 14...e4 15...e7 16...xe7...xc4 17...e5...e6 18...xe6+...b8 19...d5...d1± Sulskis-Simonet Pons, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010.

7...d3 (D)

7...d6

This looks natural, although Black can also delay the development of this piece:

a) 7...c5 8...g3 exd4 9...xc4...a6 10...d3? (10...b5+...xb5 11 axb5...c5 12 0-0±, with the idea 12...e7 13...h5! 0-0? 14...h6! gxh6 15...c1+-) 10...c8 (after 10...xc4! 11...xc4...d7, Black's position is only marginally worse) 11...b5+...xb5 12...xb5+...d7 13...xd4± Nikolić-Van Wely, Dutch Ch, Rotterdam 1999.

b) 7...a6 8...g3 c5 (after 8...d7 9...e2 g6 10 0-0...e7 11...d5 12...e4), as in Ward-N.Berry, British League (4NCL) 2002/3, I think 12 d5 exd5 13 e5 is good, intending 13...g8 14...f5 g6 15...e3!; Black is three pawns up, but after either the c- or d-pawn falls, his position will be a mess) 9 d5?! (but this seems a little crazy! On the other hand, the World Champion is playing White) 9...g7?! (9...exd5 10 exd5...f6 11...g5!...xd5 12...xd5 13 0-0-0 h6! is murky; maybe 14...e4 15...e7 16...xe7...xc4 17...e5...e6 18...xe6+...b8 19...d5...d1± Sulskis-Simonet Pons, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010.

8...g3...a6 (D)

9...g5

This is the most popular move. White wants to get his pawn back by...c1, but at the same time to exert pressure on the dark squares, e.g. by e5 or...h5. Still, other moves may be as good:

a) 9...c2 has been played a fair amount; e.g.:  

a1) 9...b3?! 10...c3...d6 11...xc4...xg3 12 hxg3...xe4 13...xb3...a5+ 14...d2...xc4 15...d3...f6
\[ \text{SLAV DEFENCE} \]

\[ \text{\`xc4 gave White a very slight edge in Zude-S. Haslinger, Palma de Mallorca 2009.} \]

\[ \text{a2) 9...\text{\`xa5 }10 \text{\`d}2 \text{c}3 11 \text{bxc}3 \text{\`xf}1 12 \text{\`xf}1 \text{bxc}3 13 \text{\`xc}3 \text{\`xa}6 \text{and now 14 \`g}3 \text{\`h}2-\text{\`h}2 \text{was the finish of Khalfman-Riazantsev, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2004, but 14 \`e}3 \text{followed by \`d}2-\text{c}4 \text{was a thought.} \]

\[ \text{a3) 9...\text{\`bd}7 10 \text{\`xc}4 \text{\`xc}4 11 \text{\`xc}4 \text{c}5 12 0-0 \text{\`e}7 13 \text{d}5! \text{exd}5 14 \text{exd}5 \text{\`b}6 15 \text{\`b}5+ \text{\`d}7 \text{and now 16 \`f}5 \text{was advantageous in I. Farago-Doric, Paracin 2011, but 16 \text{d}6! would be more so.} \]

\[ \text{b) I like the move 9 \text{\`f}4 (D), which develops, prepares \text{\`c}1, and stays away from simplifications:} \]

For example, 9...\text{c}3 (9...\text{c}5 10 \text{\`c}1 \text{c}3 11 \text{\`xa}6 \text{\`xa}6 12 \text{bxc}3 \text{bxc}3 13 0-0 \text{cxd}4 14 \text{\`d}4 \text{\`e}8 15 \text{\`b}5 \pm; 9...\text{\`wa}5 10 \text{\`e}2 \text{b}3+ 11 \text{\`d}2 \pm) 10 \text{bxc}3 \text{\`xf}1 11 \text{\`xf}1 \text{bxc}3 12 \text{\`b}3 \text{a}5! 13 \text{\`xc}3 \text{\`b}4 14 \text{\`c}2 0-0 15 \text{\`h}4 \text{\`b}6 16 \text{\`d}1 \text{h}6 17 \text{\`h}3 \text{\`bd}7 18 \text{\`g}1 (18 e5 \text{\`d}5 19 \text{\`h}5! \text{\`xf}4 20 \text{\`xf}4 \pm) 18...\text{\`bf}8 19 \text{\`e}5 \text{\`d}5 20 \text{\`h}5 \text{\`f}8 21 \text{\`g}3 \text{\`h}8 22 \text{\`wc}1 \text{\`b}4 23 \text{\`xg}7? \text{\`xg}7 24 \text{\`xh}6 \text{\`g}8 25 \text{\`\text{\`d}2} \text{\`w}7 26 \text{\`e}1 \text{\`ab}8 27 \text{\`g}5 \text{\`h}6 28 \text{\`wd}1 \text{f}6 29 \text{\`xf}6 \text{\`xf}6 30 \text{\`xe}6 \text{\`d}7 31 \text{\`\text{\`d}6}! \text{with three pawns for the piece and an ongoing attack.} \]

9...\text{\`wa}5 (D)

9...\text{\`e}7 10 \text{e}5 (10 \text{\`xf}6 \text{\`xf}6 11 \text{\`c}1 \pm) 10...\text{\`d}5 11 \text{\`xe}7 \text{\`xe}7 12 \text{\`e}4 0-0 13 \text{\`c}5! \pm (Ward). \]

10 \text{\`e}2

10 \text{\`c}1 is probably objectively better:

a) 10...\text{c}3 (Fridman-Milman, Minneapolis 2005) can be answered by 11 \text{\`xa}6! \text{\`xa}6 (11...\text{\`xb}2? 12 \text{\`b}7; 11...\text{\`xa}6 12 0-0 \pm) 12 \text{bxc}3 \text{bxc}3 13 \text{\`xf}6 \text{\`xf}6 14 \text{\`e}2 \pm; for example, 14...\text{\`a}3 15 \text{\`c}2 \text{\`xa}4 16 0-0 \text{\`b}6 17 \text{\`b}5 (17...\text{\`b}4 18 \text{\`e}1) 18 \text{\`d}5! (18 \text{\`xc}3 \text{\`xc}3 19 \text{\`xc}3 \text{\`xb}1 20 \text{\`xb}1 \pm) 18...\text{\`ex}5 (18...\text{\`c}8?? 19 \text{\`xc}3 \text{\`a}5 20 \text{\`\text{\`d}5} \text{\`ex}5 21 \text{\`c}8+) 19 \text{\`fd}4 (19 \text{\`ex}5 \text{is another possibility}) 19...\text{\`a}5 (19...\text{\`\text{\`d}4} 20 \text{\`\text{\`d}5} \pm 20 \text{\`e}1!! \text{\`e}5 21 \text{\`f}5 \text{\`e}4 22 \text{\`g}3 \pm \text{and not only is the f5-square monstrous, but capture on e4 looms.} \]

b) 10...\text{\`b}3+ \text{wins the a-pawn yet it doesn't appear to equalize: 11 \text{\`d}2 \text{\`xa}4 12 \text{\`a}1! \text{\`b}6 13 \text{\`e}5 \text{\`b}6 14 \text{\`a}3 \text{\`b}4 15 \text{\`xc}4 \text{with a modest but workable advantage.} \]

10...\text{\`bd}7

a) 10...\text{\`b}3+ 11 \text{\`d}2 \text{\`b}4 12 0-0 0-0 13 \text{\`c}1 \text{\`xa}4 14 \text{\`xc}4 \pm (Ward). \]

b) 10...\text{c}3 11 \text{\`xe}2 \text{\`xe}2 12 \text{\`xe}2 \text{bxc}3 13 0-0 \text{\`bd}7 (Moiseenko-Van Haastert, European Clubs Cup, Plovdiv 2010) and now White has 14 \text{\`e}1!! \text{\`e}7 15 \text{\`xf}6 \text{\`xf}6 16 \text{\`c}4 \text{.} \]

11 0-0 \text{\`h}6

11...\text{\`c}3 12 \text{\`e}6?! \text{\`cxb}2 13 \text{\`b}7 \text{\`bxa}1 \text{\`w} 14 \text{\`\text{\`d}8} 15 \text{\`\text{\`d}6} \text{h}6 16 \text{\`xf}6 \text{\`g}6 17 \text{\`d}5 (Ward, citing Gelfand) 17...\text{\`e}7 is strongly met by 18 e5? \text{\`f}8 19 \text{\`\text{\`d}7} \text{\`\text{\`d}7} 20 \text{\`e}6 \text{\`f}6 21 \text{\`e}6. \]

12 \text{\`xf}6 \text{\`g}6

At this point, a couple of games continued 13 \text{\`c}1 \text{\`e}6 14 \text{\`\text{\`d}2} 0-0-0 15 \text{\`xc}4 \text{\`xc}4 16 \text{\`\text{\`d}4} \text{\`\text{\`d}7} with obscure play. As we have improvements in this variation for White above, I'll just mention that another way to play this is 13 \text{\`\text{\`d}2} \text{\`b}6 14 \text{\`c}1!\text{?} \text{\`\text{\`d}4} 15 \text{\`e}1; e.g., 15...\text{\`b}3 16 \text{\`a}1 \text{\`\text{\`d}5} 17 \text{\`c}1 0-0-0 18 \text{\`\text{\`d}3} \text{\`b}7 19 \text{\`a}5. But you will probably do better by choosing one of the alternatives on move 9 or 10.
This central advance is known as the Winawer Counter gambit. It turns out that Black doesn't give up the pawn for very long, but he can burn up valuable time recovering it.

4 dxe5

A very safe way to play is 4 e3 e4 (4...exd4 5 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}xd4 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}f6 6 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}f3 is a reversed Alapin Sicilian) with a reversed Advance French; e.g., 5 \text{\textit{\textsc{D}}}d2 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}f6 6 \text{\textit{\textsc{D}}}h3?! or 5 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}ge2. If you don't like the main line, 4 cxd5 cxd5 5 dxe5 d4 6 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}e4 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}a5+ 7 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}d2 will also give White a small but sure advantage.

4...d4 5 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}e4 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}a5+ 6 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}d2 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}xe5 7 \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}g3 (D)

White is about to gain another free tempo on the queen with \text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}f3. Black is counting upon his cramping d4-pawn and the fact that White has little pawn-presence in the centre.

7...\text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}f6

Or:

a) 7...\text{\textit{\textsc{c}}}c5 8 b4 \text{\textit{\textsc{c}}}c7 9 \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}}f3 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}d6 10 c5 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}d8 11 \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}}f4 ± Mozetić-Pajković, Yugoslav Team Ch, Igalo 1994.

b) 7...\text{\textit{\textsc{e}}}e6 8 \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}}f3 \text{\textit{\textsc{c}}}c5 9 a3 (after 9 b4 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}xc4 10 e3 d3, as in Hübner-Hertneck, Bundesliga 1993/4, among other moves, 11 \text{\textit{\textsc{B}}}cl! \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}xa2 12 \text{\textit{\textsc{A}}}xd3 gives White more than enough compensation for a pawn) 9...\text{\textit{\textsc{Q}}}f6 (9...\text{\textit{\textsc{X}}}xc4 10 \text{\textit{\textsc{B}}}cl \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}d5 11 \text{\textit{\textsc{X}}}xd4!; 9...\text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}xc4 10 e3 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}d5 11 \text{\textit{\textsc{X}}}xd4 ±) 10 e3 dxe3 11 \text{\textit{\textsc{A}}}xe3 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}d6 12 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}e2 (12 \text{\textit{\textsc{B}}}e2 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}xd1+ 13 \text{\textit{\textsc{B}}}xd1 ±; 12 \text{\textit{\textsc{g}}}g5) 12...\text{\textit{\textsc{B}}}bd7 13 \text{\textit{\textsc{B}}}dl \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}c7 14 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}d2 0-0-0 15 \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}}f4 \text{\textit{\textsc{B}}}b6 16 b4 ±.

c) 7...c5 (yet another pawn move) 8 \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}}f3 \text{\textit{\textsc{W}}}c7 9 e3 (D) favours White's development; e.g.:
played, with the idea 12...\texttt{xf3}! 13 \texttt{xe1}+ \texttt{e7} 14 \texttt{xf5} 10...\texttt{dxe3} 11 \texttt{xe3} \texttt{xc6} 12 \texttt{e2} \texttt{we6} 13 0-0 \texttt{e7} 14 \texttt{ad1} 0-0 15 \texttt{xe1} with a solid advantage in Burnier-Zindel, Lenzerheide 2010, which only increased after 15...\texttt{d8}? 16 \texttt{xd8}+ \texttt{d8} 17 \texttt{d3} \texttt{wb6} 18 \texttt{g5}.

10 0-0-0 0-0 11 \texttt{c3}

The best move, I think. 11 e3 dxe3 12 \texttt{c3} (12 \texttt{xe3} \texttt{e7}?) 12...\texttt{c7} 13 fxe3 has also been popular, an idea first played by Garry Kasparov, who noticed that for control of Black’s only outpost on d4, it might be worth taking on an isolated pawn.

11...c5

After 11...\texttt{f4}+ 12 e3! dxe3 13 fxe3 \texttt{xe3}+ (13...\texttt{c7}? is the Kasparov position from the previous note, but here it’s White’s move!) 14 \texttt{bl}, White has sacrificed a pawn for development and an attack. After \texttt{d3} and \texttt{he1}, every white piece will be active. This is an emergency situation for Black, who must strike back immediately with 14...\texttt{a6}! 15 \texttt{d4} \texttt{b4} (or 15...\texttt{b4} 16 \texttt{df5} \texttt{xf5} 17 \texttt{xf5} \texttt{e6} 18 \texttt{d3} \texttt{xc3} 19 \texttt{xc3} c5 20 \texttt{he1} \texttt{b6} 21 \texttt{e3}?! ± with a menacing attack. Aza!parashvili-Eslon, Seville 1994) 16 \texttt{a4} \texttt{b5}!, and here I like 17 \texttt{a5} (17 \texttt{b3} works in most lines, but Black might be alright after 17...\texttt{c5} 18 \texttt{xb4} \texttt{xb3} 19 \texttt{xb3} \texttt{bx4} 20 \texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc5}!) 17...\texttt{e4} (17...\texttt{c5} 18 \texttt{e1}! \texttt{d8} 19 \texttt{xb5} \texttt{h6} 20 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{g6}+ 21 \texttt{a1} a5 22 \texttt{e2} with a nice edge) 18 \texttt{xb4} \texttt{xc6} (18...c5? 19 \texttt{d2} 19 \texttt{d2} \texttt{d2} (19...\texttt{c5} 20 \texttt{b3} \texttt{d2}+ 21 \texttt{xd2} \texttt{xd2} 22 \texttt{d3} ±) 20 \texttt{c2} \texttt{h6} 21 \texttt{e2} \texttt{e6} 22 \texttt{d4} \texttt{xd1} 23 \texttt{xd1} \texttt{xc4} 24 \texttt{f3} and once White wins one of the pawns back, the two pieces will be clearly superior to the rook; e.g., 24...\texttt{ae8} 25 \texttt{xc6} f5 26...\texttt{f4} 27 \texttt{d6} \texttt{e1}+? 28 \texttt{c2} \texttt{e6} 29 \texttt{e4} \texttt{xd6} 30 \texttt{xd6} ±.

12 e3 \texttt{c6} 13 \texttt{exd4}

13 \texttt{bl} might be more accurate, to get Black to commit.

13...\texttt{xd4} 14 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{b4} (D)

Arlandi-Ortega, Imperia 1996. Now 15 \texttt{b3}! \texttt{f4}+ 16 \texttt{bl} a5 (16...\texttt{a6} 17 \texttt{c2} \texttt{d8} 18 \texttt{d2}!) 17 \texttt{d2} \texttt{g4} 18 \texttt{f3}! \texttt{d8} 19 \texttt{bc} \texttt{g6}+ 20 \texttt{d3} \texttt{xd3} 21 \texttt{xd3} leaves White with an extra pawn for very little compensation.

5.3)

3...\texttt{f6} 4 e3 (D)

This is our path to the Semi-Slav Anti-Meran Variation, which we will use not only because it’s a less complicated way to meet the Slav than other main lines, but also because it lends itself to strategic positional play. In playing this
move, we are consciously avoiding 4 \( \texttt{\large \text{\texttt{Qf3 dxc4,}} \) the main line of the Slav, and 4 \( \texttt{\large \text{\texttt{Qf3 e6 5 g5,}} \) a main line of the Semi-Slav whose main lines involve tactics requiring a book or two to describe! Now we examine:

5.31: 4...\texttt{f5} 92
5.32: 4...\texttt{g4} 93
5.33: 4...\texttt{g6} 94
5.34: 4...\texttt{a6} 97

The move 4...e6 is covered in Chapter 6 (Section 6.2 to be precise).

5.31)

4...\texttt{f5}

Black’s problems would be over if he could successfully develop this bishop. Fortunately for us, the move has a drawback.

5 \texttt{cxd5 cxd5}

5. \texttt{cxd5} gives up the centre, so White can play slowly; e.g., 6 \texttt{d3 (6 f3 \texttt{xc3 7 bxc3 e5!} \) 8 \texttt{xd3 \texttt{xd3 9 wxd3 \texttt{d7 10 \texttt{e2 \pm}}) 6...\texttt{xd3 7 \texttt{wxd3 e6 8 Qf3 \texttt{e7 9 e4 \texttt{xc3 10 bxc3 \pm}}.}}

6 \texttt{wb3 (D)}

The point. It’s not easy to defend b7.

6...\texttt{b3}!

This move doesn’t really deserve an ‘!’ as it is virtually forced. But it’s got more going for it than in most cases where you move a piece twice to return it to its original square. To begin with, once e3 has been played and White’s dark-squared bishop is hemmed in, then the pawn exchange by cxd5 cxd5 is something Black welcomes. In addition, White’s queen isn’t ideally placed on b3. Thus we find pretty strong players using this line. Nevertheless, development has its place in chess and White should come out with a small advantage. At any rate, there aren’t other good answers to the threat of 7 \texttt{wb7:}

a) After 6...b6? 7 \texttt{b5+ d7 8 \texttt{xd5 \texttt{bx5 9 \texttt{xf6+ exf6 10 wb5+ Black loses a pawn for nothing.}})}

b) 6...\texttt{d7?!} 7 \texttt{f3 \texttt{xc6} (7...e6 8 \texttt{b5! \texttt{c6 9 de5 wc7 10 wa4 \texttt{xc8 11 xa7 \pm Kožul-Sutković, Bizovac 2001) 8 de5! (8 \texttt{b5 a6 9 de5 wc8 10 \texttt{xc6+ bx6 11 da4 \pm} 8...\texttt{ac8 (8...\texttt{wc7 9 \texttt{b5 e6 10 wa4) 9 f3 (9 \texttt{b5 e6 10 wa4) 9...e6 10 g4 \texttt{g6 11 h4 \pm.}})}

c) 6...\texttt{b6?!} is the most challenging line: 7 \texttt{xd5 \texttt{xc5 (7... \texttt{xb3 8 wb6+ exf6 9 a3 \pm 8 \texttt{wxd5 wb4+ (8...e6 9 \texttt{wb5+ 9 \texttt{d2! (Prie likes 9 \texttt{d1 \texttt{b6!}, when after 9...\texttt{d7 10 d3 or 10 wc4 White holds the pawn; this gives an advantage but maybe it’s not worth leaving your king in the centre if there’s an alternative) 9...\texttt{xb2 10 ac1 \texttt{d7 11 d3 (White has won some pretty games with this, and the computer move 11 \texttt{e4! is also good after 11...f5 12 \texttt{wb1 \texttt{xb1 13 ac1 b6 14 \texttt{d3 e5 15 ac4) 11...e6 12 \texttt{wc4 da6 13 de5! \texttt{c8 14 wc8+ \texttt{xc8 15 xc8+ be7 16 \texttt{xa6 bx6, and here Prie finds the nice 17 0-0! (17 \texttt{a5!! \pm} 17...\texttt{wxd2 18 \texttt{xc7+ be8 (18... \texttt{d6?! 19 dc7 is cute!), when I think 19 \texttt{ac1 is a little more accurate than his 19 \texttt{d6?! due to 19... \texttt{b4 20 h3 a5 21 \texttt{ac3 dc6} 22 \texttt{d7c2, when all Black has are bad choices.}}) 7 \texttt{d3 (D)}

White has played various moves here, including 7 f4 and 7 \texttt{b5+ \texttt{c6 8 \texttt{f3 e6 with \texttt{d2 or \texttt{c5). Fressinet-Vernay, European Ch, Aix-les-Bains 2011 saw a typical build-up for White with f4 in which he doesn’t occupy e5 for a while so that a knight can’t be exchanged: 7 \texttt{d3 e6 8 f4 \texttt{d5 9 fe3 \texttt{e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 d2 g6 (weakening; it’s probably better to protect b7 and play 11...b6 12 \texttt{ac1 \texttt{d7, but then 13 de5 gains in effect) 12 \texttt{ac1 \texttt{d7 13 de5 (now that his pieces are out and Black has slightly weakened his kingside dark squares) 13...\texttt{a5 14 \texttt{wd1 \texttt{e8 15 \texttt{e2 dc6 16 wb3 \pm. 7...\texttt{dc6

In Grischchuk-Prié, French Team Ch 2005, one of the world’s leading players found a unique plan against an attempt to create a very
solid set-up: 7...e6 8 d3 (8 e5 c6 transposes to the text) 8...c6 9 0-0 e7 10 e4? (I like this, although naturally 10 d2 with the idea ac1 and e5 is playable and not as dull as it might at first appear) 10...dxe4 11 cxe4 0-0 12 e3. We have a more-or-less standard isolated-pawn position in which White has at any rate more opportunities than his opponent to undertake positive strategies.

8 e5

The Grischuk plan might go 8 d3 e6 9 0-0 e7 10 e4 dxe4 11 cxe4 0-0 12 d1.

8...

This Stonewall position is typical and rather better for White.

9...

9...d7 10 d3 dxe5 11 fxe5 e7 12 0-0 f6 13 exf6 xf6 14 d2 d7 15 a3 0-0! 16 f3 (16 xd5?! exd5 17 xf5+ h8 18 h5 g6 19 xg6 is messy but ultimately nice for White) 16...e8 17 a1 f7 18 c6 g6 (Korotylev-Komliakov, Moscow 1999) and now 19 e1! with the idea of g3 activates White’s last non-contributing piece.

10 d3 0-0 11 0-0 (D)

11...

11...d7 12 fxe5 cxe5 13 c6 a5 (13...f5!?) 14 a6 e2 15 b8 16 f3 and after 16 c6 a1, as played in Volkov-P.Cramling, Stockholm 2004. White first expanded on the queenside and eventually drifted over for a decisive kingside attack. Aagaard says that 16...f5 must be played or the position is strategically lost. That’s right in principle, but then White wins with 17 exf6, when 17 xf6? loses to 18 a1 followed by a sacrifice on g6 or another tactical sequence, but 17...xf6 isn’t much better in view of 18 a1 xf3 19 xf3 and again the attack on g6 is too strong because if needed f4 and g3 will chip in to make it succeed.

12 d2 dxe5 13 c6 e7 14 f3

Sadler-S. Ernst, Oslo 2011. White has more space, which results in Black never being able to equalize: 14 b4 15 e2 a5 16 a3 a4 17 d1 c6 18 d3 g6 19 e2 f6? (Black is understandably wary of White’s mounting kingside attack after 19...a5 20 a1, but that’s better than this further weakening of the position) 20 xf6 xf6 21 d1 g7 22 e1! xf3 23 xf3 f6 24 c3 a5?! 25 c7 f7 26 d6 d8 27 c7 e7 28 d6 d8 29 h4! c6 30 h5 e8 31 h6+ 1-0.

5.32)

4...g4 (D)

With this infrequently-played move, Black again tries to bring his bishop out in front of the pawn-chain he is constructing.
5 f3
This is a flexible set-up and both sides have a lot of possibilities. I’ll try to cover the most important lines.

5...d6
Black can put this piece on a variety of retreat-squares:

a) 5...c8 6 d3 e6 7 ge2 c5 8 cxd5 exd5 9 0-0 d6 10 a3 e7 11 dxc5! dxc5 12 b4 d6 13 a4 e4 14 b2 ±; e.g., 14...d6 15 f4 0-0 16 d4 with a nice positional advantage: 16...d4 (16...g4?! 17 d2; 16...e7?! 17 dxc6 bxc6 18 d4 e4 19 c1 ±) 17 dxe4 (17...b6 18 c1 ±) 18 c1 ±.

b) 5...f5 6 fb3 (6 g4!?) 6...d6?! (6...c8 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 d3 e6 can be met by 9 ge2, or 9 f4, transposing to the note to White’s 7th move in Section 5.31, where White plays the pawn to f4 directly) 7 cxd5 xb3 8 axb3 d6 (8...d5 9 g4 e6 10 b5 d7 11 a7) 9 e4 dxc6 (9...d4? 10 a4!) 10 bxc3 with a large mobile centre and space; 10...e6 can even be answered with 11 d3!.

c) 5...d7 6 d3 e6 7 ge2 c5 (thematic, but Black is taking his time) 8 cxd5 exd5 9 0-0 c6 10 h1 (10 a3! c8 11 bl has the idea of d4 and/or a2) 10...e7 11 dxc5 xc5 (Kruppa-Shaw, Cappelle la Grande 2005) and now 12 d4 was proposed. 12 b3 ± is a good alternative, because if Black plays 12...a5 13 wc2, he is less likely to enforce the freeing move...d4.

We now return to 5...d6 (D):

6 ge2! dxc4 7 f4 e8 8 e4 g6 9 g4?!
9 dxe6 wc6x6 10 wa4 b5 11 wa5 ± is a simple forcing sequence, intending to play a4. The gambit-style 9 b3 cxb3 10 axb3 also looks good; e.g., 10...g7 11 a4! wb7 12 e2 b5 13 dxe6 fx6 14 c3 with clear compensation.

9...g7 10 h4
Or 10 g5 h5 11 d5 dxe5 g5xh5 12 e3 0-0 13 f4! g4 14 d2.

10...h6 11 b3! cxb3 12 axb3 d7 13 dxe6 fx6 14 e5
White stands well, based upon 14...d5! 15 d5 exd5 16 d3 d8 17 c2 w6 18 e3, when Black is badly cramped.

5.33)

4...g6 5 d3 g7 (D)

This is called the Schlechter Slav. It is known above all for its solidity, with a light-square structure that can range from h7 to a6.

6 d3
Aronian likes to play 6 h3 here, preventing g4, and then d3. This strategy resembles that of the Queen’s Gambit Exchange Variation in that White takes squares away from Black’s light-squared bishop, trying to convert a piece with a fine open diagonal into a liability.

The immediate 6 d3 has some advantages and disadvantages compared to 6 d2, but in any case notice that 6...dxc4 7 xc4 transposes to the main line. Otherwise 6...0-0 7 0-0 g4 8 h3 xf3 9 xf3 is a standard position in which Black stands solidly, even if most players will prefer having the bishop-pair. One example: 9...e6 10 d1 d7 11 b3 e8 12 b2 w7 13 f1 h5 14 ac1 a6 (pawns on light squares across the board!) 15 c2 b5 16 dc1 b6 17 cxd5 cxd5 18 d3 df3 19 e2 (19 a4?!)
19...e5 20 dxe5  \(\text{\textit{dx}}\) xe5 21 \(\text{\textit{wd2 fr6}}\) 22 a4 (or 22 f4  \(\text{\textit{d6}}\) 23  \(\text{\textit{d1 frd7}}\) 24 \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) with some real progress) 22...b4 23  \(\text{\textit{de2}}\) ± Cheremnova-Stojanovic, Zurich 2010.

\(\text{6...0-0 7 0-0 (D)}\)

**B**

7...\(\text{\textit{dx}}\) xc4

Whether or not this is the most important continuation, it is by far the most forcing one, critical for an assessment of the variation, and a position repeatedly tested at the top levels, so I'll give it top billing. Nevertheless, practice has often tended in other positional directions. Six other moves should be plenty to illustrate most of the strategic themes of this system:

a) 7...e6 is a common move because it fits with so many lines (and temperaments!): 8 b4 (8 \(\text{\textit{wd2}}\) is a good alternative; a rook may come to d1, and e4 is in the background) 8...\(\text{\textit{dx}}\) xc4 (8...\(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{b4}}\) b6 10 \(\text{\textit{wd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) [this actually arose via 7...b6 8 b4 \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{b2}}\) e6 10 \(\text{\textit{wd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{d7}}\)]) 11 \(\text{\textit{frd1 frd8}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{ac1}}\) \(\text{\textit{wb8}}\) 13 h3 a5 14 a3 axb4 15 axb4 \(\text{\textit{c8}}\) 16 \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{a4}}\) ± Ponomariov-Danielsen, European Team Ch, Porto Carras 2011; 8...b6 9 a4 \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{a3 d7}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) gave White more-or-less the ideal set-up in Szabo-Czerniak, Moscow Olympiad 1956) 9 \(\text{\textit{ac4}}\) \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) \(\text{\textit{ac3}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) offers White space and a central majority; e.g., 11...\(\text{\textit{cd7}}\) 12 e4 b6 13 \(\text{\textit{g5}}\) \(\text{\textit{cg7}}\) 14 \(\text{\textit{ac8}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 15 \(\text{\textit{wb2}}\) \(\text{\textit{ae8}}\) 16 \(\text{\textit{frd1}}\) ± Khalifman-Deviatkin, Moscow 2011.

b) 7...\(\text{\textit{g4}}\) 8 \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) b6 (9...\(\text{\textit{c8}}\), as in Section 5.31, runs into 10 \(\text{\textit{ae2}}\) [with the idea f4, which is a little awkward for Black]) 10 h3 \(\text{\textit{xf3}}\) (10...c8 11 \(\text{\textit{e5}}\) ±) 11 \(\text{\textit{xf3}}\) e6 12 \(\text{\textit{d2}}\) ± (or 12 \(\text{\textit{e2}}\) ± Flear) 12...\(\text{\textit{c6}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{e2}}\) a6 14 \(\text{\textit{fc1}}\) \(\text{\textit{e5}}\) 15 \(\text{\textit{wb4}}\) \(\text{\textit{cd7}}\) 16 b3!? (16 \(\text{\textit{a4}}\) is also good) 16...\(\text{\textit{e8}}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{wc3}}\)! 19 \(\text{\textit{wc7}}\) ± Stohl-Haba, Budapest Zonal 1993.

c) 7...\(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) 8 b4 a6 9 a4 e6 (again, every black pawn is on a light square; this time White knows what to do) 10 \(\text{\textit{a3 e8}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) (this is the perfect set-up for a queenside advance to undermine the pawn-chain, as follows) 11...\(\text{\textit{b8}}\) 12 b5! ± \(\text{\textit{f8}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{xf8}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf8}}\) 14 \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) 15 \(\text{\textit{f1}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc6}}\) 16 \(\text{\textit{xc3}}\) \(\text{\textit{axb7}}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{xb5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xb5}}\) (the black queenside is exposed and his bishop still isn't developed) 18 \(\text{\textit{xb5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{wc7}}\)!, Kasparov-Reiss, Lisbon simul 1989.

d) 7...a6 8 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) \(\text{\textit{dx}}\) c4 9 \(\text{\textit{ac4}}\) b5 10 \(\text{\textit{a2}}\) \(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{e4}}\) (White stands better due to his ideally-placed central majority) 11...\(\text{\textit{b6}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{e6}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{wc2}}\) \(\text{\textit{h5}}\) 14 \(\text{\textit{e3}}\) \(\text{\textit{e4}}\) 15 b3 \(\text{\textit{xe2}}\) 16 \(\text{\textit{xe2}}\) \(\text{\textit{ac8}}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{ac1}}\) e6 18 \(\text{\textit{fd1}}\) \(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{e5}}\)! \(\text{\textit{db8}}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{ac3}}\) with control of the dark squares, S.Mohr-Murey, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

e) 7...\(\text{\textit{ae6}}\) 8 \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) (8...\(\text{\textit{ac4}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{wc2}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf3}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{xf3}}\) ±) 9 \(\text{\textit{e5}}\)! (Flear notes the idea 9 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) \(\text{\textit{b6}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{wb6}}\) \(\text{\textit{axb6}}\), “when the doubled b-pawns are compensated for by the potential activity on the a- and c-files”) 9...\(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) (9...\(\text{\textit{fc7}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{fd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{e3}}\) ±) 10 \(\text{\textit{cd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{f5}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) \(\text{\textit{db6}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{ac5}}\) ±; Black is a little cramped and White can think about central expansion.

f) 7...b6 8 b4 \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{wb3}}\) \(\text{\textit{b6}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{cxd5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd5}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{ac1}}\) \(\text{\textit{ac8}}\), Petrovics-Hort, Moscow 1975, and now with 15 \(\text{\textit{a3}}\) White maintains a small but definite advantage; Black is cramped) 9...\(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) 10 a4 \(\text{\textit{wb8}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{ab2}}\) e6 (Pinter-Flear, Szirak 1986) and this would be a good time for 12 \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) \(\text{\textit{cd5}}\) 13 a5 ±.

We now return to 7...\(\text{\textit{dx}}\) c4 (D):
8 \( \text{gxc4 } \text{gxg4} \ 9 \text{h3 } \text{gxf3} \ 10 \text{wxf3 } \text{gbd7} \)

Now \( \text{e5} \) can't be stopped. Notice that this strategy is too slow if Black plays the solid \( \text{e6} \) first.

11 \( \text{dxe5} \)

11...\( \text{wxc7} \) 12 e4 e5 13 d5 \( \text{e6} \) 14 \( \text{b3 } \text{cxd5} \) 15 \( \text{exd5} \) gives White the two bishops and a powerful passed pawn. Even an ideal blockade on d6 can't help: 15...\( \text{e8} \) 16 \( \text{g5 } \text{e8} \) 17 \( \text{e4 } \text{cd6} \) 18 \( \text{dxc1} \) and the queen runs out of room.

12 d5!

For those not interested in an immediate crisis, 12 \( \text{b3} \)? has been recommended, and could be the way to go if you consider yourself a better strategic player than your opponent. A natural continuation is 12...\( \text{we7} \) (12...\( \text{exd4} \) 13 \( \text{exd4 } \) \( \text{b6} \) 14 \( \text{g5 } \text{wxd6} \) 15 \( \text{f4 w8d8} \) 16 \( \text{e5} \) \text{+} Ward), when 13 \( \text{dxe5 } \text{xe5} \) 14 \( \text{wxe2 } \text{fd8} \) 15 e4 \( \text{xd1+} \) 16 \( \text{e2 } \text{b4} \) is equal, so 13 a3! might be best, developing cautiously in a line such as 13...\( \text{fe8} \) 14 \( \text{a2 } \text{ad8} \) 15 \( \text{d2 } \text{exd4} \) 16 \( \text{exd4 } \) \( \text{b6} \) 17 \( \text{e1 } \text{wd6} \) 18 \( \text{g5 } \text{h6} \) 19 \( \text{f4 w4d4} \) 20 \( \text{xe8+ } \text{xe8} \) 21 \( \text{d1 } \text{wc5} \) 22 \( \text{xe6} \) \text{+}.

12...e4?!

A clever pawn sacrifice. But what else is there? 13 \( \text{dxc6} \) is threatened, and 13 \( \text{d6} \) is potentially disastrous for Black. 12...\( \text{xd5}?! \) runs into 13 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{wxb6} \) (13...\( \text{xd5} \) 14 \( \text{xd5 } \) \( \text{b6} \) 15 \( \text{wxb7} \) \text{+} 14 e4?! \( \text{d8} \) 15 a4 \text{+}.

13 \( \text{axe4 } \text{axe4} \) 14 \( \text{wxex4 } \text{b6} \) (D)

The critical point. After 14...\( \text{f6} \), 15 \( \text{w3f3}! \) keeps an eye on the key d1-square.

\[ 
\text{W} 
\]

15 \( \text{b1}! \)

Regarded as the most accurate, protecting b2. Experience has shown that Black gets sufficient counterplay after 15 \( \text{b3} \), although there might still be something to say about that: 15...\( \text{xd5} \) (after 15...\( \text{xd5} \) 16 \( \text{xd5 } \text{xe5} \) 17 \( \text{xd5} \) transposes, but 16 \( \text{w4} \) may be worth a try) 16 \( \text{xd5} \) (and here 16 \( \text{d7} \) would establish a two-bishop advantage except that 16...\( \text{xb2} \) 17 \( \text{ab1 } \text{g7} \) renders White's advantage minimal) 16...\( \text{xd5} \) 17 \( \text{wxb6} \) 18 \( \text{w3d3a} \) \text{d8} was very close to equal in Bareev-Kramnik, Novgorod 1994.

15...\( \text{e8} \) 16 \( \text{d3}! \)

This is more accurate than 16 \( \text{w3c2} \) and has a huge success rate, although Black is still stuck with defence in the latter case; for example, the value of two bishops is demonstrated by 16...\( \text{xd5} \) (16...\( \text{w4} \) should be compared with the main line) 17 \( \text{b5 } \text{e6} \) 18 \( \text{d3} \) (or 18 \( \text{d2} \) 18...\( \text{w4} \) 19 \( \text{w3} \) 20 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 20...\( \text{e8} \) 21 \( \text{b1} \) 21 \( \text{g3 } \text{w7} \) 22 \( \text{g2 } \text{d8} \) 23 \( \text{xd4 } \text{xd4} \) (Ponomariov-Wang Yue, Medias 2010) and now White has several good moves, such as 24 \( \text{g5}! \) \text{d7} 25 \( \text{f3} \) ±.

16...\( \text{w4} \)

It's not certain what's best here:

a) Not 16...\( \text{xd5?} \), when in Hammer-Zhu Chen, Cap d'Agde rapid 2010 White missed 17 \( \text{e4! } \text{b6} \) 18 \( \text{xf7+ } \text{xf7} \) 19 \( \text{w3b3+ } \text{xd5} \) 20 \( \text{exd5} \) ±.

b) 16...\( \text{xd5} \) (D) has three sensible answers all giving White an edge which has been adequate to win with in practice, whether or not Black can hold in theory:

1) 17 \( \text{xd5 } \text{xd5} \) 18 \( \text{xd5 } \text{xd5} \) 19 \( \text{xd5} \) \text{d8} 20 \( \text{d2} \) 21 \( \text{xd2 } \text{d8} \) 22 \( \text{e1} \) is a position reached in both Chatalbashev-Soylu, European Ch, Antalya 2004 and Jakovljević-D.Damjanović, Obrenovac 2005. White, who is
a pawn ahead, has good winning chances, although Black managed a draw in the latter game.

b2) 17 ♗b3?! can also be considered, when Black’s knight is not well-placed and White plans ♗d2-c3 and gradual pressure on the isolated d-pawn.

b3) 17 ♗b5 ♗e7 18 ♗b3 ♗c8 19 ♗d2 ♗c4 20 ♗c3 (or 20 ♗e1! with the idea of playing ♗xc4) 20... ♗xc3 21 ♗xc4 ♗b6 22 ♗xb6 axb6 23 ♗b3 ♗e5 24 ♗xd5 ± Turov-Ipatov, Nakhchivan 2011. Black has opposite-coloured bishops but weak queenside pawns and indeed he ended up two pawns down and unable to save the game.

17 ♗b3

I think that this is very slightly better than 17 ♗b3 ♗ad8 (17...cxd5?! 18 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♗ed8 20 ♗f3 ♗xd1+ 21 ♗xd1 ♗d8 22 ♗e1 ♗d3 23 ♗d2 gives White an extra pawn in return for what seems more like annoyance than full compensation) 18 e4! ♗xe4 (18... ♗xe4 19 ♗g5! ♗xg5 20 ♗xe4 ♗xd5 21 h4 ±) 19 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 20 ♗g5 ♗de8! and although White prevailed after 21 dx6 in the game Kozul-Nikolic, Slovenian Team Ch, Murska Sobota 2007, only 21 d6! should yield winning chances against accurate play.

Now (after 17 ♗b3):

a) 17...cxd5 18 ♗d2! ± has been played, with the bishop-pair and play against the isolated pawn.

b) 17...cxd5 18 ♗xd5 cxd5 19 b3! ♗c8 20 ♗b2 also gives White a pull; this may be drawable, but it will be hard to hold on to the d-pawn in the long run.

c) After 17... ♗ad8, as chosen in Muresan-Semenova, Women’s Candidates (3), Bad Kissingen 1983, White should play, as above, 18 e4! ♗xe4 (18... ♗xe4 19 ♗g5!) 19 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 20 ♗g5 ±.

This main line is more theoretical and technical than I’d like, but even without knowing the specifics, you can see that Black is under pressure the whole way.

5.34)

4...a6 (D)

This is one of the modern ...a6 Slav systems, normally called the Chebanenko Slav. It has attained the status of a main line over the last couple of decades.

5 ♗f3

5 ♗c2 is a good alternative. Briefly:

a) 5...e6 mixes the Semi-Slav (...e6) with the Chebanenko move ...a6; in general that’s a bit slow without the c8-bishop being developed first, but strong players have tried it: 6 ♗f3 (6 c5 is a logical course for White, who normally follows with b4 and ♗b2, although Black’s plan of ...♗bd7, ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...♗e5 appears sufficient; I think White should also consider setting up with f4, ♗f3, ♗d3 and 0-0 and playing for an attack) 6...c5 (this makes some sense of the ...e6/...a6 combination; Black is trying to exploit the fact that White’s queen is not ideally placed on c2) 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 ♗c2 ♗c6 9 0-0 (9 ♗e5 has recently been popular and may be even more promising, but I want to emphasize development) 9...♗d4 (9...♗e6 10 ♗d1 ♗b4 11 ♗b1! is a better version of the same line, Mamedyarov-Grischuk, FIDE Grand Prix, Baku 2008) 10 ♗b1 g6 11 ♗d2 ♗f5 12 ♗d1 c4 13 b3! (13 ♗e5 may also yield a slight advantage) 13...♗c2 14 ♗c1 cxb3 15 ♗b2 ♗d3 16 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 17 ♗f1 b5?! (17...♗f5 ±) 18 ♗e5 ♗f5 19 ♗xb3 ± Mamedyarov-Kariakin, Baku rapid 2009. Things got even worse after 19...♗d6? 20 e4! ♗e6 21 ♗c6 ♗d7 22 cxd5 0-0, when 23 ♗g5! would have won a piece, but White played 23 dxe6?! and Black actually came back to draw.

b) 5...♗g4 6 ♗d3 (or 6 ♗f3, having in mind 6...♗h5 7 ♗b3 b5 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 g4 ♗g6 and continuing 10 h4!?) 6 h6 11 ♗h3 e6 12 ♗f4 ♗h7 13 g5; note that the obvious 10 g5 ♗fd7 11 ♗xd5 ♗a7 and ...e6 actually gives Black some
A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPertoire FOR WHITE

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...e6 7...Ge2 Ah5 8...d2 Bbd7 9 Bf4 Ag6 10 Bxg6 hxg6 11 h3 (11 Ac1!?)
11...dxc4 12 Bxc4 b5 13 Be2 c5 14 Tf3 exd4 15 exd4 Ac8 16 Bb3 ± Mamedyarov-Nakamura, Lausanne 2005.

...b5 6 b3 Ag4 7 Ge2!? Bbd7 8 h3 Ah5 (8...Axe2 9 Aexe2 e6 10 0-0 ± with two bishops, Mamedyarov-Volkov, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006) 9 Bf4 Ag6 10 Bxg6 hxg6 11 Ae2 ± (11 Ab2 has also yielded an advantage) 11...e6 12 0-0 (D) and now:

b) Of other moves, 6...Af5 makes the most sense, bringing the bishop out before ...e6 closes it in. This is one of those times where exchanging White’s good bishop by 7 Ad3 works well, gaining development and central control (7 Ac2 and 7 Ae5 are common alternatives); e.g., 7...Axh3 (7...e6 8 Axf5!? exf5 9 0-0 A6d6 10 Ae2 g6, Dlugy-Khmelnitsky, Cherry Hill 1991, and now 11 a4! b4 12 Ae2 with the idea a5 gives a small but nagging edge, since 12...a5 13 Ae5 will tie Black down) 8 Bxd3 e6 9-0 Ae7 and now 10 a3 or even 10 e4! b4 11 a5 bxc3 12 Cxf6 Cxf6 13 Ae2!.

7 Cc2 (D)

White plans to play h3, gaining the bishop-pair. The text-move protects c3 and thus works against tactics based upon the knight’s vulnerability, as in the line 7 h3 Axf5 8 Cxc3 e5! with the idea 9 dxe5 Cb4 10 Cc2 Bxc3 11 Axc3 Cxe4, which according to extensive practice works out to a draw after many forced moves. 7 Ac2 may be objectively no better than 7 Ae2, but it is relatively straightforward and unencumbered by too many variations.

7...e6

This is the most common move. Black can try to enforce ...e5 by 7...Cd7 8 h3 (8 Ae2 is more flexible) 8...Af3 9 Axf3 b4 10 Ae4 (10 Ae2 e5 11 Cg3 may give better long-term chances; moves like Bc1, Cc3, 0-0 and Cc1 follow in one order or another, and White hopes that his bishop-pair eventually expresses itself) 10...e5 and now:

a) 11 Bc1 led to a positional advantage for White in Kramnik-Kariakin, Amber Rapid, Nice 2009: 11...Ae4 12 Cc3 Cxd3 13 Bxd3 14 Cxc3 15 Bc2 Bb7 16 Bc4 Bc6 17 Bxd4.

This move, maintaining the tension, has been White’s most frequent choice.

6...Ag4

a) 6...b4?! releases the tension, and both 7 Ae2 and 7 Aa4, working on the c-file, are good.

c) 5...b5 6 b3 Ag4 7 Ge2!? Bbd7 8 h3 Ah5 (8...Axe2 9 Aexe2 e6 10 0-0 ± with two bishops, Mamedyarov-Volkov, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006) 9 Bf4 Ag6 10 Bxg6 hxg6 11 Ae2 ± (11 Ab2 has also yielded an advantage) 11...e6 12 0-0 (D) and now:

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b) 11 \textit{c}c1 has also been played.

c) Lugovoi-Volkov, Russian Ch, Moscow 1999 continued 11 \textit{x}d5?! \textit{x}d5 12 \textit{e}xe5?! \textit{xe}5 13 \textit{w}d1?! (better is 13 \textit{w}f4! \textit{d}6 14 \textit{wd}4 \pm) 13...\textit{d}6?! (13...\textit{e}7?! =). Now that the centre has stabilized, White tends to play a redeployment such as 14 \textit{c}c1 0-0 15 \textit{b}2 with a slight advantage.

This whole line is hardly inspiring, but pretty much the name of the game when 4...\textit{a}6 and 6...\textit{g}4 is played.

\textbf{8 h3 (D)}

Now we'll see White's basic idea of exchanging the bishop.

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{8...\textit{xf}3}
\end{center}

8...\textit{h}5 9 \textit{g}4 \textit{g}6 10 \textit{e}5 \textit{d}6?! (after 10...\textit{f}d7 11 \textit{x}g6 h\textit{x}g6 12 \textit{wc}2 \textit{b}6 13 c5 \textit{d}6d7 White stood somewhat better with his bishop-pair in Malakhatko-Wirig, Differdange 2007; one way to exploit that is 14 \textit{g}2 \textit{e}7 15 e4) 11 h4! \textit{e}4 (Burmakin-Bryzgalin, Russia Cup, Kstovo 1997) and now 12 h5! is extremely strong: 12...\textit{xc}3 13 \textit{xc}3 \textit{e}4 14 f3 f6 15 \textit{h}6! g6 16 \textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 17 fxe4 \textit{g}3+ 18 \textit{d}2 b4 19 \textit{b}2 \textit{xe}4 20 \textit{c}2 and Black's e-pawn is vulnerable, among other problems, but 20...0-0 21 \textit{g}2 f5? 22 \textit{xf}5 \textit{exf}5 23 d5 is killing, and 20...\textit{f}8 21 \textit{wd}2 f5 22 \textit{wg}2 \textit{d}6 23 \textit{xf}5 \textit{exf}5 24 \textit{d}d1 is also pretty bad for Black.

\begin{center}
\textbf{9 \textit{w}xf3 \textit{b}4}
\end{center}

Black almost always responds in this manner. The slower 9...\textit{e}7 10 \textit{d}3 0-0 11 0-0 favours White's bishop-pair, and even 11 g4?! is promising.

\begin{center}
\textbf{10 \textit{d}3}
\end{center}

10 \textit{c}c1 \pm bypasses what follows because of 10...\textit{wa}5 11 \textit{c}2; that isn't really necessary, but means that the players will be more on their own.

\begin{center}
\textbf{10...\textit{wa}5! 11 \textit{c}c1! \textit{xc}3}
\end{center}

11...\textit{bxc}4 12 \textit{bxc}4 \textit{bd}7 13 0-0 0-0 14 a3 \textit{xc}3 15 \textit{xc}3 gained a straightforward advantage for White in Riazantsev-Kotanjian, Moscow 2008.

\begin{center}
\textbf{12 \textit{xc}3 \textit{wa}2 13 \textit{wd}1}
\end{center}

The next few moves are forced to save the black queen:

\begin{center}
\textbf{13...\textit{xc}4 14 \textit{bxc}4 \textit{bxc}4 15 \textit{a}a1 \textit{wb}3 16 \textit{xb}xb3 cxb3 17 \textit{e}e2}
\end{center}

The alternative is 17 \textit{d}d2 0-0 18 \textit{hb}1 \textit{bd}7 19 \textit{xb}3 c5 (Tregubov-Movsesian, Mainz rapid 2010), when White maintains a slight edge with 20 \textit{hb}7 \textit{xd}4 21 \textit{xd}4 intending 21...\textit{e}5 22 \textit{a}a7!, but this isn't much.

\begin{center}
\textbf{17...\textit{bd}7 18 \textit{hb}1}
\end{center}

An ending arises with two bishops versus two knights. This would normally be difficult for the knights, but the advantage is limited here by the pawn-structure. L’Ami-Laznička, European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008 continued 18...c5 19 \textit{xa}6?! (19 \textit{xb}3 \textit{xd}4 20 \textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5 21 \textit{b}2 \textit{xc}5 22 \textit{ba}3 \textit{xd}3 23 \textit{xd}3 \textit{e}4 24 \textit{da}3 favours White, because in spite of all the pawns being on one side of the board, Black can’t stabilize the position; for example, 24...\textit{c}d7 25 \textit{d}d1! f6 26 \textit{a}4 f5 27 g4! 19...\textit{xa}6 20 \textit{xa}6 0-0 21 \textit{xb}3 \textit{b}8 22 \textit{xb}8+ \textit{xb}8 23 \textit{d}3 \textit{cxd}4 24 \textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6 25 \textit{b}2 \pm, although Black did hold.
6 Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Qc3 e6 (D)

This move-order, known as the Triangle Variation, is one of several that Black can use to reach a Semi-Slav (via 4 Qf3 Qf6), though both sides have additional options. 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Qc3 c6 also brings about the same position. This modest-looking opening has led to some of the most exciting chess in the last couple of decades.

4 e3

We choose the same answer that we gave to 3...Qf6 in Chapter 5. This is necessary for a coherent repertoire, since 4 Qf3 allows 4...dxc4 (as does 3...Qf6 4 Qf3). In that case, White can play some interesting and possibly underestimated ideas such as g3 and even 5 e4 b5 6 e5?!, but that's another story. With 4 e3 Qf6, we arrive at the position that could arise from last chapter's 3 Qc3 Qf6 4 e3 if Black continues 4...e6.

After 4 e3, we examine:

6.1: 4...f5 100
6.2: 4...Qf6 105

Black can also try to get to a Dutch Defence by 4...Qd6, meeting 5 Qd3 with 5...f5. This transposes to Section 6.12 (4...f5 5 Qd3 Qd6), which offers White several attractive options. 5 Qf3 is a natural response to 4...Qd6 that you may prefer. Then:

a) After 5...Qf6, 6 b3 may transpose into our preferred line of the Semi-Slav (see Section 6.21), without Black having the ...b4 line available, while 6 Qd3 Qbd7 can lead to a Meran Variation, but with the bishop already on d6; this has been getting some attention recently, but is generally not considered as good as the main-line Meran for Black.

b) 5...f5 is a type of Stonewall Dutch in which White has played neither g3 nor a combination of Qge2 and f3. That may not be so bad, however, since he can try 6 Qe5?! Qf6 (6...Qxe5 7 dxe5 ± is hard on Black's dark squares, although playable) 7 f4 (7 Qe2 0-0 8 0-0 is also possible) 7...0-0 (7...Qe4? 8 Wh5+) 8 Qe2 Qe4 9 Qxe4?! (9 0-0 ±) 9...fxe4 (9...dxe4 10 Qd2 c5 11 Qc3 also feels slightly preferable for White, although that would need to be investigated) 10 0-0 Qd7 11 Qd2 ±.

6.1)

4...f5 (D)

This is a tricky and popular way for Black to get to a Stonewall formation without having to worry about g3 by White, or even development by Qf4 or Qg5. However, by playing 3 Qc3 instead of 3 Qf3, White gains some options.
In response to 4...f5, White has two promising courses:

6.11: 5 g4 101
6.12: 5 d3 103

6.11)

5 g4 (D)

One of the advantages of 3 c3 is that you still have this move available. It's very loosening and therefore somewhat risky; nevertheless, the play is positionally and strategically based. White is trying to break down Black's centre as directly as possible. Either the f5-pawn disappears by ...fxg4 or White plays gxf5 and after ...exf5 goes after the weakened d5-pawn. The two important moves are:

6.111: 5...fxg4 101
6.112: 5...d6 102

After 5...d6 (D) there are several promising replies:

a) 6 g5!? hxg5 7 e4 is an interesting gambit: 7...f6 (7...e7 8 hxh6 gxh6 and after 9 h5+ Volkov continues 9...d8 10 e5, but 9...f7 might simplify and equalize, so perhaps the immediate 9 e5 has more potential) 8 exd5 exd5 9 cxd5 d6 10 e2+ d7 (Volkov-Landa, Russia Cup, Perm 1997) and now Volkov gives 11 d3 e8+ 12 dge2, which should favour White.

b) 6 h3 (Volkov's own suggestion, though he ends up on the wrong side!) 6...d6 7 d3 e5?! 8 exd5 0-0 (Ipatov-Volkov, Moscow 2010) and then 9 b3! keeps a nice advantage for White.

c) 6 gxf5 xf5 7 f3 (7 d3 f6 8 f3 d6 9 e4 xd4 10 xd4 e4 and here Volkov gave 11 exd5 e5+ =, but 11 e3 is a more ambitious try) 7...d7 (7...d6 is answered by 8 e4; 7...e7 may be best) 8 d3 f6 9 c2 g6?! and now 10 d2 was fine in Bergsma-Koomen, Baarn 1941, but 10 h4! is better, and more fun, threatening 11 cxd5 and upon 11...exd5, 12 h5!.

6.111)

5...fxg4 6 hxg4 d6

6...h6 7 g2 d5 requires another move to develop and White takes aim with 8 d3. The game Hübner-Adler, Swiss Team Ch 2000 continued a little oddly by 8...f6 9 f4!? (9 f3! d7 10 d2 and 0-0-0) 9...b4 10 f3 h4 11 xh4 xh4+ 12 g3!, when a trade of queens would have left White with a much better pawn-structure as well as superior development.

7 g2 (D)
The queen takes aim at d5 and g7, while staying away from further attacks by Black.

7...c5

Probably the most common move, and very thematic, entailing counterattack on White's neglected centre. Other moves:

a) 7...d4 led to a pretty game after 8 d2 0-0 9 c3 Wc7 10 g1 Qbd7 11 c3 d6 12 0-0-0 Qh8 13 Qg5! dxc4 14 Qxc4 e5 15 Qe4 Qb8 16 c6 Qg8 17 c4 g5 Qd5 18 Qxd5 Qxd5 (Ward points out 19 Qb4! Wxb4 20 Qf7#) 19...h6 20 Qd8! (an extraordinary combination ends the game) 20...Qxd8 21 Qf7+ Qh7 22 Qxg7+! Qxg7 23 Qg1+ Qf6 (23...Qxf8 24 Qb4! Wxb4 25 Qxh6) 24 Qf3+ Qe6 25 d5# (1-0) Shaked-Vigh, Schwarzach 1997.

b) 7...Qbd7 8 d2 Qg6 9 Qf3 Qg7 10 Qg5?! (10 0-0-0) 10...Wc7 11 0-0-0 b5 12 cxb5 c5 13 h4?! Qb6 14 h5 e5 (14...Qxh5 15 Qxh7!) 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 Qxh8+ Qh8 17 dxe5 Qxe5 18 Qf3 Qh5 19 Qd3 Qg4 (Khenkin-Marcelin, French League 2002) and now the easiest win was 20 Qh4! Wxh4 21 Qh1.

8 Qf3

8 dxc5 should also keep some advantage.

8...Qc6 9 Qd2

And here 9 dxc5! Qxc5 10 Qd2 with the idea Qg1 and 0-0-0 gives White an edge.

9...Qd7

Seirawan-Yermolinsky, USA Ch, Key West 1994 continued 9...c8 10 0-0-0 Wc7 11 dxc5 Qxc5 12 Qg1 0-0 13 Qg5 (13 cxd5 exd5 14 Qxd5 Qxd5 15 Qc4 Qc4 16 Qc3) 13...Qh8 14 Qbl Qd5? 15 Qa4 Qa7? 16 Qb4 Qg8 (16...Qe8 17 Qd6!) 17 Qg3 1-0, since White threatens Qxe5.

10 0-0-0 Qc7??

10...Qc8 11 dxc5 Qxc5 12 Qg1 g6 13 Qbl 0-0 14 h4!?

11 Qxe5 Qxd4 12 Qxd4 (D)

12...0-0-0

12...Qxd4? 13 Qg5! is awfully strong.

13 Qf4 Qe8 14 Qxd4 Qxd5 15 Qxc6 Qxc6

16 Qg3

White threatens 17 Qh3+. Now:

a) 16...b6? 17 Qa6+ Qb7 18 Qd3! Qc6 19 Qhe1 is hopeless for Black.

b) 16...b5! was played in Dautov-Krasenkow, Essen 2002. Then White could play 17 a8! Qd7 18 Qh3 Qb7 19 Qxd7 Qxd7 20 Qe5 with an advantage, although 20...b4 21 Qe5?
12 \(\texttt{Qe2 Qb4} 13 0-0 \texttt{Qe6} 14 \texttt{Qf4 Qf7} 15 \texttt{Qd2 g5} 16 \texttt{Qxe6 Qxe6} 17 \texttt{Qa5!} 1-0 \text{Yakovich-Ali-baev, Dubai 2001.}

b) 7...\texttt{Qe4}?! 8 \texttt{Qxd5 Qxc3} 9 bxc3 \texttt{Qxd5} 10 \texttt{Qxd5} 11 \texttt{Qg2} and Black has the same problem: falling pawns. Gretarsson-Ragnars­son, Reykjavik 2000 continued 11...\texttt{Qe6} 12 \texttt{Qe2 Qd6} 13 c4 \texttt{Qa6} 14 \texttt{Qxd5 Qf7} 15 \texttt{Qbl} 0-0 16 \texttt{Qxb7 Qb4} 17 \texttt{Qc3} ±.

8 \texttt{Qxc4 Qd6}?! 

a) 8...\texttt{Qe7} 9 \texttt{Qh3}?! b5 10 \texttt{Qd3 g6} 11 \texttt{Qf4 Qh6} 12 \texttt{Qec2 g5}?! 13 \texttt{Qg2 Qe6} 14 \texttt{Qc2} (Port­tisch-Haba, Erevan Olympiad 1996) and White has two threats: \texttt{Qxf5} and h4.

b) 8...\texttt{Qb6} 9 \texttt{Qc2}!? \texttt{Qd6} 10 \texttt{Qf3} intending \texttt{Qg5} and \texttt{Qg1}, or simply 0-0.

9 \texttt{Qf7}+?! \texttt{Qe7} (D)

\[W\]

Now:

a) 10 \texttt{Qf3} is the calm way to a slight advan­tage.

b) After 10 \texttt{Qc4}, Nickel-Sehner, German corr. Ch 1994 continued 10...b5 11 \texttt{Qd3 Qe6} 12 \texttt{Qc2 Qb4} (12...g6 13 \texttt{Qh3} ±) 13 \texttt{Qec2 Qa5} 14 b3 \texttt{Qbd7} 15 Qh3 g6 16-0-0 \texttt{Qac8} 17 \texttt{Qef4 Qd5} 18 f3 (with the idea e4) 18...c5 19 \texttt{Qxd5+ Qxd5} 20 \texttt{Qe1}!? with an attack.

6.12)

5 \texttt{Qd3} (D)

This is worth seeing in part because it’s good to have an alternate repertoire option (although 5 g4 is pretty nice), but also because it’s an Anti-Stonewall weapon for anyone not com­mitted to \texttt{Qf3} in the opening.

5...\texttt{Qd6}

This is a very common move-order. Black doesn’t want to block his queen’s path to the kingside until he sees how White is deploying his forces. 5...\texttt{Qf6} tends to come to the same thing, though there are a few independent vari­ations:

a) 6 \texttt{Qge2 Qd6} transposes to line ‘d’ of the next note.

b) After 6 \texttt{Qc2} both 6...\texttt{Qd6} and the Ston­ewall/Chebanenko hybrid 6...a6?! 7 \texttt{Qge2 Qd6} 8 f3 0-0 transpose back to the main line of this section.

c) 6 f4!?! is played upon occasion. It can’t be bad and even looks slightly irritating to Black; e.g., 6...\texttt{Qd6} 7 \texttt{Qf3} 0-0 8-0-0 \texttt{Qe4} 9 \texttt{Qd2 Qd7} (if 9...\texttt{Qxd2} 10 \texttt{Qxd2 Qd7}, to bring the other knight to e4 via f6, 11 c5 followed by b4 initi­ates a promising queenside attack) occurred in Vezzosi-Lputian, Reggio Emilia 1998/9. Then Lputian suggests 10 c5?! \texttt{Qc7} 11 b4 ±, although 10 \texttt{Qc1} and 10 \texttt{Qe1} are also reasonable, since c5 and b4 can be played later.

6 \texttt{Qc2}

Or:

a) 6 g4?! is now inferior due to 6...\texttt{Qh6}! (6...fxg4 7 \texttt{Wxg4 Qf6} 8 \texttt{Wg2}) 7 gx5 0-0 8 e4 dxе4 9 \texttt{Qxe4 Qb4}+ ±.

b) With Black playing ...\texttt{Qd6} so early, White might again be tempted to play 6 f4 himself. Not only would Black need two moves to get ...\texttt{Qb4} in, but when White plays \texttt{Qd5} it will be less favourable to capture that knight with one of Black’s.

c) 6 \texttt{Qf3 Qf6} 7 0-0 0-0 8 b3 (or 8 \texttt{Qc2}) is obviously playable, probably even slightly ad­vantageous, but letting Black sink a knight into e4 isn’t always the best policy.
d) 6 \( g \ge 2 \) is obviously OK and may transpose. After 6...\( \ge f 6 \), White can try 7 f3!? (7 \( w \ge 2 \) transposes to our main line, and in fact it's probably a more logical way to get there, since \( w \ge 2 \) is a move that might be dispensed with, depending upon the situation) 7...0-0 0-0 (D);
e.g.:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B}
\end{array}
\]

\( d1) \) 8...\( c7 \) 9 h3?? \( dxc4 \) 10 \( \ge xc4 \) \( \ge h8 \), I.Sokolov-Nikolić, Bled/Rogaška Slatina 1991. I like White prospects in the centre after simply 11 a3 (versus ...b5-b4) 11...b5 12 \( d \ge d3 \) \( \ge bd7 \) 13 \( w \ge 2 \) with the idea \( \ge d2 \) and \( \ge a1 \).

\( d2) \) 8...e5 9 cxd5 \( cxd5 \) 10 \( d \ge d6 \) (Obukhov-Maliutin, Moscow 1991) and now 12 \( \ge x f 5 ! \) \( \ge x h2+ \) 13 \( \ge h1 \) \( \ge xf5 \) 14 \( \ge xf5 \) \( \ge e5 \) 15 \( \ge e2 \) is strong, intending f4 and \( \ge d4 \) or \( \ge c3 \) depending upon circumstances.

6...\( d \ge 6 \) 7 \( \ge g2 \)

After 7 cxd5 \( cxd5 \) 8 \( \ge b5 \) \( \ge b4+ \) 9 \( \ge d2 \) \( \ge xd2+ \) 10 \( w \ge d2 \) White wins the dark squares, although this appears to be only a small plus.

7...0-0 8 f3 (D)

Here we have a nice comfortable anti-Stonewall set-up. Black's favourite e4-square isn't available for a knight, and White has possibilities of expansion in the centre and on the queenside.

8...a6

Oddly enough, this is the most popular move among top players. Let's see some alternatives:

a) 8...\( w \ge 7 \) 9 0-0 \( \ge h8 \) 10 cxd5! \( cxd5 \)? (or 10...\( \ge xd5 \) 11 a3?!) 11 \( \ge b5 \) \( \ge c6 \) 12 \( \ge xd6 \) \( w \ge xd6 \) 13 a3 (not a position in which to be missing your dark-squared bishop) 13...\( d \ge d7 \) 14 b4 \( \ge ac8 \) 15 \( w \ge d2 \) a6 16 \( h \ge b2 \) \( \ge c7 \) 17 \( \ge c3 \) b5 18 \( \ge c1 \) e5 19 dxe5 \( \ge xe5 \) 20 \( \ge b3 \) \( \ge c8 \) 21 \( \ge ac1 \) \( \ge e8 \) 22 \( \ge xe5 ! \) \( \ge xe5 \) 23 \( \ge xc7 \) \( \ge xc7 \) 24 \( \ge c1 \) \( \ge e5 \) 25 \( \ge f1 \) \( \ge d7 \) 26 \( w \ge d4 \) \( \ge d6 \) 27 \( d \ge a5 \) \( d \ge e5 \) 28 \( \ge e2 \) \( \ge d8 \) 29 \( \ge c5 \) ± Lautier-Tregubov, Paris 2004.

b) 8...\( \ge bd7 \) is one of the better moves, developing quickly and covering e5: 9 \( \ge d2 \) (9 b3?!) 9...dxc4! (9...b6? 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 \( \ge b5 \) ±) 10 \( \ge xc4 \) \( \ge b6 \) 11 \( \ge b3 \) \( \ge h8 \) 12 a3 e5 13 0-0-0?! (13 0-0) 13...\( w \ge 7 \) 14 h3 \( \ge d7 \) 15 b1 a5 16 g4 (Sashikiran-Krasenkow, Calvia Olympiad 2004; 16 dxe5! \( \ge xe5 \) 17 g4 ±) and now Scherbakov offers 16...e4 with good counterplay, if not complete equality.

c) 8...\( \ge h8 \) is a kind of waiting move that comes in handy in the conventional Stonewall. White can play for queenside action or slowly prepare central activity; e.g., 9 \( \ge d2 \) c5?! (this is awfully risky; a sound move is 9...\( w \ge 7 \)) 10 cxd5 \( cxd5 \) 11 \( \ge d2 \)\( ± \); 10...\( w \ge d6 \) \( \ge f1 \) 11 \( \ge d2 \) cxd5 12 0-0-0 f4? 13 \( \ge d4 \) fxe3 14 \( \ge c3 \) \( \ge d6 \) 15 \( \ge xd6 \) \( \ge d6 \) 16 \( w \ge d6 \) \( \ge d8 \) 17 \( \ge b1 \) \( \ge d5 \) 18 \( \ge f1 \) \( \ge d5 \) 19 \( \ge d4 \) \( \ge g8 \) 20 \( \ge f1 \) \( \ge d4 \) 21 \( \ge d7 \) 22 \( \ge f1 \) \( \ge c3 \) ± Lautier-Tregubov, Paris 2004.

9 c5?!

This fixes some slight weaknesses and prevents ...dxc4. 9 0-0 is normal; then after 9...\( \ge h8 \) 10 c5 \( \ge c7 \), Akopian-Grischuk, Ubeda 1999) Grischuk offers up 11 \( \ge d2 \) \( \ge bd7 \) 12 \( \ge c3 \) ±. 9...b6 10 \( \ge d2 \) has been played a few times. For instance, Black successfully solved his problems in Chernin-Grischuk, European Team Ch, Batumi 1999 by 10...\( \ge h8 \) 11 \( \ge d1 \) \( \ge c7 \) 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 h3 \( \ge c6 \) 14 a3 \( \ge b7 = \).

9...\( \ge c7 \) 10 0-0

Now White is set to work in the centre and on the queenside; he has some advantage.

10...\( w \ge 8 \)
10...h8 11 d2 bd7 12 b4 b6!? 13 a4 and here instead of 13...bxc5?! (as played in Kramnik-Tregubov, French Team Ch 2002) Scherbakov points to 13...b5 as Black's best, when Kramnik gives 14 h2?! g6 (14...a5? 15 a4! ±) 15 a4 b7 16 e4 and White stands better; 16 f4 also deserves attention.

11 e4! (D)

This pawn-break is White's ace-in-the-hole in lines with d3, ge2 and f3.

11...fxe4 12 fxe4 g4 13 f4 e5 14 exd5!
White plays for the attack. 14 h3 isn't bad either.

14...exf4 15 xh7+ h8 16 g6 (D)

Now:

a) After 16...e3, Mamedyarov-D.Schneider, World Under-18 Ch, Iraklion 2002 continued 17 d3 f5 18 xf5 xf5 19 xf4 xf4 20 xf4 dh6 21 xf8+ xf8 22 f1 wg8 23 g4! (a beautiful move, even if the less romantic 23 e2! with the idea f4 is more decisive) 23...xd5 (23...xg4 24 g3! xf6 25 h3+ h7 26 e4 wins for White) 24 g5 and White regained his material with interest due to 24...f7 25 h3+.

b) Scherbakov prefers 16...e7!?, but it's probably too late: 17 d6 xd6 18 xd6 xd6 19 h3! h6 20 e4 ±.

6.2)

4...f6 5 f3 (D)

5...bd7
This is one of the main positions of the Semi-Slav, with Black's last move normally a signal that he is willing to play the complex Meran System.

5...a6 (equivalent to 3 c3 f6 4 e3 a6 5 f3 e6) mixes ...e6 and ...a6 systems, which looks slow but has some points; e.g., 6 d3 dxc4 7 xc4 b5 makes use of ...a6 quite nicely, and 6 c2 c5 (see note 'a' to White's 5th move in Section 5.34) makes sense. This has made it popular among grandmasters, but White should nevertheless keep an advantage with 6 b3 (a partial tempo ahead of our main lines, depending upon how you think ...a6 compares with ...bd7; 6 c5 is also played) 6...b4 7 d2 bd7 8 d3 0-0 9 0-0 (D).

Here are some examples of typical play:

a) Following 9...e7, both 10 e2 and 10 e5 are logical, but the nicest move is Aronian's 10 e1!, when 10...d6 11 c5 c7 12 e4 ± was I.Sokolov-S.Ivanov, Malmö 2004, and 10...a5 11 a3! xa3 12 e4 gave White the initiative in the game Navara-Erenburg, Bundesliga 2006/7.
b) 9...\textit{d}6 10 \textit{w}c2 (10 e4!? \textit{d}xc4 11 bxc4 e5 12 c5 \textit{c}7 13 \textit{a}4 is a gambit from Kasparov, very unclear but probably alright for Black; a good alternative is 10 \textit{c}1 e5 11 cxd5 \textit{c}xd5 12 dxe5 \textit{c}xe5 13 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 14 \textit{e}2 \pm Dreev-Godena, European Ch, Warsaw 2005) and then:

b1) 10...e5?! 11 cxd5 \textit{c}xd5 12 e4! and however Black resolves the centre he stands a bit worse. For theory buffs, this is a normal 6 \textit{c}2 Semi-Slav line with an extra b3 and \textit{d}d2 for White and an extra ...a6 for Black.

b2) Alternatively, 10...\textit{e}8 11 \textit{f}e1! leaves White better prepared for 11...e5?! 12 cxd5 \textit{c}xd5 13 e4! \pm.

b3) 10...h6 11 \textit{ad}1 e5 12 cxd5 \textit{c}xd5 13 e4 dxe4 14 \textit{d}xe4 \textit{d}xe4 15 \textit{h}xe4 \textit{e}4d4 (Ftačnik-M.Gurevich, European Ch, Warsaw 2005) and now Gurevich indicates that 16 \textit{c}xd4 \textit{f}6 17 \textit{f}3 \textit{x}h2+ 18 \textit{h}xh2 \textit{w}xd4 19 \textit{g}1, threatening \textit{g}6, gives White compensation, which is an understatement.

b4) 10...\textit{e}7 11 c5 \textit{c}7 12 e4 dxe4 13 \textit{d}xe4 14 \textit{d}xe4 h6 15 \textit{f}e1 \pm.

We now return to 5...\textit{bd}7 (D):

6 b3

This unassuming move has several benefits. It prepares a fianchetto, obviously, which solves the problem of White's worst piece. Equally importantly, it allows recapture with the pawn (bxc4) after ...dxc4. You should be aware that one of the two main lines of the Semi-Slav, the Meran System, goes 6 \textit{d}3 dxc4 7 \textit{xc}4 b5. To avoid this, White often plays an 'anti-Meran' line, usually 6 \textit{w}c2. With 6 b3, the capture on c4 followed by harassment of the bishop after \textit{xc}4 by ...b5 is eliminated. There are other reasons to play 6 b3 instead of 6 \textit{w}c2 (and vice-versa, of course; 6 \textit{w}c2 is much more popular!). It may seem obscure at the moment, but with the queen on c2, Black will often play for the move ...c5 (after ...b6 and ...\textit{b}7, for example, or in lines with ...dxc4, ...a6 and ...c5). Then the queen is situated awkwardly on c2 facing a rook on c8. After 6 b3, although in some variations it will be useful on c2 anyway, White can wait and determine the queen's optimal placement later – it may turn out to be more effective on e2 or even on its home square.

Before moving on to 6 b3, I can't resist presenting an eccentric idea that might be worth a go: 6 \textit{w}c2 \textit{d}6 7 h3?! (or 7 \textit{d}2 0-0 8 h3 7...0-0 (7...e5 8 \textit{c}xd5 \textit{c}xd5 9 \textit{bd}5 \textit{ab}8 10 \textit{e}2 with the idea \textit{b}4 and \textit{ad}1) 10...\textit{a}6 11 \textit{ad}1 \pm) 8 \textit{ad}2 (8 \textit{e}2 \textit{e}7 9 0-0 dxc4 10 \textit{xc}4 e5 11 \textit{b}3!, to avoid ...\textit{d}6 with tempo; most players like White in this kind of position) 8...dxc4 (Black has other moves, of course; 8...\textit{e}7 can be answered by 9 \textit{e}2 or the useful waiting move 9 \textit{ad}1) 9 \textit{xc}4 e5 10 0-0. Now we have a reversed Colle with an extra tempo (or two, depending upon the variation). It is widely considered that h3 in conjunction with \textit{w}c2 is the best system for Black in the reversed position (that is, ...h6 and ...\textit{e}7). Something to think about!

Let's return to 6 b3 (D).

Black's main moves are:

6.21: 6...\textit{d}6 108
6.22: 6...\textit{b}6 112

White has unique ways to meet these moves, and I will also suggest a transposition to mainstream \textit{w}c2 lines at some points. Other moves
may not be of equivalent worth, but they’re playble:

a) 6...\( \text{e7} \) makes it easier for White to play 0-0 and e4: 7 \( \text{d3} \) (the point is that Black can’t reply with an early \( ... \text{e5} \)) 7...0-0 (7...\( \text{b6} \) 8 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{b7} \) transposes to Section 6.22) 8 0-0 \( \text{b6} \). Now watch out for the nasty trap 9 e4? \( \text{b4} \), when Black wins material! Instead, 9 \( \text{d2} \)! \( \text{b7} \) is 6.22 again.

b) 6...\( \text{b4} \) 7 \( \text{d2} \) is less common, but not bad. Black tries to divert White’s queen’s bishop from the long diagonal. The drawback is that this takes time (the bishop will usually return to \( \text{d6} \)), and \( \text{d2} \) is still a useful move in that it clears the back rank and speeds White’s development. Here are some sample lines:

b1) 7...\( \text{d6} \) 8 \( \text{c2} \) 0-0 9 \( \text{e2} \) dxc4 10 bxc4 e5 11 0-0 (D) brings us to an interesting position.

b11) 11..\( \text{e7} \) 12 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e8} \) 13 \( \text{g5}! \) \( \text{f8} \) 14 f4?! (14 \( \text{fe1} \) h6 15 \( \text{ge4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 16 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{c7} \) and now 17 \( \text{ab1} \), intending \( \text{b4} \), and 17 \( \text{g3} \) g6 18 \( \text{ab1} \) are both appealing) 14...exd4 15 exd4 \( \text{wc7} \) 16 c5! \( \text{e7} \) 17 f5 \( \text{d8} \) (17...\( \text{d8} \) 18 \( \text{c4}! \) 18 \( \text{ae1}! \) (18 \( \text{f3}! \) \pm) and now Black should settle for 18...\( \text{xd4} \)+ 19 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xe3}! \)+ 20 \( \text{xe3} \) \( \text{xc5} \)+ 21 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{xe3} \)+ 22 \( \text{c4} \) \pm. Instead 18...\( \text{d5}?? \) was answered by the fairly strong 19 \( \text{c4} \) in Halouzka-Pecenka, corr. 1989-90, but 19 \( \text{xd5} \) is immediately decisive: 19...\( \text{xd5} \) (19...\( \text{xd5} \) 20 \( \text{c4} \) 20 f6 \( \text{xf6} \)+ 21 \( \text{h7}+\) \( \text{g7} \) 22 \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{xf7} \)+ 23 \( \text{h6} \) and White wins.

b12) 11...exd4 12 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 13 \( \text{fe1} \) \( \text{f8} \) 14 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xe1} \)+ 15 \( \text{xe1} \) \( \text{g4} \) 16 \( \text{e5} \) (or 16 \( \text{g5} \) h6 17 \( \text{ge4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 18 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 19 \( \text{d5} \) \pm) 16...\( \text{xe5} \) (Krasenkov gave 16...\( \text{d6} \) 17 \( \text{e3} \) c5 18 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{h5} \)+ 19 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xe5} \)+ 20 \( \text{xe5} \)+ 21 \( \text{he6} \)+, but among other moves, 21 \( \text{g5}! \) \( \text{xe2} \)+ 22 \( \text{h1} \) causes mischief: 22...\( \text{xe6} \)+ 23 \( \text{e6} \)+ \( \text{xe7} \)+ 24 \( \text{xc5} \)+ 25 \( \text{d4} \) with an attack) 17 \( \text{xe5} \) 18 \( \text{d6} \) 18 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{h4} \) (Krasenkov-Matilak, Polish Team Ch, Mikolajki 1991) and now 19 \( f3 \) \( \text{h5} \) 20 \( \text{f4} \) \pm gives White the better prospects.

b2) 7...0-0 (D) and now:

b21) \( \text{d6} \) 8 \( \text{c2} \) 0-0 9 \( \text{e2} \) dxc4 10 bxc4 e5 11 0-0 (D) brings us to an interesting position.

b22) 8 \( \text{d3} \)? is not bad, but rather optimistic:

b221) 8...\( \text{e7} \) 9 0-0 e5 10 dxe5 \( \text{xe5} \)+ 11 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \)+ 12 \( \text{xd5} \)! \( \text{xd5} \)+ 13 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{h6} \) \pm might follow.

b222) 8...\( \text{d5} \) is not bad, but rather optimistic:

b2221) 8...\( \text{e7} \) 9 0-0 e5 10 dxe5 \( \text{xe5} \)+ 11 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \)+ 12 \( \text{xd5} \)! \( \text{xd5} \)+ 13 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{d6} \) \pm 14 f4 \( \text{xd5} \) 15 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{h5} \) 16 \( \text{c3} \) with a slight
advantage for White, Uhlmann-Starostits, Leutersdorf 2002. Admittedly, this isn't much, but it's a game.

b222) 8...\textit{e}e8 9 0-0 \textit{f}f8 (9...e5 10 dxe5 dxc4! 11 bxc4 \textit{e}xe5 12 \textit{e}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 13 \textit{w}c2 g6 14 \textit{a}ad1 \textit{a}d6 15 \textit{d}e2 intending h3 and \textit{c}c3, with a minor edge) 10 \textit{w}c2 g6 11 \textit{a}ad1!? (11 \textit{d}fe1 a6 12 e4 dxc4 13 \textit{d}xc4 b5 14 \textit{f}f1 \pm) 11...b6 12 e4 dxe4 13 \textit{a}xe4 \textit{w}c7 (13...\textit{b}b7 14 \textit{g}5 \textit{a}d7 15 ?x\textit{c}3! \pm); 13...\textit{d}xe4 14 \textit{d}xe4 \textit{a}b7 15 \textit{d}fe1 \pm) 14 \textit{d}xf6+ \textit{d}xf6 15 \textit{h}h4! (17 \textit{d}fe2! with the idea 17...e5 18 \textit{d}xe1) 17...\textit{h}xf6 18 \textit{g}g3 \textit{g}g3 19 \textit{h}x\textit{g}3 e5 20 dxe5 \textit{d}xe5 21 c5 with only a very minor advantage and few prospects against accurate play, Kramnik-Marek, Lyons simultaneous 2001.

6.21)

6...\textit{d}d6 (D)

This is the 'normal' move, in that it is played versus 6 \textit{w}c2 and other anti-Meran moves. Black would simply like to get castled, protect his centre, and either continue ...e5 when advantageous, or build up for ...c5 with ...b6 and ...
\textit{b}b7.

7 \textit{e}e2

There's one bad alternative and one rather good one:

a) The move \textit{d}d3 should only be played when ...e5 isn't effective. Here White has to be aware of the forking move ...e4, and 7 \textit{d}d3? e5! (D) illustrates this:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[ai)] 8 cxd5? \textit{b}b4! (threatening ...e4) 9 \textit{w}c2 e4 10 dxc6 exf3! 11 cxd7+ \textit{d}xd7 \mp with the idea 12 gxf3? \textit{d}d5 13 \textit{b}b2 \textit{d}xc3 14 \textit{d}xc3 \textit{e}c8 15 \textit{d}c4 \textit{d}xc4 16 \textit{w}xc4 b5, etc.
\item[a2)] 8 dxe5 \textit{d}xe5 9 cxd5?! \textit{w}a5!; e.g., 10 \textit{w}d2 can be met by 10...\textit{b}b4 11 \textit{b}b2 \textit{d}xf3+ 12 gxf3 \textit{d}xd5. Black even gets a little advantage with the cute trick 10...\textit{w}xc4!? 11 \textit{w}xc4 \textit{b}b4!, when White has to play 12 \textit{d}d2! \textit{d}xd3 13 \textit{d}xd3 \textit{f}f5+ 14 \textit{c}c4 \textit{d}xc3 15 \textit{d}xc3 \textit{d}e4+ \mp.
\item[a3)] Best is 8 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 9 dxe5 \textit{d}xe5 10 \textit{d}b2 dxc4 \mp.
\end{enumerate}

b) It's often better to get \textit{e}e2 and 0-0 in quickly, because otherwise ...e5 can have more effect. However, that's primarily the case if White has also spent a move on 6 \textit{w}c2, and having skipped that move here, it turns out that there's time for 7 \textit{b}b2 (D):

\begin{enumerate}
\item[b1)] 7...e5 8 cxd5 (8 \textit{e}e2!? e4 9 \textit{d}d2 is quite an interesting possibility, as White intends g4-g5 and 0-0-0; this is very much like a reversed form of variations of the Tarrasch French with 3...\textit{d}f6) 8...\textit{d}xd5!? (8...cxd5 9 dxe5 \textit{d}xe5 10 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 11 \textit{d}b5+ \textit{d}d7 12 \textit{d}xd7+ \textit{w}xd7 13}
0-0 isn't clear, but since Black can't enforce...
d4, White will get a long-term positional edge) 9 
\( \text{Qxd5 } \text{cxd5 } e5 \text{ } \text{w} \text{a5+ } 11 \text{ } \text{e2!} \) 
gives White an extra pawn he can hold on to; for 
instance, 11...b6 12 \( \text{wd4 } \text{a6+ } 13 \) 
\( \text{d1 } \text{xf1 } 14 \) \( \text{wxf1 } \text{w} \text{b5 } 15 \text{ } \text{e1} \). 

b2) 7...0-0 8 \( \text{e2} \) (8 \( \text{d3 } e5! \) 9 \( \text{cxd5 } \) 
\( \text{cxd5 } 10 \text{ } \text{dxe5 } \text{w} \text{xe5 } 11 \text{ } \text{w} \text{xe5 } 12 \text{ } 0-0 \text{ } \text{w} \text{xe8}! = 
has the dual ideas of...d4 and...\text{xf2+}) 8...e5 
(8...xc4 9 bxc4 e5 10 0-0 \text{w} \text{e8 } 11 \text{w} \text{f2} 
transposes to Section 6.212) 9 dxe5! \text{w} \text{xe5 } 10 \text{ } \text{cxd5 } 
\text{cxd5 } 11 0-0 \pm. A possible continuation runs 
11...\text{xf3+ } 12 \text{xf3 } \text{e5 } 13 \text{w} \text{f2 } d4?! (but 
otherwise, in addition to \text{e1d1}, \text{b5} or \text{d2} is 
coming) 14 \text{b5 } \text{g4 } 15 \text{w} \text{xe4 } \text{w} \text{xe4} 16 \text{f} 
\text{xf6 } 17 \text{e4}!, when White will win a pawn for 
minimal compensation. Compare the next note. 

We now return to 7 \( \text{e2} \) (D):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\text{W}
\end{array}
\]

7...0-0

With the bishop on e2, 7...e5 8 \text{cxd5 } \text{cxd5 } 9 
\text{dxe5 } \text{w} \text{xe5 } 10 0-0 is what White wants to 
achieve from an isolated-pawn position. After 
10...\text{e6 } (10...\text{xf3+ } 11 \text{xf3 } \text{e5 } 12 \text{b2 } 
0-0 13 \text{w} \text{d2 } \text{e6} \text{ and now } 14 \text{w} \text{d1} \text{ or } 14 \text{e2} \pm ) 
11 \text{b2 } 0-0 12 \text{b5 } \text{xf3+ } 13 \text{xf3 } \text{b8 } 14 
\text{a1a6 } 15 \text{g4 } \text{d6 } 16 \text{g3 } \text{e7 } 17 \text{e2}!, White 
threatens \text{xf6} and has a variety of moves such as 
\text{xf4}, \text{w} \text{d3} and \text{gxd4} at the ready.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\text{W}
\end{array}
\]

8 0-0

Now Black picks a strategy:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{6.211: } 8...\text{e4 } 109 \\
\text{6.212: } 8...\text{e8 } 110 \\
\text{6.213: } 8...\text{b6 } 111
\end{array}
\]

a) Once more, 8...e5 gives White comfortable play after 9 \text{dxe5 } \text{w} \text{xe5 } 10 \text{cxd5 } \text{xf3+ } 11 
\text{xf3 } \text{e5 } 12 \text{b2 } \text{xd5 } 13 \text{xd5 } 14 
\text{d2 } 15 \text{e2} (14...d4?! 15 \text{b5} 15 \text{e2}, when 
he has control of the position, although his 
game is hardly dominant.

b) 8...\text{e7} usually transposes to one of our 
main variations. An unusual line would be 9 
\text{c2} (for the paradoxical 9 \text{b2 } b6 10 \text{d3}?! 
\text{b7}, see Section 6.213) 9...b6 10 \text{cxd5}?! (an 
oddity when not having played \text{b2} yet; 10 
\text{b2} is normal) 10...\text{cxd5 } 11 \text{d3 } \text{b7 } 12 \text{e1} \text{ or } 
\text{e4}) 11 \text{b5 } \text{a6 } 12 
\text{d6 } \text{xe2 } 13 \text{w} \text{xe2 } \text{xd6 } 14 \text{a4 } \text{f5 } 15 
\text{a3 } \text{w} \text{b8 } 16 \text{w} \text{a6}, and White has a very slight 
edge because of his influential bishop.

6.211)

8...\text{e4} (D)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\text{W}
\end{array}
\]

Black has in mind establishing a Stonewall 
structure with...f5.

9 \text{c2}

9 \text{xe4 } \text{dxe4 } 10 \text{d2} is also played; furthermore, 9 
\text{b2 } f5 10 \text{e1 } \text{f6 } 11 \text{f4 } \text{h6 } 12 
\text{xe4 } \text{xe4 } 13 \text{g3} proved a successful plan in 
Uhlmann-Lukacs, Austrian Team Ch 2000/1, 
although right now it's about equal.

9...f5

This is Black's intended set-up, which Vera 
suggests following up with a kingside attack, 
using moves like...\text{f6} and/or...g5, with...\text{f6-} 
h6 as a possibility. That's a logical-sounding 
plan, but does have the drawback that it will be a 
long time before the a8-rook and c8-bishop 
will be able to support the other pieces in this 
endeavour. Let's take a look.

10 \text{a4}
This is the safest counter-strategy, preparing \( a3 \) to eliminate the attacker, while also initiating a queenside expansion. The alternative is 10 \( b2 \), which can support \( e5 \) at the right moment; e.g., 10...\( \text{W}f6 \) 11 \( \text{B}a1 \) \( g5 \) (11...\( \text{W}g6 \) 12 \( \text{d}3 \) with the idea \( \text{e}2 \) and \( \text{f}4 \), sometimes preceded by \( \text{e}5 \)) 12 \( h3 \) (12 \( g3 \) \( \text{W}h6 \) 13 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{f}xe4 \) 14 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \pm \)) 12...\( g4 \)? (12...\( h5 \) 13 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{f}xe4 \) 14 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 15 \( \text{dxe}5 \) \( \text{exe}5 \) 16 \( a3 \) \( \pm \)) 13 \( \text{hx}g4 \) \( \text{fx}g4 \) 14 \( \text{ex}e4 \) \( \text{dxe}4 \) 15 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \pm \).

10...\( \text{W}f6 \)?

a) 10...\( \text{W}e7 \) 11 \( a2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 12 \( a5 \) \( \text{h}6 \) is an easy attack to fend off: 13 \( g3 \) \( \text{d}f6 \) 14 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 15 \( \text{dxe}5 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 16 \( \text{wc}3 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 17 \( \text{d}4 \) and White has a slight advantage.

b) 10...\( a5 \) 11 \( a3 \) \( \text{xa}3 \) 12 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 13 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \pm \).

11 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{b}8 \) (D)

12 \( \text{c}1 \)

I think 12 \( \text{ac}1 \) should also achieve a moderate advantage; for example, 12...\( b6 \) 13 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 14 \( \text{c}3 \) 15 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \pm \) 16 \( \text{xf}5 \) ! \( \text{xc}3 \) 17 \( \text{e}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 18 \( \text{wc}3 \) \( c5 \) 19 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 20 \( \text{d}3 \) 21 \( \text{xc}5 \) 22 \( \text{bxc}5 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 23 \( \text{d}6 \) 24 \( \text{xe}6 \) 25 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \pm \).

12...\( \text{h}6 \) 13 \( g3 \) \( \text{w}e8 \) 14 \( \text{g}2 \) \( a5 \) 15 \( \text{c}1 \)

Now:

a) 17 \( \text{xc}4 \) has the ideas 17...\( \text{fxe}4 \) ! 18 \( f4 \), 17...\( \text{xe}4 \) 18 \( h3 \) \( \pm \).

b) After 17 \( h3 \), Korchnoi-Akopian, Groningen 1996 went 17...\( \text{ch}7 \) 18 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 19 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 20 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 21 \( \text{dxe}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 22 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 23 \( \text{d}6 \) 24 \( \text{c}1 \) 25 \( \text{h}5 \) \( \pm \).

6.212)

8...\( \text{e}8 \) 9 \( \text{xc}2 \)

Or, of course, 9 \( b2 \), which you should compare with this and other lines.

9...\( \text{xc}4 \) 10 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( e5 \) 11 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{w}7 \)

The structure after 11...\( \text{xc}4 \) 12 \( \text{c}4 \) is very common; White's central pawns are flexible and always threatening to advance. Play can continue 12...\( \text{f}8 \) 13 \( \text{d}1 \) 14 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 15 \( \text{wc}3 \) \( \text{exe}4 \) 16 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 17 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{w}d4 \) and Flear gives 18...\( \text{xc}5 \) an \( \pm \). However, while White has given up key squares and entombed his b2-bishop, he's done so for the sake of a direct attack, and 17 \( f5 \) (D) implements that:

a) 17...\( \text{exe}4 \) 18 \( \text{xc}3 \) 19 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( f6 \) (or 19...\( \text{c}8 \) 20 \( \text{b}3 \) and White is winning) 20 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 21 \( \text{f}6 \) 22 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 23 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 24 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{w}e5 \) 25 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \pm \).

b) 17...\( \text{xc}3 \) is the book move, but after 18 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 19 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( f6 \), White can keep his advantage by 20 \( \text{d}3 \) (instead of 20 \( \text{f}4 \) !, as played in Taimanov-Chekhov, Tallinn 1980) 20...\( \text{d}8 \) 21 \( \text{f}4 \), when a long, semi-forced variation is 21...\( \text{we}7 \) 22 \( \text{wc}4 \) 23 \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 24 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 25 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 26 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 27 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 28 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{x}f6 \) 29 \( \text{bc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 30 \( \text{wc}4 \) 31 \( \text{h}5 \) 32 \( \text{e}5 \) 33 \( \text{h}8 \) 34 \( \text{w}d3 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 35 \( \text{w}h5 \) 36 \( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{wh}3 \) 37 \( \text{e}8 \) ! and White wins.

12 \( \text{c}1 \) (D)

This move gives White time to pursue his own ambitions without having to defend the
kingside. The 'other rook' move, 12 \textbf{f}e1?! , has been played a lot, but after 12...e4 13 \textbf{d}d2 \textbf{f}f8, the line 14 f3 \textbf{xf}3 15 \textbf{x}f3 \textbf{g}g4! hasn't treated White well after many tests. Another interesting sequence is 14 a4 \textbf{g}6 15 c5 \textbf{c}7 16 a5; e.g., 16...\textbf{h}4 17 a6 b6 18 cxb6 axb6 19 a7 \textbf{w}e6 20 g3.

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

Now:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) 12...e4 13 \textbf{d}d2 \textbf{f}8 can be answered by 14 c5 \textbf{b}b8 15 \textbf{c}c4 with the idea 15...b5 16 \textbf{e}5. In the game Azmaiparashvili-Kaidanov, USSR 1982, White played the odd-looking 14 \textbf{d}d1 \textbf{g}6 15 f3! \textbf{xf}3 16 \textbf{x}f3 with the idea 16...\textbf{g}4 17 e4 or 16...\textbf{e}6 17 \textbf{e}2! \textbf{g}4 18 \textbf{d}d \pm .
  \item b) 12...\textbf{c}7 13 c5?! (a less committal alternative is 13 \textbf{w}b3, intending \textbf{a}3 in some lines) 13...h6 14 \textbf{a}3 e4?! 15 \textbf{d}d2 \textbf{f}8 16 \textbf{c}c4 \pm came out nicely for White in G.Kuzmin-Agзамov, USSR Ch, Frunze 1981. This line illustrates the creative leeway that 6 b3 allows.
\end{itemize}

6.213)

8...b6 9 \textbf{b}2 \textbf{b}7 (D)

This is a main line. Now 10 \textbf{w}c2 is the most common move (a position that much more often arises when White plays 6 \textbf{w}c2). We have years of practice with it, to the extent that many games have been repeated nearly or entirely move-for-move. The general conclusion is that 10 \textbf{w}c2 ends in equality, which is not really a problem in itself when you're trying to find an interesting position to play. The difficulty is that White tends to be stuck with the same plan, i.e., playing for e4 either before or after bringing rooks to the centre. Then after some exchanges leaving the queen on e4, Black plays either ...f5 (often followed by ...c5) or ...\textbf{f}6, attacking the queen, and equalizes. It's revealing that with the queen on c2, Gelfand and others have upon occasion simply accepted the loss of tempo and played \textbf{d}d3, and then \textbf{w}e2, either preparing e4 or simply improving the position of the queen while keeping an eye on a6, for example. Then Black tries to play an early ...e5 and equalize. It occurs to me that you could try the same idea here, i.e., play \textbf{d}d3 and then save a tempo by playing \textbf{w}e2 directly (instead of \textbf{w}c2-e2). Let's see how that might work out:

\begin{center}
10 \textbf{d}3 (D)
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

10...

\textbf{w}e7

I think this is the most appropriate move. In general, White can play the more aggressive \textbf{d}d3 in any line in which Black is not poised to play ...e5; otherwise, \textbf{e}2 tends to be preferable, as it is the best square for the bishop should Black take on an isolated queen's pawn. In this
position 10...e5? is inferior due to 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 Bb5. Here are some other typical moves:

a) 10...Be8 11 Bd2 (contemplating e4, of course, but also introducing the idea of cxd5 and Aa6) can lead to:

a1) 11...e5 always has to be checked: 12 dxe5 Bxe5 13 cxd5 (13...Bxd5 14 Bxd5 Bxd5 15 Bxd5 Bxc6 16 Bxc1 with a favourable isolated-pawn position for White because of the good knight versus bad bishop) 14 Bxd3 cxd5 15 Bb5 Be7 16 Bc1 e4 17 Bd2 Aa6 18 a4 Bc5 19 Bd1 ± with the idea b4.

a2) 11...Aa6 (versus cxd5 and Aa6) 12 Bfd1 dxc4 13 Bxc4 c5 14 Be7 15 Ac7 1 f4 with an obscure position; hard to assess, but I'd rather be White.

b) 10...c5 provides opportunities for both sides to complicate and this time there are actually real game examples: 11 Be2 (11 cxd5 exd5 is preferable; then White's queen is well placed, so 12 Ac1!, having in mind dxc5 with Cb5, or Ae2-f4, appears to be more accurate than the 12 Bc2 Ac8 13 Be7 16 Bc1 Bf6 17 Bd2 Bc8 18 Ac1 Bb8 19 Bb5 Ae5 with the idea b4).

12 Be2 Aa6 12...Aa6 (versus Ac1 and Bh4) 13 Bfd1 dxc4 13 Bxc4 c5 14 Be5 Bc7 15 f4 with an obscure position; hard to assess, but I'd rather be White.

For illustrative purposes, and you can be sure that with sensible play in the positions after 10 Bc1, the game is objectively close to equal, just as it is in all the anti-Meran systems. I’m proposing this variation not to guarantee the better game (although in most cases you can get an edge), but to provide an alternative to 15 moves of tactical and largely forced theoretical continuations. This way you have the whole game in front of you in which to try to outplay your opponent.

6.22)

6...b6 (D)

Black can play this on any of the next four moves, so a lot of what I’m showing can come from an equivalent transposition.

7 Bb2 Bb7 8 Bc3

As explained in the note to White’s 9th move, White is secure in this move when Black can’t play an early ...e5.

8...Be7

In this popular set-up, Black plays solidly and doesn’t expose himself to some of the attacks to which the bishop on d6 was subject (e.g., Bb5). Most importantly, he can answer Bxe5 with ...Bxe5 and the bishop won’t be
attacked on d6. For lines with ...\textit{d}6, see Section 6.21.

\textbf{9 0-0 (D)}

This position can arise by a variety of move-orders; for example, if Black plays 6 \textit{e}7 7 \textit{b}2 0-0, etc., a set-up which has attracted some good players recently, or even from a radically different move-order such as 3 \textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 4 e3 e6 5 b3 \textit{bd}7 6 \textit{b}2 b6 7 \textit{d}3 \textit{b}7 8 0-0 \textit{e}7 9 \textit{c}3.

\textbf{9...0-0 10 \textit{w}c2}

Avrukh says of this position: "This seems to me to be quite favourable for White. He has a clear plan of strengthening his position with \textit{ad}1, \textit{e}5, f4 and so on, while it is not so easy for Black to create serious counterplay." I would add that simply e4, often preceded by \textit{ad}1, can be effective at the right moment. As a general comment, I should also repeat that, since \textit{d}3 is already in, I prefer putting the queen on e2, and 10 \textit{w}e2 indeed has some advantages. This move often works better with e4, since the queen can capture on e4 in some lines, and it also stays out of the way of ...\textit{c}8 and ...c5. Notice that after ...\textit{e}7, Black’s own queen can’t get to e7 and is itself subject to attack on the c-file if it goes to c7.

In the event, I’ll stick with 10 \textit{w}c2 because you may find that there are other move-orders by which you reach this position but are already committed to \textit{w}c2. This in particular gives you flexibility if you don’t like the 6 b3 move-order, but do like the b3 set-up. For the record, however, I should say that Kasparov has played the position after 10 \textit{w}e2 twice (albeit in simultaneous displays), as have other strong players.

\textbf{10...\textit{c}8}

\textit{a}) 10...\textit{w}e7 11 \textit{d}e5 (11 \textit{fd}1 improves, I think; for example, 11...\textit{ac}8 12 \textit{ac}1 \textit{h}6 13 \textit{w}e2) 11...\textit{d}xe5? (11...c5 12 f4 \textit{ad}8 13 \textit{ad}1 \pm Krasenkow, but this isn’t much) 12 dxe5 dxc4 13 bx\textit{c}4 \textit{g}4 (13...\textit{d}7? 14 \textit{xe}7+ \textit{h}8 15 f4) 14 \textit{xe}7+ \textit{h}8 15 \textit{w}e2 f5 16 h3 \textit{hx}7 17 \textit{xc}4 18 g5! \textit{h}8 19 d\textit{d}5 \textit{w}d6 20 \textit{d}e5! \textit{w}d7 21 \textit{c}7\textasciitilde Sargissian-Egiazarian, Erevan 2004; a lovely combination.

\textit{b}) 10...c5 11 \textit{ad}1 \textit{ac}8 12 dxc5 \textit{xc}5 was the actual move-order of Polugaevsky-Comas Fabrego below.

\textbf{11 \textit{ad}1 (D)}

11 \textit{fd}1 would be better in the line 11...\textit{w}c7 12 \textit{w}e2 \textit{fe}8 13 \textit{ac}1; of course, this is always a difficult decision, because the most useful squares for the rooks are determined by how the game develops.

\textbf{11...\textit{w}c7}

This is an important juncture with some instructive alternatives:
a) 11...h6 12 e4 (12 Qe5 Qxe5 13 dxe5 Qd7 14 f4 ±) 12...dxe4 13 Qxe4 Qxe4 14 Qxe4 Qf6 (14...f5?! 15 Qd3 c5 16 d5!) 15 Qd3 wC7 16 c5?! (I like 16 Qf6±) 16...Qd5 17 Qe5 Qb4 (Kveinys-Hole, Oslo 2007) and now Avrukh recommends 18 wC4 Qxd4 19 Qxd4 with "a stable advantage due to Black's lazy bishop on b7".

b) 11...c5 (a natural move) 12 cxd5 exd5 (12...cxd4 13 Qxd4 leaves White clearly better after 13...exd5 14 Qf5 or 13...Qxd5 14 Ag6) 13 dxc5 (D) (13...Ag6? Kramnik) and now:

b1) 13...Qxc5 14 Ag1 wC8 15 Qe2 Qc7 16 Qf4 ± h6 17 Qf5 Qc7? 18 Qd4 Qa6?? 19 Qde6! 1-0 Polugayevsky-Comas Fabrego, Palma de Mallorca 1989, due to 19...fxe6 20 Qxe6+ Qh7 21 Qg6+ Qh8 22 Qf8++ Qh8 23 Wh7++ Qxh7 24 Ag6#.

b2) 13...bxc5 14 Qf5 g6?! (14...wC8!? with the idea...Ag8-Sokolov) 15 Qh3 a6 16 Qe2?! (16 Qa4±) 16...Qc7 17 wC3 Qb6 18 Ag5 ± I.Sokolov-Khalifman, Pardubice 1994.

c) 11...wC8 12 wC2 (even with the loss of tempo, this is a reasonable move) 12...wC7 13 e4 dxe4 14 Qxe4 Qxe4 15 Qxe4 Qf8 (15...Qf6 is the standard response if...f5 isn't available) 16 Qf6 c5 17 d5! exd5 18 Qxe6 Qf6 19 wxe8! wC8 20 Qxe8 Qxb2 21 d6 wC6 22 Qh5! Qxh5 23 Qf7 Ag6? (23...Qxf6! 24 Qxf6+ wC8 25 Qd8 Qh2 26 Qh8 27 Qg5 is winning for White, Papenin-Shvidun, Ukrainian Team Ch, Alushta 2004.

12 Qe5 (D)

b) 12...Ag8

This is the main theoretical move. Alternatives:

a) 12...Qd5? 13 dxe5 Qg4 14 Qh7+ Qh8 15 wC2! ± Csom-Metz, Budapest 1995.

b) 12...h6 13 wC2 (or Avrukh's suggestion 13 f4! first, to avoid...Qd5 on the following move; 13 Qxd7 Qxd7 followed by 14 wC2 or 14 e4 would serve a similar purpose, but with fewer attacking chances) and here:

b1) 13...Qd5 14 dxe5 Qd7 is only slightly better for White; e.g., 15 f4 Qc5 (15...dxc4?! 16 Qxc4 Qc5 17 Qb1 Qf8 18 Qd4 ±) 16 Qb1 dxc4 17 bc4 Ag8 18 Ag4±.

b2) 13...Ag8 14 f4! c5?! (Kramnik-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2007) and here 15 f5! (Krasenkow) is strong, as is Kramnik's 15 Qb5 Ab8 16 f5.

c) 12...g6 13 f4 a6 14 Qf5 dxc4! 15 bc4 Ag8 keeps Black's disadvantage to a minimum. Then...c5 is in the air, so 16 Qc2! is a good move, having in mind both 16...c5? 17 d5 and the fact that the bishop might transfer to b3.

13 f4

Now:

a) 13...c5 can be countered by 14 cxd5! wC8 15 wC2 (Avrukh).

b) After 13...Ag8, 14 wC2?! c5? (14...Ag8! 15 Ag6 Qg5 15 f5! gave White a serious attack in Floorean-Aliev, Calicut 1998. More accurate is 14 f5!; e.g., 14...Ag6 (14...Qa6 15 Ag6 Qf6 16 Qe2±) 15 Qf6 Qxe6 (15...Qd6? 16 Qxg6 fxg6 17 Qg4±) 16 Qxf6 exd5 17 Ag8 wC2! with the idea...Ag5) 17 Ag5 Ag8 18 e4! with a significant initiative.
The Nimzo-Indian Defence was for many years a mainstay of nearly every elite player's repertoire. It was said that the reason players used 1 e4 was because after 1 d4 they had to cope with the Nimzo-Indian! The opening is still one of the elite defences versus 1 d4, although now not as feared, and competing in popularity with the Slav, Semi-Slav, Queen's Gambit Declined and (at this moment) the Grünfeld Defence. In our case, we are using 3 c3 because it is consistent with the rest of our repertoire and, in the event that Black plays 3...d5, we have bypassed some troublesome defences which White would allow should he play 3 f3 (an issue I outlined in Chapter 1). Besides, the Nimzo-Indian is one of the greatest strategic openings in all of chess, so it would be a shame to pass it by!

4 e3 (D)

This gentle advance of the e-pawn has historically been played more often than any other move against the Nimzo-Indian, and in contemporary chess is played in slightly over a third of the games with 3 b4. Nearly every leading player has played 4 e3, some of them regularly.

Despite blocking in the queen's bishop, the move accomplishes a few basic things:

1) White prepares to develop his kingside quickly, and retains flexibility as to the placement of his king's knight on f3 or e2.
2) The e4-square can be challenged by d3, while c3 can be covered by g2, potentially with a later g3 to control e4 further.
3) The d4-pawn is covered, so the typical Nimzo-Indian attack by c5 and d6 has less forcing effect.

These are modest achievements, and the non-forcing nature of 4 e3 gives Black a great deal of latitude as to how to develop. Still, once White develops and castles, he will be threatening to expand with e4, and thus Black's main moves are directed at setting up so as to prevent or anticipate that advance:

7.1: 4...c5 117
7.2: 4...b6 126
7.3: 4...0-0 139
7.4: 4...d5 143
7.5: 4...d6 146

I'm not going to deal with illogical or slow 4th moves - after all, Black can play just about anything - but there are a couple of other moves that are important enough to mention:

a) 4...d6 is sound, intending an early ...e5 as he wishes. White has some leeway in setting up:

a.1) The classic encounter Euwe-Yanofsky, Groningen 1946 continued 5 e2 0-0 6 a3
A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE

\[ \text{x}c3+ 7 \text{dx}c3 e5 8 \text{e}2 \text{w}e7 9 0-0 \text{f}5 10 \text{f}3! (D). \]

10...\text{dc}6 (White has cleverly discouraged 10...e4?! due to 11 fxe4 \text{dx}e4? 12 \text{fx}f6! \text{gx}f6 13 \text{dxe}4 \text{w}xe4 14 \text{f}3 and b7 falls) 11 \text{dc}5! \text{dx}d5 12 \text{cxd}5 \text{db}8 13 e4 \text{dc}8 14 e3 \text{ex}d4 15 \text{dx}d4. White has taken over the centre and has the bishop-pair.

b) 4...\text{dc}4 has been connected with a few recent pawn sacrifices. After 5 \text{wc}2 (D) Black has two plausible options:

\[ \text{a2) 5 \text{dc}3 0-0 6 \text{dc}2 is attractive, and now the only consistent move is 6...e5. A few examples after 7 0-0 (D):} \]

\[ \text{b1) 5...\text{f}5 6 \text{dc}3 (or 6 \text{dc}2 \text{b}6 7 a3 \text{xc}3+8 \text{dc}3 \text{dc}3 9 \text{wc}3 \pm) 6...0-0!? (6...\text{xc}3+ 7 \text{bxc}3 0-0 8 \text{dc}2 \text{b}6 9 0-0 \text{db}7 10 f3 \text{d}6 11 \text{a}3 \text{dc}6 -- Rogozenko; then White should play 12 c5 bxc5 13 \text{dc}5 \text{w}g5 14 \text{dc}f4 \text{wh}6 15 \text{dc}b1 \text{dc}b8 16 \text{wa}4 with a distinct advantage) 7 \text{dc}2 (you don't have to give up your good bishop when the alternative is so natural; it turns out that 7 \text{wx}e4 \text{fxe}4 8 \text{wc}4 d5 has quite a bit of analysis attached to it, which may not be worth your time to study) 7...b6 8 0-0 \text{xc}3 9 \text{xc}3 (9 bxc3?! is a bit more ambitious and looks promising; e.g., 9...\text{dc}7 10 f3 \text{db}6 11 \text{a}3 \text{wg}5 12 \text{dc}f4 \text{dc}6 13 c5 bxc5 14 \text{dc}5 \pm) 9...\text{xc}3 10 \text{xc}3 \text{db}7 11 b4 d6 12 \text{dc}b2 (or 12 c5) with an edge for White because of the bishops -- Emms; he nevertheless points out that it's a fairly normal game and you can't expect any quick victories to follow.} \]

\[ \text{b2) 5...\text{xc}3 6 bxc3 \text{a}5 is another relatively new attempt to block the centre with some combination of ...d6, ...c5 and ...e5. A good way for White to set up is 7 \text{dc}3 d6 8 \text{dc}2 followed by central and kingside expansion; for example, 8...\text{dc}6 9 0-0 and now 9...0-0 10 \text{e}4 \text{e}5 11 f4 \text{dc}7 12 \text{dc}3 \text{df}6 13 h3 or 9...\text{dc}7 10 e4 c5 11 f4 with a dangerous pawn-mass.} \]
7.1)

4...c5

This is Black's most aggressive continuation; it strikes at d4, usually with the specific intention of ...cxd4 followed by ...d5, to compromise White’s centre. It is in some ways the most important move to study, because White has to know tactical specifics and concrete positional moves, as well as the general contours of a variety of types of position. Although the alternative 4...0-0 is now played more often, especially at the elite levels, the resulting play there is slow and easier to understand.

5 .bd2 (D)

I am recommending playing this way against most defensive set-ups. The knight move develops a kingside piece, prevents Black from doubling White’s c-pawns, and prepares a3 to force a favourable resolution of the queenside situation. bd4 or bg3 may follow, with control over the corresponding central squares. With a knight on e2, it is also possible to play moves like g3 and f3. On the negative side, on e2, the knight blocks the king’s bishop and fails to control e5. In the abstract, a knight on f3 is better placed as it covers two central squares and reaches into enemy territory; on the other hand, with a knight on f3, Black can often create doubled c-pawns by capturing on c3, and he can put a piece on e4 without being chased away by f3. These are typical trade-offs in chess, and naturally the consequences are to be found in the particulars of the play.

5...cxd4

a) 5...b6 transposes to Section 7.24 (i.e. 4...b6 5 0e2 c5).

b) 5...0e4 (D) is playable, even though it moves a piece twice and reduces Black’s control over d5 and e4. White has two logical replies:

\[\text{w} \]

b1) 6 0xd2 0xd2 7 0xd2 gains development in return for the bishops. White also has ideas of d5 and a3. Compare this with Section 7.23 (i.e. 4...b6 5 0e2 0e4). There can follow 7...cxd4 8 exd4 0-0 (8...d5 9 c5 is the main line of Section 7.121) 9 a3 0e7 (now 9...xc3 10 0xc3 d5 11 c5 falls short of transposing to 7.121 since Black isn’t in time to play ...a4 – see the note to Black’s 11th move in that section) 10 g3!? (naturally 10 d5 is also playable) 10...d5 11 cxd5 exd5 12 0g2 0e6 13 0-0 (13 0f4 0g5? =) 13...0c6 14 0ad1 0g5 (versus 0f4) 15 0d3 with balanced play. Knights are often a touch better than bishops in this structure. One idea is 0f3 and 0f4 in order to compel ...0xf4 and leave White with the better bishop.

b2) If you can’t stand ceding the bishop-pair in the opening, 6 0c2 plays for a central advantage: 6...cxd4 7 exd4 d5 8 a3 0xc3!? (8...0xc3+ 9 0xc3 and now both 9...0xc3 10 bxc3 and 9...0c6 10 0e3 0xc3 11 bxc3 ± give White the bishop-pair and superior structure) and now:

b21) 9 axb4 0xe2 10 0xe2 0xc6! (10...dxc4 11 b5! with the idea 11...0xd4?! 12 0e3) 11 0c3 dxc4 12 0e3 (12 d5!? 0xd5 13 0-0 0-0 14 0e3 results in pressure for a pawn) 12...0-0 13 0-0 0e7 14 0xc4 0d7 15 b5 ±. This isn’t much, but White has the bishops and some queenside pressure.
b22) 9 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{d6} \) and now 10 \( \text{c5} \) is perhaps best. Instead, 10 \( \text{cx}d5?? \text{ex}d5 11 \text{d3} \text{d6} 12 \text{e}3 \text{e}6 13 0-0 leaves White a few moves ahead in a symmetrical position, with a real but limited advantage.

c) 5...\( \text{d5} \) is a smart way to get to one of the main lines below by 6 a3 \( \text{xc}3+ 7 \text{xc}3 \text{cxd}4 8 \text{ex}d4, \) which transposes to 5...\( \text{cxd}4 \) 6 exd4 \( \text{c5} \) 7 a3 \( \text{xc}3+ 8 \text{xc}3 \) (see 7.122), but bypasses White’s option of 7 c5 in 7.121. The only drawback is that White can enter the rather sterile but slightly advantageous lines arising from 6 \( \text{cx}d5 \) (D), which is therefore important to examine briefly:

c1) 6...\( \text{ex}d5 \) is sound, but Black lacks positive play after 7 a3 \( \text{xc}3+ 8 \text{xc}3 \text{cxd}4 9 \text{ex}d4 0-0 10 \text{e}2; \) for example, 10...\( \text{d}4?? 11 \text{xe}4 \text{dxe}4 12 \text{d}5! \text{f}6 13 0-0 \text{d}8 14 \text{e}3 (14 \text{b}3 \text{d}7 15 \text{g}3!) 14...\text{e}5 15 \text{b}3 with some fancy footwork: 15...b6 (15...\text{xd}5?? 16 \text{d}1; 15...\text{xd}5?! 16 \text{f}4!) 16 \text{f}d1 \text{a}6 17 \text{d}4! \text{d}6 (17...\text{xd}5?? 18 \text{e}3) 18 \text{e}3 \text{xe}2 19 \text{xe}2 \text{f}5 20 \text{xc}1 ± Novikov, Kuldiga 1987, with the idea 20...\text{d}7 21 \text{c}6! \text{xd}5 22 \text{d}6! \text{e}7 23 \text{c}5 with \text{f}4 and/or \text{d}2 next.

c2) 6...\( \text{ex}d5 \) has been the main move by some margin. There follows 7 a3 (D):

\begin{itemize}
  \item c21) 7...\text{d}4?? 8 \text{a}x\text{b}4 (8 \text{a}x\text{b}4?? ±) 8...\text{d}3 9 \text{bx}c3 \text{w}c7 (9...0-0 10 \text{e}4 \text{f}6 11 \text{xd}8 \text{xe}8 12 \text{f}3 ± and \text{e}3) 10 \text{b}3! 0-0 11 \text{e}4 \text{f}6 and in G.Kramer-Ulvestad, Baltimore 1948 White extracted an edge from 12 \text{d}4 but 12 \text{f}4 looks better, or 12 \text{d}3! b6 13 \text{e}2 \text{b}7 14 0-0 ±.
  \item c22) 7...\text{a}5 8 \text{d}x\text{c}5! \text{xc}3+! (8...\text{xc}3? 9 \text{xd}8+ \text{xd}8 gives White the extra option of 10 \text{d}2! ±) 9 \text{xc}3 \text{d}3 10 \text{xd}8+ \text{xd}8 11 \text{bc}3 \text{c}7 (11...\text{d}7 12 \text{e}4 \text{c}6 13 \text{f}3 \text{d}7 14 \text{e}3±) 12 \text{b}xc6, and one course is 13 \text{e}4 \text{c}7 14 \text{e}3±. It’s not a big advantage, but nobody really wants to play against such bishops.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item c23) 7...\text{xc}3+ and now:
    \begin{itemize}
      \item c231) 8 \text{bxc}3 is called ‘±’ by Babula, perhaps based upon play such as 8...\text{ex}d4 9 \text{ex}d4 0-0 10 \text{g}3 \text{c}6 11 \text{d}3 with the idea 11...\text{e}5 12 \text{d}xe5 \text{xe}5 13 \text{h}7+ \text{h}7 14 \text{f}1 ± g8 15 \text{e}e5. 8...0-0 probably improves, when 9 \text{g}3?! intending 10 \text{e}4 and 11 \text{g}2 is interesting.
      \item c232) 8 \text{d}xc3?? \text{ex}d4 9 \text{ex}d4 0-0 10 \text{g}5 \text{ex}d5 11 \text{f}1 \text{c}6 12 \text{d}3 \text{d}4 13 0-0 \text{d}xe3 14 \text{g}5 \text{e}8 15 \text{g}3 \text{c}4 16 \text{g}5 \text{f}3+ 17 \text{f}3 \text{g}5 18 \text{c}4 with just enough mini-threats to be annoying, although it would be hard to make much out of 18...\text{e}6 19 \text{f}6 gxf6.
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

c24) 7...\text{d}4 8 \text{d}xc3 \text{a}5 (8...\text{xc}3+?? 9 \text{bxc}3 gives Black no compensation for the bishops; likewise with 8...\text{ex}d4?? 9 \text{ax}b4 \text{d}xc3 10 \text{b}x\text{d}8+ \text{d}8 11 \text{bc}3± 9 \text{d}xc5?? 9 \text{d}xc5 \text{c}6 10 \text{e}4 \text{f}6 11 \text{b}3! isn't problem-free after 11 \text{e}3 0-0 12 0-0 \text{d}7 and now 12 \text{c}6 or just 12 0-0 \text{d}5 13 \text{w}d\text{d}7 14 \text{a}4! ± intending \text{d}3) 10 \text{xd}1 \text{xc}3 11 \text{b}xc3 \text{d}7 12 \text{c}6 \text{b}xc6. This is extremely similar to line ‘c22’; e.g., 13 \text{g}5 \text{c}6 14 \text{a}4 \text{a}6 15 \text{xa}6 (or 15 \text{a}3 \text{xf}1 \text{h}1 \text{xf}1 \text{g}4 17 \text{a}4 ±) 15...\text{xa}6 16 \text{d}1 ±.

6 \text{ex}d4 (D)

This is the most popular position by far. Now Black has two logical moves:

\begin{itemize}
  \item 7.11: 6...0-0
  \item 7.12: 6...\text{d}5
\end{itemize}

\subsection{7.11}

6...0-0 7 \text{a}3
For something different, there’s Scherbakov’s 7 c5!? preparing f4. Black’s main replies are 7...d6 and 7...De4, both adequate, but neither able to snuff the content from the position.

Now a last parting of the ways:

7.111: 7...Dxc3+ 119
7.112: 7...De7 120

7.111)

7...Dxc3+ 8 Dxc3 d5 9 c5 (D)

This calm move should favour White; it’s instructive to see why.

9 cxd5 Dxd5 (9...exd5 transposes to note ‘c1’ to Black’s 5th move in Section 7.1) 10 Dd3 Dc6 11 0-0 b6 12 He1 Db7 leads to a typical position with chances for both sides.

Remarkably, the position after 9 Dd3 dxc4 10 Dxc4 Dc6 11 De3 has been played by strong grandmasters, and hasn’t done badly, even though White is a full tempo down on the main line of Section 7.122 – all the more reason to respect that line for White!

9...b6

This break and one with ...e5 have to be critical; otherwise White’s two bishops and space will give him the better of it:

a) 9...De4 10 Dxe4!? (10 Dd3 Dxc3 11 bxc3 e5 12 0-0 Dc6 13 De3 ±) 10...dxe4 11 De3 Dc6 (11...Dd7 12 b4! Dc6 13 De2 Dd5 14 b5) 12 Dc4 f5 13 Dd2 Df6 14 g3 ±

b) 9...De6 aims for ...e5. White can play 10 De2 (or 10 Df4 De8 11 Db5; for example, 11...Dd7 12 0-0 a6 13 Dc2 De4, Khismatulin-Kravtsov, Voronezh 2007, and now 14 Dxe4 Dxe4 15 f3! is good) 10...e5 11 Dxe5! Dxe5 12 De3 Dc4 (12...Dc6 13 Db5!) 13 Dg5?! (or 13 Dd4 Dxb2 14 We2 Dc4 15 0-0 Dc6 16 Dd1 ±) 13...Dxb2 (13...d4 14 Dxc4 Dxc3 15 Dxd8 Dxd8 16 bxc3 ±) 14 Dd4! Dc6 15 0-0 h6 16 Dh4 Dc4 17 f4! Da5? (Black should play 17...De3!, but White stands better after either 18 We3 Dd4 19 We3 Dxc3 20 Dd1 De7 21 Dd6! or even 18 f5!? Dxf5 19 Dxf5! Dxf5 20 Df1) 18 f5 Db3 (18...Dc6 19 Dxf6! ++) 19 We5! Dxa1 20 fxe6 fxe6 21 We6+ Dh8 22 Dxa1 ++ Sadler-Khalifman, Bundesliga 1999/00.

c) 9...e5?! can and maybe objectively should be met by 10 Dxe5, but that gets complicated and an easy way to a small positional advantage is 10 Db5?! a6 11 Dc4 Dxe4 12 Dxd4 Dc6 13 Dxc6 bxc6 14 0-0 h6 15 Df4, again with a modest advantage.

We now return to 9...b6 (D):

10 b4 bxc5 11 Dxc5

Now:

a) 11...e5?? is natural, but loosening. Khismatulin-Harutjunian, Izhevsk 2011 continued
12...g5 b7 13...xf6 (13...b5! ± is better still)
13...xf6 (13...xf6? 14...h5! 14...xd5 e5 5 15...xd5 e4, and here White's best course was
16...c1! b2 17...d2 a3 18 c6! a6 19 a6 a6 20...e2 b6 21 c4 ±.

b) Even after the superior 11...c7 12...e2
c6 13 0-0 a6 14...g5 d7 15...d2, White has the upper hand.

7.112)
7...e7 (D)

8...d4
Again I'll stick to something straightforward which is easy to prepare and offers chances for an advantage. 8...e5 9...d5 is a main line that has undergone many years of practice and analysis. It offers plenty of excitement and strategic challenges, especially in the wild line
9...e8 10 d6 f8, where Black plays...e6 and captures the d-pawn, but at a considerable cost in development and piece placement. Even the supposedly complete solution 9...c5 gives White chances for a slight advantage. Some years ago I intended to play this from both sides of the board and can tell you that it's still a good choice for White if you want to spend umpteen hours working out what is, alas, only one small part of your repertoire.

8...d5
8...d6 is sound but a bit slow; for example, 9...e3 b7 9...e5 10...e5 dxe5 11...d5 cxd5 12...g5 13...d2 a3 14 a3 ± 10...e2
b8 (10...e5 11...d5 cxd5 12...d5 a6 13...e7+ ± Lautier-Timman, Dordrecht blitz 2001) 11 0-0 b8 12 b4 (12...f3 –
Lautier) 12...g6 13...g6 hxg6 14...f3 with a convincing space advantage, Lautier-Cvitan, European Ch, Ohrid 2001.

9...d5 (D)
9...d5 isn't played much, as Black would like to exchange pieces and win some freedom. There might follow 10...e2!? (or 10...d3 a6 11 0-0) 10...d5 11 0-0 a5 12...f3 a6 13 fx5 d5 14...d5 with the idea...h4?
(14...b6 15...e3 b2 16...e4 ad8 17 f3! ±) 15 g3! fx4!? 16...c6.

10...d5 exd5 11...d5 b6 12 0-0 (D)

12...f6
a) 12...xd4 13...h7+...h7 14...xd4 is obviously easy for White to play.
b) 12...g5 13...e1...f4 14...xf4 b6 15...h5! g6 16...h6 (16...e5!?) 16...e6 (not 16...h4! 17...h8+!) 17...a5! threatens...c6!, so play might go 17...g7 18...xg7+...xg7 19...e6! a6! a5 (19...e8 20 b5! d7 21 f5! 20 f5! b3 21 b7 (21...f7...xc5 22 dxc5 is also promising) 21...a6 22...e2 a8 23...e7...xe7 24...xe7...e8 25...e5+ f8 26 g4! with threats such as...f6, a7 and
a7.

13...e3 g6
Likewise 13...xd4?! 14...xd4...xd4 15...h7+...h7 16...d4; this time the d-pawn is under great pressure.

14...c1! (D)
14...c2 is a logical option, protecting d4; after something like 14...d6 15...d2...e8 16...e1, the bishop may go to b3 or a4.

The position after 14...c1 has been reached many times over the years (with rather spectacular success for White, but Black keeps trying).
White intends $\text{c}5$ and perhaps $\text{b}3$ or $\text{f}3$; the manoeuvre $\text{b}1$-$\text{a}2$ can also be useful.

14...$\text{d}6$

The current favourite. Other moves:

a) 14...$\text{cxd}4$ 15 $\text{xd}4$ $\text{xd}4$ 16 $\text{g}6$ $\text{xf}2$+$+17 \text{xf}2 \text{hx}g6 18 $\text{d}4!$ $\text{e}6$ 19 $\text{h}4$! with an attack (or 19 $\text{fc}2$).

b) 14...$\text{g}7$ 15 $\text{c}5$ (15 $\text{b}1$ !?) 15...$\text{e}7$ (15...$\text{e}6$ gives White various approaches; e.g., 16 $\text{b}1$ with the idea $\text{d}2$ or simply 16 $\text{xe}6$ $\text{xe}6$ 17 $\text{g}4$ $\text{f}6$ 18 $\text{b}4$!) 16 $\text{b}3$ b6 17 $\text{c}3$ and now:

b1) 17...$\text{f}5$ 18 $\text{a}6!$ $\text{d}6$ 19 $\text{fc}1$ $\text{e}6$ 20 $\text{e}2$ (versus ...$\text{xd}4$, although 20 $\text{g}3$ is also good) 20...$\text{f}5$ 21 $\text{f}4$ $\text{e}7$ (L.Sokolov-J.Richardson, Reykjavik 1998) and here in view of the attack on d4 and the idea of ...$\text{h}4$, 22 $\text{d}1$! is a good way to keep White’s advantage, with $\text{c}7$ next.

b2) 17...$\text{d}6$ 18 $\text{fc}1$!? (giving up a pawn for two bishops and pressure; 18 $\text{b}4$! is a simpler path to advantage – after 18...$\text{xb}4$ 19 $\text{d}8$ 20 $\text{fc}1$ $\text{f}5$ 21 $\text{a}6$, Black is tied down and hasn’t won a pawn) 18...$\text{xd}4$! 19 $\text{xd}4$ $\text{xf}4$ 20 $\text{e}3$ (20 $\text{b}4$!? $\text{f}5$ 21 $\text{e}6$! $\text{xb}4$ 22 $\text{xb}4$ $\text{d}7$ 23 $\text{e}6$ ñ Lautier-Nikolić, Moscow 2001) 20...$\text{d}6$ 21 $\text{c}7$ d4 22 $\text{h}6$ $\text{e}6$ 23 $\text{a}4$ $\text{d}8$ (Paramos Dominguez-Nava Pereda, Cordoba 1995) and now 24 $\text{e}4$ would finally recover the pawn with a slight advantage. 18 $\text{b}4$ appears to be the way to go; regardless, this whole line is a thankless task for Black.

15 $\text{b}1$

Or 15 $\text{c}5$; e.g., 15...$\text{e}7$ 16 $\text{f}3$ and Black tried to avoid the passivity of 16...$\text{d}8$ 17 $\text{fc}1$ by choosing 16...$\text{g}7$! 17 $\text{xd}5$ $\text{c}6$ 18 $\text{f}4$

$\text{d}8$ 19 $\text{c}7$ $\text{xd}4$ 20 $\text{g}3$! ñ in Aleksandrov-Dvoirys, St Petersburg 2011.

15...$\text{d}8$ 16 $\text{b}2$

Khrushchov-Gavrilov, Moscow 2008 continued 16...$\text{c}7$ 17 $\text{a}2$! $\text{d}7$ 18 $\text{d}3$! $\text{b}6$ 19 $\text{c}5$ $\text{c}6$ 20 $\text{f}4$ $\text{f}5$ 21 $\text{e}5$ $\text{e}7$ 22 $\text{f}6$ $\text{e}8$ 23 $\text{b}1$. This game demonstrates how White’s position can be systematically improved. Now 23...$\text{d}6$? could have been answered cleverly by 24 $\text{e}6$! $\text{f}6$ 25 $\text{g}6$ $\text{g}6$ 26 $\text{h}6$.

7.12)

6...$\text{d}5$ (D)

Now White has two approaches, demonstrating positions which can also transpose from other lines:

7.121: 7 $\text{c}5$

7.122: 7 $\text{a}3$

7.121)

7 $\text{c}5$

White gives the position a closed nature, although this advance can also buy him time to set up for an attack.

7...$\text{e}4$

Black has two main alternatives:

a) 7...$\text{c}6$ 8 a3 (D) can lead to:

a1) 8...$\text{xc}3$+ 9 $\text{xc}3$ 0-0 (9...$\text{e}4$?! 10 $\text{d}3$! $\text{xc}3$ 11 bxc3 0-0 12 0-0 $\text{b}6$ 13 $\text{a}4$! $\text{xc}5$ 14 $\text{a}3$ $\text{e}8$ 15 $\text{xc}5$ ñ Shirov-Pinter, French Team Ch 1993) 10 $\text{e}2$ (or 10 $\text{b}5$ e5 11 dxe5 $\text{xe}5$ 12 $\text{f}4$ $\text{c}4$ 13 0-0 $\text{xb}2$ 14 $\text{b}3$ $\text{c}4$ 15 $\text{ad}1$ $\text{a}5$ 16 $\text{b}1$ ñ with the ideas of $\text{d}6$
and \( \texttt{g5} \), among others) 10...\texttt{e4} (10...\texttt{e5}!? 11 dxe5 \texttt{c}xe5 12 \texttt{c}xe3 \texttt{c}c4 13 \texttt{d}d4 \texttt{d}xb2 14 \texttt{w}c2 \texttt{d}c4 15 0-0 \texttt{e}6 16 \texttt{a}d1 gives White more than enough compensation) 11 \texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{d}xe4 12 \texttt{c}e3 \texttt{f}5 13 \texttt{w}d2 \texttt{f}6 14 g3 \texttt{e}5 15 dxe5! \texttt{c}xe5 16 0-0-0 ± M. Gurevich-Zaid, USSR 1984.

a2) 8...\texttt{a}5 9 b4 \texttt{c}7 10 g3 \texttt{e}5 11 \texttt{g}g2 \texttt{a}5 (11...\texttt{g}4 12 f3 \texttt{f}5 13 0-0 0-0 14 \texttt{g}5! ±) 12 \texttt{g}5 (or 12 dxe5 \texttt{d}xe5 13 b5 \texttt{c}e7 14 \texttt{f}4 ±) 12...\texttt{g}4 (Gligoric-Spassky, Linares 1981) 13 0-0! (or 13 h3 \texttt{d}xe2 14 \texttt{d}xe2 \texttt{a}x b4 15 \texttt{a}x b4 \texttt{a}xa1 16 \texttt{w}x a1 \texttt{a}xb4 17 0-0! ±) 13...\texttt{a}x d4 14 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}e2+ 15 \texttt{w}xe2 \texttt{d}6 (15...\texttt{f}5? 16 \texttt{f}4!) 16 f4! 0-0 17 \texttt{f}5 \texttt{a}xb4 18 \texttt{a}x b4 \texttt{a}xa1 19 \texttt{a}xa1 \texttt{a}x f5 20 \texttt{g}x d5 ±.

b) 7...\texttt{e}5!? leads to wild complications after 8 dxe5 \texttt{g}4. The player answer is 8 a3 \texttt{x}c3+ 9 \texttt{d}x c3 exd4 10 \texttt{w}xd4, when Black has a choice:

b1) 10...\texttt{c}c6 11 \texttt{b}b5 0-0 12 \texttt{c}xc6 bxc6 13 0-0 (D).

This type of position favours White's superior bishop and central control, even if that advantage is limited. Apart from putting a bishop on e5 or d6, it's worth remembering that even \( \texttt{g}5xf6 \) can lead to a large advantage for White if he gets a knight to d4 versus Black's bad bishop.

b2) 10...0-0 11 \texttt{b}b5 \texttt{d}d7 (11...\texttt{c}c6 transposes to 'b1') 12 0-0 \texttt{c}xb5 13 \texttt{c}xb5 \texttt{c}c6 14 \texttt{w}a4 (or 14 \texttt{w}d3 \texttt{e}4 15 \texttt{c}e3 \texttt{d}e5 16 \texttt{b}b3 ±) 14...\texttt{d}e4 15 \texttt{c}c3 d4 (15...\texttt{a}6 16 \texttt{c}c3! has been called '±', which is greatly exaggerated, but White's control of the dark squares and b-file after 16...\texttt{x}c3 17 \texttt{b}c3 gives him superior prospects) 16 \texttt{a}x d4 \texttt{c}x c5 17 \texttt{w}c4 \texttt{a}x d4 18 \texttt{c}x d4 \texttt{e}6 19 \texttt{c}c3 ± Krush-Browne, Parsippany (2) 1999.

8 \texttt{d}d2! (D)

8...\texttt{x}d2

a) 8...\texttt{c}c6 9 \texttt{x}e4 dxe4 10 \texttt{b}b4 \texttt{d}xb4 11 \texttt{a}a4+ \texttt{c}c6 12 \texttt{d}d1 favours White, who has stopped...\texttt{e}5 and is ready to develop. Stojanovic-Enchev, Belgrade 2009 continued 12...\texttt{w}g5 13 g3 \texttt{f}xe3 14 \texttt{f}xe3 \texttt{x}e3 15 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{d}7 16 \texttt{c}c4 0-0 17 \texttt{d}d3 ± Koneru-Chiburdanidze, Doha 2011) 13 \texttt{c}c3 \texttt{w}h4 14 g3 \texttt{w}g4 15 \texttt{g}g2 e5?! 16 d5! \texttt{d}d4 17 \texttt{x}d4! \texttt{x}d4 18 \texttt{w}d4 f5 19 0-0 with a clear advantage for White.

b) 8...\texttt{c}x c3 9 \texttt{c}xc3 0-0 10 \texttt{d}x e4 dxe4 11 \texttt{c}c3 \texttt{c}c6 (11...\texttt{d}d7 12 \texttt{c}c4 \texttt{f}6 13 \texttt{w}c2 [versus...\texttt{d}d5] 13...\texttt{d}d7 14 0-0 \texttt{c}c6 15 \texttt{b}4 \texttt{d}d5 occurred in Muir-Bryson, Scottish Ch, Oban 2005, and now Emms's suggestion 16 \texttt{e}2 ± preserves the bishop-pair and the better game) 12 \texttt{w}d2 f5 13 0-0-0 \texttt{c}e7 (Volkov-Aseev, Russian Ch, St Petersburg 1998) and here 14 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{c}c5 15 \texttt{c}e5 is attractive.

9 \texttt{w}x d2 \texttt{a}5
This is Black’s most popular move, holding down White’s queenside expansion. It would be too space-consuming to describe all the alternatives, some insignificantly different, so let me show the most important two, with which Black changes the basic character of the game:

a) 9...\texttt{cxd7} is a clever move, freeing \texttt{d8} for the bishop to retreat to (on \texttt{c7} it can get hit by \texttt{\texttt{c1b5}}). White will pit his space advantage against the bishops: 10 a3 \texttt{\texttt{xa5}} 11 g3 0-0 and now:

a1) 12 \texttt{\texttt{g2}} \texttt{\texttt{d8}} 13 0-0 \texttt{b6} 14 f4?! (14 b4 is more accurate, to discourage \ldots \texttt{a6}) 14...\texttt{\texttt{xa6}}?! 15 b4 \texttt{\texttt{xc7}} 16 a4 \texttt{\texttt{e7}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{f1}} \texttt{\texttt{b7}} 18 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d1}}} \texttt{\texttt{xf8}} 19 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f2}}} b5 20 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d3}}} and White had all the play in the game Sadler-Kosten, British Ch, Hove 1997.

a2) 12 b4 \texttt{\texttt{d8}} 13 \texttt{\texttt{g2}} b6 14 \texttt{\texttt{b1}} (14 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{a6}} 15 \texttt{\texttt{ab1}} \pm) 14...\texttt{\texttt{e7}} 15 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d8}}?!} 16 \texttt{\texttt{we3}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c6}}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{f1}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d7}}} was played in Scherbakov-Egiazarian, Kolkata 2002. White has systematically built up, and the most pointed continuation would have been 18 b5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a5}}} 19 c6 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c4}}} 20 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d3}}} \texttt{\texttt{e8}}} 21 a4 \pm (Scherbakov).

b) 9...b6 10 a3 \texttt{\texttt{xc3}} 11 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d3}}} bxc5} 12 dxc5 \texttt{\texttt{a5}} (D) gives Black a big centre, but at the cost of development and potentially dangerous queenside pawns for White. Then:

\begin{center}
\textbf{W}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\texttt{\texttt{b1}) 13 \texttt{\texttt{b5+ d7} 14 0-0 a4} (14...0-0 15 b4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b5}}} 16 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xb5}}} \texttt{\texttt{a6}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{d6 d7}} 18 f4! \texttt{\texttt{ab8}} 19 f5?! gave White a powerful attack in Reshevsky-Najdorf, Dallas 1957, based on the idea 19...\texttt{axb4} 20 axb4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xb4}}} 21 f6?! 15 \texttt{\texttt{xd7+ xd7}} (15...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d7}}} 16 c6! \texttt{\texttt{b8}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{b5 xc6}} 18 \texttt{\texttt{c3}} \pm) 16 f4 \texttt{\texttt{e7}} (Bu Xiangzhi-Shaposhnikov, World Junior Ch, Athens 2001) and now 17 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d4}}} 0-0 0-0 18 \texttt{\texttt{cxa4}} favours White.

\texttt{b2}) You might also want to investigate something simpler such as 13 \texttt{\texttt{c4 d7}} (Gligorich-Ivkov, Yugoslav Team Ch, Pula 1971), when I don’t like Black’s game after 14 \texttt{\texttt{b5}} 0-0 15 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a6}}} 16 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d7}}}! \texttt{\texttt{xf1}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b6}}}.

10 a3 \texttt{\texttt{xc3}} 11 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d3}}} a4}

Black’s idea is to restrain White’s pawns and strengthen his grip on b3 and c4. What’s more, 11...0-0 unnecessarily allows 12 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d4}}}.

12 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d3}}} \texttt{\texttt{d7}}

Black protects a4 against White’s potential attack on it with \texttt{\texttt{c2}} and \texttt{d1}. The bishop also covers the key b5-square. Sometimes 12...0-0 is played first, but it limits Black’s options; e.g., 13 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{d7}} (13...\texttt{\texttt{c6}}?! 14 \texttt{\texttt{c2}}; 13...b6?! 14 \texttt{\texttt{wc2}}! hits \texttt{\texttt{h7}} and a4, when 14...\texttt{\texttt{c6}} 15 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{hx7+ h8}}} 16 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d3}}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xd4}}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{d1}} threatens both \texttt{\texttt{wh5+ and \texttt{\texttt{xa4}} with advantage}}) 14 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c2}}}!} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c6}}} 15 \texttt{\texttt{e1 d7}} 16 \texttt{\texttt{e3 d6}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g3 e8}}} 18 \texttt{\texttt{e1 g6}} 19 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h3 g8}} 20 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d1}}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a5}}} 21 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e6}}}! (J.Watson-P.Smith, Kona 1998) and White was winning in view of 21...\texttt{\texttt{fxe6}} 22 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h7+ h7}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{wh5+}}.}}

13 0-0 (D)

\begin{center}
13...b6
\end{center}

This is the best defence, although it requires great care. 13...0-0 14 \texttt{\texttt{c2}} gives Black the same problems as in the last note. For a few years, Black defended by 13...\texttt{\texttt{c6}} 14 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c2}}} 15 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e7}}, watching over the kingside. However, White has superior firepower there anyway and the defence is difficult:

a) One approach is 15 \texttt{\texttt{d1}} \texttt{\texttt{a5}} 16 \texttt{\texttt{g4}}.

b) After 15 \texttt{\texttt{ae1}, a trappy line is 15...\texttt{\texttt{b6}} 16 \texttt{\texttt{g5}} 0-0 17 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e6}}} 18 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d8}} 19 \texttt{\texttt{d8}} 19 b7 \texttt{\texttt{a7}} 20 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xa4}}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xa4}}} 21 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a4}}} 22 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c1}}}.

13...b6
in view of 22...\(c4\) 23 \(b3\) \(\text{exc}1\) 24 \(\text{exc}1\) \(\text{exe}7\) 25 \(a4!\), when the a-pawn waltzes down to queen.

c) 15 \(\text{fe}1\) \(b6\) 16 \(\text{wg}5!\) 0-0 17 \(\text{xb6}\) \(\text{g6}\)? (17...\(\text{h6}\) 18 \(\text{wh}4\) \(\text{e8}\) \(\pm\) 18 \(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{fxd}8\) (Nenashev-Yudasin, Kemerovo 1995) and here 19 \(\text{xa}4!\) is strong, with the idea 19...\(\text{xa}4\) 20 \(b7\) and 21 \(\text{xa}4\) (Burgess).

14 \(\text{cxb6}\) \(\text{wxb6}\) 15 \(\text{fe}1\) 0-0

14...\(\text{xc}4??\) 15 \(\text{txe}6+!\) is pretty.

16 \(\text{c}2\) (D)

White targets \(a4\), protects \(d4\), and in some cases prepares \(\text{wd}3\). Probably Black can defend here, but in practice it's been downhill:

a) 16...\(\text{c}8\) gives Black's king room; for example, 17 \(\text{e}3\) (17 \(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{wd}8?!\) 18 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{w}8\) 19 \(h4!\), Knaak-Lerner, Lugano 1989) 17...\(\text{a}7\) (17...\(\text{c}4!\) can be met by 18 \(\text{e}2\) or 18 \(\text{d}3!\)? \(\text{xd}4\) 19 \(\text{g}3!\) \(g6\) 20 \(\text{e}2\), although 20...\(\text{c}6\) 21 \(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) creates counterplay) 18 \(\text{g}3\) \(g6\) (Polak-Biolek, Strmilov 2005) 19 \(\text{h}3\) \(h5\) 20 \(\text{e}1\) with an attack.

b) 16...\(\text{a}7\) 17 \(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{wd}8?!\) 18 \(\text{e}3\) \(g6\) 19 \(\text{f}3\) \(f5\) 20 \(\text{e}1\) and Black is reduced to defence, Scherbakov-Mitenkov, Russian Ch, Elista 1995.

c) After 16...\(\text{c}6!\), 17 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{d}7\) 18 \(\text{g}3?!\) (18 \(\text{b}1\)) 18...\(\text{f}8\) 19 \(h4\) is suggested by Speelman, although Black has nearly equal chances.

d) 16...\(g6!\) prepares to shore up the kingside before an attack there begins in earnest. M.Sokol-Mkrtchian, Women's World Ch, Elista 2004 continued 17 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}6\) (17...\(\text{c}8?!\) 18 \(\text{h}3!\) with the idea \(\text{wh}6\) won't force mate, but will cause some damage) 18 \(\text{d}1\) \(\text{a}5\) 19 \(\text{h}3\) \(f5!\). This is the only defence, to meet \(\text{wh}6\) with ...\(\text{f}7\); it creates weaknesses, but they are manageable for the moment. Now, instead of the game's 20 \(\text{xa}4?!\) \(\text{c}4\) 21 \(\text{wh}6\) \(\text{f}7\) 22 \(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{xd}7\) =, White had 20 \(\text{xa}4!\) \(\text{xa}4\) 21 \(\text{xa}4\) \(\text{c}4\) 22 \(\text{wh}6\) \(a7!\) 23 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{xb}2\) 24 \(\text{e}1\) \(\pm\).

7.122)

7 \(a3\) \(\text{xc}3+\)

7...\(\text{e}7\) transposes after 8 \(\text{f}4\) 0-0 or 8 \(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 9 \(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{exd}5\) (9...\(\text{xd}5\)?! 10 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{d}7\) 11 \(\text{c}4!\) \(\pm\) 10 \(\text{f}4\) 0-0 to Section 7.112 (i.e., 6...0-0 7 \(a3\) \(\text{e}7\) 8 \(\text{f}4\) \(d5\) 9 \(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 10 \(\text{c}xd5\) \(\text{exd}5\)).

8 \(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{dxc}4\)

8...0-0 transposes to Section 7.111 (i.e. 6...0-0 7 \(\text{a3}\) \(\text{c}3+\) 8 \(\text{xc}3\) \(d5\)), which favours White.

9 \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 10 \(\text{e}3\) 0-0 11 0-0 (D)

This position is important because, for example, it will very often arise from the move-order 4...\(c5\) 5 \(\text{e}2\) \(d5\) 6 \(a3\), etc. We don't quite have the standard isolated queen's pawn, as for one thing, White has the bishop-pair opposing Black's bad bishop; furthermore, one pair of pieces has been exchanged off (so you won't see \(\text{e}5\), for example), and White's bishop is rather passive on \(e3\). Overall, White has very good practical chances and can easily work up an attack. Unfortunately, this position has been played and analysed a lot, and I'll have to limit myself to the essential points and exemplary games.

11...\(b6\)

The most natural move. Other possibilities:

a) 11...\(a6\) is risky as it weakens the queenside and invites \(d5\): 12 \(\text{a}2\) (even 12 \(d5\) \(\text{exd}5\) 13 \(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 14 \(\text{xd}5\) \(\pm\) gives White strong bishops and a positional advantage) 12...\(b5\) 13
d5! aims for 13...exd5 14 cxd5 cxd5 (14...e6 15 a6 and cxf6+) 15 a6; for example, 15...b7 16 b4 c8? 17 c5 e8 18 af7+! axf7 19 wb3+ e6 20 ba1 wb6 21 ad7+ with a clear advantage for White.

b) 11...h6 (D) has been widely used, including by some top grandmasters.

It is designed to prevent a7-g5, so that ...e7-d5 can follow. The problem is that Black is then rather stuck and isn’t poised for positive action. White therefore has time to build up. Here’s a sampling of the many reasonable ways to do so (note that 12 d5 exd5 13 cxd5 a6 achieves nothing):

b1) 12 a2 e7 13 f4 (a standard response, heading for e5) 13...d7 14 e5 c6 15 af6 gxf6 16 d5! cxd5 17 a6 exd5 17...a5 18 b5 and a6 is often enough for White. White regains the pawn with some advantage.

b2) 12 e1 b6!? (12...e7 13 f4) 13 d5! a5 (13...exd5 14 cxd5 c6 15 cxf6+ wb6 16 fxe6 fxe6 17 b4 ±) 14 a2 exd5 15 cxd5 b7 16 c3! wc8 17 a4 wb5 18 wb4! wh5?! (18...xf4 19 xf4 e7 20 b4 c6 21 b5 c5 22 c5 d6 23 d6 24 f3 and Black faces a tough defence) 19 a4! wb6 20 wb6 c5+xg3 21 hxg3 with considerable pressure, Dydyshko-Macieja, Lubniewice 2003.

b3) 12 e1 e7 (12...b6 13 d5! d5 14 b3 ±) 13 wb3! ed5 14 wb3! wh8! 15 b4 exd5 15...cxd5 16 a6 c6 17 a6 f4, Rezan-Hulak, Split 2008, 18 e1! with ideas of c7 and/or d2 – the opposite-coloured bishops will help White’s attack) 16 d3 d7 17 wb6 c6 18 wxd8 xd8 19 f3 ± Onischuk-Vekshenkov, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2004. Black’s bad bishop is a liability.

12 wb3

12 d5 exd5 13 cxd5 a6 14 cxf6+ wb6 15 cxe6 wb6 is more or less equal. The old move 12 wb3 is still valid, a classic game proceeding 12...b7 13 cxd5 c7!? (13...h6; 13...c8 14 g5 ±) 14 g5 d6 15 f4! h6 16 f5! exf5 17 c6 wb6 18 wb5 c6 (or 18...wb6 19 b2 and wb3) 19 wb3+ c6 20 wb3! xf6 21 xf6 c6 22 b2 wb8 23 wb8 c8 24 d5 c8 25 wb7 (the seventh rank serves White well) 25...wb6 26 dxe6 d6 27 dxe7 dxe7 28 wb5 wb5 29 wb5 wb5 30 ba4 bc 31 ba4 ba4 32 ba4, eventually winning in Botvinnik-Tolush, Moscow-Leningrad match 1965.

12...b7 (D)

13 cd3

White isn’t subtle: he wants to target h7 in order to create weaknesses near Black’s king. 13 wb3 is the other main idea:

a) 13...exd5 14 wb3 e5 15 cd5 ± and White regains the pawn with some advantage.

b) After 13...c8 (D) White has attacking ideas which are typical for the owner of the isolated queen’s pawn:

b1) 14 xd5! a5 (14...exd5? 15 cxd5 e5 16 f4! costs Black material; 14...e7 15 cd5 16 c6 17 cd2) 15 d5! (a typical tactic worth remembering) 15...exd5 15...exd5 16 c6 17 c6 18 c7 19 f4 b7 20 g5 h6 21 wbh6! with the idea 21...xbh6 22 cd3 ±.

b2) 14 cxd5 a5!? 15 xd6 d6 16 wb5 h6 17 wb6!? ultimately leads to some advantage
for White after 17...\textit{a}xb2 18 \textit{a}xg7 \textit{a}xg7 19 \textit{g}3+ \textit{g}4! 20 \textit{g}x4+ \textit{f}6 (Knoll-Benzoni, corr. 2008), when 21 d5! is best, based upon 21...\textit{xc}3 22 \textit{d}4+ e5 23 \textit{xc}x3 \textit{xd}1 24 \textit{b}4!!.

c) Black’s best path is 13...\textit{d}7! 14 \textit{a}d1, and now 14...\textit{fd}5 or 14...\textit{g}6 15 \textit{d}3 \textit{d}5 16 \textit{g}3 \textit{d}7 17 h4 (M.Gurevich-Van Beers, Belgian Team Ch 2004/5), when 17...\textit{xc}3 18 bxc3 \textit{d}5 19 f3 is only marginally better for White.

13...\textit{d}7

This is the main line, although 13...\textit{c}8 is still played, with themes similar to the previous note.

14 \textit{h}3 \textit{c}7 15 \textit{g}5 \textit{g}6 16 \textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 17 \textit{ad}1

The little-used 17 d5?! is apparently slightly advantageous; e.g., 17...\textit{xd}5 18 \textit{ad}1 \textit{c}7 19 \textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 20 f4 ± or 17...\textit{ad}8!? 18 \textit{e}4 \textit{g}7 19 \textit{g}3 \textit{exd}5?! 20 \textit{f}5+ \textit{h}8 21 \textit{h}6 \textit{g}8 ± Peralta-Ricardi, Buenos Aires 2003.

17...\textit{ad}8 18 \textit{fe}1 (D)

\textbf{18...\textit{g}7}

18...\textit{wc}7? 19 \textit{a}xg6 h\textit{g}6 20 \textit{wh}6! \textit{c}6 21 \textit{e}4 \textit{xe}4 22 \textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 23 \textit{f}4 f5 24 \textit{c}7! \textit{a}8 25 \textit{c}1 gave White a winning game in Aleksandrov-Vekshenkov, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2004, and this sequence was repeated move-for-move in S.Martinović-Sandhu, Pula 2010.

19 \textit{e}4

This has been played several times and yields a small advantage. The same may be said for 19 d5; for example, 19...\textit{xd}5 20 \textit{e}4 \textit{c}6 (Van den Bersselaar-Naumkin, St Vincent 2004) and here 21 \textit{xd}5! exd5 22 \textit{d}4 \textit{fe}8 23 \textit{ed}1 ± should have been played. Either way, White’s advantage is quite modest.

19...\textit{xe}4 20 \textit{xe}4

Now:

a) Black’s position was loose after 20...e5 21 \textit{f}3 \textit{c}8 22 d5! f5 23 \textit{e}3 \textit{g}8 in the game Monacell-Moura, corr. 2004, when 24 \textit{h}5 keeps an edge.

b) 20...\textit{g}8 and after 21 \textit{ee}1 \textit{e}7 22 \textit{ad}3 \textit{h}8 23 d5 \textit{xd}5 24 \textit{f}3 \textit{c}6 (L.Andersen-Dard, email 2005) 25 \textit{xd}5 exd5 26 g3 \textit{g}8 keeps an edge in the endgame which is likely to ensue. Again, 21 \textit{h}5 looks right, intending d5, and if 21...f5, then 22 \textit{e}3 \textit{c}7 23 \textit{h}3 \textit{f}8 24 \textit{g}3 intending d5 next.

\textbf{7.2)}

\textbf{4...b}6 (D)

\textbf{At first sight, the philosophy behind this move is simple: to control the d5- and e4-squares and exert pressure on the long diagonal.}
That's true. But it can also introduce a general light-square strategy, as you will see from the alternate idea of ...\( \text{a6} \) and ...\( \text{d5} \). Black can also delay the decision about where to put the bishop and seek to exploit other aspects of the position first.

5 \( \text{e2} \)

Thus we need to examine:

7.21: 5...\( \text{a6} \) 127
7.22: 5...\( \text{b7} \) 133
7.23: 5...\( \text{e4} \) 134
7.24: 5...\( \text{c5} \) 137

The move-order 5...0-0 is mentioned in Section 7.22, as the follow-up is almost always \( \text{b7} \).

7.21)

5...\( \text{a6} \)

Attacking c4 and preparing ...\( \text{d5} \). This time we examine two systems for White, the first with a tactical orientation and the second strategic:

7.211: 6 \( \text{g3} \) 127
7.212: 6 \( \text{a3} \) 130

7.211)

6 \( \text{g3} \) (D)

Here White intends to expand with e4 and frees his f1-bishop to develop. This is a much-played and analysed position for which I'll try to propose continuations which aren't ultra-theoretical and time-consuming:

6...\( \text{xc3} \+)

The most famous move, preparing ...\( \text{d5} \) to work on the light squares, although the most challenging is probably 6...0-0, because Black can play it with various structural ideas in mind. Here are the alternatives:

a) 6...\( \text{d5??} \) 7 \( \text{a4+} \) has happened more often than you'd imagine! This is the reason why Black needs to exchange on c3 first if he wishes to make the ...\( \text{d5} \) advance.

b) 6...\( \text{c5?} \) 7 d5 \( \text{exd5} \) 8 \( \text{cxd5} \) \( \text{xf1} \) 9 \( \text{xf1} \) (D) has traditionally been considered to favour White, who has an advanced and influential centre.

Note, too, that White has got rid of his 'bad' bishop, as defined by his pawn on d5 (and soon, one on e4), in return for Black's 'good' bishop, as defined by his pawn which will soon be on d6. In practice, White would like to gain more space on both wings and not spend too much time resettling his king; for example, 9...0-0 10 e4 \( \text{e8} \) 11 f3 \( \text{xc3} \) (11...g6 12 \( \text{b5} \)); 11...d6 12 \( \text{xf5} \) g6 13 \( \text{h6+} \) \( \text{g7} \) 14 \( \text{g5} \) a6 15 \( \text{c1} \) ± with the idea h4) 12 \( \text{bxc3} \) d6 13 \( \text{g5} \) (13 \( \text{f5} \) ! ±) 13...\( \text{bd7} \) 14 h4 h6 15 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e5} \) 16 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 17 h5 \( \text{h7} \) 18 \( \text{f5} \) with space and a continued central advantage, Geller-Matanović, Zagreb 1958.

c) 6...0-0 is flexible. White can play a slow move like 7 \( \text{d3} \), but he normally chooses the consistent 7 e4 (D).

Black has these noteworthy replies:

c1) 7...\( \text{d5} \) 8 \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{xf1} \) 9 \( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{exd5} \) (or 9...\( \text{xc3} \) 10 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 11 e5 \( \text{e4} \) 12 \( \text{d3} \) f5 13 \( \text{e2} \) {with the idea h4 and f3} 13...\( \text{g5} \) 14 \( \text{gxg5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 15 g3 and White holds a substantial advantage with \( \text{f4} \) and \( \text{g2} \) to come) 10
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e5 ²e8 11 ²g4 (11 ²f3 ²xc3 12 bxc3 c5 13 ²f5 ²h8 and now, apart from 14 g3, as played in Berezjuk-Cvek, Czech Team Ch 2005/6, White can 'go for it' with 14 c4!? ²c7 15 ²b2, peering down the long diagonal) 11...²h8 12
²h5 (12 ²ce2? ²e7 13 h4) 12...c5 13 ²g5! ± ²f6 14 exf6 gxf6 15 ²h6 ²g8 16 ²we6 ²xc3 17 bxc3 ²wd7 18 ²e1 with a clear advantage for White.

c2) 7...c5 8 d5 d6 (8...exd5 9 cxd5 ²xe4? 10 ²gxe4 ²e8 11 ²xa6 ²xc3+ 12 bxc3 ²xa6 13 ²a4 ±; 8...²e8 9 f3 d6 10 ²e2 transposes) 9
²e2 ²e8 (9...exd5 10 exd5! ²xc3+ 11 bxc3 ²bd7 12 0-0 ²d8 13 ²a4 gave White a modest edge in the game Portisch-Reshevsky, Santa Monica 1966; Black's pieces won't find permanent posts) 10 f3 exd5 11 ²gxe2 12 ²gxe2 b5 13 0-0 a6 14 ²a4! ²bd7?? (14...²b4 15 ²a4 ²b6 16 ²g5 ±; 14...²xh8!? 15 bxc3 ²bd7) 15 axb5 ²b6 16 bxa6 ²xa6 (16...²e5 17 ²a4 c4+ 18 ²h1 ²d3 19 ²b5 ±) 17 ²e2 ²xc1 18 ²xc1 ²b6 19 ²xc6 ²xc6 20 ²xa6 ²a8 (Korchnoi-Short, Madrid 1995) and here Korchnoi proposes 18 ²g5!, which is certainly promising.

c3) 7...²c6!? is a unique idea which has had some success over the years. The most promising approach is 8 ²d3! (D), with interesting, varied and instructive play:

c31) 8...²xd4?! 9 ²a4 will win a piece in return for some, but not full, compensation; e.g., 9...²a5 10 b4 d5! 11 exd5 exd5 12 0-0! dxc4 13 ²b1 c5 14 ²a5 b5 15 ²wd1 b4 16 ²dce4 c3 17 ²e1 ²e8 18 ²g5 ²e2+ 19 ²h1 ²xd1 20 ²xd1 and White still has the better game.

c32) 8...²a3 9 e5 (9 ²g5 ²e7 10 ²we2 keeps some advantage) 9...²xc3+ 10 bxc3 ²e8 11 ²a3 d6 12 ²we2 keeps Black tied down; e.g., 12...c5 13 0-0 ²e8 14 dxc5 ²xc5 15 ²ad1 ²c7 16 ²e1 and Black's pieces are cut off from the kingside.

c33) 8...d5 9 cxd5 ²xd3 10 ²xd3 exd5 11
²e5 ²e4 12 a3 ²xc3+ 13 bxc3 f5 (13...²xg3 14 ²xg3 h6? 15 ²xh6!) 14 ²e2! ²a5 15 h4! (threatening 16 f3) 15...²b3 16 ²bl ²xc1 17 ²xc1 f4 18 ²f3 ²f7 19 c4 ²c5 20 cxd5 ²c5 21 ²f4 ± Portisch-Spassky, Moscow 1967.

c34) 8...e5 is the safest move: 9 d5 ²xc3+ (9...²d4? 10 ²a4 ±) 10 bxc3 ²e7 (10...²a5 11 ²e2 c6 12 ²f5 ²e8 13 f4! ± Spassky-Hüblner, Munich 1979) 11 ²g5 ²e8 12 a4! (12 0-0±) 12...²f6! 13 ²e3 ²c8 14 0-0 ²d6 15
²e2 (or 15 c5 bxc6 16 ²xc6 ±) 15...²b7 16 f4 d6 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 c5! ²xd3 19 ²xd3 bxc5 (19...²d8 20 ²c4 – Dunnington) 20 a5 ²d7 21
²a1 ²f7 (Sadler-Wahls, Bundesliga 1999/00) and here 22 c4 is simplest, when 22...²xa5 23 ²xb5 ²d7 holds on to the pawn, but at the cost of a mobile central pawn-mass following 24 ²e3 or 24 ²xe7 ²xe7 25 c5.

d) 6...h5 7 h4 ²b7 8 ²d3! (8 a3!? ²d6!? 9 ²h3 is unclear) 8...d5 (8...²d6 9 e4 and the queen defends g3 – this is why White chose 8 ²d3 instead of 8 ²c2; 8...c5 9 a3 ²xc3+ 10 ²xc3 d6 11 dxc5 ²xc5 12 b4 ±) 9 cxd5 ²xd5 10
²c2 (or 10 ²e2) 10...c5 (10...g6 is more solid) 11 a3 cxd4 12 axb4 ²xc3 13 bxc3 (or 13 b5!? 13...²bd7 14 ²f5? 0-0 15 ²h2 ²e5 16 c4! (with an attack on the long diagonal) 16...²e8 17 c5 ²c5 18 bxc5 d4 19 ²d6!, Knaak-Bronstein, Tallinn 1979.

7 bxc3 d5

Here 8 ²a3 introduces a famous gambit variation which has years and years of theory
and practice attached to it, and is not easy to play. Fortunately, there's a respected alternative which at the very least yields interesting play:

8 \textit{\textit{Wf3}} (D)

This simply pins the d5-pawn and thus protects the c4-pawn. The nice thing about \textit{Wf3} is that the queen can slide over to the kingside to help attack in that sector, and can also manoeuvre to control the dark squares no longer defended by an enemy bishop.

8...0-0

This is almost always played. Two other moves:

a) 8...c5!? 9 cxd5 (9 e4 dxc4 10 a5 g6 11 e5 \textit{Wd5} 12 exf6 \textit{Wxf3} 13 gxf6 hgx5 14 fxg7 \textit{Hg8} 15 \textit{Hh5} \textit{Qd7} =) 9...exd5 10 a6a6 c6a6 11 \textit{We2} (11 0-0 0-0 12 \textit{Wf2} \textit{Qc7} 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 c4 d4 15 exd4 \textit{Hxe8} 16 \textit{Wd3} cxd4 17 \textit{Qf5} \pm) 11...\textit{Qc7} 12 a3 \textit{Qe6} 13 0-0-0 14 c4 \pm.

b) 8...c6 is awfully slow. Apart from the natural 9 e4 with some advantage, White has 9 \textit{a3}! (D).

Now Black may even hesitate to capture the pawn on c4 (his intent in playing ...c6) because White gets so much play following 9...dxc4 (9...\textit{Hxc4} 10 \textit{Hxc4} dxc4 11 0-0 \textit{Wd5}?! 12 e4 \textit{a5} 13 \textit{a6} \pm) 10 \textit{a2} \textit{c7} 11 \textit{Hh5}! \textit{Hxh5} 12 \textit{Hxh5} c5 (12...\textit{Qd7} 13 \textit{Wg5}! 13 dxc5 b5 14 c6! \textit{Qxc6} 15 \textit{Qd1} g6 (15...\textit{Wf5}?! 16 \textit{Wf3}! \textit{Qxc3}+ 17 \textit{Hf1} \textit{Qc8} 18 \textit{Wc5}) 16 \textit{Wh4} \textit{a5} 17 \textit{Hd6} \textit{Wd8} 18 \textit{Wf4}, when Black is starting to run out of good ways to get developed.

9 cxd5 \textit{Wxd5}

9...\textit{a1}? 10 dxe6! threatens a8 and f1, compelling 10...\textit{Qg2} 11 \textit{Whg2} \textit{Wd5} 12 exf7+ \textit{Wxf7}

13 0-0 with an extra centre pawn. The sound alternative is 9...\textit{exd5} 10 \textit{a6a6} \textit{a6}, when 11 0-0 will lead to a manoeuvring game; e.g., 11...\textit{Qe8} 12 a4 c5 13 \textit{a3} \textit{Wc7} 14 \textit{Hf1}. Alternatively, White can play for a big centre by 11 \textit{Wc2}, when an f3/e4 expansion often follows; for example, 11...\textit{b8} 12 0-0 c5?! 13 f3?! (13 dxc5! bxc5 14 c4 \pm) 13...\textit{c6} 14 \textit{Hb2} \textit{Wd7} (14...\textit{a5}?! 15 e4 \textit{Qc4} 16 \textit{Had1} \pm) 15 e4!, Knaak-Plachetka, Bratislava 1983, with the idea 15...\textit{dx4} 16 fxe4 \textit{cxd4}?! 17 \textit{Qxf6}! \textit{gx6} 18 \textit{Hh5} \textit{Hh8} 19 \textit{Wf2} \textit{Wd6} 20 \textit{Qxf6} \textit{Wg8} 21 cxd4 and White wins.

10 e4 \textit{Wd5}

After 10...\textit{b7}, 11 \textit{a6a6} \textit{Wxa6} transposes, while White can also try 11 \textit{Qd3}.

11 \textit{a6} \textit{Wxa6} (D)

White has everything going for him here, except that he can't castle.

12 \textit{Hg5}

12 \textit{Hh6}?! hasn't been tried, as far as I know.
It has the idea of e5 and \textit{Wg4}; then a sample line
is 12...\texttt{Wc4}(12...\texttt{h8} 13 \texttt{c1}??; for example, 13...\texttt{bd7} 14 \texttt{f4} c5 15 \texttt{d6} \texttt{fd8} 16 \texttt{e2} \texttt{xe2+} 17 \texttt{xe2} and White can claim a tiny edge) 13 e5 \texttt{d5} 14 \texttt{h5!} \texttt{xc3}+ 15 \texttt{c3} \texttt{xc3} 16 \texttt{xg7} with obscure prospects; \texttt{h6}, \texttt{h4} and \texttt{h3-g3} might follow.

12...\texttt{bd7} 13 \texttt{e2} \texttt{xe2+}

This has been criticized. Knaak suggests 13...\texttt{a3}, although White can't be too unhappy with 14 \texttt{c1} and 0-0, yielding the type of position he's been aiming for. A possibility here is 14...h6 15 \texttt{f4}!? e5!? 16 \texttt{e3} !

14 \texttt{xe2} c5 15 a4 (D)

\section{7.212) 6 a3 (D)}

For those who don't like the complexities of 6 \texttt{g3} and need an alternative that is easier to play, this might suffice, but don't expect too much in the way of advantages.

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

6...\texttt{e7}

The alternative is 6...\texttt{xc3}+ 7 \texttt{xc3} d5. Now there are many decades of theory on and practice with the main move 8 b3, a line which I can recommend as safe and having enough content to please a technical player. But I'm going to recommend the other cautious move, 8 \texttt{a4}+ (D).

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

This is appropriate when you want to play with minimal risk and/or are willing to go into a dry position. If your opponent chooses the latter, you will have some opportunities for outplaying him, but you'll have to forget about that brilliancy prize! Black has only two serious replies:
a) 8...c6 and then:
   a1) 9 \textit{b}b4 is worth a thought, since 9...
   \textit{w}e7 10 \textit{w}xe7+ \textit{d}xe7 11 \textit{b}3 yields a
   bishop-pair ending which you can play to your heart's
delight. Naturally, there are many alternatives;
e.g., 9...\textit{b}b7 10 \textit{d}d3!? c5! 11 \textit{w}a4+ \textit{c}6 12
   \textit{w}d1 dx\textit{c}4 13 \textit{d}xc4 0-0 14 0-0 with a slim
   advantage for \textit{w}hite at best.
   a2) 9 \textit{d}e2 affords more prospects: 9...\textit{d}xc4
   (9...\textit{d}xc4 10 \textit{d}xc4 dxc4 11 \textit{w}xc4; after 9...
   0-0 10-0 I don't see a particularly positive plan for
   Black apart from exchanging, as 10...c5 11 \textit{d}d1
   doesn't obviously help) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \textit{d}d1 \textit{c}7
   12 e4 (not a risky gambit; now \textit{d}g5 and e5 fol-
   lowed by \textit{d}e4 become possibilities) 12...b5
   and \textit{w}hite can play 13 \textit{w}c2 or even the exotic
   13 \textit{w}d4!? \textit{d}b7 (13...\textit{d}bd7 14 a4) 14 \textit{w}c5 \textit{d}bd7
   15 \textit{w}g5.
   b) 8...\textit{d}d7 9 \textit{w}xd7+ (D) and \textit{b}lack can
   choose between:

   b1) 9...\textit{w}xd7 10 cxd5 exd5 11 \textit{d}x\textit{a}6 (11 f3
   and 11 b4 \textit{d}xf1 12 \textit{d}xf1 are also possible)
   11...\textit{d}xa6 12 f3. It would be too much to claim
   a significant advantage here, but on the positive
   side, \textit{w}hite can aim to expand slowly in the
   centre or on the kingside, and this central struc-
   ture tends to be pretty good at restricting the en-
  emy knights.
   b2) 9...\textit{d}bd7 10 \textit{d}b5!? (10 \textit{b}3 c5 11 a4 0-0
   12 \textit{d}b5 is of some interest) 10...\textit{xb}5 (10...\textit{d}8
   11 cxd5 exd5 gives \textit{w}hite a choice between 12
   \textit{d}xc6? (and 12 \textit{d}d2), if he likes endgames) 11
   cxb5 e5!? 12 f3 exd4 13 exd4 \textit{f}8 14 \textit{e}3 \textit{e}6
   15 \textit{d}3 with a long-term advantage for \textit{w}hite,
   but again nothing to shout about.

   \textbf{7 \textit{f}4 (D)}
\textbf{A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE}

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\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{A chess board setup.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{C 1 b5} and Black is holding the balance (but no more than that).

\textbf{b) \textit{\ldots} e4 \textit{\ldots} c4! is hard/impossible to crack if Black defends well (there are all kinds of nice wins after 11...c5?! 12 e5: 12 \textit{\ldots} e3 (or 12 e5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c6 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e3, transposing) 12...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c6 13 e5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e8! (13...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d5? 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e6+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} g8 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} cxd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xdx5 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} h5 +-) 14 b3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} a6 15 b4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c4 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} g8! 17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c2! (17 exf6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xf6 18 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c2 b5) 17...b5! 18 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xc4?! (18 exf6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xf6 19 0-0 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d7 =) 18...bxc4 19 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} h8! 20 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xc4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d7 21 exf6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xf6 22 0-0 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d8 23 d5 (23 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d1?! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xdx4) 23...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e7 24 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c8 25 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} x6f4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xcd8 =. I've skipped most of Black's alternatives, but believe they favour White, so if you can find something against this main line, you're in business.

We now return to 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xf1 (D):

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board2.png}
\caption{Another chess board setup.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{9...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xdx5}

After 9...exd5, Botvinnik's 10 g4 was originally considered favourable (10 h4!? prepares g4, h5 or \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} h3-g3; this might serve as a way to play if you are willing to accept that it's probably only equal), and in any case leads to a fascinating position. We have:

\textbf{a) 10...h6 11 h4!, intending \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} f3 with an early g5, is promising, even after 11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d7?! 12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} f3! with the idea 12...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xg4 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xg4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xg4 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} g1 h5 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xdx5.}

\textbf{b) The stem game for the line went 10...c6 11 g5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d7 12 h4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d6? (12...0-0 is awfully risky due to 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} g4; Kasparov gives a sample line beginning with 13...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} a6 14 e4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe4 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe4 f5? 16 gxf6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xf6 17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e6+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} h8 18 h5! threatening \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} g6+!) 13 e4! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe4 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xf4?! 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xf4 0-0 16 h5! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e8 17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e6 and here 18 d5 led to a sterling victory in Botvinnik-Smyslov, World Ch (2), Moscow 1954, but the computer proves that 18 g6! wins immediately in view of the beautiful sequence 18...fxg6 19 hxg6 h6 20 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} b3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} f8 21 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d7 22 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe6 23 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} f5!! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xb3 24 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e7+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} h8 25 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xh6+ gxh6 26 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e5#.

\textbf{c) 10...g5! (D) has proven itself in many contests:}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board3.png}
\caption{A chess board setup with variations.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{c1) Someone should give 11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d3 a try, having in mind \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e5, especially after 11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c6; a strange line is 11...h5! 12 gxh5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xh5 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e5 with chances for both sides.}

\textbf{c2) 11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} h5 (recommended and played by everyone) 11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xh5 12 gxh5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c6 (12...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} f8 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} f3 c6 14 e4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe4 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} xe4 f5 has also done well, but the untried 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} e5! appears to yield an advantage regardless of Black's reply) 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} f3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} a6 (generally favoured over 13...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} d7, which is probably of equivalent worth) 14 e4 (or 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} g1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c7 15 e4) 14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\ldots}} c7, and perhaps the seldom-played 15 h4 affords the best prospects;
e.g., 15...h6 16 exd5 Qxd5 17 hxg5 hxg5 18 Ad2 ± and Me1 next, or 15...f6! 16 exd5 Qxd5 17 Ad2, which is more or less equal but nevertheless rather interesting.

10 Qxd5

10 Wf3 c6 11 g3 is an uncommon but sensible way to play; e.g., 11...0-0 12 Qg2 Qd7 13 e4 (13 Ml Wc7?!) 14 e4 Qxc3 15 Wxc3 Mxe8 16 Mf3 ± Ruether-Galje, corr. 1996) 13...Qxc3 14 Wxc3 c5! 15 d5! f6 16 Wb3? exd5 17 Qxd5 Ad4 18 Qe3 Qxe3 19 Wxe3 Ad6 (White has only a nominal edge, although worth playing in practice) 20 Qc3 (White can try 20 Qad1 Me8 21 Wf3, hoping for 21...Qxe4? 22 Qc3 Qe7 23 Me1) 20...We7 21 Qad1 Qad8 22 f4!? (Budnikov-S.Pavlov, Yuzhny 2010) and here a normal move like 22...We6 is satisfactory.

10...exd5 11 Wf3

This is the standard move. 11 h4 might be worth a try, when 11...c6 12 h5 h6 13 Qd2 Qg5 14 Qd3 0-0 15 Mc1 a5 16 Qf3 was Lutsko-S.Pavlov, Khmelnitsky 2008.

11...Qg5 12 Qe6?!

Played umpteen times, as opposed to none for 12 Qd3?!. In combination with Qd2 and Mc1, this would help to hold down c5. Even the computer seems to think that White has a modest advantage then! Well maybe, maybe not, but surely it’s better than getting slightly the worse side of a drawn position (which tends to be the outcome of the text-move)?

12...g6 13 Wxg5 fxe6 14 We5
Or 14 Wxd8+ Qxd8 =.

14...Qd7

White has achieved absolutely nothing here and in fact has both a negative record and performance rating. So you should take a look at the various alternatives along the way.

7.22)

5...Qb7

5...0-0 would probably arise more often from 4...0-0 5 Qe2 b6, but it fits here conceptually because the bishop will go to b7: 6 a3 Qxc3+ 7 Qxc3 d5 (7...Ab7 can be met by 8 Ad3!, when White gains control of e4 unless Black attacks the risky 8...Qxg2?! 9 Qg1 Qb7 10 e4; instead, 8 f3 is also good) 8 Ad2 (the exchange on d5 allows Black to exchange light-squared bishops without losing a tempo: 8 cxd5 exd5 9 Ad3 c5 10-0-0 Aa6?!) 8...Ab7 (after 8...Aa6 White has 9 b3) 9 0-0 Qbd7 10 b4!? (or 10 b3 ±) 10...dxc4 11 Qxc4 c5 12 Qb2 a6!? (after 12...cxd4 13 Qxd4 Ae8, as in the game Bareev-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1995, White can play 14 Qb5! 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 Qe2 Qd5 15 Qxd5 Qxd5 16 Wd2 ± M.Gurevich-Rozentalis, Turin Olympiad 2006; the bishop-pair provides some advantage.

6 a3 (D)

B

6...Ab7

Or:

a) 6...Qxc3+ 7 Qxc3 d5 8 cxd5 doesn’t give Black enough counterplay to justify the loss of the bishop-pair; e.g., 8...Qxg5 (8...Qxd5 has several good replies, including the direct 9 Qxd5 and 9 Wf3) 9 Qd3 (9 b4 is probably more flexible) 9...0-0 10 0-0 c5 (10...Me8 11 b4 Qbd7 12 Qb3 c6 13 f3) 11 b4!? cxd4 12 exd4 Qe4 13 Qxe4?! dxe4 14 d5 Wf6 15 Qb2 Qd7 16 Wg4 ± V.Milov-Korchnoi, Swiss Team Ch 2007.

b) 6...Qd6?! is better than it seems. In fact, White might be well advised to play the conservative 7 b4 0-0 8 Qg3 (the immediate 7 Qg3 h5 is not so clear). Otherwise, White can go for central expansion by 7 Qd3!? c5 (against other moves, e4 will follow) 8 e4 cxd4 9 Qxd4 0-0 10 Qdb5?! Qe5 11 f4 Qxc3+ 12 Qxc3, when Black should hurry to establish himself with 12...d5 13 e5 Qe4 14 Qxe4 dxe4 15 Wxd8 Qxd8 16 Qe3 Qc6 (otherwise the bishops will again be a real force) 17 Qf2 (17 b4 Qd4 18 Mc1) 17...d4?! (it’s not clear that White can convert this advantage into victory; the alternative is 18 b4 Qc2 19 Mc1 Qxe3 20 Qxe3 ±) 18...Qxd4 19 Qe3 Qad8 20 Qe2 f5 21 exf6
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gxf6 22 \text{Bhd}1 \text{Bxd}1 23 \text{Bxd}1 \text{Bxd}1 24 \text{Bxd}1 f5 25 g4, when White has all the chances.

7 \text{d}5 (D)

7 \text{Qf}4 has also been played, going way back to Rubinstein! I think that White has a small plus to work with; for example, 7...0-0 8 \text{d}3 (8 \text{Qe}2 \text{d}5 9 \text{exd}5 \text{exd}5 10 \text{f}3 \text{c}6 11 0-0 \text{d}6 12 b4, with the idea b5, might squeeze a little something from the position, since ...\text{xf}4 generally helps White, and especially so when ...c5 isn’t effective) 8...d6 (after 8...d5 9 \text{exd}5 \text{exd}5 10 0-0 c5, G.Kuzmin suggests 11 \text{Wf}3! with pressure on \text{d}5 and the kingside) 9 0-0 \text{Bbd}7 10 b3 (or 10 b4 \pm) 10...\text{Bxe}8 11 \text{Bb}2 \pm Kharlov-Liogky, Cappelle la Grande 1999. White has some space advantage and his minor pieces are actively placed.

7...0-0

A game which may be known to old-timers went 7...a5 8 e4 e5 9 \text{Qg}3 0-0 10 \text{d}3 \text{Bxe}8 11 h4 (to avoid the bishop exchange by ...\text{Qg}5) 11...\text{a}6 12 \text{f}5 \text{c}5 13 \text{Qc}2 \text{d}6 14 \text{Qxd}6 (14 \text{Wg}4! \text{xf}5 15 \text{exf}5 \pm) 14...\text{xd}6 15 \text{Qe}3 \text{e}7 16 \text{Bb}1!? (16 \text{Wg}4) 16...\text{c}8 17 b4 \text{axb}4 18 \text{axb}4 \text{Qa}6 19 \text{Qa}2 \text{d}6 20 b5 \text{Qb}8 (versus \text{Qb}4-c6, but 20...\text{c}5 may be preferable) 21 \text{Qb}4 \text{f}5?! 22 \text{exf}5 \text{xf}5 23 \text{xf}5 \text{xf}5 24 \text{g}3 \text{We}8 25 \text{Ha}1 \text{Dd}7 26 \text{xa}8 \text{xa}8 27 \text{Qc}6 \text{f}7 28 0-0 and White stood clearly better in Lilienthal-Kotov, USSR Ch, Moscow 1945.

8 \text{Qg}3

8 g3 can be met by 8...b5! or 8...a5 9 \text{Qg}2 \text{Qa}6, spoiling White’s fun, while 8 e4 \text{We}8 9 \text{Qg}3 \text{exd}5 10 \text{cx}d5 \text{Qd}6 is also satisfactory for Black.

8...d6

8...b5 might be answered by 9 e4!?, but 8...a5 looks best.

9 e4 \text{Bbd}7 10 \text{Qe}2 \text{Bxe}8 11 0-0

Now 11...a6?! 12 \text{xf}4 \text{Ec}8 13 \text{Wd}2 \text{Qf}8 14 \text{Qad}1 \text{Wd}7 15 \text{Qe}3 gave White a solid advantage in Levitt-Emms, British Ch, Plymouth 1992. Emms offers 11...c6! \pm, when 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 f4 is an interesting course, gaining space and preparing moves such as \text{Qe}3, \text{Qf}3 and b4, depending upon how the play develops.

7.23)

5...\text{Qe}4 (D)

This is an unambitious move which has a high percentage of draws at high levels of play and is supposed to reduce Black’s losing prospects. In fact, while the system is undoubtedly solid and objectively adequate, White has several ways to make things interesting.

6 \text{Qd}2

I’ll recommend this as the best way to obtain a complex strategic struggle without taking on real risks. 6 \text{We}2 is still the ‘main line’, leading after 6...\text{a}6 7 \text{Qb}7 7 a3 \text{Qxc}3+ 8 \text{Qxc}3 \text{Qxc}3 9 \text{Wxc}3 to a position in which the two bishops are compensated for by Black’s pressure on the kingside and rapid development.

Other moves:

a) Aside from the text-move, the choice that most appeals to me (and hasn’t been seriously investigated) is 6 f3. This can lead to Sämisc-like positions. Those might not be to everyone’s taste but they are considerably more exciting than the alternatives. Play can go:
a1) The fascinating position after 6...\( \texttt{hxc3+} \) 7 bxc3 \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) (D) tends to turn critical because of the race between White’s play in the centre/kingside and Black’s queenside counterplay:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\text{\texttt{\textit{d6}}} \\
\text{\texttt{\textit{g3}}} \\
\text{\texttt{\textit{f6}}} \\
\end{array}
\]

a11) 8...\( \texttt{\textit{a6}} \) 9 \( \texttt{\textit{a4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{h4}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \) f5 11 0-0 0-0 12 e4 \( \texttt{\textit{b7}} \) 13 exf5 \( \texttt{\textit{xf5}} \) (13...exf5 14 c5 bxc5 and now 15 \( \texttt{\textit{a3}} \) or 15 \( \texttt{\textit{b3+}} \) c4 16 \( \texttt{\textit{xh4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xc4}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{xc4+}} \) d5 18 \( \texttt{\textit{xc7}} \pm \) 14 \( \texttt{\textit{xf5}} \) exf5 15 \( \texttt{\textit{a3}} \) d6 16 c5 with a strong attack.

a12) 8...\( \texttt{\textit{c6}} \) 9 e4 (9 \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) is a legitimate option) 9...\( \texttt{\textit{a6}} \) 10 e5 \( \texttt{\textit{xc4}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xa5}} \) 12 0-0 \( \texttt{\textit{b7}} \) 13 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{d5}} \) 14 \( \texttt{\textit{h5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{h4}} \) 15 f4 0-0-0 16 g3 \( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) (Fedorowicz-Ward, Cannes 1988) and now 17 f5! with the idea 17...exf5 18 \( \texttt{\textit{gxf7}} \).

b) Partly for the record (and since it could be of surprise value), I should note that 6 a3, given a straight “?” in most sources, is playable. The supposed refutation (and best move) is 6...\( \texttt{\textit{h4}} \), when White should play 7 \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) (D) (analysts give the ugly 7 g3 \( \texttt{\textit{f6}} \) 8 f4 here), with the following possibilities:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\text{\texttt{\textit{d6}}} \\
\text{\texttt{\textit{a6}}} \\
\text{\texttt{\textit{c5}}} \\
\end{array}
\]

b1) 7...\( \texttt{\textit{xc3?!}} \) 8 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e4+}} \) 9 axb4 f5 10 \( \texttt{\textit{xe4?!}} \) (10 \( \texttt{\textit{h5+}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{h5}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{h5}} \) g6 12 f3 gxh5 13 fxe4 fxe4 14 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) 0-0 15 \( \texttt{\textit{h5}} \) leaves White with the bishop-pair in a promising context) 10...fxe4 (10...\( \texttt{\textit{xe4?!}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) 12 hxg3 \pm . This isn’t a great deal, but with space, the bishops, and Black’s rather cramped position, White can certainly play for a win.

b2) 7...\( \texttt{\textit{xg3?!}} \) 8 fxg3 \( \texttt{\textit{xc3+}} \) 9 bxc3 opens the file, which is typical in Nimzo-Indian positions in which White controls the centre. Of course, White’s c4-pawn can be harassed (and might want to go to c5 at some point), and if Black stabilizes the centre he can boast of a superior pawn-structure. Nevertheless, I’d give White a limited plus; e.g., 9...\( \texttt{\textit{f6}} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) 0-0 11 \( \texttt{\textit{e2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) 12 \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{b7}} \) 13 0-0 \( \texttt{\textit{xc6}} \) 14 g4!? (versus...f5) 14...e5 15 c5 intending 15...bxc5 16 \( \texttt{\textit{b3?!}} \) (16 d5 \( \texttt{\textit{d5}} \) 17 e4) 16...\( \texttt{\textit{ab8?!}} \) (16...\( \texttt{\textit{d8}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{xf7}} \) 18 \( \texttt{\textit{xf7}} \).
b3) 7...\textit{xc}3!+ 8 bxc3 \textit{b}7 offers chances for both sides; for example, 9 \textit{wh}5?! \textit{wh}x5 10 \textit{dd}x5 g6! 11 \textit{gg}3?! \textit{xc}3! 12 f3 d5! (12...\textit{da}4 13 \textit{dd}3 \textit{cc}6 14 \textit{bb}1 a5 15 \textit{cc}2 \textit{dd}6 16 \textit{ee}2 \textit{ee}7 17 \textit{ff}2 is slightly better for White) 13 \textit{dd}2?! (13 a4 dxc4 14 \textit{xc}4 is unclear, though White has compensation) 13...\textit{da}4 14 cxd5 exd5 15 \textit{bb}5+ \textit{cc}6 16 \textit{ee}2 =.

6...\textit{xd}2

The only logical move, gaining the bishop-pair. 6...\textit{xc}3?! 7 \textit{xc}3 \textit{xd}2 8 \textit{xd}2 essentially wastes time compared to other variations (White didn’t have to play a3), and White took advantage by 8...\textit{bb}7 9 \textit{dd}3! \textit{gg}2 10 \textit{gg}1 \textit{ff}3 11 \textit{xc}3 securing an obvious plus, in the game Grandelius-Penalver, Swedish Team Ch 2010/11.

7 \textit{xd}2 (D)

7...0-0

Here there are important and frequently-seen alternatives:

a) 7...\textit{aa}6 8 a3 (8 \textit{ff}4 is quite playable) 8...\textit{ee}7 (8...\textit{xc}3 9 \textit{xc}3 d5 can be answered calmly by 10 b3 or even 10 \textit{ee}2 \textit{xc}4 11 \textit{xc}4 dxc4 12 \textit{we}2, or more directly with 10 cxd5 \textit{xf}1 11 \textit{xf}1 exd5 12 \textit{cc}1 0-0 13 g3 \textit{cd}6 14 \textit{gg}2 ±) 9 \textit{ff}4 \textit{gg}5! 10 \textit{hh}5?! g6 11 \textit{gg}3 (D.Gurevich-Christiansen, USA Ch, Estes Park 1984) and now 11...0-0! 12 \textit{ee}2 f5 13 0-0?! \textit{ff}4! 14 \textit{ge}4 \textit{hh}6 15 d5 ± can follow.

b) 7...\textit{bb}7 8 a3 (or 8 d5) 8...\textit{ee}7 (8...\textit{xc}3 9 \textit{xc}3 0-0 10 d5) 9 d5 (for 9 \textit{ff}4 \textit{gg}5 10 \textit{dd}3 0-0, see the main line) 9...0-0 10 g3 \textit{cc}5!? (10...d6 11 \textit{gg}2 \textit{ee}5 12 0-0 \textit{dd}7 13 f4 gave White more space, but nothing special, in Jelen-Grosar, Slovenian Ch, Postojna 1992) 11 \textit{hh}3! e5 12 f4 exf4 13 gxf4 d6 14 0-0-0 \textit{ee}8 15 \textit{gg}3 with good attacking chances for White, Szabo-Botvinnik, European Team Ch, Oberhausen 1961.

c) 7...d5 8 a3 \textit{ee}7 9 cxd5 exd5 10 \textit{gg}3 (10 \textit{ff}4 c6 11 \textit{dd}3) 10...0-0 11 \textit{gg}2 c6 12 0-0 ± M.Gurevich-Enders, Eger 1987.

8 a3 \textit{ee}7

Again, 8...\textit{xc}3 9 \textit{xc}3 \textit{bb}7 is reasonable (but 9...f5?! less so; e.g., 10 \textit{dd}3 d6 11 0-0 \textit{dd}7 12 \textit{ff}4 \textit{ff}6 13 d5 \textit{ee}8 14 \textit{ee}1 has the idea of 15 \textit{ee}4, even against 14...\textit{ee}5).

9 \textit{ff}4

This is a flexible option, and perhaps better than 9 d5 in terms of forcing Black to come up with a plan.

9...\textit{gg}5?!

9...d6 10 \textit{ee}2 \textit{bb}7 11 0-0 \textit{dd}7 (Aleksandrov-Ehlvest, Polanica Zdroj 1997) 12 \textit{ad}1 \textit{gg}5!? 13 \textit{dd}3 a5 14 f4 \textit{ff}6 15 \textit{ff}3 gives White a comfortable game.

10 \textit{dd}3 \textit{bb}7

This is equivalent to 7...\textit{bb}7 8 a3 \textit{ee}7 9 \textit{ff}4 \textit{gg}5 10 \textit{dd}3 0-0.

11 0-0 (D)

11...\textit{xf}4

It’s not clear who profits more from this exchange; I’d say White. Sokolov suggests implementing it in another way: 11...d5 12 cxd5 \textit{xf}4 13 exf4 exd5, which he calls equal, but I think White can use his superior activity by means of 14 \textit{fe}1, with ideas of \textit{ee}3 and doubling rooks or attacking on the kingside. Since 14...\textit{cc}5 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 \textit{ad}1 is very awkward, Black might try 14...\textit{cc}6 15 \textit{ee}2 \textit{dd}6 16 b4 \textit{ee}8 17 \textit{dd}3 g6 18 f5 \textit{cc}8! 19 \textit{dd}2! ±.
Now 12...c5? 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 \( \text{dxe4} \) is very bad for Black, while after 12...d5 (O.Rodriguez-I. Sokolov, Barcelona 1992) 13 cxd5! exd5 (Black should avoid 13...\( \text{dxe5}?! \) 14 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{b7} \) 15 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \pm \)) 14 \( \text{b6} \) White has the better of it.

7.24)

5...c5
Notice that this can also arise via 4...c5 5 \( \text{dxe2} \) b6.
6 a3 \( \text{a5} \) (D)

This variation was brought into prominence by Romanishin and Psakhis, and has retained an excellent reputation since it first came into general notice. Black simply prevents b4 and maintains his pin, while putting some pressure on d4.

7 \( \text{b1} \)

At this juncture, White has tried a large set of responses but there is no known way to achieve more than a small theoretical advantage. The text-move intends to trap the bishop with b4; the other main move is 7 \( \text{d2} \).

7...\( \text{d6} \)

7...\( \text{e7} \) isn't played much. White has several plausible ways to try for an advantage, including 8 \( \text{d2} \). Then:

a) 8...\( \text{d6} \) 9 b4! \( \text{cxb4} \) 10 \( \text{AXB4!} \) \( \text{dxb4} \) 12 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 13 \( \text{d7}+ \) \( \text{d8} \) 14 \( \text{dxe8} \) and Black exploits the trapped knight by 14...\( \text{dxc4} \) but White will get pressure on his position and king; e.g., 15 \( \text{dxc3} \) \( \text{xf1} \) 16 \( \text{xf1} \) d5 17 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{b7} \) 18 \( \text{c1} \) 19 \( \text{ac7} \) \( \text{f6} \) 20 \( \text{e2} \) a6 21 \( \text{dxa6} \) \( \text{xa6} \) 22 \( \text{d7} \) \( \pm \).

b) White also retains an edge after 8...0-0 9 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 10 \( \text{d3} \) cxd4 11 exd4 \( \text{xc3} \) 12 \( \text{xc3} \) d5 13 \( \text{e2} \) dxc4 14 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{b7} \) 15 0-0 \( \text{c7} \) 16 \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{d5} \) 18 \( \text{d6} \) \( \pm \).

c) 8...\( \text{d6} \) 9 \( \text{f4} \) (with the idea of a timely \( \text{d3} \), or in some cases supporting the advance d5; or 9 dxc5 bxc5 10 \( \text{f4} \) 9...\( \text{b7} \) 10 \( \text{d3} \) cxd4 11 exd4 \( \text{xc3} \) 12 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{d4} \) 13 0-0-0-0 14 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{d3} \) 15 \( \text{d3} \) h6 (15...d6 16 \( \text{g5} \) h6 17 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 18 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 19 \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{e7} \) 20 \( \text{b4} \) \( \pm \)) 16 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 17 c5 with a slight advantage for White.

We now return to 7...\( \text{d6} \) (D):

8 \( \text{g3} \)

Now that White has gained a small concession, i.e., Black’s knight on the awkward square a6, his centre is secure for the moment and he can develop. 8 \( \text{d2} \) is the main line, and 8 \( \text{f4} \) is another safe way to play: 8...\( \text{d4}! \) (8...0-0 9 \( \text{d3} \) should bring White a small advantage) 9 \( \text{d3} \)? \( \text{xc3} \) 9...\( \text{b7} \)? 10 b4 \( \text{xc3} \) 11 \( \text{xc3} \) 9...\( \text{f5} \) 10 b4! \( \text{cxb4} \) 11 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 12 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{bxa3} \)? 13 \( \text{a2} \) 14 \( \text{a1} \) \( \text{b8} \) 15 \( \text{a3} \) with prospects of advantage) 10 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 11 \( \text{e2} \) (11 d5??) 11...\( \text{f5} \) 12 f3 with a complex and balanced position. The text-move is more ambitious.

8...\( \text{b7} \)

8...\( \text{cxd4} \) 9 \( \text{exd4} \) \( \text{b7} \) 10 d5 (threatening b4) 10...\( \text{xc3}+ \) 11 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{c8} \) 12 \( \text{e2} \) exd5 13 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 14 0-0 \( \text{fxd5} \) (14...\( \text{xd5} \) 15 \( \text{b5} \)) 15 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 16 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{b7} \) 17 \( \text{d6} \) and Black is struggling.

9 d5 b5!?

A bold move, designed to break up the centre straightaway. Other moves grant White some advantage:
a) 9...exd5 10 ¤g2 gains White some time, reserves the idea of capturing on d5 with a piece, and doesn't really help Black; e.g., 10...b5 11 b4! cxb4 12 axb4 dxc4 13 bxc5 dxc3+ 14 dxc3 d7 15 a3 d6 16 b3 0-0 17 0-0 d7 18 ¤fd1 ± 13 0-0 bxc4 14 ¤a3 d6 15 d4.

b) 9...¢e4?! 10 ¤g2 dxc3 11 dxc3 dxc3+ 12 bxc3 gives White space and creates potential dark-square problems. Gelfand-Aronian, Leon rapid 2010 continued 12...d6 13 ¤a4+ ¢e7 14 0-0 d7 15 e4 d8! 16 e5! d8! (16...exd5? fails to 17 ¤d1 or 17 ¤c2), and now 17 ¤d1! would have practically won on the spot due to 17...exd5 (17...dxe5 18 d6) 18 exd6 ¤xd6 19 ¤f4 d8 20 exd5.

10 ¤g2 bxc4 11 0-0 0-0

Dearing gives 11...dxc3 12 ¤xc3 dxc5 13 ¤xc5 exd5 14 dxc5

12 e4 (D)

b) 12...d6 (D)

He continues 15 ¤xb7 ¤xb7 16 ¤d6 ¤e4!, when Black is at least equal. White can get a small advantage by other means – nothing out of the ordinary, but enough to worry Black:

a) 15 ¤xc4 d7 16 ¤c2 d5 17 ¤d3; for example, 17...d6 18 b4 c4 19 ¤f5.

b) 15 e4 d7 16 ¤xb7 ¤xb7 17 ¤e3 0-0 (17...d6 18 ¤c1 d6 19 ¤xc4 ¤e6 20 f4 ±) 18 ¤xd7 ±.

c) 15 ¤f3 ¤xd5 16 ¤xd5 has been played twice but only gives White a minor advantage following 16...d7! (16...d6 17 ¤xc6 dxc6 18 ¤d2 intending 19 ¤fc1 – Dearing; 16...d6 17 ¤xc4) 17 ¤xc4 d5 18 ¤a4+ ¤b5 19 ¤c2 0-0 (Bu Xiangzhi-P. Carlsson, World Junior Ch, Athens 2001), and now 20 ¤d1! ¤fd8 21 b4 c4 22 a4 d3 23 ¤b2 ¤e6 24 d5 ± is best.

13...d6

Vaißser analyses both 13...h6 14 ¤xf6 ¤xf6 15 ¤a4 ¤b6 16 dxe6 ¤xe6 17 e5 ¤xg2 18 ¤xc2 d7 19 exd6 ¤xd6 20 ¤bd1 ± and 13...dxe5 14 ¤xd5 ¤xd5 15 ¤xf6 ¤xf6 16 ¤xd5 ±.

14 e5

Vaißser labels this ‘!’ I'm not so sure; in any case, White seems able to get a slight advantage by two other moves:

a) 14 ¤xf4 exd5 15 ¤a4 ¤xc3 16 bxc3 ¤c8 17 ¤c6; for example, 17...d7! (17...dxe4 can be met by 18 ¤xf6 gxf6 19 ¤xe4 ± or 18 ¤xe4) 18 ¤xd6 ¤b5 19 ¤xf6! (19 ¤xc5) 19...dxe6 20 ¤xd8 ¤xd8 21 ¤xd5 ±.

b) 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 ¤a4 ¤b6 16 ¤bd1 ±.

14...dxe5 15 d6 ¤xg2 16 ¤xf6! ¤xf6 17 ¤xg2 ¤d5
Or 17...\(\text{c}e8\)!? 18 d7 \(\text{d}c7\) 19 \(\text{w}a4\) \(\text{b}6\) 20 \(\text{h}bd1\) \(\text{f}d8\) = .
18 \(\text{c}xd5\) exd5 19 \(\text{w}xd5\) \(\text{a}d8\) 20 d7 e4! 21 \(\text{g}1\) \(\text{w}e7\)

Black has equalized, but White’s options above afford him good prospects for advantage.

7.3)

4...0-0 (D)

This is a less dynamic option than 4...c5 or 4...b6, but it is also the most reliable move, and impervious to direct attack. As such, it’s not surprising that 4...0-0 is the first choice at the top levels, since a split point as Black is considered more acceptable than in a weekend Swiss. Fortunately, however, White is able to keep things interesting.

5 \(\text{e}2\)

A tip: it may be that eventually you’ll want to construct an alternative repertoire with 5 \(\text{d}3\). It’s worth mentioning that because once Black has committed to ...0-0, there are certain move-orders that become easier (e.g., 5...b6 is no longer a problem). One very important difference is that it is much easier to find effective plans against the Hübner System, normally introduced by 4 e3 c5 5 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 6 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{x}c3\)+ 7 bxc3 d6, when Black has played 4...0-0 and can’t go queenside.

5...d5

A direct and thematic move, staking out central territory. 5...\(\text{e}8\) is a reasonable alternative, giving the b4-bishop a retreat-square and helping to enforce ...e5, but it’s a little slow: 6 a3 \(\text{f}8\) 7 \(\text{g}3\) (I prefer this to the more direct 7 e4; 7 \(\text{f}4\) is well met by 7...d6 with the idea ...e5, either on the following move or after ...c6) 7...d5 (7...e5 8 dxe5 \(\text{x}e5\) 9 \(\text{e}2\) g6 10 0-0 \(\text{g}7\) 11 e4 \(\pm\) 8 \(\text{e}2\) c5 9 dxc5! (a key idea which gives White good prospects of central superiority) 9...\(\text{x}c5\) 10 b4 (10 0-0 dxc4?! 11 \(\text{w}a4\) \(\text{e}7\) 12 \(\text{w}xc4\) a6 13 \(\text{d}1\) \(\text{b}d7\) 14 \(\text{d}e4\) \(\pm\) 10...\(\text{d}e7\) (10...\(\text{f}8\) 11 \(\text{b}2\) \(\text{c}6\) 12 0-0 \(\pm\) ) 11 cxd5?! (11 \(\text{b}2\) ) 11...exd5 12 0-0 \(\text{e}6\) (12...\(\text{c}6\) 13 \(\text{a}2\)! \(\text{e}6\) 14 \(\text{d}2\) \(\pm\) ) 13 \(\text{b}2\) a5 14 \(\text{b}5\)! (D) and now:

a) 14...\(\text{a}b4\) 15 \(\text{a}b4\) \(\text{a}x\text{a}l\) 16 \(\text{w}x\text{a}l\) \(\text{a}x\text{b}4\) 17 \(\text{a}x\text{f}6\) \(\text{w}x\text{f}6\) 18 \(\text{w}x\text{f}6\) gxf6 19 \(\text{d}1\) \(\text{c}6\) 20 \(\text{h}5\) \(\text{e}7\) 21 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{d}8\) 22 \(\text{c}7\) is slightly better for White.

b) 14...\(\text{x}c6\) 15 \(\text{d}d\) 4 axb4 16 axb4! \(\text{a}x\text{b}4\) 17 \(\text{x}a\text{a}8\) \(\text{w}x\text{a}8\) 18 \(\text{d}f5\) (with the ideas \(\text{xg}7\) and \(\text{xf}6\) ) 18...\(\text{a}x\text{f}5\) 19 \(\text{d}f5\) \(\text{e}6\) (19...\(\text{d}8\) 20 \(\text{w}b3\) ) 20 \(\text{w}b3\) \(\text{f}8\) 21 \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}x\text{d}4\) 22 \(\text{x}d4\) with the bishop-pair and pressure (\(\text{b}1\) and/or \(\text{a}1\)) for the pawn.

6 \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{e}7\)

Or:

a) 6...\(\text{x}c3\)+ 7 \(\text{x}c3\) b6 8 \(\text{e}2\) (8 cxd5 exd5 9 b4 \(\pm\) 8...\(\text{b}7\) (8...\(\text{a}6\) 9 b3) 9 0-0 \(\text{d}b7\) 10 b4 (10 cxd5 \(\text{x}d5\) 11 \(\text{d}x\text{d}5\) \(\text{x}d5\) 12 f3 \(\pm\) ) 10...dxc4 11 \(\text{x}c4\) c5 12 \(\text{b}2\) \(\pm\) M. Gurevich-Rozentalis, Turin Olympiad 2006.

b) 6...\(\text{d}6\) deserves respect, and is certainly better than its relative rarity would suggest:

b1) 7 c5 \(\text{e}7\) 8 b4 and now:

b11) 8...\(\text{c}6\) 9 \(\text{g}3\) b6 10 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{b}c5\) 11 \(\text{b}c5\) e5! 12 \(\text{e}2\) g6! (12...\(\text{d}b7\) 13 0-0 \(\text{w}c7\) 14 \(\text{f}4\) exd4 15 exd4 \(\text{e}8\) 16 f5 \(\pm\) ) 13 0-0 h5 and now 14 dxe5?? worked out well in Illescas-Morozovich,
Madrid 1996, but perhaps 14 f3 h4 15 Qh1, intending Qf2, is objectively more likely to produce an advantage.

b12) 8...b6 and ...a5 should be satisfactory. Then 9 Qf4 a5 10 b2 axb4 11 axb4 Qxa1 12 Qxa1 Qxe4 13 Qxe4 dxe4 14 Qc4 ± c6 15 0-0 Qa6 16 Wc2 gave White a nice space advantage in Elianov-Volokitin, Bundesliga 2010/11. Of course, both sides have numerous alternative ideas in this line.

b2) 7 Qg3 is solid and perhaps objectively best:

b21) 7...c5 is logical, when 8 dxc5 Qxc5 9 b4 Qe7 (9...b6 10 Qa4 Qc7 11 Qb2 favours White) 10 Qb2 Qc6 11 cxd5 (or 11 Qa4!?) 11...exd5 12 Qb5 could benefit from more attention.

b22) 7...c6 shores up d5 in anticipation of ...e5, and has been chosen by some strong players. Then:

b221) The interesting 8 e4!? has been played in a few games, counting upon the open h-file after the unnecessarily risky 8...Qxg3?! 9 hxg3. Instead, 8...dxe4 9 Qxe4 Qxe4 10 Qxe4 e5!? 11 Qe3 Qc7 12 d5 was double-edged in Ivanisevic-Markos, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010.

b222) 8 Qe2 e5 9 cxd5 (9 0-0! may be more accurate, since 9...e4 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 Wh3 is a nice French-like position) 9...exd4! 10 Qxd4 Qd6 (12...Wc8 13 0-0 Qb6 14 Qe5 ±) 13 Qe5 Qf6 14 0-0 Qe6 15 Qe1 ± and I like White’s activity, one primitive idea being Wh3 and Wh1, while Wf3 is also promising.

Nevertheless, our main line is tougher for Black to equalize against than 7 Qf4. Thus we return to 7 cxd5 (D):

Then:

a) 7...c5 8 cxd5 cxd4 9 exd4 transposes to Section 7.112, in which White is slightly better.

b) 7...Qxc4 8 Qxc4 c5 9 0-0 has done very well for White in practice and in my opinion favours him slightly; e.g., 9...cxd4 10 exd4 and now 10...Qbd7 11 Qe3 Qb6 12 Qb3 ± or 10...Qc6 11 Qe3 Qd6 12 Qh5, a position which has arisen many times. 12...Qd5 is probably best, although 13 Qc1 Qxc4 14 Qxc4 gives White excellent activity.

c) Black’s main line begins with 7...c6, protecting d5 so as to organize ...e5. White has played numerous moves with mixed success, among them 8 Qd3 and 8 Qd2. An irregular move of note is 8 h3?! (covering g4 and usefully protecting the kingside) 8...Qxc4!? (8...Qbd7 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Qd3 is equal but has the potential to become interesting) 9 Qxc4 Qbd7 10 Qa2 e5 11 Qd3! exd4 12 exd4 Qb6 (12...Wh3 13 0-0 Qb6 14 Qe5 ±) 13 Qe5 Qf6 14 0-0 Qe6 15 Qe1 ± and I like White’s activity, one primitive idea being Wh3 and Wh1, while Wh3 is also promising.

Nevertheless, our main line is tougher for Black to equalize against than 7 Qf4. Thus we return to 7 cxd5 (D):

7 cxd5
7 Qf4 (D) is also popular and may suit the style of some Qge2 players. Its goal is more to create problems for Black than to prove any theoretical advantage.

Black can choose between:

7.31: 7...Qxd5 140
7.32: 7...exd5 142

7.31)

7...Qxd5 8 Qd2
White has tried many moves here, but I like this choice because it leaves so much play on
the board. White’s idea that after the move 9 e4, 9...dxc3 will be answered by 10 cxd5, which solves a number of problems related to activating White’s pieces. In addition, the move c4 can be useful.

8...d7

It’s difficult for Black to demonstrate equality in this unassuming position.

a) 8...c5 9 dxc5 (9 dxc5, with the idea 9...dxc5?! 10 df4 and 11 dxc5, is also promising) 9...xc5 10 g3 (or 10 e2 ± 10...b6?! 11 dxc5 d5 12 dxc5 dxc5 13 h4! b7 14 h5 f6 15 c4 with ongoing pressure, Nenashe-Nikolaids, Aegina 1995.

b) 8...xc3 9 xc3 b6 10 g3 (10 e2 b7 11 c2 ±) 10...b7 11 d3 d7 (11...xg2?! 12 g1 is perilous for Black, who must avoid 12...b7?? 13 h7+! xh7 14 h5± g8 15 d5!, with a winning attack for White; 12...d5! is necessary, but White has more than enough compensation following 13 e4 b7 14 h5 g6 15 e2 intending 0-0-0 and/or h6) 12 c2 h6 13 0-0 and White’s control of the centre means a little something:

b1) 13...c5?! 14 dxc5 xc5? (14...dxc5 15 h7+! g8 16 c6! f6 18 g6 ±) 15 fd1 e7 16 h5 ± Sargissian-Tiviakov, FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004.

b2) 13...f6 14 e4 c5 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 c4 d7 17 f4 (17 h5?! – G.Kuzmin) 17...b6 18 e2 f6 19 d1 d4+ 20 xd4 xd4 21 wd2 c8 22 xd4 xd4 23 c2 24 b1 f8 and now rather than 25 a4, as played in Aronian-Anand, Calvia Olympiad 2004, 25 b4 covers b2 while preparing a4-a5; e.g., 25...d8 (25...d2 26 f1 c2 27 e1 with the idea d1) 26 f1 f6 27 d1!

b2) 13...f6 14 e4 c5 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 c4 d7 17 f4 (17 h5?! – G.Kuzmin) 17...b6 18 e2 f6 19 d1 d4+ 20 xd4 xd4 21 wd2 c8 22 wd4 wd4+ 23 c2 24 b1 f8 and now rather than 25 a4, as played in Aronian-Anand, Calvia Olympiad 2004, 25 b4 covers b2 while preparing a4-a5; e.g., 25...d8 (25...d2 26 f1 c2 27 e1 with the idea d1) 26 f1 f6 27 d1!

c) 8...f6 9 g3 (9 g3?!) 9...bd7 10 g2 (D).

This has been tested at the top levels:

c1) 10...c5 11 0-0 cxd4 12 exd4 (12 d4x4!?) 12...d6 13 c2 (13 f4 ed5 14 c5 ±) 13...f6 14 d5 d5 15 c3 ± (G.Kuzmin).

c2) 10...c6 11 c2 e5 12 ed1 exd4 13 dxd4 d6 14 h3 (14 0-0 ± 14 c2 ± 14...f7?!) 15 0-0 f6 16 c2! ± followed by e4, Graf-Xu Jun, Bled Olympiad 2002.

c3) 10...e5 11 0-0 exd4 12 dxd4 c5 13 c2 f5 14 f5! xf5 15 xf5 xd2 16 xe5

9...b6

Gennady Kuzmin thinks that this is Black’s best move. Other ideas:

a) 9...f6 transposes to 8...f6 9 g3 fbd7 (note ‘c’ to Black’s 8th move).

b) 9...c3 10 xc3 c5 11 g2 cxd4 12 exd4 leaves White’s minor pieces superior. After 12...b6 13 0-0 c5, 14 c1! (instead of 14 c1, chosen in Volkov-Tomashevsky, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006) 14...xc3 15 xc3 e5 16 c5! keeps a small advantage.

c) After 9...b6, G.Kuzmin prefers 10 c2 e5 11 d1 with a small edge; indeed, the forcing line 11...exd4 12 xd4 c5 13 c1 g4 14 f3 d7 15 f4! g4 16 g2 gives White a nice game.

10 g2
10...exd5 achieves nothing after 11...g6 12 0-0 f5.

10...b7

10...a6!? 11 exd5 exd5 12 c5 13 f3 d3+ 14 df1 cxb2 15 c2 c4 16 c3 d7 17 g2 offers White the better chances due to his central majority; e.g., 17...xa3 18 c1 xe2 19 xe2 c4! 20 e1 d6 21 f3 ±.

10...b7

11...xc3

11...d6 12 c2 xc3 13 xc3 xg2 14 xg2 d5+ 15 f3 b7 16 e4 ±. Admittedly, some of these advantages are slight; the important thing is that there’s a healthy imbalance.

12 xc3 xg2 13 xg2 c5 14 d5 f6

On 14...exd5 15 xd5 f6 16 xd3 c7 17 xf4, White has in mind e4-e5.

15 dxe6 fxe6 16 f4

White has a slight advantage. The e6-pawn is a little loose and White has the more active minor pieces.

7.32)

7...exd5 (D)

Another solid move.

8 xf4

In my opinion, this is a more promising course for White than 8 g3, although that has a long history and is certainly playable. 8 g3 is a common professional choice; White tends to play b4 next to stop the freeing move ...c5 and tie down the queenside. In that case too, Black has no serious theoretical problems, yet some players might like the manoeuvring game that results. The text-move keeps the knight more centrally posted, and it is still very difficult for Black to arrange ...c5. White reserves the possibility of both central and queenside expansion.

8...c6

This position can also arise via 7 xf4 c6 8 exd5. Of course, in that case White allows 8...exd5, and with this move-order (7 exd5), he allows 7...exd5. If Black waits on ...c6 with 8...e8, then after 9 d3, either 9...c6 or 9...a5 10 0-0 c6 will probably follow anyway.

9 d3 e8

Or:

a) With 9...a5, Black clamps down on the queenside, which can lead to some fundamentally different strategies after 10 0-0 (D):

a1) 10 d6 11 f3 xf4 ("!") Kotov; although White is generally pretty happy with this exchange, which incidentally has taken four moves of Black’s bishop to implement!) 12 xf4 e8. At this point in Ghitescu-Shamkovich, Moscow-Bucharest match 1969, 13 e3 d6 14 c2 g6 15 g4 f5 led to a dynamically balanced game. White stands better in these types of positions if he can free his bishops; in this case he should try 13 c2! h6 (13...g6 14 f5 f6 15 fxg6! xd4+ 16 h1 hxg6 17 g5 c7 18 ae1 with more than enough compensation) 14 f5 d7 15 f4 with the upper hand.

a2) 10...a6 introduces not just the idea of ...c5, but also centralization by ...c7-e6: 11 c2 (D) (11 d2 c7 12 c1 is another idea, as is 11 f3, but probably 11 h3! c7 12 a4! ± is objectively best) and now:

a21) 11 d6 12 f3 c7 13 w2 (G.Kuzmin’s suggestion 13 d3 has the idea h5;
then 13...g6 14 \textit{wd}2! could follow, aiming for 14...g5?! 15 \textit{efe}2 \textit{hx}h2+?! 16 \textit{h}1 \pm with the threat of f4 and intention of e4) 13...\textit{xf}4?! (usually an ill-advised exchange; 13...\textit{d}8 14 \textit{wf}2!) 14 \textit{exf}4 \textit{d}7 15 f5 c5 (Martinović-Kriebel, Chotowa 2010) and now 16 \textit{f}4! c4 17 \textit{e}1 with the idea \textit{g}5 uses the bishops to good effect.

a22) 11...\textit{c}7 12 f3?! \textit{de}6 (12...c5?! 13 \textit{da}4! \textit{exd}4 14 \textit{exd}4 \textit{b}5 15 \textit{wd}3 \textit{a}7 16 \textit{c}3 gave White a solid advantage in G.Kuzmin-Korchnoi, Sochi 1970) 13 \textit{ld}3 \textit{c}7 14 \textit{de}5, when Kuzmin thinks that the chances are approximately equal; fair enough.

b) 9...\textit{d}6 10 0-0! and now:

b1) 10...\textit{e}8 transposes to the main line.

b2) As already mentioned a few times, exchanging with 10...\textit{xf}4?! is very often – but not always – a mistake. It’s important not to lose control of the dark squares, and White gets the bishop-pair. To be sure, White’s weakness on d4 can be attacked by ...c5 and ...\textit{c}6, but that’s not enough to make genuine progress. After 11 \textit{exf}4 \textit{b}6 (11...\textit{e}8 12 f5 \textit{bd}7 13 \textit{me}1 \textit{xe}1+ 14 \textit{wx}e1 c5 15 \textit{e}3 \pm) 12 \textit{me}1 \textit{a}6 13 \textit{c}2 (13 \textit{xa}6 \textit{xa}6 14 \textit{wa}4 \pm) 13...c5 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 b4!, intending 15...d4 16 \textit{e}4! \textit{xe}4 17 \textit{xe}4 c4 18 f5!, White has the superior pieces.

10 0-0 \textit{d}6 11 f3 (D)

White wants to play e4, but his centre will have to be secured first; in the meantime, this move also defends the kingside and prevents ...\textit{e}4 or ...\textit{g}4.

11...b6

Again, 11...\textit{xf}4 appears to give White more than Black: 12 \textit{exf}4 \textit{wb}6 (12...b6 13 f5 \textit{a}6 14 \textit{xa}6 \textit{xa}6 15 \textit{wa}4 \textit{b}8 16 \textit{f}4 leads to a slight advantage for White, Petrosian-Liberzon, USSR Spartakiad, Moscow 1964) 13 \textit{ec}2 \textit{d}7 (hoping to play ...c5) 14 b4 a5 15 \textit{xa}4 \textit{wc}7 16 bxa5 \textit{xa}5 (16...\textit{xa}5 17 \textit{b}1) 17 \textit{me}1 \textit{xe}1+ 18 \textit{wx}e1 \textit{a}8 19 \textit{b}1 \pm.

12 b4 \textit{b}7

Black’s pieces are logically placed and the position should be close to equal. Now:

a) I.Sokolov-Vitiugov, Poikovsky 2010 went 13 \textit{b}1 a5 14 \textit{fe}2 (an equal position follows 14 bxa5 \textit{xa}5 15 a4) 14...\textit{xb}4 15 axb4 \textit{d}6 with balanced chances. Then 16 e4?! dxe4 17 \textit{fxe}4 \textit{xb}4 18 \textit{c}4 would produce an unclear attack.

b) I prefer 13 \textit{d}2, by which White connects his major pieces and covers b4 indirectly against ...a5. In addition, the idea of \textit{e}1-g3/h4 is a long-term possibility. This may also be approximately equal but White has good potential for central progress. A sample continuation is 13...a5 14 \textit{ce}2 (or 14 \textit{wb}3) 14...\textit{xb}4 15 axb4 \textit{xa}1 (15...\textit{d}6 16 \textit{wb}3) 16 \textit{xa}1 \textit{wc}7 17 \textit{b}1! \pm (or 17 \textit{g}3 \pm) with the idea 17...\textit{wr}7 18 \textit{g}3. Here 17...g5?! does little good following 18 \textit{hb}3 h6 (18...\textit{exh}2+?! 19 \textit{wh}1 g4? 20 \textit{fxg}4 \textit{dc}4 21 \textit{xe}4 dxe4 22 \textit{dg}5) 19 f4 g4 20 \textit{f}2 h5 21 \textit{g}3 \pm. White has the outpost f5 and play along the c-file.

7.4)

4...d5 (D)

This move isn’t even mentioned in most books that deal with 4 e3, and barely in others, but it has important implications. It’s true that 4...d5 will often transpose to other lines, but that limits your options, and in fact, you can’t
get into a $\text{Qge2}$ system proper, because after 5 $\text{Qe2} \text{dxc4}$, it's difficult to get a satisfactory position (recovering the c-pawn takes too much effort and Black achieves a central break). So I'm going to recommend transposing to a line that almost always arises via the move-order 4...0-0 5 $\text{Qd3}$ d5, that is:

5 $\text{cxd5}$

White will answer 5...exd5 with 6 $\text{Qd3}$.

I should mention that there are other ways to deal with 4...d5 if you go outside our repertoire. For example, 5 a3 $\text{Qxc3+}$ 6 bxc3 is a deferred Sämisch Variation, and constitutes a major reason why Black tends to avoid this move-order; that's because ...d5 is not the most popular or trusted response to the Sämisch. Then 6...0-0 7 cxd5 exd5 8 $\text{Qd3}$ will usually follow, and White plays the classical plan with $\text{Qe2}$, 0-0, f3 and $\text{Qg3}$, slowly building up for e4. You can find this in theoretical books, of course, and also in many well-known games by leading masters.

5...exd5!

5...$\text{Qd5}$? will lose time; e.g., after 6 $\text{Qf3}$ 0-0 7 $\text{Qd3}$ and 0-0.

The somewhat better 5...$\text{Qxd5}$ (D) is rare because it gives up the centre.

Instead of 6 $\text{Qe2}$ (when 6...c5 transposes to note 'c2' to Black's 5th move in Section 7.1), White has two more ambitious choices:

a) 6 $\text{Qc2}$ c5 (critical) 7 $\text{Qf3}$ (or 7 $\text{dxc5}$ 7...exd4 8 exd4 $\text{Qc6}$ 9 a3 $\text{Qa5}$ 10 $\text{Qd3}$ is a well-known line from the Caro-Kann Panov Attack, in which 10...$\text{Qxc3}$ 11 bxc3 $\text{Qxd4}$ 12 $\text{Qxd4}$ $\text{Qxd4}$ is a controversial position, but Black tends to avoid it, because lines like 13 $\text{Qb5+}$ $\text{Qf8}$ 14 0-0 $\text{Qxc3}$ 15 $\text{Qb1}$ are hard to defend.

b) 6 $\text{Qd2}$ 0-0 7 $\text{Qc1}$ (or 7 $\text{Qc2}$ +, while 7 $\text{Qf3}$ gives White an easy game; for example, 7...c5 can be answered by 8 $\text{Qxd5}$ exd5 9 $\text{dxc5}$ $\text{Qxc5}$ 10 $\text{Qd3}$ g6 11 $\text{Qc1}$ with superior development, or simply 8 a3) 7...c5 8 $\text{Qxd5}$ $\text{Qxd5}$ (8...$\text{Qxd2+}$ 9 $\text{Qxd2}$ $\text{Qxb4}$ $\text{cxb4}$ 10 $\text{Qc2}$? $\text{Qc6}$ (10...$\text{Qxa2}$?? 11 $\text{Qxc8}$) and rather than 11 $\text{Qc4}$ $\text{Qa5}$ (Skembris-Djuric, Istanbul 1988), 11 $\text{Qf3}$ $\text{Qxa2}$ 12 $\text{Qd3}$ h6 13 0-0 gives White excellent play for the pawn.

6 $\text{Qd3}$

6 $\text{Qa4+}$ $\text{Qc6}$ 7 $\text{Qb5}$ is an old recommendation ('±' in ECO, for example), but White has nothing, or even stands worse, after 7...$\text{Qd7}$ 8 $\text{Qxc6}$ $\text{Qxc3}$+ 9 bxc3 when his light squares are weak.

6...0-0

This position is usually reached via 4...0-0 5 $\text{Qd3}$ d5 6 cxd5 exd5.

6...c5 7 $\text{Qe2}$ (7 a3 $\text{Qxc3}$+ 8 bxc3 transposes to that Sämisch Variation again, not Black's normal preference; that's a handy line to pick up if you have a few spare hours!) 7...$\text{Qc6}$ 8 0-0 0-0 9 a3 (9 $\text{Qd2}$ would produce a unique position, or 9 $\text{dxc5}$ $\text{Qxc5}$ 10 b3) 9...$\text{Qxc3}$ 10 $\text{Qxc3}$? (once again, 10 bxc3 is the Sämisch) 10...exd4?! 11 exd4 $\text{Qxd4}$?! 12 $\text{Qxh7+}$ and 13 $\text{Qxd4}$ with a nice positional advantage.

7 $\text{Qe2}$ (D)

Of course, 7 $\text{Qf3}$ is also playable.

7...$\text{Qe8}$

7...c5 8 0-0 $\text{Qc6}$ transposes to the note to Black's 6th move above.

One line after 7...$\text{Qd6}$ is 8 a3 a5 9 0-0 (the strategy from our main line is also promising: 9 $\text{Qd2}$, with the idea $\text{Qc1}$, may transpose if Black plays ...$\text{Qe8}$; see also note 'c' to Black's 8th
move) 9...a6 10 ¤b5 ¤e7 11 f3 c6 12 ¤bc3 c5 13 d2 d8e8, and here one plan is 14 e1!? with the idea w2d2, f2 and aae1.

8 d2

This is a subtle way to improve White's position and prepare to meet Black's potential freeing moves. By delaying castling, it also neutralizes lines in which Black plays an early ...d6 in order to harass White's kingside. Of course, 8 0-0 has been played for many, many years; one line is Epishin's 8...d6 9 h3 intending w2c2, d1, and ultimately a minority attack with b1 and b4. I feel that 8 d2 is an easier and in some respects more accurate way to play.

8...f8

a) The first point of 8 d2 is that Black's standard freeing move 8...c5 is answered by 9 a3 ¤xc3 10 ¤xc3, when White plans dxc5. So Aleksandrov-Malakhatko, European Ch, Batumi 2002 continued 10...c4 11 a2 c6 12 0-0 a5, and Postny suggests 13 b3 b5 14 bxc4 dxc4 (14...bxc4 15 f4 w6 16 w2d2) 15 f4 ± with the idea 15...e4! 16 xe4 xe4 17 d5 d5 c5 18 wbl f5 19 wxb5 ±.

b) 8...a5 introduced a strategic battle which ultimately turned into a tactical melee in the game I.Sokolov-Naiditsch, Poikovsky 2010: 9 ¤c1 b6 (a standard idea, to exchange off White's good bishop; in return, White gets a considerable lead in development) 10 0-0 a6 11 b1 d6 12 e1 c5 13 g3 cxd4 14 exd4 e1+ 15 wxe1 (with ideas like f5 and g5) 15...c6 (D) (it's difficult to find a decent move for Black here).

16 cxd5! (16 f5! is also strong) 16...cxd5 17 c6 (17 e4 xg3! 18 xh7+ f8) 17...d7 18 e1 (18 xh7+? h8 19 xxd6 wxd6 20 b1 leaves White an exchange down for a pawn, but he threatens moves such as f5 and e4, which are difficult to defend against) 18...e8 19 d1 d4?!, and now 20 f3! b8 21 e4 was the way to preserve a meaningful advantage.

c) 8...d6 is popular and important. There can follow 9 a1 (Vera mentions 9 w2c2 c6! 10 h3 intending g4; a kingside pawn-storm can be effective as long as White hasn't played 0-0) 9...a6 (D) (preventing d5; 9...c6 is natural, but Black would sacrifice his ...c5 freeing move for a while; for example, 10 w2c2 w6 11 a3 a4 12 c7 f3 e6 13 0-0 c5 14 dxc5 xxc5 15 b4 ± Grischchuk-L'Ami, Wijk aan Zee 2011), when I shall present some samples of the play:

c1) 10 0-0 d7 (10...b5 11 d4 b7 12 f3 e4 13 w2d1 w5 14 a4 ± b4?? 15 cxd5! 1-0 I.Sokolov-Khenkin, Belgian Team Ch 2010/11 – Black is lost following 15...x5d5 16 d5 xd5 17 c4; the sacrifice 10...xh2+? fails after 12 g3) 11 g3 b6
and now I like 12 $\mathcal{W}f3!$ with the idea 12...$\mathcal{D}c5$!? (12...$\mathcal{D}b7$! 13 $\mathcal{D}f5$ $\mathcal{A}f8$ 14 $\mathcal{W}h3$ ±) 13 $\mathcal{D}xc5$ $\mathcal{g}4$ 14 $\mathcal{cxd}6$ $\mathcal{A}xf3$ 15 $\mathcal{dxc}7$ $\mathcal{W}xc7$ 16 $\mathcal{D}ce4!$ $\mathcal{W}e7$ 17 $\mathcal{D}xf6+$ $\mathcal{W}xf6$ 18 $\mathcal{A}c3$! and 19 $gxf3$ with a strong attacking position.

c2) I. Sokolov-Åkesson, Stockholm 2010 varied with 10 $\mathcal{W}h3$ c6 11 f3!? (11 h3 deserves consideration) 11...$\mathcal{D}bd7$! 12 0-0 b5 13 $\mathcal{D}b6$ 14 e4 b4 (14...$\mathcal{D}c4$ 15 $\mathcal{D}g5$ $\mathcal{e}7$ 16 e5 ±; 14...c5! 15 e5 $\mathcal{cxd}4$ 16 exd6 $\mathcal{dxc}3$ 17 $\mathcal{A}xc3$ and after 17...$\mathcal{W}xd6$ White has compensation for the pawn, but hardly more than that; Black should avoid 17...$\mathcal{A}xe2$?! 18 $\mathcal{A}xf6$ $\mathcal{W}xf6$ 19 $\mathcal{D}d3$ $\mathcal{A}xg2$+ 20 $\mathcal{A}xg2$ ±) 15 $\mathcal{D}d1$ $\mathcal{dxe}4$ 16 $\mathcal{f}xe4$ $\mathcal{D}xe4$ 17 $\mathcal{W}xf7+$ $\mathcal{W}h8$ 18 $\mathcal{A}xe4$ $\mathcal{A}xe4$ 19 $\mathcal{g}5$ $\mathcal{g}8$ 20 $\mathcal{A}xc6$ $\mathcal{W}xf7$ 21 $\mathcal{W}xf7$ $\mathcal{A}xe2$? 22 $\mathcal{W}xd6$ ±.

We now return to 8...$\mathcal{W}f8$ (D):

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9 $\mathcal{A}c1$

Again, a useful and noncommittal move. The obvious 9 0-0 can lead in several directions; e.g., 9...a5 10 $\mathcal{A}c1$ $\mathcal{D}a6$ 11 f3 $\mathcal{D}b4$ 12 $\mathcal{D}bl$ c5 (Rakhmanov-Zakhartsov, Voronezh 2010) and here 13 $\mathcal{A}el$!? $\mathcal{A}xe3$ 14 $\mathcal{A}f2$ is an ambitious continuation; e.g., 14...$\mathcal{cxd}4$! 15 $\mathcal{W}xd4$ $\mathcal{A}e8$ 16 $\mathcal{A}fd1$ $\mathcal{D}c6$ 17 $\mathcal{W}d2$, and White has compensation in a roughly equal position.

9...b6

White's basic strategy is shown by 9...c6 10 0-0 $\mathcal{D}a6$ 11 f3 $\mathcal{D}c7$ 12 $\mathcal{W}h1$ $\mathcal{A}e6$ 13 $\mathcal{A}el$ $\mathcal{A}d6$ 14 $\mathcal{W}d2$ $\mathcal{A}c8$ 15 $\mathcal{A}h4$ h6 16 e4 ±.

10 $\mathcal{D}f4$

Since f3 will now be met by ...c5, White switches course.

10...c5 11 0-0 $\mathcal{A}a6$

11...$\mathcal{D}c6$ is natural and sound. White can try for a pull with 12 $\mathcal{A}h5$! $\mathcal{D}e4$ (12...$\mathcal{D}xh5$? 13 $\mathcal{W}xh5$ g6 14 $\mathcal{W}xd5$) 13 $\mathcal{D}xe4$ $\mathcal{dxe}4$ 14 $\mathcal{A}b5$ $\mathcal{b}7$ (14...$\mathcal{D}d7$ 15 $\mathcal{dxc}5$ ± intending $\mathcal{A}c3$ next) 15 $\mathcal{dxc}5$ (15 $\mathcal{g}4$ has in mind $\mathcal{A}c3$ and d5) 15...$\mathcal{A}e5$!? (Krasenkow) 16 $\mathcal{D}xc6$! (16 $\mathcal{D}f4$ $\mathcal{A}xc5$ =) 16...$\mathcal{A}xc6$ 17 $\mathcal{cxb}6$ ±.

12 $\mathcal{A}xa6$ $\mathcal{D}xa6$ 13 $\mathcal{W}f3$

Once again this is an effective way to mobilize, putting pressure on d5.

13...$\mathcal{cxd}4$

Now:

a) After 14 $\mathcal{A}xd5$? $\mathcal{D}e4$ 15 $\mathcal{A}d1$, as in I.Sokolov-Adams, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010, Black could have played 15...g5! and actually gained the advantage.

b) 14 exd4 is better, with a small advantage due to the better-placed knights for this particular pawn-structure; e.g., 14...$\mathcal{D}c7$ (14...$\mathcal{D}e4$ 15 $\mathcal{A}fd1$ $\mathcal{D}xc3$ 16 $\mathcal{A}xc3$ $\mathcal{b}4$ 17 $\mathcal{A}e3$ $\mathcal{A}xd2$ 18 $\mathcal{A}xd2$ ±) 15 $\mathcal{A}c2$ $\mathcal{D}e4$ 16 $\mathcal{A}fc1$

Of course, this whole line is hardly an existential threat to Black. Indeed, if he plays well, he is on the verge of equality at a few points along the way; nevertheless, it's a practical line in which knowledge of theory is less important than understanding the characteristic ideas.

7.5)

4...$\mathcal{D}c6$ (D)

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This is the Taimanov Variation, the most important of the unusual responses to 4 e3. Black develops and reserves the right to play ...d5 or ...e5. The latter idea is the one which distinguishes 4...$\mathcal{D}c6$ most from other lines.
5 ... d3
5 ... d3 is fine, of course, but not the type of position we're used to.

5 ... e2 is worth a look. For example:

a) 5 ... d5 6 a3 e7 7 cxd5 exd5 8 f4 0-0 9 e2 a5!? (9 ... e8 10 f3) 10 0-0 (10 b4 c4 and now instead of 11 cxd5?! cxd5 12 c4 f4 13 e4 a5 14 b5 g4!, as in Taimanov-Stobik, San Augustin 1990, 11 e4! offers White the better position) 10 ... c6 11 b4 c4 12 e4! g5?! 13 cxd4 dxc4 14 c2 h6 15 f4 with an attack.

b) 5 ... e5 6 a3 cxc3+ 7 cxc3 exd4 8 exd4 d5? 9 ... c5!?(9 ... e5! e.g., 9 ... dxc4 10 e2+? e7 11 e7+ e7 12 0-0-0 c6 13 xf6 gx6 14 d5 f5 15 c4 ±) ... 9 ... d6 10 b5 0-0 11 0-0 f5 (Botvinnik-Sokolsky, USSR Ch, Moscow 1944) and now 12 f4 ± still leaves White better.

5 ... e5!
After 5 ... d5, 6 e2 e5 transposes, but White has the extra possibility of 6 f3 with a pleasant Queen's Gambit.

6 e2 (D)

B

| Diagram |

6 ... d5
Or:

a) 6 ... 0-0 gives White time to organize: 7 0-0 e8 8 d5 e4?! 9 c2 e5 10 c4 e4 11 c4 e4 f4 (11 ... c4?! 12 c2 f4 13 g3 d6 14 d3 d6 (12 ... c4?! 13 g3) 13 a3 c5 14 b4 b6 15 c2 and Black has little compensation for the pawn.

b) 6 ... exd4 7 exd4 d5 8 c5 (or 8 exd5 cxd5 9 0-0 ±) 8 ... 0-0 9 b3 ± x3 10 bxc3 ± Geller-Taimanov, USSR Ch, Moscow 1966.

7 cxd5 cxd5 8 0-0 exd4 9 f4! (D)
This is a nice improvement over 9 exd4, which has been played for many years. Then the game Lerner-Gurgenidze, Kharkov 1985 went 9 ... 0-0 10 ... c6 h6?! (10 ... e6 11 e3 d6 12 a3 is only slightly better for White) 11 a3 e7 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ... d6. Now both 14 f1 and 14 e4 are arguably in White's favour, but not to the extent that 9 f4 is.

... 6 ... e5!
I don't see a way for Black to level things in this line:

a) After 9 ... c3 10 bxc3 c3? (10 ... d6 11 b1 ±; this is tough for Black, especially since 11 ... h4 12 g3 f3 13 f4! works out badly) 11 c6 bxc6 12 b1 f6 (12 ... 0-0 13 c2 c5 14 f4 d6 15 xh7+ g8 16 e4 ±) 13 c5 c4! Black was stuck in Bhat-Matnadze, Barbera del Valles 2010.

b) Temirov-Kvon, Tashkent 2007 is the only other game with 9 f4 that I can find, when after 9 ... c3 10 cxc6 c3 11 c2 d6 12 d4, White had a definite advantage, and after the further 12 ... f4?! 13 d2 h5? the move 14 a6! would have won material in addition to keeping the better position.

c) Black will also be unhappy with 9 ... 0-0 10 xh7+! xh7 11 h5+ g8 12 cxd5 g6 13 f3 d5 14 e4.
8 King’s Indian Defence

1 d4  asks 2 c4  asks g6 3  asks c3  asks g7 4 e4 d6

This is the standard form of the King’s Indian Defence, against which we'll be adopting a flexible set-up with h3.

The alternative move-order 4...0-0 (D) usually doesn’t make any difference but if anything gives White better possibilities in a few lines. For example:

![Diagram 1](image)

a) 5  asks c5?! (5...d6 6 h3 transposes to Section 8.1, while 5...c6 6 h3 d5 7 e5  asks e4 8  asks g2 is comfortable for White) 6 dxc5  asks a5 7 f3! keeps White a pawn ahead for insufficient compensation.

b) 5  asks g5 and now:

b1) 5...d6 allows for some deviations like 6  asks d2, or White can of course ignore Black’s move-order and play 6 h3 (see Section 8.2).

b2) After 5...c6, one promising idea is 6 e5  asks e8 7 h4!? d6 8 h5, or White can go for a small advantage with 6  asks d3 d5!? 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 e5  asks f7 9  asks g2.

b3) 5...c5 6 dxc5 (6 d5 is normal – compare Section 8.23) 6... asks a5 and now 7  asks d2 may appeal to White; I see no reason for Black to allow this. Note that White should avoid 7  asks d3?!  asks e4! 8  asks e4  asks x3+ 9 bxc3  asks x3+ and now 10  asks f2 or 10  asks f1  asks e5 hitting two pieces, and giving Black at least enough for the exchange after 11  asks h6  asks e4 12  asks f8  asks xc4+.

c) After 5 h3, 5...d6 transposes to our main lines. Alternatively, Black can try 5...c5 (for 5...c6 6  asks e3, see 5  asks e3 c6 6 h3 in line ‘a’ above) 6 d5 d6. Then he must be ready for a pure Modern Classical line of the Benoni by 7  asks d3 (or 7  asks f3 e6 8  asks d3) 7...e6 8  asks f3 exd5 9 cxd5, or else the recapture with the e-pawn, which is our repertoire preference – see Section 8.12 for the consequences of 9 exd5  asks e8+ 10  asks e3.

5 h3 (D)

![Diagram 2](image)

This unassuming little move is our repertoire choice. 5 h3 introduces two different but related set-ups following 6  asks g5 or 6  asks e3. These are both highly strategic variations in which neither side will get a serious attack if the other plays carefully. With 5 h3, White’s first and most basic idea is to prevent a black piece from arriving at g4, that is, preventing ...  asks g4 to secure a square for his own bishop on e3, and eliminating the pin ...  asks g4 once  asks f3 is played. Importantly, 5 h3 supports an advance by g4, which can be used for attacking purposes, but also serves as a strong disincentive to Black’s ...f5. When you consider that ...f5 is the foundation of Black’s play in many King’s Indian variations, you can see how significant its prevention can be.

In the process of clamping down on Black’s play, White will extend his lead in territory,
which he can do on both wings. Ideally, Black will have to play a manoeuvring game that doesn’t always suit the King’s Indian player. Consider the main lines of the King’s Indian, in which, after you’ve read a 300-page book and memorized mind-boggling amounts of material, you get a positional breakthrough on the queenside only to find yourself checkmated on the kingside! I’m always hesitant to say that knowing the ‘ideas’ of a variation is more important than memorizing variations, but in this case I believe that’s true, which means that a lot of playing experience will have exceptional value.

Another remarkable characteristic of 5 h3 lines with 6 \textit{e}3 or 6 \textit{g}5 is how flexible the play becomes. At practically any early point in the opening, White routinely plays \textit{d}3 or \textit{e}2, \textit{g}5 or \textit{e}3, \textit{f}3 or \textit{g}e2, \textit{g}4, \textit{h}4 (or the latter two in combination), and \textit{a}3 with \textit{b}4. Black can also set up in a remarkable number of ways and orders, typically using the moves ...e5, ...\textit{bd}7 or ...\textit{bd}7, ...\textit{e}8 or ...\textit{d}h5, ...c5 or ...c6, ...a6 and/or ...b5, while the odd move ...\textit{e}8 is also commonplace. As a consequence, it is impossible to be ready for every move at every point, all the more so for Black, who has any number of more tactical mainstream King’s Indian variations to be prepared for. This is an ideal situation for the strategist.

5...0-0

This is the main move, chosen in the vast majority of games. However, Black does have an important option (albeit seldom exercised) to take advantage of the opportunity to dictate a quick response in the centre, which he can do by 5...e5 (D).

This move and the related 5...\textit{bd}7 are potentially significant, because they interfere with White’s conventional plan to get a knight to d2 via f3 to protect his e4-pawn (that sentence will become clearer as we go along). That is, both 5...e5 6 d5 \textit{bd}7 and 5...\textit{bd}7, intending ...e5 and ...\textit{c}5, force White into the same choice of responses: if White plays one of the moves 6 \textit{e}3, 6 \textit{g}5 or 6 \textit{f}3 and Black plays 6...e5, then after 7 d5, 7...\textit{c}5 will attack the e-pawn and force the play into one of the lines below (but still within this note); in other words, White will need another way to protect his e-pawn, which will turn out to be \textit{c}2. As a side benefit, 5...\textit{bd}7 also avoids the possibility of a dxe5 Exchange Variation. Of course, this comes at the cost of committing the knight early and foregoing options like ...\textit{c}6.

Incidentally, how about the immediate 5...c5? Then 6 dxc5 is possible, but it’s easier to play 6 d5 0-0, transposing into one of the 5...0-0 and 6...c5 lines below. It also turns out that playing 5...a6 or 5...c6 has no particular benefit over playing 5...0-0 first and then one of those moves. So finally, let’s get to a specific analysis of the move 5...e5:

a) 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 \textit{xd}8+ \textit{xd}8 (D) doesn’t make the heart beat faster, but might be useful if you want to keep things uncomplicated.

For example, 8 \textit{e}3 and now:

a1) 8...c6 9 \textit{fd}3 \textit{bd}7 (9...\textit{c}7 10 \textit{g}5) 10 a3?! \textit{c}7 (10...a5 11 c5) 11 c5?! \textit{d}f8 12 0-0-0 \textit{h}5 13 \textit{d}2 \textit{d}6 14 \textit{c}4 ±.

a2) 8...\textit{bd}7 9 0-0-0 c6 10 g4 h5 (10...\textit{c}7 11 f4 b6 12 \textit{f}3) 11 g5 \textit{e}8 12 f4 exf4 13 \textit{xf}4 \textit{c}7 14 \textit{f}3 ± (Breutigam).
You can use this 6 dxe5 option if you are eager to avoid theory. To be fair, however, I don't believe that White can actually get a real advantage by force in such endings.

b) 6 d5 is normal, when 6...0-0 transposes to our main lines. Instead, Black can try 6...Qbd7 (D) (this is equivalent to 5...Qbd7 followed by 6...e5; also, 6...Qa6 followed by ...Qc5 will also transpose to this note), when White has these options:

b1) 7 Qe3 Qc5 8 Qc2 and then:

b11) 8...a5 9 Qf3 0-0 transposes to Section 8.111 (i.e. 5...0-0 6 Qe3 e5 7 d5 Qa6 8 Qf3 Qc5 9 Qc2 a5).

b12) 8...0-0?! can be met by 9 b4 Qa6 10 a3 Qh5, when White may continue solidly with 11 Qf3 or even try 11 c5; e.g., 11...dxc5 12 b5 Qb8 13 Qxc5 Ae8 14 Qf3 f5 15 Qc4. That should discourage Black from 8...0-0, and of course White can also hold off on b4 with normal moves such as 9 Qf3 if he so chooses. To emphasize how wonderfully flexible the 5 h3 systems are, White can also play 9 a3, 9 Qe2 or 9 g4 instead. The most common and interesting alternative is 9 Qg2! a5 (after 9...Qd7, 10 0-0-0 a5 11 g4 is possible, or White might play 10 g3 a5 11 Qg2 “with decent chances of finding an advantage” according to Panczyk & Ilczuk) 10 0-0-0 Qfd7 11 g4 Qa6!? 12 Qd2 Qdc5 13 Qd3 a4 14 Qe2 with ideas like h4-h5 and Qf5. 9 Qge2 is a complicated option which you may want to study further on your own.

b2) After 7 Qg5 h6 8 Qe3 Qc5 I recommend 9 Qc2, after which 9...a5 10 Qf3 0-0 transposes to Section 8.221, which is a main line of our 6 Qg5 repertoire. These transpositions sound complicated, but as you study this chapter you'll see that several move-orders lead to the same basic positions, and those positions are what you really need to know. You can also experiment with the riskier f3, which seems very weakening, but is surprisingly playable; for example, 9...Qh5 (9...a5 10 Qge2 Qh7 11 Qd2 Qf6 12 0-0-0 Qg5 13 h4! Qxe3 14 Qxe3 Qf6 15 h5!; 9...0-0 10 Qd2 a5 11 0-0-0-0 Qh7 12 g4) 10 Qge2 a5 (10...Qh4+ 11 g3 Qe7 12 Qg2) 11 Qd2 Qd7 (11...Qf6 12 g3 Qg5 13 0-0-0 Qxe3 14 Qxe3 f5 15 exf5 gxf5 16 f4± with the idea 16...e4 17 g4!) 12 0-0-0 a4 13 g4 (or 13 Qb1), when the pawn sacrifice 13...Qxf4 14 Qxf4 exf4 15 Qxf4 a3 16 b3 looks a little scary, but Qe3-d4 is a theme, and 16...Qf6? runs into 17 e5. These are just sample lines, of course, but if White can play even the weakening f3 without problems, it's a good sign for the whole variation.

b3) 7 Qf3 Qc5 8 Qc2 is a flexible move-order by which White waits to decide where his bishops should go. After 8...0-0, 9 b4?! permits the very messy line 9...Qxe4! 10 Qxe4 Qxe4 11 Qxe4 f5 12 Qb1! (older theory gave 12 Qe3?! e4 13 Qd4 f4 14 Qc3 c5 15 dxc6 bxc6 +) 12...e4 13 Qd2 e3!? 14 Qxe3 f4+, and I'll stop there, but the end result is an opposite-coloured bishop ending that White will have no interest in. Therefore, White does better to replace 9 b4?! with one of the repertoire moves I'll be proposing, i.e. 9 Qe3 or 9 Qg5, both of them main-line positions which you'll run into below.

As I say, you can worry about these transpositions later; I just want to point out that the seldom-played moves 5...e5 and 5...Qbd7 cause unique problems.

After the standard move 5...0-0, I'm proposing two replies for White:

8.1: 6 Qe3 151
8.2: 6 Qg5 160

6 Qf3 has been played and analysed far more than the bishop moves, and a couple of anti-King's Indian repertoires in books have featured it. I'll be including several variations whose theory derives from that move (i.e., transposing from 6 Qe3 or 6 Qg5), but I'll also be giving independent methods against each of Black's move-orders. The most important thing
is that, by using the bishop moves, I’ve avoided some theoretical problems associated with 6 \( \text{Qf3} \) (such as 6...e5 7 d5 \( \text{Qh5} \), for example).

**8.1)**

6 \( \text{Qe3} \) (D)

This move is somewhat less popular in contemporary play than 6 \( \text{Qg5} \), mainly because the latter is supposed to be well-suited for meeting certain difficult set-ups. But 6 \( \text{Qe3} \) is also an effective weapon, and in certain respects more challenging to play against. In some cases it’s better to have the bishop on its natural post defending the centre. I’ve divided the material into only two initial moves:

**8.11:** 6...e5 152

**8.12:** 6...c5 159

The second section is relatively short, while the first embraces a large number of subvariations and transpositions, since most variations will include ...e5 at some point. I have included numerous alternate suggestions to deviate from main moves you don’t like.

Besides 6...e5 and 6...c5, we have these moves to consider:

a) 6...\( \text{Qa6} \) is highly transpositional; e.g., 7 \( \text{Qd3} \)!? e5 8 d5 transposes to the note to White’s 8th move in Section 8.11. The normal sequence is 7 \( \text{Qf3} \) (D). Then:

a1) 7...e5 8 d5 is the main-line position of Section 8.11, where play branches into 8...\( \text{Qh5} \) and 8...\( \text{Qc5} \).

a2) 7...\( \text{We8} \) can be answered conventionally by 8 \( \text{Qe2} \) or 8 \( \text{Qd3} \), for example. But 8 a3! with the idea b4 is a particularly effective response, since 8...e5 can be met by 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 b4 \( \pm \) b6 11 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qb7} \) (Piket-Reinderman, Amsterdam 1999), when 12 c5! gives White a pleasant advantage. 9 d5 is of course also possible, when 9...\( \text{Qh5} \) transposes to the note to Black’s 9th move in Section 8.112, while 9...\( \text{Qc5} \) 10 \( \text{Qd2} \) favours White; e.g., 10...\( \text{Qd7} \) 11 \( \text{Qe2} \) a5 and now 12 b4 led to some advantage in Karpov-J.Polgar, Zurich blitz 2006, but 12 b3! would leave Black in need of a plan.

b) 6...\( \text{Qbd7} \) (D) will also transpose most of the time after ...e5.

Two exceptional cases:

b1) 7 \( \text{Qd3} \) is interesting: 7...c5!? 8 d5 (8 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{cx} \, d4 \) 9 \( \text{Qd} \, d3 \)!) 8...\( \text{Qe5} \), when White gave up his bishop for development in Izoria-Inarkiev, European Ch playoff, Kusadasi 2006 with 9 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qx} \, d3 \) + 10 \( \text{Wx} \, d3 \) a6 11 a4 \( \text{Qb8} \) 12 0-0. Now one idea is \( \text{Qf4} \) followed by an early e5. The game went 12...\( \text{Qe8} \) 13 \( \text{Wd2} \)! \( \text{Qc7} \) 14 \( \text{Qh6} \) b5 15 \( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 16 axb5 axb5 17 cxb5
A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE

\( \square \text{xb5 18 b4!} \) with a threat on Black’s c-pawn. Following the forced 18...\( \text{cxb4} \) 19 \( \square \text{xb5} \) \( \square \text{xb5} \) 20 \( \text{d4} \), White infiltrates on c6 while the b-pawn falls in any case.

b2) 7 \( \text{f3} \) a6 8 \( \text{e2} \) (or 8 \( \text{d3} \)) 8...c5 9 e5 \( \text{e8} \) 10 e6! fxe6 11 dxc5 dxc5 (11...\( \text{wa5} \) 12 cxd6 and now 12...\( \text{exd6} \) 13 \( \text{d4} \)! or 12...\( \text{exd6} \) 13 0-0, with the idea 13...\( \text{xc3} \) 14 bxc3 \( \text{wc3} \) 15 \( \text{bxc1} \) \( \text{wa5} \) 16 c5 \( \text{xf5} \) 17 \( \text{wb3} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 18 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xc7} \) 19 \( \text{c4} \) ±) 12 \( \text{xc5} \) b5! 13 cxb5 axb5 14 0-0 \( \text{a6} \) 15 \( \text{b4} \) ± J. Watson-Gufeld, Las Vegas 1995.

c) 6...c6 can go any which way. One relatively common set-up in the King’s Indian is that with ...c6 and ...a6; for example, 7 \( \text{f3} \) a6 (equivalent to 6...a6 7 \( \text{f3} \) c6) 8 \( \text{e2} \) (8 \( \text{d3} \) is equally valid, and because it protects the e-pawn, 8...b5 doesn’t threaten ...b4, allowing for 9 0-0; instead, Black might try 8...\( \text{bd7} \) 9 0-0 \( \text{c7} \) 10 \( \text{c1} \) ±) 8...b5 (8...\( \text{bd7} \) 9 0-0 b5 10 a3 transposes to line ‘c2’). White maintains a space advantage after 9 a3 (D) (or 9 cxb5 axb5) 10 a3 \( \text{bd7} \) 11 0-0 \( \text{b6} \) 12 b3 ±) and now:

\[ B \]

cl) 9...\( \text{xc4} \) 10 \( \text{xc4} \) d5 (10...\( \text{xe4} \) 11 \( \text{xe4} \) d5 12 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{exe4} \) 13 \( \text{exe4} \) ± Pieterse-Bosboom, Dutch Ch, Eindhoven 1991) 11 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 12 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xc6} \) 13 0-0 \( \text{xd5} \) 14 \( \text{ec3} \) with a slight advantage for White.

c2) 9...\( \text{bd7} \) 10 0-0! (or 10 e5 \( \text{e8} \) 11 0-0 ±) 10...\( \text{xc4} \) (10...\( \text{b6} \) 11 b3 ±) 11 \( \text{xc4} \) d5 12 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{b6} \) 13 \( \text{a2} \) (13 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 14 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 15 \( \text{xc1} \) ±) 13...\( \text{xd5} \) !? 14 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{e6} \) 15 \( \text{eb2} \) \( \text{e8} \) 16 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c8} \) 17 \( \text{c5} \) e6 18 \( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{d6} \) 19 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{bc4} \) 20 \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 21 b3 \( \text{d6} \) 22 \( \text{e5} \) ± J. Watson-Gufeld, Los Angeles 1995.

\[ 8.11) \]

6...e5 7 d5 (D)

\[ B \]

7...\( \text{a6} \)

I’ll use this move as the way to reach our two main lines. 7...\( \text{bd7} \) and 7...a5 often lead to the same positions, but 7...\( \text{a6} \) produces more unique subvariations than any other move, so it’s a good pivot point. Here are some ideas versus the most important alternative lines:

a) 7...a5 sometimes transposes, as mentioned, but has a few independent paths:

a1) 8 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 9 \( \text{e2} \) (D) (9 \( \text{d2} \) !? \( \text{c5} \) is the main line in the books, but that gives Black the opportunity for 9...\( \text{e8} \), which is unclear; for example, 10 h4 doesn’t impress after 10...f5 11 exf5 gxf5 12 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 13 h5 h6 14 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{e8} \)).

\[ B \]

Now, however, 9...\( \text{c5} \) 10 \( \text{d2} \) does indeed transpose to a main line. Instead, Black has two ways to deviate:
a11) 9...\(\text{d}e8\) 10 g4!? (10 a3! f5 11 b4 \(\text{d}f6\) 12 0-0 also appears to favour White; for example, 12...\(\text{fxe}4\) 13 \(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{f}5\) 14 \(\text{b}1\) 10...f5 (10...\(\text{d}c5\) 11 \(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{d}7\) 12 h4!) 11 gxf5 gxf5 12 exf5 (or 12 \(\text{g}1\) f4 13 \(\text{d}d2\) with the idea 13...\(\text{x}h3\) 14 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 15 \(\text{g}4\) \(\pm\)) 12...\(\text{x}f5\) 13 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{c}5\) (13...\(\text{b}4\) 14 \(\text{e}6!\)) 14 \(\text{g}1\) \(\text{h}6\) 15 \(\text{xc}5\) dxc5 16 \(\text{e}6!\) \(\text{xe}6\) 17 dxe6 \(\text{f}6\) 18 \(\text{d}e4\) \(\text{w}xe6\) 19 \(\text{wd}3\) \(\text{d}d6\) 20 0-0-0 \(\pm\).

a12) 9...\(\text{d}h5\) 10 g3 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 12 \(\text{g}1!\)? f4 13 gxf4 \(\text{x}f4\) 14 \(\text{wd}2\) intending 0-0-0, \(\text{g}5\) and/or \(\text{g}3\) with good attacking chances; as you will see repeatedly, the bad bishop on \(g7\) is a positional liability, which adds to Black's problems.

a2) 8 c5 (D) might be a good reason to avoid 7...a5. White won't necessarily gain much more than a normal edge, but that's probably not what Black wanted to concede at so early a stage:

b) 7...c6 is a move that can be played at various points, and 8 \(\text{f}3\) would normally follow.

But a promising non-transpositional move-order is 8 \(\text{d}3\) (D). Then:

b1) 8...\(\text{cxd}5\) 9 \(\text{cxd}5\) a6 10 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{bd}7\) 11 \(\text{d}d2\) b5 12 b4! (or 12 a4 b4 13 \(\text{e}2\)) 12...\(\text{h}5\) (12...\(\text{b}6\) 13 a4 \(\text{xa}4\) 14 \(\text{xa}4\) \(\text{bxa}4\) 15 \(\text{h}5\) 16 b5 \(\text{f}4\) and now 17 \(\text{f}1\) or even 17 \(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{exf}4\) 18 0-0 \(\text{a}5\) 19 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}5\) 20 \(\text{c}4\) \(\pm\)) 13 a4 \(\text{bxa}4\) 14 \(\text{wa}4\) \(\text{f}4\) 15 \(\text{f}1\) f5 16 \(\text{c}4\) \(\pm\).

b2) 8...b5!? has the idea 9 dxc6 bxc4 10 \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{xc}6\), but maybe White should simply develop by 9 \(\text{f}3!\) with the idea 9...\(\text{bxc}4\) 10 \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{b}7\) 11 \(\text{b}3\) \(\pm\).

c) 7...\(\text{bd}7\) 8 \(\text{f}3\) (D) gives Black three ways to prepare ...f5:

c1) 8...\(\text{c}5\) transposes to Section 8.111.

c2) 8...\(\text{e}8\) can be countered by 9 g4 (9 h4!? is also played); e.g., 9...a5 (9...f5!? 10 gxf5 gxf5 11 exf5 \(\pm\)) 10 \(\text{c}2!\) (this move is our main idea in this section, so I'll use it here; 10 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{c}5\) 11 \(\text{e}2\) is also possible, or 10 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 11 \(\text{c}2\) followed by queenside expansion)
10...\(\text{dx}c5\) 11 0-0-0 (11 \(\text{Ag}1 \text{h}8\) 12 0-0-0 \(\pm\) f5?!) 13 gxf5 gxf5 14 h4 gave White a nice advantage in Radjabov-Morozevich, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2007) 11...f5? (as so often, this move is premature) 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 \(\text{Ag}1 \text{xe}4\) 14 \(\text{Ag}xe4\) fxe4 15 \(\text{Ag}5 \text{f}6\) 16 \(\text{Ad}e2 \text{h}8\) 17 \(\text{Ag}4\) \(\pm\).

c3) 8...\(\text{Oh}5!\) 9 \(\text{Ad}d2\) a5 (9...f5? 10 exf5) 10 g3 \(\text{C}c5\) 11 \(\text{Ad}e2 \text{Af}6\) gives White two extra moves over the traditional line without ...\(\text{Oh}5-\text{f}6\). To be sure, one of them is g3, which is of questionable value. Nevertheless, this affords time for useful moves, including 12 g4 intending h4-h5 and at some point 0-0-0.

d) 7...\(\text{Oh}5\) is also a bit out of the ordinary. Then I think that 8 \(\text{Ad}e2\), which creates a familiar pattern but in a unique set-up (the knight on d7), is a worthy move: 8...\(\text{Of}4\) 9 \(\text{Af}3\) f5 10 g3 \(\text{fx}e4\) 11 \(\text{Af}xe4\) \(\text{Oh}5\) looks forced, and now 12 \(\text{Ag}2!\) intends simply to develop with \(\text{Af}3\) with a comfortable game and a small advantage; here 12...\(\text{We}7\) contemplating ...\(\text{Af}4\) can be met by 13 \(\text{We}2\).

8 \(\text{Af}3\)

8 \(\text{Ad}3\) (D) has drawn the attention of some strong players over the years. It’s a move that can serve as an alternative to more theoretical lines.

Here are three important replies:

a) 8...\(\text{C}c5\) 9 \(\text{Ad}e2\) a5 10 \(\text{Wd}2!\) (Bologan likes this for White; 10 \(\text{Ge}2\) is also possible) and then:

a1) 10...c6 11 dxc6!? bxc6 12 \(\text{Ad}1! \text{Ob}7\) 13 \(\text{Af}3\) \(\text{Ed}6\) 14 b3 \(\text{Wc}7\) (14...\(\text{Oh}5\) 15 \(\text{Da}4\) is very nice for White) 15 \(\text{Ag}5!\) \(\text{Af}d8\) 16 \(\text{Ax}e6 \text{Wx}e6\) 17 0-0 \(\pm\).

a2) 10...\(\text{Oh}5\) 11 \(\text{Ge}2\) (11 \(\text{Ad}1!\) also deserves a look) 11...f5 12 exf5 and now Vigorito’s 12...gxf5 can be answered by 13 0-0-0! \(\text{Ad}7\) 14 g4! \(\pm\) with the idea 14...\(\text{Fg}4\)? 15 \(\text{Fxg}4 \text{Gx}g4\) 16 \(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{dx}c5\) 17 \(\text{Ad}g1\) --, while after 12...\(\text{Ad}5\), as played in Bets-Fedoseev, Peterhof 2007, Bologan suggests 13 \(\text{Ad}1!\) gxf5 14 g4! \(\text{Fxg}4\) 15 \(\text{hx}g4 \text{Af}4\) 16 \(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{dx}c5\) 17 \(\text{Ad}3\) \(\pm\) (or 17 \(\text{Af}4\)).

b) Vigorito proposes 8...c6. Play might go 9 \(\text{Af}3\) \(\text{C}c5\) 10 \(\text{Ad}2\) \(\text{cx}d5\) (D), and now:

b1) 11 \(\text{cx}d5\) a5 12 \(\text{xc}5!\) \(\text{dx}c5\) 13 \(\text{Ad}2!\) \(\text{Oh}5\) 14 g3 \(\text{Af}6\) 15 \(\text{Ad}4\) 16 \(\text{Ab}5\) (16 h4 f5 17 h5) 16...\(\text{Ad}6\) 17 h4 h5 18 0-0 \(\text{Ah}6\) 19 a4 with some light-square pressure, but not a serious advantage.

b2) 11 \(\text{ex}d5\) yields an extremely unbalanced game. You’ll see this idea elsewhere; in return for giving Black a central pawn-mass, White gets the opportunity for a queenside attack. For example, 11...a5 (11...e4!? 12 \(\text{Ad}4!\) \(\text{Af}d7\) 13 b4 \(\text{Ad}3+\) 14 \(\text{Ad}x d3\) \(\text{ex}d3\) 15 \(\text{Wx} d3 \text{Ge}5\) 16 \(\text{We}2\) \(\text{Wc}7\) 17 c5; 11...\(\text{Ad}7\) 12 b4 \(\text{Ac}6\) 13 a3 \(\text{Ac}8\) 14 \(\text{Ab}3\) b5 15 \(\text{Ad}2\) \(\pm\) 12 0-0 \(\text{Oh}5\) 13 \(\text{xc}5!\) (13 \(\text{Ac}1\) b6 14 \(\text{Ab}1\) 13...\(\text{dx}c5\) 14 \(\text{Ac}1\) f6 15 \(\text{Ad}4\) \(\text{Af}4\) 16 \(\text{Ad}2\) \(\pm\)).

c) 8...\(\text{Oh}5\) 9 \(\text{C}c5\) 10 \(\text{Ad}2\) \(\text{Af}6\) 11 \(\text{Ad}2\) a5 12 0-0-0 is pleasant for White, who is ready to launch a kingside attack: 12...a4 (12...\(\text{Ae}8\) 13 h4 f5 14 h5 f4? 15 \(\text{Gx} f4 \text{ex} f4\) 16 \(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{dx}c5\) 17 hxg6 hxg6 18 \(\text{Ad}3\) \(\pm\) Piket) 13 g4 \(\text{Ag}8\) (13...\(\text{Ad}7\) 14 g5 \(\text{Ae}8\) 15 h4) 14 h4 f5 15 \(\text{Gx} f5 \text{Gx} f5\) 16 \(\text{Ad}3\) (16 h5 is better because ...h6 is weakening -- this is a positional nicety to file away) 16...a3 17 b4 (17 b3!) 17...\(\text{fxe} 4\) (Knaak-Piket, Hamburg 1991) and now 18 \(\text{Ag}5\) \(\text{Ad}3+\) 19 \(\text{Ad}3\)
exd3 20 \textit{W}xd3 \textit{f}5 21 \textit{D}ge4 \textit{D}f6 22 \textit{h}5 is not simple, but should be in White's favour.

We now return to the main move, 8 \textit{D}f3 (D):

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node (a) at (0,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {B};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Now Black has:

1. 8...\textit{D}c5 155
2. 8...\textit{D}h5 157

8.111)

\begin{itemize}
\item 8...\textit{D}c5 9 \textit{W}c2
\end{itemize}

I am recommending this unusual move for several reasons. First, and crucially, this position is hard to avoid because it can arise via 5...e5 6 d5 \textit{D}bd7 7 \textit{D}e3 \textit{D}c5 8 \textit{W}c2 a5 9 \textit{D}f3 0-0 (assuming that Black plays 9...a5 in our main line). In fact, it's hard for White to avoid bringing the queen to c2 after 5...e5 or 5...\textit{D}bd7, a fact that books treating 5 h3 don't tend to mention, so you will very likely want to know this position anyway. Furthermore, the variations with the main theoretical move 9 \textit{D}d2 are worked out in a depth that is almost prohibitive, and the resulting assessment isn't particularly optimistic for White (although he maintains even chances). On a practical level, the play associated with 9 \textit{D}d2 can easily become tactical and critical; for example, with sacrifices based upon trapping the e3-bishop with ...f4. With 9 \textit{W}c2, there are unavoidably tactical situations, but fewer, and they are not already worked out by theory. Furthermore, the presence of White's knight on f3 often serves to deter Black's ...f5 break (for example, \textit{D}g5 or \textit{D}h4 might follow). Finally, we have a practical advantage: the move 9 \textit{W}c2 doesn't appear in most sources, so it can throw the opponent off balance (to his credit, David Vigorito analyses some of the key positions by transposition, but no one else seems to). In the coverage of 6 \textit{D}g5, we can also arrive at the position with \textit{D}d2 in place of \textit{W}c2, having added the moves ...h6 and \textit{D}e3. I will make some limited comments about the \textit{D}d2 option in that case (see the note to White's 10th move in Section 8.221), but will forego doing so here.

9...a5 (D)

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node (a) at (0,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {W};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

10 \textit{D}e2

10 \textit{D}d2 is still possible here (equivalent to 9 \textit{D}d2 a5 10 \textit{W}c2) and not a bad move. The idea is to meet 10...\textit{D}h5 with 11 g3 followed by \textit{D}e2 and if the knight retreats to f6, advancing with g4. Then 11...f5 12 \textit{D}e2 transposes to the note to White's 12th move below.

10...\textit{D}h5

Arguably the critical move. Black wants to play ...\textit{D}f4 and at the same time clears the way for ...f5.

10a) Black can also prepare ...f5 by 10...\textit{D}e8, when a typical line is 11 g4 f5 12 gxf5 (but 12 exf5! gxf5 13 0-0-0 \pm is a good sequence, when Black is rather stuck, especially since 13...e4 14 \textit{D}d2 helps White) 12...\textit{D}h5 13 0-0-0 (13 \textit{D}g1!? 13...\textit{D}xe4 (13...f4? 14 \textit{D}xc5 dxc5 15 \textit{D}d2 \textit{D}d6 16 \textit{D}g4) 14 \textit{D}g5 \textit{D}d3+! 15 \textit{D}xd3 \textit{exd}3 16 \textit{W}xd3 \textit{D}f5 17 \textit{D}ce4 \textit{D}f6 (17...h6? 18 \textit{D}e6 \textit{xe6} 19 dxe6 \textit{W}e7 20 \textit{D}d1 \textit{W}xe6 21 \textit{D}g4! gives White a strong attack) 18 f3 \textit{W}e7 19 \textit{D}g1 with compensation for the pawn.

10b) 10...c6 11 \textit{D}xc5 (or 11 \textit{D}d1 cxd5 12 \textit{D}xc5 dxc5 13 \textit{cxd}5) 11...\textit{D}xc5 12 \textit{D}d1 cxd5 13 cxd5 \pm.

11 \textit{g}3 (D)
Stopping ...\( \text{Qf4} \) isn’t always essential in these lines, but when that move would attack a bishop on e2, the preventive g3 is often best.

11...f5

Naturally there are alternatives, although this was to some extent the point of 10...\( \text{Qh5} \), and in view of the positional idea 12 \( \text{Qd2} \), hindering ...f5, it’s logical to move quickly. One possibility is 11...\( \text{Qd7} \), a straightforward developing move. Then after 12 \( \text{Qd2} \) (12 \( \text{Qxc5} \) dxc5 13 \( \text{Qf1} \) f5 14 \( \text{Qg2} \) is a conservative option) 12...\( \text{Qf6} \), 13 g4 brings about a standard position where play might go 13...h6 14 0-0-0 (14 g5 hgx5 15 \( \text{Qxg5} \) c6 16 h4! 14...c6 (14...\( \text{Qh7} \) 15 h4 a4) 15 g5 hgx5 16 \( \text{Qxg5} \) a4 17 h4 with a healthy attack. But what’s interesting here is that White can also play 13 h4 h5 14 f3 a4 15 \( \text{Qg4}! \) followed soon by a *queenside* attack with b4!

12 \( \text{Qxc5} \)

I like this move, which captures the knight before Black can play ...b6 and retake with the b-pawn. Still, it may not be any better than 12 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) (D), which unlike 12 \( \text{Qxc5} \) has appeared in practice quite a few times. The difference is instructive:

a) 13 0-0-0 b6! (13...fxe4?! allows the continuation 14 \( \text{Qxc5} \) dxc5 15 \( \text{Qdxe4} \); Mikhailovski analyses 13...\( \text{Qxe4}?! \) 14 \( \text{Qdxe4} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) 15 \( \text{Qxe4} \) fxe4 16 h4! “with g4 to follow”) 14 \( \text{Qdgl}! \)? (14 \( \text{Qb1} \) prepares to answer 14...\( \text{Qfxe4} \) 15 \( \text{Qcxe4} \) fxe4 with 16 h4!) 14...f4?! (14...a4 improves, but the best move is 14...\( \text{Qfxe4} \) 15 \( \text{Qdxe4} \) fxe4, since 16 h4?! is strongly met by 16...\( \text{Qd3}! \) 17 \( \text{Qxd3} \) exd3 18 \( \text{Qxd3} \) \( \text{Qg4} \) and 16 g4?! allows 16...\( \text{Qh4}! \); better is 16 \( \text{Qg4}! \) or 16 \( \text{Qb1} \), with equal chances) 15 \( \text{Qxc5} \) bxc5 16 \( \text{g4}! \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 17 g5 \( \text{Qh5} \) 18 \( \text{Qg4}! \) gave White a large positional advantage in Vallejo Pons-Radjabov, Spanish Team Ch, Sant Lluis 2005.

b) 13 \( \text{Qxc5}! \) dxc5 14 h4 looks best:

b1) 14...a6 15 0-0-0 \( \text{Qh6} \) 16 \( \text{Qb1} \) \( \text{Qxd2} \) 17 \( \text{Qxd2} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) (17...fxe4?! 18 h5 \( \text{Qf5} \) 19 \( \text{Qal} \) ghx5 20 \( \text{Qxh5} \) \( \pm \) 18 \( \text{Qxe4} \) fxe4 19 \( \text{We3} \) \( \pm \) with ideas of 20 \( \text{Qxc5} \) or 20 h5 g5 21 h6!.

b2) 14...f4 15 gxf4 exf4 16 \( \text{Qg1} \) \( \text{We7} \) 17 0-0-0 a6 18 \( \text{Qb1} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 19 h5 \( \text{Qe5} \) 20 hgx6 hxg6 21 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \pm \).

12...dxc5 13 \( \text{Qd2} \) (D)

White has some advantage. Now 13...\( \text{Qf6} \) is probably best, when 14 h4! intending h5 is a good continuation (as is 14 \( \text{Qd3} \), which denies Black a plan), but 13...f4?! 14 \( \text{Qhx5} \) ghx5 15 g4! is a tactic worth remembering: 15...hgx4 16 hgx4 \( \text{Qxg4} \) 17 f3 \( \text{Qd7} \) 18 \( \text{Qb3} \) b6 19 \( \text{Qh2} \) h6 20 0-0-0, when not only does White have an attack (the knights can gradually shift over to the kingside and use h4 and g4, for example), but Black’s bishop on g7 is very bad.
Kasparov’s choice in days gone by. This made the combination of ...a6 and ...h5 Black’s most popular system for many years.

9 a3!

This move has been very underrated, in my opinion. After b4, White will neutralize the knight on a6 and initiate an attack at the same time. I should mention that even in the main line with 9 h2 e8 I’d still rather be White following 10 a3 (instead of the usual 10 e2) 10...f5 11 b4, although of course this is much less clear than 9 a3 (in some lines, the knight will waste two moves with h2-f3 for one thing); e.g., 11...fxe4 (11...f6 12 d3) 12 dxe4 d4 (12...b8 is probably best) 13 d3 f5 14 d2. You could even play 9 g1 e8 10 a3! I’m not actually recommending either of these moves (9 a3 is a much better version of the same idea), but it all says something about the effectiveness of restricting the knight to a6.

9...f5

This has to be played soon.

9...e8 10 b4 f5 (D) is also important, but shouldn’t equalize:

a) 11 c5 yields a solid advantage; for example, 11...f4? 12 d2 dxc5 13 axa6 bxa6 14 bxc5 ± or 11...h8 12 c7 d6 13 e2 b8 14 0-0 ±, when Black can hardly move, and 14...dxc5 15 exf5! gxf5 16 axa6 bxa6 17 dxe5 cxb4 18 axb4 is awful. After 11...h6, as in Bewersdorff-Piket, Ostend 1994, one strong choice is 12 c4! (12 c1) 12...d4 13 0-0 ±, when it’s hard for Black to find a plan; here is a sample line: 13...fxe4 (13...b8 14 c1 d7 15 b5 d8 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 exf5 gxf5 18 d4 f4 exf4 19 dxe6 d6 20 dxc8 dxc8 21 b3 with an extra pawn and a killing position) 14 d2 b6 15 cxd6 (or 15 c6) 15...cxd6 16 dxe4 f7 17 d6 d8 18 f4 exf4 19 e1 f8 20 bx d6! xd6 21 d6 f3 d6 22 e8+ f7 (22...h7 23 a6) 23 h6! e6 24 dxe6+ f7 25 d6+ xd6 26 d1+ 25 d6+ and White will keep increasing the pressure.

b) 11 e2 d4 12 0-0 also looks good, since Black has no apparent way to attack on the kingside: 12...dxe2+ (12...fxe4 13 d5) 13 e2 f4 14 d2 c5 15 dxc6 (or 15 ab1) 15...bxc6 16 c5! dxc4 sacrifices a pawn for a large positional gain. Black, whose dark-squared bishop is atrocious, can’t seem to get adequate play; e.g., 17...xb4 18 xxb4! xb4 19 axb4 h8 20 f1 h6 21 d5 f7 (21...e7 22 a2+ f7 23 xxa7 ±) 22 a5 and White will keep increasing the pressure.

c) 11 c1 f4?! (11...d4 12 c5 is at least slightly better for White) 12 d2 c5 13 dxc6 (or 13 b1, because Black has nothing useful to do) 13...bxc6 14 d3 h8 (Bewersdorff-Timoshenko, Mainz 1995) and now the simple 15 0-0 is best; for example, 15...d7 16 e1 f7 (16...e6 17 c5! dxc5 18 a4 ±) 17 c5! d5 18 exd5 cxd5 19 b5 b8 19...b8 20 b6! axb6 21 cxb6 bxa8 22 a4 b8 23 dxe5 (+) 20 b6 axb6 21 cxb6 a6 22 c6 23 e5 (or 22 a4! e4 23 b3!, threatening c8 and winning) 22...a5 23 c5 d4 24 a7 +–.

10 b4 (D)

10...h8

Removing his king from potential checks. I’ll pursue this position in some detail because...
the a3/b4 idea is normal in the h3 systems and I haven't given it close attention anywhere else:

a) 10...We8 transposes to the previous note.

b) 10...c5 runs into 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 Wa4 f4 13 d2 b7 14 c5 ± Ec7 (14...Eb8 15 cxd6 Ec6+ 16 c4+ Eh8 17 Ec5 ±) 15 cxd6 Ec6 16 d1 Ec7 17 Ec4+ Eh8 18 0-0. Black has weak pawns and little activity.

c) 10...d8! is as good as anything (Exa6 tends to be good in too many positions), but 11 c5 (D) gets a jump start on the attack and maintains an edge (11 Ec1 isn't bad either); for example:

c1) 11...Ec4 12 Eb3!? (watch out for the trick 12 Ed2? Exg2+! 13 Exg2 f4, but 12 Ec1 fxe4 13 Ed2! is good, in view of 13...Ed3+ 14 Exd3 exd3 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 Ec4) 12...fxe4! 13 Exe4 Exf5 14 Ed2 Ec6 15 g3 Ed7 16 Ec1 Exe4 17 Exe4 Ec6 18 Exf6+ Exf6 19 h4 Ec5 20 Eh3 ±.

c2) 11...a5 12 b5!? (risky; 12 Ec1 ± may be best) and now:

c21) 12...f4?! 13 Ec1 dxc5 14 Ec4 Eh8 15 Eb2 and Black has won a pawn but his pieces are reduced to passivity; for example, 15...Ec7 16 Eb4 b6 17 0-0 Ec7 18 Ec3 h6 (18...Ed6 19 Ec5) 19 Ed1 Cd6 (trying to blockade, in view of 19...Cf6?! 20 d6!) 20 Ea2 and Ed2-c4.

c22) Burgess's 12...Ec7 13 c6 Ed6! appears better; perhaps White keeps a slight advantage by 14 Ec5 Ec4! 15 g3 Eh5 16 h4 h6 17 Ec6 Exe6 18 dx6 f4 19 Ec4, but this is not clear.

We now return to 10...Ec8 (D):

11 Ec1

11 c5!? is attractive: 11 dxc5 (11...Ed4 12 Ec1) 12 Exa6?! (12 b5 f4 13 Ec1 Eb8 14 Ec2 ±) 12...Exb2 13 a4 Exe4 14 Ed4 fxe4 15 cxd6 Ec5 16 h4 Ec8 17 Exc6 Ed4 18 h5 Ed5 19 g4 ±, e.g., 19...Ed8 20 Ec6 Ed5 21 Ec5 Ec5 22 Ed2 Ed8 23 Ec1 ±.

11...c5!

Otherwise c5 gives White a definite advantage.

12 dxc6 bxc6 13 Exf5?!

11 Ec2 ± with the idea Ed2 is safer.

13 Exg5 14 Ec2

Now:

a) 14...Ed4? fails positionally to 15 Exf4! exf4 16 0-0 ±.

b) White keeps an edge following 14...f4 15 Ec6 16 Ec4 Eb7 17 Ec5 ±.

c) After 14 Ec6, White has a moderate advantage; e.g., 15 Ec4 Eb8 16 Ec5 Ec8 17 Eh4 Ec6 18 Ec2Ec2 (threatening g4) 18...Ec4 19 Ec5! and Black's central pawns will be targets.
8.12)

6...c5 7 d5 (D)

For the record, 7 dxc5 8 a5 8 d3 dxc5 9 e5 works out fine for Black if he plays simply 9...fxd7 10 f4 d8, but it's hard to resist the pseudo-sacrifice 9...h5!? 10 g4 d8! 11 f3 c6! 12 0-0 xe5 13 xe5 xe5 14 d5 with a complicated and approximately equal game, Fressinet-Golod, Biel 2006.

7...e6

7...b5!? 8 cxb5 a6 9 a4 wa5 10 f3 transposes to note 'b' to Black's 7th move in Section 8.23 (there the white bishop reached d2 via g5).

Now, without going into enormous detail, I'm going to present the standard methods against 6...c5 and 7...e6, illustrating why Black is reluctant to play this move-order. You will see something similar after 6 g5 c5 7 d5.

8 f3

Or 8 d3, when 8...exd5 9 exd5 e8 10 f3 transposes. If you want one, 8 dxe6 xe6 9 f3 is a safe alternate line.

8...exd5

8...e8 9 d3 exd5 10 exd5 is simply a different path to our main line.

9 exd5 (D)

This (rather than cxd5) is a normal recapture in lines with a delayed ...exd5, seeking to emphasize White's space advantage, and denying Black the dynamic counterchances typical of Modern Benoni positions.

9...e8

Black has several other moves, of which I'll note two:

10 f6

a) White stands much better after 10...h5 11 0-0 xc3 (11...d7 12 d2 e5 can be answered by 13 e2 xf3+ 14 xf3 f6 15 e1 ± or 13 xe5 xe5 14 e1) 12 bxc3 f5 (12...g7 13 e1 f5 14 g5 xel+ 15 xel f6 16 xf5±) 13 g5 c7 14 e1 d7 15 d2 f6 16 xf5± 17 g5 c7 18 e1 d7 19 d2 e6 (Ristic-Stankovic, Yugoslav Ch, Kladovo...
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1991) and already 16 ¿e7! with the idea ¿g5 would produce a decisive advantage; for example, 16...f4 17 ¿g5 ¿xe1+ 18 ¿xe1 ¿e8 19 ¿xe8+ ¿xe8 20 ¿e1 ¿f7 21 ¿d2 with the idea ¿e4 or simply ¿e7.

b) 10...b5!? 11 ¿xb5 ¿e4 12 0-0 (12 ¿xe4 ¿xe4 13 ¿b3!? is also good) 12...a6 13 ¿c3 ¿xc3 14 ¿xc3 ¿xc3 15 ¿d1 ¿g7 16 ¿f4 is slightly better for White, Ulybin-Kuzuev, Russian Ch, St Petersburg 1998.

c) 10...¿f5 and now 11 ¿xf5 gxf5 is a little messy, whereas 11 0-0 ¿e4 12 ¿xe4 ¿xe4 13 ¿xe4 ¿xe4 14 ¿c2 ¿e8 15 ¿f4 secures a modest edge.

11 0-0! ¿xe3

11...¿xe3? looks interesting at first glance, but 12 fxe3 ¿xe3+ 13 ¿h1 ¿h5 14 ¿e1 is good, with the idea 14...¿f4 15 ¿e2 (compare the same sacrifice in the 6 ¿g5 lines).

12 fxe3 (D)

12...¿e7

12...¿xe3? 13 ¿d2 is known to be too risky; you can see how White’s attack practically plays itself with ¿h6, ¿g5, ¿ce4 and ¿ael or doubling rooks.

In spite of an extremely lengthy tradition of analysing only 12...¿e7 (which mistake I have joined in), Jan Markos correctly points out that 12...¿bd7! is more accurate, even if not ultimately equal: 13 ¿d2 ¿f8 14 e4 ¿e8 and now:

a) 1 like 15 a3 ¿f6 16 ¿h1 ¿e7 17 b4, which was favourable for White in M.Tsietlin-Szekely, Pernik 1981. Along with an attack on the kingside, there’s a potentially vulnerable queenside, too. That’s the advantage of controlling more space.

b) 15 ¿c2?! ¿e5! occurred in Antić-Velimirović, Yugoslav Ch, Subotica 2000. Here Antić analyses 16 ¿xe5 dxe5, continuing with the excellent 17 ¿e3 ¿b6 18 ¿a4 ¿d7 19 ¿xd7 ¿xd7 20 ¿b3 ±. Another way to approach this is 17 ¿f3 ¿d6 18 ¿f2 ¿b6 19 ¿f1 ¿e7, and now the dynamic 20 ¿a4! ¿xc4 21 ¿c6 ¿b8 22 ¿f6 ¿b7 23 ¿b3 ¿d6 24 ¿h4 ¿h8 25 ¿b5! ¿xb5 26 ¿xb5 ¿bd8 27 ¿g5 a6 28 ¿e2 b5 29 h4 with the idea ¿xf7; Black is totally tied down, and after 29...¿d6 30 ¿xg6! ¿xg5 31 ¿xg5 White wins the e-pawn as well.

13 e4 ¿bd7 14 ¿d2 (D)

White has an advantage, and in practice it’s a very large one.

14...a6

After 14...¿g7, 15 ¿b5! ¿f8 16 ¿c3 ± has the idea 16...¿g8 17 ¿e5! or 16...a6 17 ¿xd6! ¿xd6 18 ¿e5 ±.

15 ¿f2!

White simply doubles rooks. This position is well-known in Benoni theory and favours White. Again, he need only make natural moves to build up the attack. For example: 15...¿g7 16 ¿a1 ¿f8 17 ¿e5! (alternatively, 17 ¿g5 ¿g8 18 ¿g3 ¿e5? 19 ¿xe5 ± with the idea ¿a4, ¿kesson-Ziegler, Swedish Team Ch 2005/6) 17...¿xe5 18 ¿c2! ¿f6 19 ¿h2 ¿h7 20 ¿d6 ¿g5 21 ¿e1 ¿f5 22 ¿d5 with a very large advantage.

8.2)

6 ¿g5 (D)

White develops the bishop more aggressively, and provokes ...h6, after which it will settle back to e3. His strategy is sometimes similar to
that after 6...\texttt{e}3, but there are positions in which one or the other proves superior. Putting the bishop on \texttt{g}5 rather than \texttt{e}3 has gained enormously in popularity, not only with this move-order, but in practically every line beginning with 6 \texttt{\textbullet}f3. We examine:

8.21: 6...\texttt{\textbullet}l\texttt{a}6 162
8.22: 6...\texttt{h}6 169
8.23: 6...\texttt{c}5 173

There are several other moves which are quite important but go in unique directions that are not particularly related to overarching themes. I'll try to illustrate them separately:

a) Not 6...\texttt{e}5? 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 \texttt{w}xd8 \texttt{\textbullet}xd8 9 \texttt{\textbullet}d5.

b) 6...\texttt{d}bd7 7 \texttt{d}f3 (7 \texttt{\textbullet}d3 \texttt{e}5 8 d5 \texttt{\textbullet}c5 9 \texttt{\textbullet}c2 a5 10 \texttt{\textbullet}ge2 is an independent move-order which I won't analyse here) 7...\texttt{h}6 (7...\texttt{e}5 8 d5 \texttt{h}6 9 \texttt{\textbullet}e3 \texttt{\textbullet}c5 transposes to 8.22) 8 \texttt{\textbullet}e3 \texttt{c}5?! (8...\texttt{e}5! 9 d5 \texttt{\textbullet}c5 again transposes to 8.22) and now simply 9 d5 \texttt{w}a5 10 \texttt{\textbullet}d2 favours White, while 9 e5!? \texttt{\textbullet}e8 10 e6 \texttt{f}xe6 11 dxc5 is better still.

c) 6...\texttt{c}6?! hits d4, and has been rather neglected: 7 \texttt{\textbullet}f3?! (7 d5 \texttt{\textbullet}b8 8 \texttt{\textbullet}d3 \texttt{\textbullet}± is modest and somewhat in White's favour) 7...\texttt{h}6 8 \texttt{\textbullet}e3 \texttt{e}5 9 d5 (9 dxe5 \texttt{\textbullet}xe5 10 \texttt{\textbullet}xe5 dxe5 11 \texttt{w}c1 \\texttt{h}7 12 \texttt{\textbullet}e2 is also possible) 9...\texttt{d}d4! (9...\texttt{e}7 10 \texttt{w}c1 \\texttt{h}7 11 \texttt{\textbullet}d3 \texttt{±} Chernin-Uhlmann, Austrian Team Ch 1993) 10 dxc4 (10 \texttt{\textbullet}e2?! \texttt{\textbullet}e8 11 0-0) 10...exd4 11 \texttt{\textbullet}xd4 (11 \texttt{\textbullet}xd4!? \texttt{\textbullet}d4 12 \texttt{w}d2 \texttt{\textbullet}xe3 13 \texttt{\textbullet}xe3 c5!) 11...\texttt{\textbullet}xe4! 12 \texttt{\textbullet}xe4 (12 \texttt{\textbullet}xg7?! \texttt{\textbullet}e8) 12...\texttt{h}4! (12...\texttt{e}8?! 13 \texttt{f}3) 13 \texttt{\textbullet}g4 \texttt{w}e8 14 \texttt{\textbullet}g2 \texttt{f}5! 15 0-0 \texttt{\textbullet}xe4 16 \texttt{\textbullet}xg7 \texttt{\textbullet}xg2 17 \texttt{\textbullet}xg2 \texttt{f}xg7 18 \texttt{w}d4+ \texttt{\textbullet}f6 19 \texttt{\textbullet}xf6+ \texttt{\textbullet}xf6 20 \texttt{\textbullet}ae1 a5 and the game is headed for a draw. Perhaps 7 d5 is the best idea for White.

d) 6...\texttt{a}6 can be used to prepare ...c5 and ...5: 7 \texttt{\textbullet}f3 (7 \texttt{\textbullet}d3 c5 8 d5 b5 9 \texttt{\textbullet}f3 transposes) 7...\texttt{c}5 (or 7...\texttt{c}6 8 \texttt{\textbullet}d3 b5 9 \texttt{a}3 \texttt{±}; compare note 'c' to Black's 6th move in Section 8.1) 8 d5 (8 dxe5 doesn't give much after 8...dxe5 9 \texttt{\textbullet}e2 \texttt{\textbullet}c6 10 0-0 or 8...\texttt{w}a5 9 \texttt{\textbullet}d2 \texttt{w}xc5 10 \texttt{\textbullet}e3 \texttt{w}c7 11 \texttt{\textbullet}e2, but these are positions with a good deal of content) 8...\texttt{b}5! 9 \texttt{\textbullet}d3! (D) (9 cxb5 axb5 10 \texttt{\textbullet}xb5? falls for the old tactic 10...\texttt{\textbullet}xe4! 11 \texttt{\textbullet}xe4 \texttt{w}a5+ 12 \texttt{\textbullet}c3 \texttt{\textbullet}xc3+ 13 \texttt{\textbullet}xc3 \texttt{w}xb5 \texttt{±}) and now:

B

\texttt{d}1) 9...\texttt{b}4 10 \texttt{\textbullet}e2 takes the pressure off White's centre.

\texttt{d}2) 9...\texttt{\textbullet}d7 10 0-0 \texttt{b}6?! (10...\texttt{\textbullet}b8 11 \texttt{w}e2 \texttt{±}) 11 cxb5 axb5 12 \texttt{\textbullet}xb5 \texttt{\textbullet}a6 13 \texttt{\textbullet}xa6 \texttt{w}a6 (Grivas-Moutousis, Zouberi Zonal 1993) 14 a4! \texttt{w}d7 15 b3 \texttt{\textbullet}fa8 16 \texttt{\textbullet}c1 (or 16 \texttt{\textbullet}d2 \texttt{±}) 16...\texttt{e}8 (16...\texttt{c}4 17 e5! \texttt{\textbullet}e8 18 e6! \texttt{f}xe6 19 dxe6 \texttt{w}xe6 20 \texttt{\textbullet}e1 \texttt{±}) 17 \texttt{\textbullet}b5 c4?! 18 \texttt{\textbullet}e3! \texttt{cxb3} 19 \texttt{\textbullet}xb6 \texttt{\textbullet}xb6 20 \texttt{w}b3 \texttt{±}.

\texttt{d}3) 9...\texttt{h}6 10 \texttt{\textbullet}e3 \texttt{e}6 neglects Black's development, and White shouldn't mind the Benoni position after 11 0-0 exd5 (11...\texttt{b}xc4 12 \texttt{\textbullet}xc4 exd5 13 \texttt{\textbullet}xd5?! \texttt{\textbullet}dxe4 14 \texttt{\textbullet}f4! threatens \texttt{w}d5 and \texttt{\textbullet}xg6; the latter should establish a positional edge) 12 cxd5. Black's pawn on h6 slightly weakens his kingside.

\texttt{d}4) 9...\texttt{b}xc4 10 \texttt{\textbullet}xc4 is Black's best bet from a positional point of view, but White's space and aggressive stance carry a great deal of weight; for example, 10...\texttt{\textbullet}d7 11 0-0 \texttt{\textbullet}b8 12 b3?! (12 \texttt{\textbullet}b1! \texttt{±}) 12...\texttt{\textbullet}e8 (12...\texttt{\textbullet}g4! 13 \texttt{hxg4 \texttt{\textbullet}xc3} 13 \texttt{\textbullet}c1 \texttt{\textbullet}c7 14 \texttt{w}e2 \texttt{\textbullet}b6 15 \texttt{\textbullet}f1 \texttt{\textbullet}xc4 16 bxc4! \texttt{\textbullet}d7 17 \texttt{\textbullet}h4 (17 \texttt{e}5 \texttt{f}6 \texttt{±})
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17...f6 (else e5) 18 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{a}8 \) 19 \( \text{xb}8 \) \( \text{xb}8 \) 20 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 21 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 22 \( \text{wb}7 \)! and White was well on top in Yermolinsky-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1997.

e) 6...\( \text{we}8 \) (D) is a tricky move.

\[ \text{chessboard} \]

Now 7 \( \text{d}3 \) e5 8 \( \text{f}3 \) can be met by 8...\( \text{exd}4 \) 9 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) followed by ...f5. But White can play 7 \( \text{e}2 \) (preventing ...\( \text{h}5 \)) 7...e5 8 d5 with the idea 8...\( \text{a}6 \) 9 \( \text{c}2 \). Still, 7 \( \text{f}3 \) is the most natural move. Then:

e1) 7...\( \text{a}6 \) transposes to Section 8.2121.

e2) 7...c5 8 d5 (8 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 9 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 10 \( \text{e}3 \) is a sort of Maroczy Bind with Black having a queen on e8 and White a pawn of h3; personally I'd rather be on the white side of this trade-off, but it's not much more than a normal edge for White) 8...e6 9 dxe6 (or 9 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{exd}5 \) 10 \( \text{exd}5 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 11 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{we}4 \) 12 0-0) 9...\( \text{we}6 \) 10 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 11 0-0 ±.

e3) 7...e5 is critical:

e31) 8 d5 \( \text{h}5 \)!? (this poses unique challenges; 8...\( \text{a}6 \) transposes to Section 8.2122) can be met by 9 a3; e.g., 9...f5 10 \( \text{xf}5 \) gxf5 11 \( \text{e}2 \)!, intending 11...f4?! 12 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 13 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 14 \( \text{h}5 \) and \( \text{d}4 \).

e32) 8 dx\( \text{e}5 \)!? \( \text{dxe}5 \) 9 \( \text{d}5 \)!? (D) is one of the few King's Indian Exchange variations that creates real problems for Black. Here are a couple of lines out of many:

e321) 9...\( \text{xe}4 \)!? is enterprising but probably too speculative; after 10 \( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 11 \( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 12 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 13 \( \text{f}3 \) White will ultimately come out a full exchange ahead. Black gets some counterplay from 13...e4 14 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \)!, but 15 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 16 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 17 \( \text{d}1 \) retains the better chances.

A critically important move, recommended by several leading King's Indian experts as a good reply to 6 \( \text{g}5 \), especially in conjunction with 7...\( \text{we}8 \).

I'll examine two moves here:

8.211: 7 \( \text{d}3 \) 162
8.212: 7 \( \text{f}3 \) 164

8.211)

7 \( \text{d}3 \) e5
7...\textit{w}e8 can develop in various ways; for example, 8 \textit{D}ge2 (for 8 \textit{D}f3, see Section 8.2121) 8...e5 (8...\textit{D}d7 9 f4! e5 10 dxe5 \textit{D}xe5 11 \textit{D}f5 \pm Potapov-Fedorov, Ufa 1993) 9 0-0 (9 d5 is more common) 9...\textit{D}d7 (9...\textit{D}h5 10 \textit{D}c2! \pm; 9...exd4 10 \textit{D}xd4 \textit{D}c5 11 \textit{D}e1 \textit{D}xd3 12 \textit{w}xd3 \pm with a dangerous central attack) 10 \textit{D}c2 f5?! (10...exd4 11 \textit{D}xd4 \pm; 11 exf5 gxf5 12 \textit{D}d5! threat, which will at least secure the bishop-pair, Stocek-B.Smith, Philadelphia 2009.

8 d5 (D)

8...\textit{w}e8

As mentioned elsewhere, this queen shuffle is one of Black's favourite moves versus \textit{g}5 systems. It steps out of the pin on the knight while avoiding the weakening ...h6.

a) 8...c6 is an alternative approach: 9 \textit{D}ge2 cxd5 (9...\textit{D}d7 10 0-0 h6 11 \textit{D}e3 \textit{D}c5 12 \textit{D}c2 cxd5 13 exd5 \pm with the idea 13...a5 14 \textit{D}xc5!? dxc5 15 \textit{D}a4 \pm; 9...\textit{D}c5 10 \textit{D}c2 cxd5 11 exd5 transposes) 10 exd5! This is an original, seemingly anti-positional, way for White to get a real imbalance out of this line, intending queenside expansion; e.g., 10...\textit{D}c5 (after 10...\textit{D}d7, 11 0-0 \textit{D}c5 12 \textit{D}c2 is normal, but White could also grab space with 11 a3 \textit{D}c5 12 \textit{D}c2 a5 13 b4) 11 \textit{D}c2 a5 (11...\textit{D}d7 12 b4 \textit{D}a6 13 a3 \textit{D}c8 14 \textit{D}b3 \pm) 12 0-0 (12 \textit{D}b5 \pm is also worth a try) 12...\textit{D}d7 13 \textit{D}b1 (13 \textit{D}g3 \textit{w}b6 14 \textit{D}b1) 13...\textit{w}e8?! 14 \textit{D}g3 h5 (it's hard to find a plan for Black here) 15 \textit{D}e3 b6 16 f4?! (16 \textit{D}e1! with the idea f4) 16...h4 17 \textit{D}ge2 (or 17 fxe5 \textit{w}xe5 18 \textit{D}f4 \textit{w}e7 19 \textit{D}e1 \textit{w}d8 20 \textit{D}f1 and with extra space, White's game is easier to play) 17...\textit{w}f4 18 \textit{D}xh4 \textit{D}f4?! (Kazhgaleev-J.Polgar, Calatrava rapid 2007) and now 19 \textit{D}e1 would have been strong.

b) 8...\textit{D}e5 9 \textit{D}c2 a5 10 \textit{D}ge2!? is a unique move-order; White might be aiming for g4 and \textit{D}g3 under the right circumstances. After the sequence 10...h6 11 \textit{D}e3 c6 12 \textit{w}d2 \textit{h}7 (D), White has two very different approaches:

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\end{figure}
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\begin{enumerate}
\item[b1)] 13 0-0! is a promising move, because 13...\textit{D}h5?! can be met by 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 \textit{D}ad1 or 14 \textit{D}ad1 cxd5 15 \textit{w}xd5! So Black might play 13...cxd5, when apart from 14 cxd5, 14 exd5?! looks surprisingly good, as it's hard for Black to undertake a central or kingside advance without overexposing himself.

\item[b2)] 13 g4 (this position can be reached by various move-orders; White could have played g4 earlier, for example, avoiding some ...\textit{D}h5 lines) 13...cxd5, and here two games have gone 14 cxd5 with ultimate success, but 14 exd5?! would be extremely interesting; for example, 14...\textit{D}d7 15 0-0-0 (15 \textit{D}g3 \textit{D}c8 16 0-0 is sound, though White can attack directly by 15 g5 hgx5 16 \textit{D}xg5, which is probably just unclear, though a nice line is 16...\textit{D}g8?! 17 h4 \textit{D}g4 18 h5! with the idea 18...\textit{D}xh5!? 19 \textit{D}xh5! gxh5 20 \textit{D}g3) 15...\textit{D}c8 16 \textit{D}b1 \textit{w}b6 17 f3 followed by \textit{D}g3 and h4-h5 in some order.

\end{enumerate}

We now return to the position after 8...\textit{w}e8 (D):

9 \textit{D}ge2 \textit{D}c5

Two games continued 9...\textit{D}d7 10 a3 f5 11 b4 f4 12 f3 \textit{D}f6 13 \textit{D}xf6 \textit{D}xf6, when I think White merely has to play 14 0-0, because Black will struggle to reorganize; e.g., 14...\textit{w}e7 15 \textit{D}c1 \textit{f}7 16 \textit{D}b3 \textit{D}f6 and 17 \textit{w}d2 intending \textit{w}f2 and c5 is natural, but the immediate 17 c5!
gets a risk-free advantage following 17...dxc5 18 $xa6 cxb4 19 $a2! $xa6 20 $xb4.

10 $c2 a5 11 g4!? 11 0-0! is not a bad move at all and shows that there are various ways to set up in these lines. White simply attacks on the queenside; e.g., 11...$h8 12 a3?! $b5 $d7 14 $c3 h6 15 $e3 b6 16 f3 and 17 $xa4.

11...$fd7!?
11...h5 is well met by 12 $d2!, but 11...b6 is a legitimate alternative.

12 $g3
Or 12 $b5 $a6 13 $c3 $e8.

12...$b6 13 $e2 $d7 14 $h4 $ba4!? 15 $xa4 $xa4 16 b3 $d7 17 $h5 $c6
17...b5 18 f3! has the idea 18...bxc4? 19 $wh2! f6 20 hxg6 $xg6 21 $d2 cxb3 22 axb3 with far superior pieces.

18 f3 (D)

White has all the prospects and Black needs a strategy. In the game Agrest-V. Milov, Frankfurt rapid 2000, he tried 18...h6?! 19 $e3 g5 20 $f2. This is an example of the kingside being completely closed without Black having access to f4; generally the pawn-structure d5 versus d6 will ensure that White has some way to make progress on the queenside. The game continued 20...cxd5 21 cxd5 $f6 (to activate the bishop, ideally on b6 or a5) 22 a3 $c8 23 $h1 $c7 24 $d2 $d8. The players agreed to a draw at this point, but White is far superior on the queenside and can play simply 25 b4; for example, 25...axb4 (25...$a6 can be answered by 26 $d3! or 26 bxa5) 26 axb4 $a6 (26...$a4?? 27 $xa4 $xa4 28 $xc7 $xc7 29 $xg5 is overwhelming) 27 $d3 $xc1 28 $xc1 $h7 29 $c3 with the idea $a3 or b5; if Black’s bishop is diverted and White’s knight is allowed into f5, it’s over.

8.212)

7 $f3
This is more mainstream than 7 $d3, and also not easy to play against.

We need one final division here:

8.2121: 7...$e8 164
8.2122: 7...e5 166

8.2121)

7...$e8 (D)

This is a funny position, as both sides have been making natural moves and nothing special seemed to be happening, but now suddenly

This is a very popular set-up against 6 $g5. The primary plan is ...e5, when the queen isn’t pinned and Black has avoided the potentially
weakening ...h6. In that case, ...\textit{We}8 also has the subtle point that after ...\textit{Qh}5 and ...f5, Black's h5-knight will be protected in case of exf5 and ...gx5. Finally, Black leaves open the possibility of other plans such as ...c5.

8 \textit{d}3

This bypasses the deep theory surrounding White's best-known move, 8 g4, when apart from 8...e5 9 d5, Black can play 8...c5. The alternative that stays within our repertoire is 8 \textit{e}2 e5 9 d5, transposing to Section 8.2122 (i.e. 7...e5 8 d5 \textit{We}8 9 \textit{Qe}2).

8...e5

8...c5?! 9 d5 doesn't work well with the queen on e8 in view of 9...e6 10 0-0 exd5 11 exd5; e.g., 11...\textit{Cc}7 12 \textit{Me}1 \textit{Wd}7 13 \textit{Wd}2 with the idea \textit{Wf}4.

8...c6 is better motivated. Then the game Szilagyi-B.Szabo, Hungarian Team Ch 2008/9 went 9 \textit{Wd}2 (9 0-0 e5 transposes to note 'b' to Black's 9th move below) 9...e5 10 0-0 \textit{Cd}7 11 d5 f6 12 \textit{Qh}4?! ±.

9 0-0 (D)

White maintains the tension because 9 d5 gives Black more counterplay after 9...\textit{Cc}5 (9...\textit{Qh}5?!?) 10 \textit{Qc}2 a5.

9...exd4

Or:

a) 9...\textit{Qd}7 10 \textit{Qc}2?! h6 (10...\textit{Qb}6 11 b3 exd4 12 \textit{Qxd}4 \textit{Wb}5 13 \textit{Qe}3) 11 \textit{Qe}3 c6 (11...exd4 12 \textit{Qxd}4 \textit{Qb}4 13 \textit{Qb}1 \textit{Qb}6 14 b3 \textit{Cc}6 15 \textit{Qde}2 ±) 12 \textit{Me}1 (12 d5 ±; 12 \textit{Wd}2! \textit{Qh}7 13 \textit{Qd}1 ±) 12...\textit{Wc}7 13 \textit{Qd}2 \textit{Qh}7 (Ehlvest-Ye Jiangchuan, Biel Interzonal 1993) and now was a good moment to play 14 d5!, with a substantial advantage.

b) 9...c6 10 \textit{Me}1 \textit{Qh}5 (10...exd4 11 \textit{Qxd}4 \textit{Qc}5 12 \textit{Qc}2 \textit{Qe}6 13 \textit{Qxe}6 \textit{Wxe}6, P.Cramling-Laveryd, Swedish Team Ch 1998/9, and now 14 \textit{Qf}4 \textit{Qe}8 15 \textit{Qd}3 is a simple way to increase the pressure) 11 \textit{Qf}1 h6 (11...\textit{Qf}4 12 \textit{Qxf}4 exd4 13 \textit{Qd}2) 12 \textit{Qe}3 \textit{Qf}4 13 c5! (a theme to remember) 13...\textit{Qxc}5 13...exd4 14 \textit{Qxf}4 \textit{Qxc}3 15 \textit{Qxd}6 ± 14 dxe5 \textit{Qe}6 15 \textit{Qxa}6 bxa6 16 \textit{Qa}4 and Black's pawns are too weak.

c) 9...\textit{Qh}5 (D) is logical and consistent with \textit{Wf}8, but doesn't appear to have been analysed.

Now 10 \textit{Qd}5?! is wild and rather unclear, but White seems able to get a small advantage with calmer moves:

1) 10 \textit{Wd}2 \textit{f}5? (10...exd4 11 \textit{Qb}5 \textit{Qd}7 12 \textit{Qxd}4 \textit{Qc}5 13 \textit{Qae}1 ±) 11 exf5 gxf5 (Åkesson-Shulman, Stockholm 1998/9) 12 \textit{Qae}1! ± has the idea 12...e4? 13 \textit{Qxe}4 fxe4 14 \textit{Qxe}4, winning; e.g., 14...\textit{Qh}8 15 \textit{Qxh}7 \textit{Wf}7 16 \textit{Qe}7.

c2) 10 \textit{Qe}3 is probably the best continuation: 10...\textit{f}5?! (10...\textit{Qf}4 11 \textit{Qxf}4 exf4 12 \textit{Wd}2 c5 13 d5 \textit{Qe}5 14 \textit{Qe}2; 10...exd4 11 \textit{Qxd}4 ±) 11 exf5 gxf5 12 c5! e4 13 \textit{Qc}4+ \textit{Qe}6 14 d5 \textit{Qc}8 15 \textit{Qg}5! f4 16 \textit{Qd}4 \textit{Q xd}4 17 \textit{Wxd}4 \textit{Qxc}5 18 b4 ±.

10 \textit{Qxd}4 \textit{Qc}5

10...h6 11 \textit{Qe}3 \textit{Qc}5 12 \textit{Me}1 \textit{Qf}7 13 \textit{Qc}2 \textit{Qe}4 14 b3 ± Jovanić-Zuvić, Rabac 2003.

11 \textit{Qe}1! \textit{Qd}6

11...\textit{Qxd}3 12 \textit{Wxd}3 with the idea \textit{Qd}5 or \textit{f}4 is difficult for Black to meet; probably 12...h6 13 \textit{Qf}4 \textit{Qd}7 is best, leading to 14 \textit{Wd}2 \textit{Qe}5 15 b3 \textit{Qh}7 16 \textit{Qad}1 ±.

12 \textit{Qe}3 \textit{Qh}5?! 13 \textit{Qf}5!

Threatening to exchange the dark-squared bishop. Laketić-Piscopo, Gallipoli 2000 went
13...\textit{\textasciitilde}e5 14 \textit{\textasciitilde}h6 \textit{\textasciitilde}hg7 (14...\textit{\textasciitilde}ef4 15 \textit{\textasciitilde}d5! \textit{\textasciitilde}xd5 16 exd5), and here 15 \textit{\textasciitilde}d5! \textit{\textasciitilde}d8 16 f4 would have put a lot of pressure on Black.

8.2122)

7...e5 (D)

\textit{\textasciitilde}d5

This is an obvious advance, but 8 \textit{\textasciitilde}d3 seems to afford White real chances for a moderate advantage. This has hardly been played at all, yet in most of the few games White has had the better position, and it's easy to improve on the others. Let me go through some possibilities and leave you to take it from there:

a) 8...h6 9 \textit{\textasciitilde}e3 exd4 and now 10 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd4 \textit{\textasciitilde}c5 11 0-0 transposes to line 'c2', but 10 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd4 is an extra idea for Black to deal with.

b) 8...c6 and here 9 d5 \textit{\textasciitilde}c5 10 \textit{\textasciitilde}c2 a5 11 0-0 is a typical \textit{\textasciitilde}d3 position, while 9 0-0 is also possible.

c) 8...exd4 9 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd4 \textit{\textasciitilde}c5 (9...\textit{\textasciitilde}e8 10 0-0 \textit{\textasciitilde}c5 11 \textit{\textasciitilde}e1 is the basic idea; if 11...h6, 12 \textit{\textasciitilde}c1! is most interesting) 10 0-0 (D) and now Black has these natural moves:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{\textasciitilde}c1) 10...\textit{\textasciitilde}xd3 11 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd3 is a Maroczy Bind-like clamp with Black having the bishop-pair, a situation familiar from lines in several openings including the Hedgehog. One difference is that White has got rid of his bad bishop, which is less of a drawback. It's difficult for Black to free himself completely; e.g., 11...c6?! (11...h6 can be met by 12 \textit{\textasciitilde}h4 \pm or 12 \textit{\textasciitilde}f4, while 11...\textit{\textasciitilde}e8 offers White a choice between 12 \textit{\textasciitilde}ef1!, 12 \textit{\textasciitilde}ad1 or even 12 \textit{\textasciitilde}d5!\textit{?} c6 13 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf6+ \textit{\textasciitilde}xf6 14 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf6 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf6 15 \textit{\textasciitilde}ad1 with an edge) 12
\end{itemize}

8...\textit{\textasciitilde}e8

This queen move is the favourite of several important King's Indian players, and this is
currently an important position for h3 theory as a whole. If you face a strong opponent, you can count upon him to know a fair amount about it. Now 9 g4 has been analysed to death; theory shifts back and forth between ‘±’ and ‘=‘. The problem is that Black has so many options, some of them very messy. And you may not be fond enough of moves like 8 b3 to let them deter you from more standard structures. Fortunately, there’s a promising alternative, namely 9 a3.

Before we get to that, notice that instead of 8...e8, 8...h6 9 a3 transposes to 8.22. And 8...c5?! loses time to 9 b4 a6 10 a3, which restricts Black’s knight to the side of the board a tempo. Then 10...c5 is best countered by 11 b4 with the upper hand; e.g., 11...h6 12 a3 d5 13 h5 14 d2 h7 (13...f4 14 g3 f6! 15 g4! b6 16 b3 ±) 14 d3 f5 15 exf5 gxf5 16 g4! e4 17 cxe4 fxe4 18 dxe4+ h8 19 gxh5 ±.

9 a3 (D)

9...c5

There are various alternatives, but nothing too difficult to cope with:

a) 9...d7 is often met by 10 g4, but an easier course is 10 d2 h6 11 a3 h7 12 g4 f5 13 gxf5 gxf5 14 exf5 d5 15 g4 ± (15 g1) 15...g6 16 xf5 xf5 17 g4! with control of e4.

b) After 9...c5, 10 c2 is a familiar set-up, but preventing ...h5 by 10 d2 is just as good; e.g., 10...a5 11 0-0 h6 12 a3 g7 and now 13 a3 b6 14 b4 gave White a considerable advantage in Boehme-Krebs, corr. 1992. If the pawn sacrifice 13...a4 bothers you, 13 b3 is sufficient.

c) 9...h8 offers White a pleasant choice. 10 d2 is good, while 10 a3 c5 11 d2 may be better still, when 11...a5 (11...d7 12 0-0) 12 b4 axb4 13 axb4 xal 14 xal a6 15 b3 favours White. The attempt to block the queenside by 15...c5 can be answered by 16 dxc6 (16 bxc5 dxc5 17 0-0 with b1 and b3 or d4 is pretty good too) 16...bxc6 and now 17 0-0 with the idea 17...g7 18 b5 is a small improvement on 17 b5 c5!, as played in the game Ivanisevic-Vogt, Swiss Team Ch 2007.

d) 9...d7 (D) is one of Black’s most popular approaches, with the idea of...d5 and...f5.

From White’s point of view, the knight’s disappearance from the kingside means that there are fewer defenders in that sector, and also that attacking ideas such as...h5 aren’t available. Accordingly, the following two suggestions:

d1) 10 g4 should be sufficient for a small advantage simply on the basis of territorial control: 10...h8 (10...d5 11 a3 f5 12 d2 h6 13 h4 g5 14 g3 ± with the idea 14...f4 15 h2 d7 16 f3 e7 17 g1 and White’s queenside attack proceeds naturally) 11 d2 (11 a3 f5 12 d2 also gives White the better of it; Black has no clear plan) and now:

   d11) 11...f5 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 g1 f4?! (or 13...xe4 14 h6 g8 15 dxe4 ±) 14 0-0-0 d5 15 b1 g8 16 h4 d4 17 g2 ± with the idea d4, when 17...h3 18 h2 just makes things worse.

   d12) 11...d5 12 0-0-0 f5 13 gxf5 gxf5 14 g1 g8! (14...f4?! releases the pressure; White can arrange to move his knight from f3 and play g4, and he can also play directly: 15...
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10...f5
10...f6!? has been chosen by leading players and is considered more sophisticated; if nothing else, it reduces White's options. I think that White retains a small but definite advantage following 11...e3 (11...d2!? f5 12...h4 is an interesting possibility) 11...f5 12 exf5 gxh4 13...g5!?! fxh6 14...d2...c5 15...xc5 dxc5 16 0-0-0 is double-edged) 13...xf6 14...d2...c5 (14...f4? can be met by 15...xf4 exf4 16...d4! with the idea 16...e4? 17...xe4...e4 18...g1...f7 19 0-0-0 +-) 15 0-0-0 (15...c2 and 15...xc5 dxc5 16...g5!? both slightly favour White) 15...f6 16...d4 16...d4 and now 17...c2 is a rather surprising transposition to note 'a' to Black's 13th move below (the position after 16...e3), where White is a little better.

11 exf5!
This is a logical way to destabilize Black's position.

11...gxh4 and now 12...e3?! 13...h5 exf2++ 14...hxf2 gxh5 15...e1 ± F.Schmidt-Klewe, corr. 1990. 12...c5 is an improvement, but White still keeps the upper hand with 13 0-0 or 13...e3.

12...h4...f6 (D)

13...c2
This is the most popular and ambitious move. 13 g4!? should give a very limited advantage; for example, 13...e4! (13...f4 14...f5...xf5 15...xf5...d7 16...xf6...xf6 17...e4...xf5! 18...d3!? 14...xe4...e4 15...d2...c5 and here 16 0-0 was alright in Zubarev-Bojkov, Greek Team Ch. Kallithea 2008. but 16...e3...
favours White slightly because of the weak e-pawn.

13...\(\square b4\)

This is the main move, but players have different opinions at this point:
a) 13...\(\square c5\) can be met by 14 \(\square e3\) with a slight advantage (compare the note to Black’s 16th move below). More ambitious is 14 0-0-0 \(\square c4\) 15 \(\square xe4\) \(\square xe4\) 16 \(\square e3\) \(\pm\) (a position also relevant to the 10...f6?! line cited above) and now:
a1) 16.c6?! 17 g4 cxd5 (I. Ivanisević-Hausrath, Biel 2008) 18 \(\square x d5\)! is extremely strong for White due to the line 18...\(\square e6\) 19 \(\square dd1\) d5 20 \(\square xf5\)!

a2) 16...\(\square e7\)! stops g4, but 17 \(\square d3\) still leaves White with the better game.

b) 13...e4 14 0-0-0 (good, but 14 0-0! with the idea of \(\square g2\) is simply better for White) 14...\(\square d7\) (14...\(\square c5\) 15 \(\square b5\) \(\square f7\) and now 16 \(\square e3\) \(\square d7\) 17 \(\square d4\)) gives White a nice advantage, while he can also choose 16 \(\square b1\) and 17 \(\square d4\) 15 \(\square g2\)!! (objectively, 15 \(\square b1\), with the idea 15...\(\square e5\) 16 \(\square g2\), is a superior move-order) 15...\(\square e5\) (15...\(\square b4\)! 16 \(\square e3\) (16 \(\square d4\) \(\pm\) 16...\(\square c5\) 17 \(\square f4\) \(\square d7\) (17...\(\square a6\)?!), Arutinian-G. Gutman, Cappelle la Grande 2007, 18 \(\square b1\) \(\square d7\) 19 g4!) 18 \(\square b1\) (or 18 g4 \(\square g6\) 19 \(\square h5\) \(\pm\) 18...a6 (18...\(\square a4\)?! 19 \(\square b5\) \(\pm\) Avrukh) 19 \(\square h5\)! \(\square h8\) 20 \(\square xc5)! dxc5 21 g4 \(\pm\) gives White an attack that is difficult to counter.

14 \(\square b3\) a5 15 a3 \(\square a6\) 16 \(\square c2\) (D)

16...e4

16...\(\square c5\) is the theoretical move, but White stands better after 17 \(\square e3\). None of Black’s responses is attractive:
a) 17...\(\square d7\) 18 g4! \(\square xg4\) 19 \(\square xg4\) \(\square xg4\) 20 \(\square xc5\) dxc5 21 \(\square xg4\) \(\square xg4\) 22 f3 \(\square d7\) 23 0-0-0 with good pieces and some kingside chances.
b) 17...d4 18 0-0-0 \(\square b3+\) 19 \(\square b1\) \(\pm\)
c) 17...e4 18 \(\square g2\) a4 19 0-0-0 \(\square fd7\) 20 \(\square f4\)
(20 \(\square b5\) \(\square d8\) 21 \(\square b1\) \(\pm\) and \(\square f4\)) 20...\(\square e5\) 21 g4 \(\square h8\)?! (21...\(\square g6\) 22 \(\square h5\) \(\pm\)) 22 \(\square b1\) \(\square g6\) 23 \(\square h5\) \(\square e5\) 24 \(\square xf5\) \(\square xf5\) 25 \(\square g3\) \(\pm\) Mchedlishvili-Akshat, Ravana 2009.
d) 17...b6 (anticipating \(\square xc5\)) 18 0-0-0 a4 19 \(\square b1\) and instead of 19...\(\square b8\)?! (as played in Kacheishvili-Smirin, Minneapolis 2005, when 20 g4! and other moves are good), Avrukh suggests 19...\(\square b3\). Nevertheless, 20 \(\square b5\) (or 20 \(\square h1\)) 20...\(\square e7\) 21 \(\square g3\)! e4 22 \(\square h1\) is excellent for White.

17 0-0-0?!

Or 17 0-0 intending \(\square g2\)-f4.

17...\(\square d7\) 18 \(\square h1\) \(\square c5\) 19 \(\square b1\)

19 \(\square e3\)! is a good alternative.

19...\(\square b8\)

19...\(\square a4\) is met by 20 \(\square b5\).

20 g4! \(\square xg4\) 21 hxg4

White has a clear advantage. Bregadze-Liaskovsky, European Under-16 Ch, Herceg Novi 2008 continued 21...\(\square d3\)?? 22 \(\square xd3\)! exd3 23 \(\square xd3\) \(\square f7\), when 24 \(\square f5\) would have been virtually winning, since 24...\(\square xf5\) 25 \(\square xf5\) h6 26 \(\square d2\) is hopeless for Black.

8.22)

6...h6

Black does the most obvious thing and kicks back the bishop. He hopes that ...h6 will be more of an asset than a liability.

7 \(\square e3\) e5 8 d5 (D)
8...\(\text{a}6\)

Or:
a) 8...\(\text{bd}7\) 9 \(\text{f}3\) a5 is essentially the same, for our purposes, as line 'b', as after 10 \(\text{e}2\) or 10 \(\text{wc}2\), Black has nothing better than 10...\(\text{c}5\).

b) 8...a5 9 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{a}6\) (D) and then:

\(\text{W}\)

b1) 10 \(\text{e}2\) \(\text{c}5\) and here 11 \(\text{d}2\) is an old main line, which is worth a glance: 11...\(\text{e}8\) (11...c6 12 0-0; 11...\(\text{fd}7\) 12 0-0 f5 13 \(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{gxf}5\) 14 \(\text{b}3\) b6 =) 11...\(\text{h}7\) 12 \(\text{b}3\)!? 12 h4!? (12 0-0 f5 13 \(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{gxf}5\) 14 f4 \(\text{we}7\) is about equal) 12...f5 13 h5 \(\text{a}6\) 14 f3 f4 15 \(\text{f}2\) g5 with a mixed outlook. More important with respect to our repertoire is that 11 \(\text{wc}2\) is a good move (with the idea 11...\(\text{h}5\) 12 g3). This transposes to Section 8.221.

b2) 10 \(\text{wc}2\) is arguably even more accurate. I'll discuss the position after 10...\(\text{c}5\) via the move-order 8...\(\text{a}6\) 9 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 10 \(\text{c}2\) a5 in Section 8.221.

9 \(\text{f}3\)

Now the material splits into:

8.221: 9...\(\text{c}5\) 170

8.222: 9...\(\text{h}5\) 172

9...c6 is often played in this and related positions, but generally gives White as many squares to work with as Black; for example, 10 \(\text{d}2\) (10 \(\text{e}2\) is also fine) 10...\(\text{h}7\)!? (10...\(\text{e}8\) 11 g4?! has the idea 11...f5 12 \(\text{gxf}5\) \(\text{gxf}5\) 13 \(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{xf}5\) 14 \(\text{de}4\) \(\text{wh}4\) 15 \(\text{g}1\)!! ±) 11 g4 f5 12 \(\text{gxf}5\) \(\text{gxf}5\) 13 \(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{xf}5\) 14 \(\text{de}4\) (14 \(\text{dxc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) 15 \(\text{de}4\) ± is also good but not as clear) 14...\(\text{f}6\) (J.Watson-Dzindzichashvili, Philadelphia 1996) and now White had simply 15 \(\text{g}2\)! with a significant advantage.

8.221)

9...\(\text{c}5\) (D)

10 \(\text{wc}2\)

This is the same rare move that I recommend in the 6 \(\text{e}3\) system. Importantly, what follows can also occur via the move-order 5...e5 6 d5 \(\text{bd}7\) 7 g5 h6 8 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 9 \(\text{wc}2\) a5 10 \(\text{f}3\) 0-0. As playing \(\text{wc}2\) versus 5...e5 or 5...\(\text{bd}7\) is hard to avoid anyway, learning this position solves two problems at once. I like 10 \(\text{wc}2\) for a few other reasons, the same ones as I outlined with 9 \(\text{wc}2\) in the corresponding 6 \(\text{e}3\) section (i.e. 8.111). The variations with the approved move 10 \(\text{d}2\) are highly theoretical, and they will probably be at least partially memorized by knowledgeable King’s Indian players, so this move may throw your opponent off. As in the 6 \(\text{e}3\) lines, 10 \(\text{wc}2\) either doesn't appear (or barely does so) in most sources, and it provides some much-needed fresh material. With 10 \(\text{wc}2\), there are also fewer difficult tactical situations to memorize; the knight on f3 delays some of Black’s more radical attempts.

Having said all that, you may find that you don’t like something about 10 \(\text{wc}2\), so I want to make a few brief and incomplete suggestions about 10 \(\text{d}2\), after which White also has fair chances for advantage. In any case, these lines are characteristic of 5 h3 as a whole:

a) 10...\(\text{d}7\) 11 b4 \(\text{a}6\) 12 a3 ± restricts the knight on a6.

b) 10...\(\text{h}5\) 11 b4 \(\text{a}6\) 12 a3 is more complex, but still to White’s liking; e.g., 12...\(\text{e}8\) 13 c5 f5 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 \(\text{b}5\) or 15 \(\text{e}4\), and there are other ways to proceed.
c) 10...a5 (D) is almost always played.

Amidst the crowded traffic of moves and transpositions, I’ll cover a few typical lines, to give you a starting point for further investigation. First, 11 \e2 transposes to note ‘b1’ to Black’s 8th move in Section 8.22. I should also mention that 11 \c2 does pretty well even a move late, with the idea 11...\h5 12 g3, which implies that 10 \c2 a5 11 \d2 isn’t bad either! See the next note. White has a couple of other ways to continue:

   c1) 11 a3 \e8 (11...c6 12 b4 axb4 13 axb4 \xal 14 \xal \a6 15 \a3 ±; 11...\fd7!? 12 b4 f5 13 f3, when I suspect that White stands a bit better) 12 b4 axb4 13 axb4 \hal 14 \xal and now 14...\a6 15 \a3 f5 or 14...\d7 15 c5 f5 16 c6 ±.

   c2) After 11 g4, extremely dense theory exists on half a dozen possibilities. The most-investigated line is undoubtedly 11...c6 (11...\h7 is well met by 12 h4! b6 13 h5, when 13...g5? 14 f3 gives White all the time in the world to break through on the queenside; this is a typical position that White aims for in the h3 lines, although Black seldom allows it) 12 \e2 \d7 13 h4 a4 (13...\h7!? 14 h5 \g5) 14 g5 hxg5 15 hxg5 \h7 16 \g1 \a5 (D).

   This position has arisen many times, also via the Petrosonian System of the King’s Indian. For instance, 17 \b1! (17 \b1 \fb8! 18 f3 \f8 19 \f2 \e7 with chances for both sides) 17...\xd5 (17...\fb8 18 \g3! \f8 19 \f1 \e7 20 \g2 \d8 21 \f3 ±) 18 \xd5! \d8 (remarkably, 18...\xe4 19 \e7+ \h8 20 \g4 \xd2 21 \xd2 favours White) 19 \g3! \a6 20 \f1 \c6 21 \c2 \e6 22 \f3 \d4 23 \xd4! \xd4 24 \d2 \a8 25 \d3 \c8 26 \d1 with the powerful idea f4-f5, Poluliahkov-J.Watson, New York 1996.

   Let’s return to 10 \c2:

10...a5 (D)

11 \e2

11 \d2 is a position that can arise from 10 \d2 a5 11 \c2. As mentioned above, it is a perfectly good move with prospects of advantage; e.g., 11...c6 (hoping to work on the c-file to embarrass the white queen; 11...\h5 12 g3 b6 13 \e2 \f6 14 g4! ± has the idea g5 or, if the f6-knight moves, h4; compare the main line below) 12 \e2 \d7 13 0-0 ±, and here Black should avoid the positional trick 13...\xd5?! 14 \xc5! \xc5 15 \xd, when White conquers the queenside light squares.

11...\h5

In principle, this should be the problem with \c2, but...f5 doesn’t prove that dangerous:

12 g3 b6
Or 12...f5, and now:
a) 13 \( \text{h}4! \) \( \text{f}4 \) (forced) 14 \( \text{x}c5 \) \( \text{d}xc5 \) 15 0-0-0 \( \text{e}xe2+ \) 16 \( \text{w}xe2 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 17 \( \text{f}3 \) doesn't give either side much to do, but White can try to scare something up with \( \text{e}1-\text{d}3 \).

b) 13 \( \text{d}2 \) maintains an edge: 13...\( \text{a}6 \) (or 13...\( \text{f}6 \) 14 \( \text{x}c5 \) \( \text{d}xc5 \) 15 0-0-0 \( \pm \) with the idea of exf5 and g4; this isn't much, but Black doesn't have any obvious plan) 14 exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 15 \( \text{d}e4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 16 f3?! b6 17 0-0-0 \( \text{c}5 \) 18 g4 \( \pm \).

13 0-0-0 \( \text{d}7 \) 14 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 15 g4 (D)

White has achieved the standard position and should have the better chances; e.g., 15...\( \text{a}4 \) 16 g5 \( \text{h}xg5 \) 17 \( \text{x}g5 \) c6 18 h4 with good attacking prospects. A natural continuation is 18...\( \text{a}3! \) (18...\( \text{c}x5! \) 19 \( \text{c}x5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 20 \( \text{x}f6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 21 h5 \( \pm \) 19 \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{a}6 \), but 20 h5! is strong: 20...\( \text{b}8 \) (20...\( \text{xb}4? \) 21 \( \text{b}3 \) c5 22 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{h}8 \) 23 h7+) 21 \( \text{g}6 \) \( \text{xb}4 \) 22 \( \text{b}3 \) c5 23 gxf7+ \( \text{xf}7 \) 24 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \pm \).

8.222)

9...\( \text{h}7 \) (D)

This is a position that we've seen before in the 6 \( \text{c}3 \) section without ...h6. It is generally considered favourable for White to have ...h6 included, in part because he can target h6 with tempo by \( \text{d}2 \), and in part because g6 becomes weak when ...f5 is played.

10 \( \text{d}2 \)

White decides to take direct advantage of the move ...h6. This is straightforward and apparently strong. Nevertheless, there are some promising alternatives, which could be investigated if for some reason 10 \( \text{d}2 \) fails to please:

a) 10 a3 is the move I recommended in the analogous section with 6 \( \text{c}3 \) (i.e. 8.112). It is supposed to be answered by 10...f5 11 b4 c5, but then 12 \( \text{d}c6 \text{bxc6} \) 13 \( \text{a}4 \) looks good, with the idea 13...\( \text{b}7 \) 14 c5! or 13...f4 14 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{b}8 \)! 15 c5 \( \text{d}x5 \) 16 \( \text{c}2 \text{xb}4 \) 17 axb4, when White's compensation is obvious, having \( \text{a}5 \), \( \text{a}4-c5 \), \( \text{c}4 \) and other active moves in store. You can see similar lines in the 6 \( \text{c}3 \) section.

b) 10 g3 may also yield a small advantage; e.g., 10...\( \text{e}8 \) (10...f5 11 exf5 gxf5 12 \( \text{d}2 \) f4 13 \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 14 \( \text{g}1 \) 11 \( \text{c}5 \) f5? 12 exf5 gx5 13 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 14 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \pm \).

We now return to 10 \( \text{d}2 \) (D):
15 f3 \( \text{h}5 \) 16 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 17 f4! with a decisive attack for White.

11 0-0-0!

Strangely, 11 g4? has been played in most of the games in this line, although after 11...\( \text{f}4 \)!, Black has done well. He will clearly have a lot of compensation if White dares to capture twice on f4.

11...\( \text{f}5 \)?!

This is too loosening. 11...\( \text{d}7 \) is more cautious, when White can kick the h5-knight by 12 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{w}7 \) 13 \( \text{c}2 \) (D).

This position favours White; for example, 13...\( \text{d}4 \) (13...\( \text{f}6 \) 14 g4 \( \text{c}5 \) 15 f3 a5 16 h4 \( \text{a}4 \) 17 h5! g5 18 \( \text{b}1 \) and White should eventually win on the queenside; a major advantage of the h3 systems is that a locked kingside is very often to White's great benefit) 14 \( \text{f}3 \) f5 15 g3 \( \text{x}h3 \) (15...\( \text{f}xe4 \) 16 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 17 \( \text{x}h5 \) gh5 18 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{f}5 \) and \( \text{h}4 \) follows, with or without a capture on e4) 16 exf5 gxf5 17 \( \text{g}2 \) f4 18 \( \text{x}h3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 19 \( \text{w}3 \) with a clear positional advantage for White.

12 exf5 gxf5 13 g4!

In the intensely strategic battlefield of these systems, it's a pleasure to see 0-0-0 and a classic sacrificial attack!

13...\( \text{fxg4} \)

There's nothing better:

a) 13...\( \text{xf4} \) 14 \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 15 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 16 \( \text{c}2 \) ± J. Costa-Watanabe, Maringa (team event) 1991.

b) 13...f4 14 \( \text{c}2+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 15 \( \text{d}2 \) ±; for example, 15...\( \text{f}6 \) 16 \( \text{g}1 \) (16 g5?! \( \text{h}7 \) 17 h4 \( \text{g}4 \) 18 ghxh6 \( \text{x}h6 \) 19 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 20 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 21 \( \text{d}3 \) offers White just a slight edge)

16...\( \text{d}7 \) 17 g5 \( \text{xg5} \) 18 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{w}7 \) 19 h4 \( \text{g}8 \) 20 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 21 \( \text{h}3 \) +– with the especially cruel idea 21...\( \text{xh3} \) 22 \( \text{g}6 \)!

c) 13...\( \text{f}6 \) 14 gxf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 15 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 16 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 17 \( \text{xd}3+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 18 \( \text{d}g1 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 19 \( \text{w}2 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 20 \( \text{g}6 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 21 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 22 \( \text{h}1 \) and White's attack crashes through.

14 \( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{xf4} \) (D)

Now White has a very pleasant choice of ways to pursue his attack:

a) 15 \( \text{e}2 \)! is relatively complex, but virtually winning. A couple of rather pretty lines: 15...\( \text{xf3} \) 16 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{d}4 \) 17 \( \text{d}g1 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 18 \( \text{e}4+ \) ! \( \text{xe}4 \) 19 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{h}8 \) 20 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{w}6 \) 21 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 22 \( \text{xf4} \) 1 \( \text{xf4} \) 23 \( \text{d}4 \) ! and 15...\( \text{xf3} \) 16 \( \text{d}g1 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 17 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 18 \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 19 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{w}7 \) 20 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 21 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 22 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{w}8 \) 23 \( \text{d}h6+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 24 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{w}6 \) 25 \( \text{h}6+ \) .

b) After the simpler 15 \( \text{g}5+ \), the attack triumphs as follows: 15...\( \text{hxg5} \) (15...\( \text{g}8 \) 16 \( \text{d}e6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 17 \( \text{d}e6 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 18 \( \text{d}5 \) ! \( \text{d}e6 \) 19 \( \text{h}3 \) and Black's position has fallen apart) 16 \( \text{e}2 \)! \( \text{f}3 \) 17 \( \text{d}g1 \) \( \text{w}7 \) (17...\( \text{xe}6 \) loses immediately to 18 \( \text{xe}3 \) 19 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 19 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{w}6 \) 20 \( \text{d}f3 \) \( \text{d}f3 \) 21 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{w}7 \) 22 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 23 \( \text{h}h6 \) .

White has multiple threats and even a material advantage.

8.23)

6...c5

We saw this against 6 \( \text{e}3 \), and will pursue a similar approach, although the details differ significantly.

7 \( \text{d}5 \) (D)
7...e6

a) 7...a6 8 a4 (8 d3 b5 9 is also good) 8...e6 9 d3 exd5 and now 10 exd5 resembles our main line, but the insertion of these a-pawn moves will generally favour White. For 10 cxd5, see Section 10.1 on the Modern Benoni.

b) 7...b5 is a fairly respectable version of the Benko Gambit, although I think White keeps the advantage following 8 cxb5 a6 9 a4 wa5 (9...h6 10 c3 wa5 11 d2 e6 is a different strategy, but 12 c4!?) 13 dx6 is very strong in view of 13...fxe6 14 d3, threatening e5, or 13...xe6 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 d5 d5 16 exd5 exd5 17 0-0 d4 18 c2 with the threat of d4 (10...e6 can be met by 11 dxe6 dxe6 12 d3 or 11 d3; 10...axb5 11 axb5 and now 11...a6 12 c4! or 11...a6 12 d3 d4 13 0-0), and then:

b2) 11 d3! d7 (11...c4 12 c2 d7 can be met by 13 b1 c5 14 e3 b4 15 g2 or 13 g2 d5 14 0-0 with the idea 14...b7 15 a5! axb5 16 a4) 12 d3 c4 13 c2 (D) and here:

b21) 13...xb2 14 b1 a3 15 e2 c5 16 0-0 c3 (16...b2? 17 b2! b2 18 c3 b2 19 d2 with a killing attack; 16...d3 17 b6!) 17 a1 axb5 18 axb5 b7 19 f4 ±.

b22) 13...c5 14 e2! (or 14 0-0 bxb2 15 b1 a3 16 e2 c3 17 a3) 14...xb2 15 b1 a3 16 0-0 b3 17 axb3 cxb3 18 b6! a4 19 b3 b3 20 b3 b7 21 c1 with bright prospects for White.

8...d3 exd5

8...e8 offers White a choice between 9 f3 exd5 10 cxd5, transposing to Section 10.11 (Modern Benoni), and 9 g2 exd5 10 exd5, which we cover in Section 8.232.

9 exd5

This is the same method we used after 6 e3 c5. White has space and Black's queen's bishop lacks squares. If you're curious about another approach, you may want to study the Modern Benoni section (10.1) for the position that arises after 9 cxd5.

We now have:

8.231: 9...d7 174

8.232: 9...e8+ 176

8.231)

9...d7 (D)

Black awaits a decision from White regarding his king, which is probably the best course in the analogous 6 e3 c5 system.
10 .gf3!?

This is arguably the most interesting move, responding to the 'threat' of ...ge5. 10 f4 addresses the same issue (...ge5), having in mind a potential attack with f5, which has occasionally succeeded. This is very loosening, however, and I can't recommend it – notice the weaknesses on e3, g3 and even e4, now that f3 can't be played. After 10 ge2 ge5, Black can exchange off the bishop on d3, which should suffice for equality; in return, White has space and good development, so that would be a balanced game.

10...ge8+ (D)

10...ge8+ unpins the f6-knight, but White retains his space advantage after 11 we2 wxe2+ 12 xe2, as shown by several games in this and related positions.

11 .he3!?

This is a rather absurd-looking move which nevertheless appears reasonably good. White is a full tempo down (the move ...bd7, to be precise) on the exact same line in the 6 .he3 c5 7 d5 system. Often there are compensations for losing a move; for example, the opponent commits to a move and you can adjust accordingly. Here, however, it's hard to see any advantages that White has gained. On the other hand, maybe it doesn't matter that much who has an extra move, because the fundamentals of the position are the same. And of course, White did very well indeed in the corresponding 6 .he3 position.

11...h5

11...h6 is the obvious alternative; compare the 6 ...e3 c5 main line. White plays 12 0-0! (D) and Black has two ways to capture on e3:

B

12...xe3 13 fxe3 we7 (13...xe3 14 wd2 is too risky for Black, as shown in the 6 .he3 c5 main line) 14 e4 with the idea of wd2 and doubling on the f-file. This is a tempo down on the main 6 .he3 c5 line, but it appears to favour White anyway due to Black's kingside weaknesses; for example, 14...a6 (14...e5 15 xe5 xe5 16 f3 g7 17 h2) 15 b4 b6 16 wd2 (16 a4 is also possible) 16...b5 17 ab1 a4 18 c2 a5 19 g3 with the idea wg5.
b) 12... hx e3!? 13 fxe3 \( \text{hx} e3+ 14 \text{h}1 \text{w}f8! \)
(14... \( \text{h}5 15 \text{w}e1 \text{f}f4 16 \text{d}e2 \) drives Black back) launches a dark-square attack which, however, doesn't seem to have quite enough punch:
15 \( \text{w}e1 (15 \text{w}e2 \text{f}4! 16 \text{d}e4! \text{w}h6 17 \text{d}h2 \) is slightly better for White) 15... \( \text{w}h6 16 \text{d}g1 \) (or
16 \( \text{h}2 \) ) 16... \( \text{f}4 \) (16... \( \text{h}5 17 \text{d}e2 \) with the idea 17... \( \text{f}4?! 18 \text{w}g3 \) ) 17 \( \text{w}f2! \) \( g5 18 \text{d}e5 \text{d}e5 19 \text{d}ae1 \text{d}d4 20 \text{w}f3 \text{d}xg1? (20... \text{d}g7 21 \text{d}e4) 21 \text{x}g7 22 \text{d}xg1 \text{w}xh3 23 \text{w}e5+ threatening \( \text{d}e4 \). 12 0-0 (D)

12... \( \text{w}x e3?! \)

Or 12... \( \text{d}e5 13 \text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 14 \text{w}d2 \), but not 12... \( \text{g}3?! 13 \text{d}e1 \text{f}f5 14 \text{w}f5 \text{g}x f5 15 \text{w}d2 \text{d}e5 16 \text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 17 \text{g}5+.

13 \( \text{b}x c3 \text{d}e5 \)

13... \( \text{f}5 14 \text{h}6 \) and now 14... \( \text{f}4 15 \text{g}5 \text{c}7 \)
(16 \text{e}1 \pm or 14... \( \text{e}5 15 \text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 16 \text{e}1 \text{e}4?! 17 \text{e}2 \text{f}6 18 \text{d}2 \pm the bishop-pair, dark squares and passed pawn favour White. 14 \( \text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 15 \text{w}d2 \) (D)

10 \( \text{g}e2 \)

a) 10 \text{f}f1 can easily transpose to 9... \( \text{b}d7 10 \text{f}3 \text{e}8+ 11 \text{f}1 \) (note to White's 11th move in Section 8.231), and the themes are often the same; e.g., 10... \( \text{h}6 \) (or 10... \( \text{b}d7 11 \text{f}3 \)) a6 12 a4 \text{h}6 13 \text{e}3 \text{e}5 = 11 \text{f}4?! \text{h}5 (or
11... \( \text{d}a6 12 \text{ge}2 \text{d}c7 \) with the idea ...b5; 
White's knight is poorly placed on e2 when the king is on f1) 12 \text{h}2 \text{d}7 13 \text{f}3 \.)

b) 10 \( \text{d}e3?! \) is weak this time in view of 10... \( \text{h}5 \), and if 11 \( \text{f}3?! (11 \text{ge}2 \text{d}7 \) \) then 11... \( \text{d}g3 \) ?.

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

10... \( \text{b}d7 11 \text{f}4 \) (11 0-0 \( \text{e}5 \) 11... \( \text{h}6 12 \text{h}4 \) enters line 'a' of the next note.

11 \( \text{d}e3 \)

A crucial juncture: this doesn't seem to give White anything special, and nor does 11 \( \text{f}4?! \text{h}5 12 \text{h}2 \text{d}7! 13 \text{xd}6 \text{w}b6.}
But 11 h4! (D) appears to offer White superior prospects:

\[ B \]

a) 11...\( \texttt{bd7} \) 12 f4 grants White a pleasant edge because Black is tied down; e.g., 12...a6 13 a4 \( \texttt{b8} \) (13...\( \texttt{f8} \) 14 0-0 \( \texttt{h7} \) 15 \( \texttt{c2} \) \( \pm \)) 14 0-0 \( \texttt{c7} \) 15 \( \texttt{h1} \) \( \texttt{f8} \) 16 \( \texttt{xf6} \)!? (interesting, if unnecessary; 16 \( \texttt{d2} \) is also good) 16...\( \texttt{xf6} \) 17 f5 g5!? (17...\( \texttt{e7} \) 18 fxg6 \( \texttt{g6} \) 19 \( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 20 \( \texttt{h7}+ \texttt{h8} \) 21 b3 \( \pm \)) 18 \( \texttt{g3} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 19 \( \texttt{c4} \) (19 \( \texttt{h5} \) is strong) 19...\( \texttt{e7} \) 20 \( \texttt{h5} \) \( \texttt{f8} \) 21 \( \texttt{a2} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 22 b3 \( \texttt{e5} \) 23 \( \texttt{d1} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 24 \( \texttt{f2} \) and now Black blundered the game away with 24...\( \texttt{e3} \)? (though White was better anyway) 25 \( \texttt{h5} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 26 \( \texttt{g4} \) in Suba-Reyes, Palma de Mallorca 1992.

b) 11...a6 attempts to get some pieces out: 12 0-0 \( \texttt{d7} \) 13 f4?! (I like 13 a3! \( \pm \), simply improving White’s position with moves such as \( \texttt{g3} \) and \( \texttt{b1} \) to follow) 13...\( \texttt{b6} \) (Suba-Uhlmann, Bucharest 1978) and now 14 \( \texttt{d2} \)! keeps a slight advantage.

11...\( \texttt{bd7} \)! (D) 12 0-0

This move hasn’t yet been played in practice, but I think it’s best, ceding the bishop on d3 in return for time to consolidate White’s space advantage. 12 b3 \( \texttt{e5} \) 13 \( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{h5} \) is unclear, with Black hoping for 14 0-0? \( \texttt{xh3} \)!. And 12 \( \texttt{g3} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 13 \( \texttt{e2} \) h5! \( \mp \) is depressing for White, because he doesn’t have his usual resource 14 \( \texttt{g5} \) due to 14...\( \texttt{xc4} \).

12...\( \texttt{e5} \) 13 \( \texttt{g3} \) \( \texttt{xd3} \)

13...h5 14 \( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{b6} \) 15 \( \texttt{b1} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 16 \( \texttt{e3} \) h4 17 \( \texttt{gxe4} \) is complex, although probably slightly in White’s favour. Then the greedy 17.f5 18 \( \texttt{g5} \) f4 19 \( \texttt{xf4} \) \( \texttt{xd3} \) 20 \( \texttt{xd3} \) \( \texttt{f5} \) 21 \( \texttt{xf3} \) \( \texttt{g5} \) 22 \( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{xb1} \) 23 \( \texttt{xb1} \) gives White more than enough for the exchange because of Black’s weakened kingside.

14 \( \texttt{xd3} \)

Now:

a) After 14...a6?!; play might go 15 \( \texttt{d2} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 16 \( \texttt{f4} \) g5 17 \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{b8} \) 18 \( \texttt{ab1} \) (or 18 a4) 18...b5?! 19 b4! \( \texttt{xc4} \) 20 \( \texttt{xc5} \) \( \texttt{xb1} \) 21 \( \texttt{xb1} \) dxc5 22 \( \texttt{xc5} \) with an edge.

b) 14...h5?! is also unimpressive after 15 \( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{b6} \) 16 \( \texttt{f3} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 17 \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \pm \).

c) However, 14...\( \texttt{d7} \)! should keep things level, particularly as 15 f4?? allows 15...\( \texttt{xe3} \), and 15 b3 \( \texttt{e5} \) 16 \( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{h3} \) 17 gxh3 \( \texttt{f3}+ \) 18 \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{h4}+ \) 19 \( \texttt{h2} \) at best repeats (and not 19 \( \texttt{h1} \) \( \texttt{f6} \)).

Overall, I’d assess 11 \( \texttt{e3} \) as equal. However, the continuation with 11 h4! is promising; it may be that Black ultimately has nothing to counterbalance White’s space advantage and must accept a small but real inferiority. In any case, there is potential in this line for subtle manoeuvring, and a reward for good strategic play.
The Grünfeld Defence is one of the leading defences versus 1 d4, used by high-level players everywhere. Today it is at the peak of its popularity and none of the main lines appear to be achieving an advantage against it. That makes it all the more appropriate to propose responses which are not the best known but at the same time challenging and complex enough to be rewarding to the player who understands them well.

4 cxd5 exd5 5 e4 (D)

The Exchange Variation seems a bit mainstream and committal for this book, but has two things going for it:

1) It limits Black’s options and this makes it easier to form a repertoire;

2) It targets the only weakness from which the Grünfeld suffers, i.e., that Black allows White to gain space and control the centre with a potentially mobile central majority.

5...dxc3

Avoiding the exchange is considered clearly inferior, but you will come across the second of these moves from time to time, especially at club level:

a) 5...d6?! is practically never seen; one example is 6 Qf3 Qg7 7 h3 (7 e2 0-0 8 0-0 is less elaborate) 7...0-0 8 Qc6 c6 9 a4?! (or 9 0-0; with White’s centre secure, he has the superior position following 9...b5 10 Qd3 9...a5 10 0-0 Qa6 11 Qe3 Qb4 12 Qb3 (12 Qc2 is possible too) 12...Qe8 (Tolush-Mikenas, USSR Ch, Moscow 1950) and now 13 Qa2 would get rid of Black’s only advanced piece.

b) 5...b6?! also escapes notice in some books. It is more serious, covering c4 and keeping the g7-bishop unmasked versus d4. The traditional recommendation is 6 h3 (preventing ...Qg4 and thus denying Black a good square for that bishop, although 6 Qf3 Qg4 7 a5+ c6 8 e2 Qg7 9 Qe3 0-0 10 0-0 still favours White; after 6 Qe3 Qg7, 7 h3 0-0 8 Qf3 transposes into the main line, while White can also play 7 Qd2 0-0 8 Qd1 ± Podgorny-Pachman, Czechoslovak Ch, Prague 1954) 6...Qg7 7 Qf3 0-0 8 Qe3 (8 e2 Qc6 9 Qe3 f5 10 exf5 Qxf5 11 Qd3+ Qh8 12 d5 Qe5 13 Qxe5 Qxe5 14 Qd1 ± Christiansen-Castro, Torremolinos 1977) 8...a5 (8...c6 9 Qe2 Qe6 10 0-0 Qc4 11 Qd2 Qd8d7, Portisch-Szabo, Hungarian Ch, Budapest 1958, and now simply 12 Qfd1 is the most direct course) 9 Qe2 a4 10 0-0 (10 Qc1 a3 11 b3 f5 12 exf5 Qxf5 13 0-0 Qc6 14 Qd2 ± I.Sokolov-Djuric, Novi Sad 1986) 10...a3 11 bxa3 Qxa3 12 Qc1 Qa5 13 Qd1 c6 14 Qh6 Qxh6 15 Qxh6 f6 16 Qbl Qe6 17 d5! ± Petrosian-Smyslov, Garpa 1953.

6 bxc3 Qg7

This is the most natural move. Other possibilities:

a) 6...b6 7 Qb5+ (D), and then:

a1) According to Botvinnik & Estrin, the continuation 7...Qd7 is best, but then 8 Qc4 Qg7 9 Qf3 0-0 10 0-0 is pleasant for White. Upon 10...c5, 11 Qe3 is natural and good, while 11 Qg5?! is unique and consistent with our emphasis on that move in this chapter; for example, 11...Qc6 (11...Qg4? 12 Qd5) 12 d5 Qa5 (12...Qe5 13 d6!) 13 d6! Qxc4 14 dxe7 Qc7 15 exf8Q+ Qxf8 16 Qe2 leaves White the exchange up for less-than-sufficient positional compensation.
a2) 7...c6 8.c4 b5 9.b3 b7 10.df3 and here:

a21) 10...e6 delays Black’s development and
is obviously weakening. 11 0-0 g7 12 a3 (±
Botvinnik & Estrin) 12...a6 13 w6 b6, and
now 14 ab1 keeps Black tied down, while 14
d6 c5 15 e5 c4 16 c2 was also very strong
in Rashkovsky-Smyslov, USSR Ch, Moscow
1973; g5, e4 and h4 can follow, or a4, as
in the game.

a22) 10...g7 11 xf7+! xf7 12 w6 a5 (13 w6 d6 14 xg7+ f7 15 h6 g8 16 e5 w5 d5 17 e6+ f8 18 h5+ e8 19 f4 e4+ 20 d2! ++) 14 0-0! (14
xg7+ f7 15 f5! ±) 14...g8 (14...f6 15
e5 c6 16 xf6 xe6 17 e1 d7 18 f3 +–;
14...f8 15 f4) 15 b3 a6 16 f4 ±.

b) After 6...c5, 7 g5 will generally trans­
pose to Section 9.1 following 7...g7, and
7 w5 allows the new possibility 8 f3?! c3+ 9 d2 with compensation. But White
often tries to take advantage of 6...c5 with 7
b5+ (D). This isn’t strictly necessary, but
avoids odd variations by Black and gains a
small advantage.

For example:

b1) 7...d7 fails to put any pressure on the
centre, and 8 f3 ± gives White a pleasant
game.

b2) After 7...d7, the move 8 b1 ± isn’t
mentioned in the books, but looks promising;
e.g., 8...w d3 cxd4 10 d2 xb5 11
bx5 with the idea 11...xa2 12 bx7 c6 13
f3; instead, 11...a6 is a little better but White
plays cxd4, f3 and 0-0 and has a small, stable
advantage. Upon 8...g7, White’s centre re­
stays strong after 9 c2 0-0 10 0-0.

b3) 7...c6 8 d5 and now:

b31) 8...w5? 9 w4 c3+ 10 w2 gives
Black nothing better than 10...g7 11 dxc6 0-0
12 b1! a6 13 d3 b5 14 w3 ± Belaivsk­
Mikalchishin, Terme Zrece 2003, as 10...d7?
11 dxc6 bxc6 12 xc6 d8, tempting White
to play 13 d2?? wxd2+! is demolished by
Nezhmetdinov’s 13 b3! xal 14 b2 b1
15 f3! xh1 16 e5 +–, which has won sev­
eral games.

b32) 8...a6 9 e2 and White has the better
of things; e.g., 9...a5 10 e3 c6 11 f3 exd5
12 exd5 b6 13 0-0 g7 14 w4 ±. Sokolov­
Olofsson, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990 (14 g5
f6 15 f4 is also good).

Thus, in my opinion 6...g7 (D), to which
we now return, is objectively better than 6...c5.

Here the main lines start with 7 f3, 7 c4
or 7 e3. I am proposing these two moves in­
stead:

9.1: 7 g5 180
9.2: 7 w4+ 187
This is a slightly unusual continuation which has recently attracted the attention of strong players. The related 7 \( \texttt{f}3 \) has been used by many top players, and Karpov and Kramnik in particular won some famous games with it. 7 \( \texttt{g}5 \) is similar in that one of White's main goals is to move his rook from a1 (to c1 in our case) and then, having protected his c-pawn, be ready to make the advance d5. This reduces the need to expend energy defending d4. What's more, both 7 \( \texttt{f}3 \) and 7 \( \texttt{g}5 \) prepare the idea of \( \texttt{d}2 \) and \( \texttt{h}6 \). If Black plays passively, this might even be followed by h4-h5, but \( \texttt{f}3 \) and early castling is more common. 7 \( \texttt{g}5 \) is played with the idea that after ...h6, White retreats to e3 and the h6-pawn will prove a drawback. For example, if Black's g7-bishop takes part in exchanges or captures on d4 or e5, the h-pawn will be hanging. And if White plays \( \texttt{d}2 \) (which he very often does in the \( \texttt{f}3 \) lines), it will come with a gain of time. When Black doesn't play ...h6, another potential benefit of 7 \( \texttt{g}5 \) is that it pins the e7-pawn (so that ...e6 and ...e5 aren't yet possible) and attacks it, so that defenders such as the queen on d8 or knight on c6 can't stray too far without at least considering the consequences of a capture on e7. On the negative side, 7 \( \texttt{g}5 \) (like 7 \( \texttt{f}3 \)) does nothing to prepare castling and commits the queen's bishop at an earlier stage than is usual in most d-pawn openings. Furthermore (unlike 7 \( \texttt{f}3 \)), the bishop does nothing to protect d4, which is the first point of attack for Black in most lines of the Grunfeld. All told, I think that this is rather a good set of trade-offs for White, especially when you consider that the moves 7 \( \texttt{c}4 \), 7 \( \texttt{f}3 \) and 7 \( \texttt{e}3 \) are covered in massive detail in the literature, and 7 \( \texttt{g}5 \) isn't even mentioned in most sources.

7...c5 (D)

Or:

a) 7...0-0 can transpose to Section 9.11 after 8 \( \texttt{c}1 \) c5. With this move-order, White gets the opportunity to try other moves, such as 8 \( \texttt{f}2 \) c5 9 d5, but I don't know if there's any advantage to be found by doing so.

b) 7...h6 8 \( \texttt{f}3 \) and now 8...c5 transposes to note 'b' to Black's 8th move below if White plays 9 \( \texttt{c}1 \), while 9 \( \texttt{f}3 \) \( \texttt{a}5 \) 10 \( \texttt{d}2 \) leaves Black searching for a way to increase the pressure on White's centre. Instead, 8...0-0 9 \( \texttt{f}3 \) c5 10 \( \texttt{e}2 \) is pleasant; the h-pawn hangs in several lines and \( \texttt{d}2 \) can be a useful tempo-gainer.

8 \( \texttt{c}1 \)

This move has three points:
1) It indirectly protects d4, since multiple captures by Black on that square expose his bishop on c8;
2) It takes White's rook off the a1-h8 diagonal;
3) It protects c3, which will often be a target of attack, and in doing so allows ...\( \texttt{c}6 \) to be answered with d5.

Black's main options are now:
9.11: 8...0-0 182
9.12: 8...\( \texttt{a}5 \) 185

There are several other moves too:
a) 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 (D) can lead to a couple of unique positions but they aren’t recommended for Black:

![Diagram]

a1) 9...c6?! 10 d5 cxd4 11 Wd2 cd7 (or 11...0-0 12 Oe2) 12 Ox3 0-0 13 Oe2 Ox2 e2 14 Oxe2 with more space and easy development, Plischki-Kalod, Ceska Trebova 2006.

a2) 9...0-0 10 d5!? (this is interesting, although my preference is 10 Oe3!, transposing to note ‘c’ to Black’s 9th move in Section 9.11, i.e. 8...0-0 9 Oe3 cxd4 10 cxd4) 10...Wa5+ 11 Wd2 Wxd2+ 12 Oxd2 e6 could be investigated further but in limited experience it is regarded as equal; e.g., 13 b5 (13 c4 exd5 14 Ox5 Ox2 15...Oe6 16 Oe1, and Black has played various moves here, but 16...f5! looks satisfactory; e.g., 17 Oe2 Oc5 18 e5 (18 Oe3 Oe6) 18...Oe7 =.

a3) After 9...Wxd4?! 10 Oxc8 Oxf2+ 11 Oxf2 Wxc8 12 Oe3 the minor pieces are worth considerably more than the rook and two pawns, as is often the case when you are still in the middlegame. This is especially true as White has the bishop-pair, and all the more so with Black’s kingside dark squares exposed.

b) 8...h6 9 Oe3 cooperates with White’s plan by exposing Black’s h-pawn to attack via Wd2. It’s useful to compare the well-established line 7 Oe3 c5 8 Oxc1, championed by Kramnik; here the pawn on h6 can be a disadvantage. On the other hand, Black gets an escape-square on h7 and can in principle advance with...g5 in some positions. After 9...Wa5 (D), play can go:

b1) 10 Wb3!? has the idea 10...cxd4 11 Wb5+ Wxb5 12 Oxb5+, which is admittedly cowardly. Then 12...Od7 13 Oxd7+ Wxd7! 14 cxd4 Oc6 15 Of3 Oac8 16 Oe2 gives White only a nominal edge; historically, however, this kind of centre has helped to win a number of simplified endgames and there’s minimal risk; for example, 16...b6 (16...Oa5 17 Oe3 b5 18 Od2 with the idea Oe3 isn’t a lot to go on, but White has some pressure; 16...e6 is another defense to consider) 17 d5 Od4 18 Oxd4 Oxd4 19 Oxd4 Ox2? (19...f5 20 Oe3 Od6 21 Oe1 ±) 20 Wf6! Oe3+ 21 Oe3 a5?! 22 Oc6 Oa5 23 Wb1 ±.

b2) 10 Wd2 is normal:

b21) 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 Wxd2+ (D).

Lysy calls this an “inferior ending”, based upon that h6-pawn. That’s unclear, and I suspect that with perfect play, Black will always stay close to equality. Nevertheless, many grandmasters have played this type of ending as White with success. White has two recaptures:

b211) 12 Wxd2 isn’t played much, in spite of 12...0-0 13 Oe3 Oc6 14 d5 Oc8 15 Oe1!?
b212) 12 ... axd2 0-0 13 ♞f3 is a safe choice:

b212) After 13 ... e6, 14 ♞c4?! might be worth a try; the normal move is 14 ♞b5 ♞d7!

b2 12 ♞xd2 0-0 13 ♞f3 is a safe choice:

b2 121) After 13 ... e6, 14 ♞c4!? might be worth a try; the normal move is 14 ... ♞b5 ♞d7!

b2 122) 13 ... ♞d8 14 ♞c4 (unusual in this type of position, and as far as I know never played here, but it serves a prophylactic role; after 14 ♞b5, 14 ... ♞d7! 15 ♞xd7 ♞xd7 16 ♞c7?! ♞f6! gives up a pawn for sufficient counterplay) 14 ... ♞g4 (14 ... e6 15 0-0 ♞d6 16 d5 exd5 17 exd5 ♞e7 18 ♞e1 ±; 14 ... ♞c6?! 15 ♞d5; 14 ... ♞xd4?! 15 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 16 ♞xf7+ ♞xf7 17 ♞xc8 ♞xe4+ 18 ♞e3 ±) 15 ♞e5 (15 ♞d5!?) 15 ... ♞xe5 16 dx5 ♞g6 17 f3 ♞d7 18 ♞xh6 ♞xe5 19 ♞e2 ♞c6 20 ♞c2 and again White is counting upon the bishop-pair for a small pull.

b22) 10 ... ♞c6 11 d5 ♞e5 12 c4 ♞a3 (Valles-Wirig, Lille 2011) 13 ♞e2! and then:

b221) 13 ... b6 14 f4? ♞d4+ 15 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 16 ♞xf7+ ♞xf7 17 ♞xc8 ♞xe4+ 18 ♞e3 ±) 15 ♞e5 (15 ♞d5!?) 15 ... ♞xe5 16 dx5 ♞g6 17 f3 ♞d7 18 ♞xh6 ♞xe5 19 ♞e2 ♞c6 20 ♞c2 and again White is counting upon the bishop-pair for a small pull.

b222) 10 ... ♞a5 11 ♞d2 ♞a3 (Valles-Wirig, Lille 2011) 13 ♞e2! and then:

b2221) 13 ... b6 14 f4? ♞d4+ 15 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 16 ♞xf7+ ♞xf7 17 ♞xc8 ♞xe4+ 18 ♞e3 ±) 15 ♞e5 (15 ♞d5!?) 15 ... ♞xe5 16 dx5 ♞g6 17 f3 ♞d7 18 ♞xh6 ♞xe5 19 ♞e2 ♞c6 20 ♞c2 and again White is counting upon the bishop-pair for a small pull.

b2222) 13 ... ♞g4 14 ♞xg4 ♞xg4 15 h3 ♞d7 16 ♞e2 (16 ♞f3 ±) 16 ... b6 17 0-0 ±.

9.11)

8...0-0 (D)

9 ♞f3

The advance 9 d5 isn’t my first choice but it’s a handy alternative that’s worth knowing. Leaving out a lot of detail, here are two main lines:

a) Dembo likes 9 ... ♞d6!?, “unpinning the e-pawn ... [and intending] to exploit his lead in development to break up White’s centre with ...e6 and/or ...f5.” She continues 10 ♞f3 e6? (10 ... ♞g4 transposes to note ‘b’ to Black’s 10th move below; also preferable is 10 ... ♞d7 11 ♞e2 e6 12 0-0 exd5 13 exd5 ♞f6 14 c4 ♞e4, limiting White’s edge) 11 ♞c4 e5 12 0-0 (or 12 ♞d2) 12 ... h6, but I don’t like this ...e5 idea:

a1) After 13 ♞h4, Dembo says that 13 ... ♞d7 14 ♞d2 ♞b6 “is good for Black, who plans ...d7, ...�ae8 and ...f5”; however, after 15 a4 ♞d7 16 ♞b3 ♞ae8 17 a5 ♞c8 18 ♞a4 ♞xa4 19 ♞xa4 f5 20 f3, White should stand considerably better, since a kingside attack won’t work without Black’s good bishop.

a2) 13 ♞e3 f5 14 ♞d3 f4 15 ♞d2 g5 16 h3 ♞g6 “leads to a massive King’s Indian-style pawn-storm on the kingside.” White can play for a typical d5 position by 17 c4 g4 (17 ... h5 18 ♞e2 with the idea 18 ... g4 19 ♞h4 ♞g5 20 g3 gxh5 21 ♞h1) 18 hxg4 ♞xg4 19 ♞c3! (19 ♞e2!? ♞xe4 20 ♞e1) 19 ... ♞d7 20 ♞e2 ♞h3 (20 ... ♞xe4?? 21 ♞d3 ♞xf3 22 gxf3) 21 ♞e1 ♞f6 22 ♞f3 ±.

b) 9 ... f5! (Avrukh’s preference) 10 ♞c4 ♞h8 is satisfactory for Black, although not easy. One line: 11 ♞e2 (Avrukh gives 11 exf5 ♞xf5 12 ♞d3 ♞d7 13 ♞e2 ♞e5 14 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 15 ♞e3 e6 with equality; fair enough) 11 ... fxe4 12 ♞g3 ♞d7 (12 ... ♞f5 13 0-0 ♞d7! 14 d6 ♞f6 15 ♞h6 ♞g7 16 ♞g5 ♞f6 17 ♞h6 h6-½ Polak-Ftačník, Czech Team Ch 2009/10) 13 ♞xe4 ♞b6 14 ♞e2 ♞xc4 (14 ... ♞f5 is worth considering too) 15 ♞xc4 and now Avrukh claimed that 15 ... b6(!) leads to double-edged play, but 16 d6! ♞f6 17 0-0 is good, so 15 ... h6 is preferable, with chances for both sides.

We now return to 9 ♞f3 (D):

9 ... ♞g4

Or:

a) 9 ... ♞a5 10 ♞d2 transposes to Section 9.12 (i.e. 8 ... ♞a5 9 ♞d2 0-0 10 ♞f3).
b) 9...b6 10  ♖d3  ♖g4 11 0-0! h6 (11...cxd4 12 cxd4  ♖xd4 13  ♖c4) 12  ♖h4 g5 13  ♖g3 cxd4 14 cxd4  ♖xd4 15 e5!  ♖c5 16 ♕e2 gives White an attack.

c) The position after 9...cxd4 10 cxd4  ♖g4 has been played by Svidler (twice, unsuccessfully) and other strong players as Black (often via 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 0-0 10  ♖f3  ♖g4), but opening the c-file and eliminating the pawn on c3 helps White's game after 11 d5 (D):

B

10 d5 (D)

Emelin suggests 22  ♖c5  ♕g7 23  ♕xe5  ♕xe5 24  ♕xe5  ♕e6 25  ♕xe6! ♕xe6 26 e5 ±, while 22  ♕c4!  ♕g7 23  ♖d1 is also promising.

c2) 11...h6 12  ♖e3 (12  ♖f4 also suffices for some advantage) 12...e6 13 ♖c4 exd5 14 ♖xd5  ♖c6 14... ♖a5+ 15 ♕d2  ♖xd2+ 16 ♖xd2 ± or 16  ♖xd2) 15 h3  ♖xf3 16 ♕xf3 ♖b4 17 0-0  ♖xd5 18 exd5 ♖d7 (V.Milov-Tseshkovsky, Biel 2005) and now 19 d6! ♖ac8 20 ♖f4 is simplest.

10...f5?  

'Thematic' but at the same time loosening. Other moves:

a) Dembo likes 10... ♖d7 "when Black is all set to break with ...f5 and White is forced on to the defensive." White should be able to meet that move fairly easily, however:

a1) Simply 11 h3 ♖xf3 12 ♕xf3 is untried as far as I know. Then the only critical move is 12...f5! 13 ♖e2 ♕e5 (13...b6 14 0-0 and now 14...f4 15 ♕g4 ♖d6 16 g3 f3 17 ♖d1 favours White, so 14...fxe4 15 ♕xe4 ♖xd5 16 ♕g4 might follow, when the bishops provide ample compensation, even after 16... ♖xa2 17 ♕f3) 14 ♕e3 ♕f7 15 ♖f4 ♕xe4 16 ♕xe4 ♕a5 17 0-0 ♕xc3 18 ♖b1 (18 ♕g4?! ) 18...b6 19 ♕c2! ♖f6 20 ♖d2 ♖a3 21 ♖b5! c4 22 ♖xc4 ♖d6 23 ♖b1 ±.

a2) 11 ♖e2 ♕a5 (11...f5?! 12 d6 ♖f6 13 ♕xf6 exf6 14 0-0 ♖e8 15 h3 ♕xf6 16 ♕xf3 fxe4 17 ♕xe4 ± Prohaszka-Shankland, Budapest 2009; 11...c4 should be investigated) 12 ♕d6 e5 (12...♕f8 is also possible) 13 ♕e7 ♕xe8 14 d6 ♖f6 15 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 (A.Kopylov-Turov, Salekhard 2006) 16 e5 ♖d7 17 ♕g5! ±.
b) 10...\(\text{Nbd6}\) is Svidler's move, and Avrukh's explicit preference over 10...f5. It is probably Black's best way to keep things level, but there is plenty of play and options on every move. Amongst other ideas, there is 11 \(\text{Be2 Qd7}\) 12 0-0 \(\text{Nxf3}\)! 13 \(\text{Nxf3}\) (D):

\[
\text{B}
\]

b1) 13...c4 clears c5, but 14 \(\text{Wxa4 Nxc8}\) 15 \(\text{Bxe3 a6}\) 16 \(\text{g4 b5}\) 17 \(\text{Wc2}\) with the idea f4 causes a bit of trouble; e.g., 17...\(\text{Nc7}\) 18 f4 \(\text{Qxc5}\) 19 e5.

b2) 13...b5! is a called "a very interesting concept" by Avrukh. The fact that ...\(\text{Nxf3}\) and ...b5 is the computer’s instantaneous and persistent recommendation says a lot about how far they have come. Play might go 14 \(\text{Wd2 c4}\) 15 \(\text{We3 Nf6}\)! (15...\(\text{Qc5}\) 16 \(\text{Bb1 a6}\) 17 \(\text{Qf4 Wb6}\) 18 e5! is reasonably promising for White) 16 \(\text{h6}\) \(\text{Qg7}\) 17 \(\text{Qxg7}\) (avoiding repetition) 17...\(\text{Qxg7}\) 18 \(\text{Bd1 f6}\)! 19 h4 \(\text{Qc5}\) 20 \(\text{Qe2}\) (20 h5 g5 21 \(\text{Be2 Qa4}\) 22 g3 intending \(\text{Qg2}\)) 20...\(\text{Qa4}\) 21 \(\text{Qd4 a6}\) 22 h5 with the idea 22...g5? 23 e5! \(\text{fxe5}\) 24 \(\text{Qxe4}\). OK, I’ll grant you that any advantage White gets in these lines is minuscule, but they involve complex play in all sectors and should appeal to the strategic player.

11 \(\text{Wb3 Nc8}\) 12 \(\text{Qd2}\)!

Not only defending e4 and potentially transferring to c4, but also stranding Black’s bishop on g4.

12...\(\text{Qd7}\) (D)

Or:

a) 12...h6?! 13 h3 (or 13 \(\text{Wxb7 Qd7}\) 14 h3) 13...\(\text{Qh5}\) 14 \(\text{Qf4}\) ±.

b) 12...\(\text{fxe4}\) and now:

b1) After 13 \(\text{Wxb7 Qd7}\) 14 h3, Avrukh says, “I don’t have much faith in Black’s position”, but remarkably, it appears to hold together: 14...\(\text{Qf5}\) 15 g4 \(\text{Qb8}\) 16 \(\text{Qxa7 Qa8}\) 17 \(\text{Qb7 Qb8}\) =, based upon 18 \(\text{Wc6 e3}\) 19 \(\text{fxe3}\) (19 \(\text{Qxe3}\)?! \(\text{Qd3}\)!!) 19...\(\text{Qxc3}\)!! 20 \(\text{Qxc3 Qa5}\) 21 \(\text{gxf5 Wxc3}\) 22 \(\text{Wxd7 Qb2}\) 23 e4 \(\text{Wg3}\)+, which soon leads to a draw.

b2) 13 h3! (this is a positional method) 13...\(\text{Qc8}\) 14 \(\text{Qxe4 Qd7}\) (14...\(\text{Qc7}\) 15 \(\text{Qe3 Qd7}\) 16 \(\text{Qe2}\) ± Prohaszka-Csiba, Budapest 2009) 15 \(\text{Qe2}\) (eyeing g4, and perhaps also considering h4-h5) 15...\(\text{Qf6}\) 16 \(\text{Qxf6 exf6}\) 17 \(\text{Qe3 b6}\) 18 0-0. White’s d-pawn gives him a positional advantage.

\[
\text{W}
\]

13 h3!?

13 f3! may be best. After 13...\(\text{Qh5}\), Lysy gives 14 \(\text{Wxb7}\) as ±, but 14...\(\text{fxe4}\) 15 \(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qb8}\) is very unclear. On the other hand, 14 \(\text{Qe2}\) appears to favour White.

13...\(\text{Qh5}\) 14 \(\text{Wxb7 Qb8}\) 15 \(\text{Wxa6 h6}\) 16 \(\text{Qf4}\) (D)

\[
\text{B}
\]

Now:
GRUNFELD DEFENCE

a) 16...f5xe4? (Black loses the thread) 17 axb8=xb8 (17...e3 18 fxe3 bxb8 19 g4 Wg3+ 20 d1 Qe6 21 Qc4 =−) 18 g4 Wb2 (18...Wf4 19 We2 Qe5 20 Wc3) 19 Qd1 b6? (19...Qxf2 20 Qxe4 Qf4 21 Qf2±) 20 Wb5 Wxa2 21 Qc4 and White was winning in Sadorra-Kazhgaleev, Subic Bay 2009.

The following are playable, although not ideal for Black:

b) 16...b6 17 Wxa7 e5! 18 dxe6 Wxe6 19 a5! Wf6 20-0 ±.

c) 16...e5!? 17 dxe6 (17 h2 b2!!) 17...Qxe5 18 a4 b6 19 Wd6! Wxe6! 20 0-0! Qd3 21 Qxd3 Wbd3 22 Wde1 g5 23 Qe3 f4 24 Qxc5 Wd2 25 Wxf8 Wxf8 26 Wd4+Wxd4 27 cxd4 affords White the better prospects; his rook and two central pawns count for somewhat more than the bishop-pair.

d) 16...Qe5 17 g4!? Qd3+! (17...f5g4? loses to 18 Wxe5 Qxe5 19 hxg4 b6 20 We2) 18 Qxf3 fxe4 19 Wxh6 (19 Wxb8 Wxb8 leads to equality; 19 Qe3 g3?! 19...Wxh6 20 hxg4 b6 21 Wd3 Qxg1 22 g5 Qg5 23 Qe5 Wb6 24 Wg3 Wd6 25 Qf7 Wxf7 26 e5 and after further messiness White will come out with a slight advantage.

9.12)

8...Wa5

Here Black wants to bring White's queen to d2 and maybe exchange queens to divert White's pieces. We'll see other ideas as we go along.

9 Wd2 (D)

B

d1) 12...h6 13 Wf4 Wxe4 14 0-0 Wc4 15 Wxc4 Wxc4 16 Wf1 gives White excellent compensation – Fleer.

d2) 12...f6 13 We3 Qc4 14 Wd3 and now rather than 14...Qd6?! 15 Wxe5 Wxe4 16 Wf5 17 Wd2 ± Nybäck-Negi, Wijk aan Zee 2010, 14...Qxe3 15 Wxe3 0-0 is more obvious, but still favours White's centre and space.

d3) 12...Wxe4 13 0-0 0-0 (13...Qg4?? loses to 14 Wb5+ Qf8 15 Wxe7+ Wxe7 16 Wxe5) 14 Wfe1. This is mainly analysis by Lysy. White has a strong attack for his pawn; he continues 14...Wf6 (14...e6?! 15 Wxe5 Wxe5 16 Wf3) 15 Qd1 Qd8 (15...Qf5 16 Wxf6 Wxf6 17 We3 =) 16 Wxf6 exf6 17 Wxe5 fxe5 (17...Wd5 18 Wd6) 18 Wg5, when "White will regain the e5-pawn, and he will retain a long-term initiative thanks
to his passed d-pawn.” A typical result of many of these 7...g5 lines.

10 \( \text{c3} \) (D)

10 \( \text{xe7?} \) is too greedy: 10...\( \text{e8} \) 11 \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 12 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d6} \) 13 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{d7} \) is slightly better for Black.

At this point, Black must make an important decision:

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

Instead:

a) 10...e6 11 \( \text{h6 c6} \) 12 h4! \( \text{xd4} \) 13 \( \text{gxg7} \) \( \text{g7} \) 14 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{b8} \) 15 \( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xa5} \) 16 \( \text{d2} \) h5 17 \( \text{e3} \) leaves White nicely centralized with a small edge. After 17...\( \text{d7} \) Lysy gives 18 \( \text{d3} \), although 18...\( \text{ac8} \) looks fine. However, 18 \( \text{c5!} \) b6 19 \( \text{c1} \), with the idea of \( \text{a6} \), retains some advantage.

b) 10...\( \text{g4} \) 11 d5 \( \text{e8} !? \) (preparing counterplay in the centre; White is in control after 11...\( \text{d7} \) 12 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 13 \( \text{e3} \)) 12 c4 \( \text{a3} \) 13 \( \text{e2} \) e6 14 h3 \( \text{xf3} \) and now instead of 15 gx\( f3 \)?! (Navara-Laylo, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2009), Marin analyses 15 \( \text{xf3} \)! \( \text{exd5} \) 16 \( \text{d5} \) b5! 17 0-0 \( \text{d7} \) 18 d6 c4, when “the black pawns should not be underestimated”. Still, 19 e5! \( \text{c5} \) (versus \( \text{c6} \); 19...\( \text{ac8} \)? 20 \( \text{g4} \)) 20 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 21 \( \text{xa8} \) \( \text{xa8} \) 22 \( \text{a5} \!) \( \text{wd6} \) 23 \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{e5} \) 24 \( \text{fd1} \) leaves Black short of compensation.

11 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd2+} \) 12 \( \text{xd2} \) e6 (D)

This queen less middlegame is a type of position that we’ve seen before, but with the moves ...h6 and \( \text{e3} \) included. In some ways the difference favours White, since d8 is covered and ...h6 can be met by \( \text{e7} \).

13 \( \text{b5} \)

13 \( \text{c7} \) is an important alternative. After 13...\( \text{c6} \) there’s a lot to explore:

a) 14 e5?! might be an idea; if 14...h6, 15 \( \text{f6} \) looks a little strange, but this piece needs to be put to work, and White can apparently be satisfied with 15...\( \text{b4} \) (15...\( \text{xf6} \) 16 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{d8} \) 17 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 18 \( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 19 \( \text{e4} \)) 16 \( \text{c4} \) b5! (16...\( \text{d5} \)?! 17 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 18 \( \text{hc1} \)) 17 \( \text{b3} \) a5 18 a3 \( \text{a6} \) 19 \( \text{e7} \). Similarly, after 14...\( \text{b4} \) 15 \( \text{c4} \) White develops quickly. I like the look of this, but it needs testing.

b) 14 \( \text{b5} \) (D) is conventional and practical, although probably only equal versus accurate play:

b1) 14...\( \text{xd4} \) is awfully tempting: 15 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 16 \( \text{e7} \) \( \text{e5} \) 17 \( \text{c5} \) (17 \( \text{c2} \) a6 18 \( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 19 \( \text{d3} \) ‘±’, according to Predojević, but I’m not sure it’s so different after 19...\( \text{d7} \)) 17...\( \text{f4+} \) 18 \( \text{e2} \) a6 19 \( \text{a4} \) b6 20 \( \text{c2} \) b5 21 \( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 22 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 23 f3 (Flear). It wouldn’t be too surprising if this were full compensation for the exchange; maybe a quick
pawn-storm in the centre and kingside can get there for White before the mighty bishops coordinate, but I think that would take a lot of time to determine.

b2) 14...h6!? 15 \text{\textit{a}e}3 (15 \text{\textit{b}xc6 h\textit{xg5} is analysed at great length by Steenbekkers, Van Oirschot and Flear, with perhaps the very tiniest of advantages emerging in some lines, but basically it’s just chess, which is not such a bad thing) 15...\textit{d}8 16 \textit{c1} (D) and now:

b21) Flear recommended 16...\textit{x}d4!!' but I’m doubtful. After 17 \textit{x}d4 \textit{x}d4, his line continued 18 \textit{x}d4 \textit{xd}4+ 19 \textit{e}3 \textit{d}8, when Black stands passively but is a pawn up. Flear gives 20 e5 a6 21 \textit{d}3 b5 as ‘unclear’; White may well stand better in that case, but 21...\textit{d}7! with the idea 22 \textit{x}b7 \textit{b}5 apparently ruins the fun. However, there’s a nice line with 18 \textit{d}3! \textit{c}6 19 \textit{x}h6 which ultimately favours White. Black has two alternatives:

b22) First, 16...g5 is logical. If 17 h3 (not the only move), then 17...\textit{f}8 with the idea ...\textit{b}4+ and/or ...\textit{d}6 makes sense because h6 is shielded, but anything can happen here; for example, 18 \textit{x}c6 \textit{bxc6} 19 \textit{f}1 \textit{e}6 20 \textit{d}1 \textit{d}6 21 \textit{x}e6 \textit{x}e6 22 \textit{e}5.

b23) Unfortunately (from our viewpoint), 16...\textit{x}d4! forces a mass-liquidation by 17 \textit{x}d4 \textit{xd}4 18 \textit{x}d4 \textit{xd}4+; compare line ‘b21’. So maybe 13 \textit{c}7 isn’t theoretically advantageous, but there’s no definitive assessment.

We now return to 13 \textit{b}5 (D):

\textbf{13...\textit{a}6}

13...\textit{c}6!? may be best; e.g., 14 \textit{xc6} (14 \textit{hd}1 h6 15 \textit{e}3 \textit{d}8 16 \textit{xc6 bxc6} 17 \textit{e}1 ± with \textit{e}5 in mind; but this is hardly inspiring) 14...bxc6 and now:

a) 15 \textit{f}4 \textit{a}6 16 \textit{e}5 g5! 17 \textit{g}3 f5 is complex.

b) 15 e5!? looks interesting. After 15...\textit{b}8 16 \textit{xc6}, 16...\textit{b}2+ 17 \textit{c}2 \textit{xc2}+ 18 \textit{xc2} \textit{b}7 appears to be enough to draw.

c) 15 \textit{e}3 f6 16 \textit{f}4 e5!? 17 dxe5 fxe5 18 \textit{xe5} \textit{xf}4! 19 \textit{xf}4 g5+ 20 \textit{xxg}5 \textit{xe}5 21 \textit{xc}6 was at most slightly better for White in Volokitin-Moor, Mainz rapid 2007, and certainly not ‘±’, Predojević’s assessment! The bishops are dangerous; e.g., 21...\textit{d}7 22 \textit{c}5 h6+! 23 \textit{h}5! \textit{d}4 24 \textit{d}5 \textit{e}8+ 25 \textit{hxh}6 \textit{xf}2 26 \textit{g}5 \textit{e}3+, etc.

\textbf{14 \textit{a}4 \textit{b}5 15 \textit{b}3 \textit{b}7}

15...a5 16 \textit{c}5 \textit{a}4 and now 17 \textit{d}1! ± is more accurate than 17 \textit{c}2?!, as played in Timofeev-Nepomniashchyy, Russian Ch, Moscow 2011, since 17...\textit{d}7 18 \textit{e}2 \textit{a}6 19 \textit{c}2 doesn’t end in a fork by ...\textit{c}4.

\textbf{16 \textit{d}5 ex\textit{d}5}

Now:

a) Strange to say, 17 ex\textit{d}5 a5 18 \textit{c}7, as played in Y.Vovk-Bezemer, Dieren 2009, could have been well met by 18...\textit{c}8! 19 \textit{d}6 \textit{d}6=.  

b) White can try 17 \textit{xd5} \textit{xd}5 18 ex\textit{d}5 \textit{d}7 (18...\textit{f}6 19 \textit{e}3 \textit{d}8 20 \textit{e}2 =) 19 \textit{c}6 f6 20 \textit{f}4 ±.

Overall, this line is pretty balanced, or a sliver better for White at most. But there are interesting nooks and crannies to investigate for fresh ideas.

\textbf{9.2)}
This is our second repertoire option, similar to $7 \texttt{g5}$ in that it leads to positions of a strategic nature, seldom highly tactical, which is the opposite of so many lines beginning with the main moves $7 \texttt{c4}$ and $7 \texttt{f3}$. Thus, while you are unlikely to win a smashing miniature or even develop a nasty attack right out of the opening, it’s hard to make the kind of mistake that gives you a terrible disadvantage. What’s more, in the variations following $7 \texttt{f4}+$, the pieces tend to stay on the board and we don’t see the type of mass-liquidation that can sometimes occur in the Grünfeld. After $7 \texttt{f4}+$, we have:

9.21: $7...\texttt{d7}$ 189
9.22: $7...\texttt{d7}$ 189
9.23: $7...\texttt{d7}$ 192

Other moves are rare but not necessarily bad:

a) $7...\texttt{c6}$ develops, but blocks the c-pawn, and the desirable $...b6$ is temporarily hindered. $8 \texttt{f3} 0-0$ and now:

a1) $9 \texttt{a3}?! \texttt{g4} 10 \texttt{e2} \texttt{d7} 11 \texttt{d1} (D).

b1) $9 \texttt{e2} c5$ (Black feels that White’s poor queen position justifies his waste of time with $...c6-c5$). $10 \texttt{e3} \texttt{c6}$ ($10...\texttt{xd4} 11 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{c6} 12 \texttt{b1} \pm$) $11 \texttt{c1} \texttt{d7} 12 \texttt{a3} \texttt{a5} (12...\texttt{xd4} 13 \texttt{xd4} e5 14 \texttt{d5} \texttt{d4} 15 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 16 \texttt{e8} 17 \texttt{d3} limits Black’s disadvantage) $13 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xa2} 14 \texttt{d5}! \texttt{xd5} 15 \texttt{exd5} \texttt{a5} 16 \texttt{e8} \texttt{f8} 17 \texttt{d2} \pm$, this isn’t much, but White’s centre restricts Black’s pieces and will at some point advance.

b2) $9 \texttt{e3} c5 10 \texttt{c1}! intends to answer $10...\texttt{c6}?!$ by $11 \texttt{d5}$, so Black might try $10...a6!$ $11 \texttt{e2} \texttt{d7} 12 \texttt{b5} 13 \texttt{c2} \texttt{b7} 14 \texttt{a4} \texttt{xd4} 15 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{b4} 16 \texttt{d5} \pm$.

b3) Since Black wants to play $...c5$, and since $a3$ is a desirable place for White’s queen, White
might play 9 \( \mathcal{Wa}3 \) straightaway. Then it's not clear what Black's plan should be; for example, 9...\( \mathcal{d}d7 \) 10 \( \mathcal{d}d3 \) \( \mathcal{b}b6 \) 11 0-0 \( \mathcal{e}e6 \) 12 \( \mathcal{g}g5 \)∥ or 9...\( \mathcal{g}g4 \)!? 10 \( \mathcal{e}e2 \), when 10...e5 is met by 11 \( \mathcal{g}g5 \)!; while 10...\( \mathcal{xf}3 \) 11 \( \mathcal{xf}3 \) e5 12 0-0 exd4 13 \( \mathcal{d}d1 \) b5 14 \( \mathcal{f}f4 \) \( \mathcal{b}b6 \) 15 e5 dxc3 16 \( \mathcal{w}xc3 \) gives White more than enough compensation for a pawn.

9.21)

7...\( \mathcal{d}d7 \)

This bishop development is thought to be the worst of Black's three major defensive moves, and is given '?' by Svidler, who is the world's most prominent Grunfeld expert. However, Black has an array of options and not everything is worked out by any means.

8 \( \mathcal{W}a3 \) \( (D) \)

There are many alternatives of roughly equal worth:

a) 8...b6 9 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) c5 10 \( \mathcal{g}g5 \)! cxd4 (10...0-0 11 \( \mathcal{d}d1 \) ? h6 12 \( \mathcal{f}f4 \) !± prevents ...\( \mathcal{c}c7 \), but naturally White can set up in many ways; for example, c1 tends to be a good spot for the rook) 11 cxd4 \( \mathcal{d}c6 \) (Czakon-Palekza, Aschach an der Donau 2006) and here I like 12 \( \mathcal{e}e1 \)! intending d5, and with the point that 12...\( \mathcal{x}d4 \)? (12...h6 13 \( \mathcal{f}f4 \) e6 14 d5 \( \mathcal{d}d4 \) 15 \( \mathcal{a}a6 \)!?) 13 \( \mathcal{x}d4 \) \( \mathcal{x}d4 \) 14 \( \mathcal{d}d1 \) favours White.

b) 8...e5?! 9 \( \mathcal{a}a3 \)!? (9 d5! with a pull - Flear; this looks good, as does 9 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) 9...exd4 10 \( \mathcal{x}d4 \)!? (10 cxd4 \( \mathcal{d}c6 \) 11 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) \( \mathcal{g}g4 \) 12 \( \mathcal{b}b5 \) ±) 10...\( \mathcal{f}f6 \) (10...\( \mathcal{x}d4 \) 11 cxd4 \( \mathcal{w}c7 \) 12 \( \mathcal{w}xe7 \)+ \( \mathcal{w}xe7 \) 13 \( \mathcal{d}c1 \) ±) 11 \( \mathcal{d}d1 \) (11 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \)!) 11...\( \mathcal{d}c6 \) 12 \( \mathcal{c}c5 \) \( \mathcal{e}e7 \) 13 \( \mathcal{c}c4 \) b6! 14 \( \mathcal{xe}7 \) \( \mathcal{w}xe7 \) 15 \( \mathcal{w}xe7 \)+ \( \mathcal{w}xe7 \) 16 \( \mathcal{w}xf7 \) \( \mathcal{g}g4 \) 17 f3 \( \mathcal{w}xf7 \) 18 \( \mathcal{x}g4 \) \( \mathcal{e}ae8 \) with equality, M.Gurevich-Manor, Tel Aviv 1989.

c) 8...0-0 9 \( \mathcal{g}g5 \) f6 (9...\( \mathcal{e}e8 \) 10 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) \( \mathcal{g}g4 \) 11 \( \mathcal{x}d2 \)!?) 10 \( \mathcal{h}h4 \) e5 11 \( \mathcal{c}c4 \)+ \( \mathcal{h}h8 \) 12 \( \mathcal{e}e2 \) exd4 13 cxd4 ± c5 14 0-0 \( \mathcal{w}e8 \)!? (Toth-Liptay, Hungarian Team Ch 2011/12) 15 \( \mathcal{d}d5 \)! ±.

9 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) e5 10 \( \mathcal{e}e3 \)

10 d5! \( \mathcal{d}d7 \) 11 c4 (or 11 \( \mathcal{d}d3 \)) may be better still.

10...exd4 11 cxd4 \( \mathcal{w}e7 \) 12 \( \mathcal{w}xe7 \)+ \( \mathcal{d}dxe7 \) \( (D) \)

8...\( \mathcal{e}e6 \)

Ponomariov-Svidler, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2011. Here Flear offers 13 \( \mathcal{c}c1 \)! c6 (after 13...0-0-0 both 14 d5 and 14 \( \mathcal{f}f4 \) favour White) 14 \( \mathcal{c}c4 \) 0-0 and now 15 \( \mathcal{w}e2 \) "with a pleasant enduring edge", although 15 \( \mathcal{e}e5 \) looks better, with the same assessment.

9.22)

7...\( \mathcal{d}d7 \) \( (D) \)
8 \textit{f3}

White can also play 8 \textit{g5} intending \textit{d1}, or 8 \textit{e3}; e.g., 8...0-0 (8...c5 9 \textit{c1} 0-0 10 \textit{f3} \pm) 9 \textit{c1} \textit{f6} 10 \textit{d3} b6 11 \textit{e2} e5?! 12 f3 = Nakamura-Esserman, Orlando 2011.

8...0-0 8...c5 9 \textit{g5} 0-0 transposes into Section 9.221.

9 \textit{g5}

This is the most assertive move, and has some ideas similar to those arising from 7 \textit{g5}. 9 \textit{e3} and 9 \textit{e2} c5 are common alternatives. I see no mention of 9 \textit{b1} anywhere, and yet in some ways it compares well to 9 \textit{g5}, because after 9 \textit{b1} c5 10 \textit{e2} \textit{b6} 11 \textit{wa3} cxd4 12 cxd4, the move 12...\textit{d6}, which is the generic antidote with the moves \textit{g5}, ...h6, and \textit{e3} included, is not effective in view of 13 \textit{e3}! \pm with the idea \textit{a3} in many lines. Probably 9 \textit{b1} is no better or worse than other moves, but this is an area for investigation.

After 9 \textit{g5}, Black has:

9.221: 9...c5 190
9.222: 9...h6 191

9.221)

9...c5 (D)

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

10 \textit{c1}

10 \textit{wa3} is more interesting than theory would suggest:

a) 10...h6 11 \textit{e3} b6 has been considered fine for Black due to 12 \textit{d3} cxd4 13 cxd4 \textit{c5}? (an important theme for Black in this variation), Varga-Navara, Pula 2003. But given Black’s knight on d7 and his slight kingside weakness, White can get a little something from 12 e5! \textit{b7} (12...\textit{c7} 13 \textit{e2} \textit{b7} 14 0-0 with a light edge) 13 \textit{e2} \textit{a6} 14 0-0 \textit{b5} 15 \textit{b2}! \textit{b8} (15...\textit{c7} 16 a4 \textit{bxa4} 17 \textit{xa4} \pm) 16 \textit{d2} \textit{h7} 17 h4 \textit{cxd4} 18 \textit{cxd4} \textit{b6} 19 h5 \textit{c4} 20 \textit{d3} \textit{xf3}! 21 \textit{gxf3} (21 \textit{xf3} \textit{cxe5}) 21...\textit{d7} 22 \textit{h2} \textit{bc8} 23 f4 \pm.

b) 10...\textit{c7} 11 \textit{d3}? (or the natural 11 \textit{c1}; compare our main line) 11...\textit{xd4} 12 \textit{cxd4} \textit{c5} 13 0-0 \textit{xd3} 14 \textit{xd3} with development in return for the bishop-pair; e.g., 14...\textit{g4} 15 \textit{ac1} \textit{wd6} 16 d5 \textit{fc8} 17 h3 \textit{xf3} 18 \textit{xf3} with the idea \textit{w4} and f4 later. Here it’s only fair to emphasize that White’s advantage in most of these lines is small and not enough to discourage Black. The real point is that there’s interesting unbalanced play on the board.

10...\textit{c7}

10...h6 11 \textit{e3} transposes to Section 9.222.

11 \textit{d3} \textit{a6} 12 \textit{wa3} (D)

12 \textit{xe7}? \textit{b6} 13 \textit{wa5} \textit{xe7} 14 \textit{xb6} \textit{g4} gives Black more than adequate counterplay.

12... \textit{e5}

After 12...h6, 13 \textit{e3} is still possible, but White can also play 13 \textit{xe7} \textit{e5} 14 \textit{xe5} \textit{xe7} 15 0-0 \textit{xe7} 16 \textit{xe5} \textit{xf4} 17 \textit{f4} \pm with kingside chances; for example, 18...\textit{e6} 19 f5 \textit{ad8} 20 \textit{fxe6} \textit{xd3} 21 \textit{xf7} \textit{xf7} 22 \textit{fxf7}+ \textit{xf7} 23 e5 and the combination of White’s passed pawn and Black’s exposed king gives White a pull. 12...\textit{e8} 13 0-0 \textit{b6} is well met by 14 \textit{h4} e5 15 \textit{c4} \pm.

13 0-0 \textit{e8}!

Mark Tseitlin’s excellent plan, which may well equalize, but leaves the position full of interest.
14 \( \mathcal{C}c4 \)
This has the idea of occupying d5 as well as capturing twice on e5 and attacking via f4.
14...\( \mathcal{D}b6 \) 15 \( \mathcal{A}b3 \) c4
15...\( \mathcal{L}f8 \)?! 16 \( \mathcal{W}a5 \) ±.
16 \( \mathcal{A}c2 \) exd4
After 16...\( \mathcal{D}d7 \) (Avrukh), White could play 17 \( \mathcal{A}e7! \) exd4 18 \( \mathcal{D}d6 \) \( \mathcal{F}f8 \) 19 \( \mathcal{X}xf8 \) \( \mathcal{X}xf8 \) 20 cxd4 b5 21 \( \mathcal{M}fe1 \) \( \mathcal{B}b7 \) 22 \( \mathcal{W}c3 \) with the idea of a well-timed d5 and/or \( \mathcal{D}e5 \).
17 cxd4 \( \mathcal{D}d7 \)
"The position is very complicated, with mutual chances" – Avrukh. This describes the situation well; e.g., 18 \( \mathcal{W}e3 \) (18 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) b5 19 \( \mathcal{A}a5 \) \( \mathcal{W}f4 \)! 20 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) \( \mathcal{W}c7 \) =; 18 e5 b5 19 \( \mathcal{A}f4 \) \( \mathcal{B}b7 \) 20 \( \mathcal{D}g5 \)?) 18...b5 19 \( \mathcal{A}h6 \) (19 h4?! \( \mathcal{B}b7 \) 20 \( \mathcal{D}f6 \) 21 \( \mathcal{X}xf6 \) \( \mathcal{X}xf6 \) 22 e5) 19...\( \mathcal{B}b7 \) 20 \( \mathcal{A}xg7 \) \( \mathcal{X}xg7 \) 21 d5 with unclear play; obviously both sides have alternative options throughout, White more so than Black.

9.222)

9...h6
In general, I think White profits by having this move in, but it's not always clear.
10 \( \mathcal{A}e3 \) c5
10...b6?! loses the light squares after 11 \( \mathcal{B}b5 \) \( \mathcal{D}f6 \) 12 \( \mathcal{D}e5 \) (12 \( \mathcal{A}c6 \) \( \mathcal{D}d7 \) 13 \( \mathcal{O}xe5 \) \( \mathcal{D}xc6 \) 14 \( \mathcal{D}xc6 \) \( \mathcal{W}d7 \) 15 f3 a6 16 \( \mathcal{W}c4 \) ±) 12...a6 13 \( \mathcal{A}c6 \) \( \mathcal{H}b8 \) 14 f3 ±.
11 \( \mathcal{W}c1 \) (\( D \))

Following the same policy as after 9...c5.
11...\( \mathcal{W}c7 \)
Here Black has the typical set of alternatives (it is useful to compare the lines from Section 9.221, in which the moves ...h6 and \( \mathcal{D}e3 \) are omitted):

a) 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 \( \mathcal{D}b6 \) 13 \( \mathcal{W}b3 \) ! \( \mathcal{G}g4 \) 14 \( \mathcal{A}e2 \) \( \mathcal{D}d6 \) (the difference between inserting ...h6 or not shows up in lines like 14...\( \mathcal{D}xf3 \) 15 \( \mathcal{A}xh3 \) \( \mathcal{X}xd4 \) 16 \( \mathcal{D}xh6 \) ± with the idea h4-h5 – Krasenkov) 15 0-0 \( \mathcal{D}xf3 \) 16 \( \mathcal{A}xd4 \) 17 \( \mathcal{A}xh6 \)?! (17 \( \mathcal{A}xh3 \) !? e5 18 \( \mathcal{A}xh6 \) \( \mathcal{M}fc8 \) 19 h4 ±) 17...\( \mathcal{M}fc8 \) 18 g3 a5 19 \( \mathcal{D}g2 \) \( \mathcal{W}b4 \) (Dzhandzh-gava-Krasenkov, Vilnius 1988) and here 20 \( \mathcal{W}d3 \) is enough for a nice advantage.

b) 11...e5 12 d5! (12 \( \mathcal{D}xe5 \) cxd4 13 cxd4 \( \mathcal{D}xe5 \) 14 dxe5 \( \mathcal{D}d7 \) is supposed to be equal, although 15 \( \mathcal{D}b5 \) \( \mathcal{X}xb5 \) 16 \( \mathcal{W}xb5 \) should result in a modest edge) 12...f5 13 \( \mathcal{A}d3 \) f4 (13...a6 14 c4 \( \mathcal{D}f6 \) 15 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) b6 16 f3 ±) 14 \( \mathcal{A}d2 \) \( \mathcal{D}b6 \) (14...g5 15 h3! precludes a kingside counterattack) 15 \( \mathcal{D}b3 \) \( \mathcal{G}g4 \) 16 c4?! (or 16 \( \mathcal{A}e2 \) ±) 16...\( \mathcal{D}xf3 \) 17 \( \mathcal{G}xf3 \) \( \mathcal{H}f6 \), and here instead of 18 0-0 (Kroes-Nenciulescu, Internet 2009), White should leave open the ideas of \( \mathcal{F}f1 \)-h3 and/or h4-h5 by, say, 18 a4 \( \mathcal{W}e7 \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}b1 \).

c) 11...e6 is solid; for example, 12 \( \mathcal{A}e2 \) (or 12 \( \mathcal{D}d3 \) b6 13 0-0 \( \mathcal{D}b7 \) 14 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \), thinking about e5 and \( \mathcal{A}e4 \) or \( \mathcal{D}e4 \)) 12...b6 13 0-0 \( \mathcal{D}b7 \) 14 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) a6 15 \( \mathcal{W}b3 \) \( \mathcal{W}c7 \) (Belichev-Avrukh, Cappelle la Grande 1999), which Avrukh calls slightly better for White.
12 \( \mathcal{D}d3 \) (\( D \))

12...a6
12...e5 13 0-0 b6 14 \( \mathcal{M}fe1 \) \( \mathcal{B}b7 \) 15 d5 (15 \( \mathcal{B}b5 \)?)!; e.g., 15...a6 16 c4 b5! 17 cxb5 axb5 18 \( \mathcal{W}xb5 \) \( \mathcal{M}fb8 \) 19 \( \mathcal{W}c4 \) \( \mathcal{A}a6 \) 20 \( \mathcal{W}e2 \) \( \mathcal{A}xd3 \) 21 \( \mathcal{W}xd3 \) \( \mathcal{X}xa2 \) 22 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) with a pleasant positional advantage for White.
13 0-0 e6
13...b5 14 \( \text{Wd1} \) \( \text{b7} \) 15 \( \text{Wd2} \) shows another idea unique to \( \ldots \text{h6} \) lines; for example, 15...\( \text{h7} \) (15...\( \text{c7} \) 16 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 17 \( \text{fe1} \) \( \pm \)) 16 a4 c4 17 \( \text{c2} \) \( \pm \). Lines where the centre stays intact like this tend to be slightly better for White.

14 \( \text{Wa3} \)?
Or 14 \( \text{d1} \) b5 15 \( \text{d2} \) h5 16 a4.

14...b6

14...b5 15 \( \text{xb5} \) axb5 16 \( \text{xa8} \) \( \text{b7} \) 17 \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 18 \( \text{d2} \) gives Black compensation, but it doesn’t seem to be quite enough; e.g., 18...\( \text{d5} \) 19 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 20 f3 \( \text{e8} \) 21 \( \text{b3} \).

15 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{b7} \) 16 \( \text{c1} \)

Again this reorganization.

16...\( \text{h7} \) 17 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{fe8} \) 18 \( \text{f4} \)
Dreev-Gofman, USSR Junior Team Ch, Kramatorsk 1989. White has a small but definite advantage in this type of position.

9.23)

7...\( \text{Wd7} \) (D)

This is one of Black’s two favourite moves, and is preferred by Dembo in her treatise on the Grünfeld. This is a rather theoretical line, but I found it amenable to new ideas throughout.

8 \( \text{wb3} \)

Now it’s as if White has played 7 \( \text{wb3} \) and then given Black the move 7...\( \text{d7} \) for free. The former position for White’s queen isn’t bad, but the latter (7...\( \text{d7} \)) gets in the way of the development of Black’s c8-bishop and arguably isn’t the best square for the queen, which normally goes to a5 or c7. Still, 7...\( \text{d7} \) clears the back rank, maintains the pressure on d4, and keeps an eye on the light squares, which are Black’s usual hunting grounds in the Exchange Grünfeld.

8 \( \text{wa3} \) compiled a hugely positive score a decade ago and then almost disappeared – I am not actually sure why! Dembo cites Sevillano-Yermolinsky, Stratton Mountain 1999, which went 8...0-0 9 \( \text{f3} \) b6 10 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{b7} \) (10...c5 is probably more accurate; then 11 \( \text{d1} \) cxd4 12 cxd4 \( \text{b7} \) 13 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d6} \) is a familiar manoeuvre for Black – White’s chances for advantage after 14 \( \text{xd6} \) exd6 15 0-0 look slim, but on the other hand, who would want to be Black here?) 11 \( \text{d3} \) c5. Now instead of that game’s 12 \( \text{d1} \), Szeberenyi-D.Howell, Budapest 2004 went 12 0-0 cxd4 13 cxd4 \( \text{e6} \) 14 \( \text{e1} \) (14 \( \text{e5} \) is more awkward for Black; if 14...\( \text{xe5} \) 15 dxe5 \( \text{c6} \), then 16 \( \text{b5} \) and White’s centralized rooks will cause trouble) 14...\( \text{c6} \) 15 \( \text{ac1} \), with a slight advantage for White; \( \text{b5} \) and \( \text{wa4} \) is one problem. Such positions are manageable for Black, but still not attractive.

8...0-0 (D)

8...b6 9 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b7} \) (9...0-0 10 \( \text{e3} \) transposes to the main line) 10 \( \text{b5} \)? \( \text{c6} \) 11 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{a4} \) 12 \( \text{wa3} \) 0-0 13 0-0 c5! 14 \( \text{e3} \)? (14 \( \text{b1} \) \( \pm \) discourages Black’s main idea...\( \text{b5} \), as does 14 \( \text{g5} \) \( \pm \), threatening \( \text{xe7} \)) 14...\( \text{b5} \) 15 \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{xb5} \) 16 dxc5 \( \text{d6} \) with compensation, M.Anderssen-Kanarek, Krakow 2011.

9 \( \text{e3} \)

9 \( \text{f3} \) is an important move-order. Then after 9...b6, 10 \( \text{e3} \) transposes to the main line of this section while 10 \( \text{b5} \) c6 11 \( \text{e2} \) c5 12 0-0 cxd4! 13 cxd4 \( \text{b7} \) 14 \( \text{we3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 15 \( \text{b2} \) is comfortable for White, but very close to equal.
Alternatively, Black can play 9...c5, when 10 \( \text{\textit{Qe3}} \) transposes to 9...c5 10 \( \text{\textit{Qf3}} \) in the next note, but White might play 10 d5. Surprisingly, the latter move hasn’t been contested much, but might be a promising move-order for White.

9...b6

9...c5 tries to exert pressure upon White’s centre along normal lines; it can be played without ...b6, as seen in the well-known game Kramnik-Giri, Wijk aan Zee 2011: 10 d5!? (10 \( \text{\textit{Qf3}} \) is the natural move, when 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qd1}} \) is unclear; then 12...\( \text{\textit{Qd6}} \) is natural, freeing the c8-bishop and contemplating ...\( \text{\textit{Qb4}} \)+) 10...e6 11 \( \text{\textit{Qc4}} \) exd5 12 \( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qc7}} \) (12...\( \text{\textit{Qa6}} \)?) 13 \( \text{\textit{Qe2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{Qf4}} \)!

9...

\( \text{\textit{b6}} \)

Play continued 14...\( \text{\textit{Qe5}} \) 15 0-0 \( \text{\textit{Qc4}} \) (15...\( \text{\textit{Qb8}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{Qa4}} \) – Fleer; this is White’s planned set-up once the bishop is on d5, although in general it’s best constructed when Black isn’t well-placed to occupy d4) 16 \( \text{\textit{Qb4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qe8}} \) (Flear analyses 16...a5, giving 17 \( \text{\textit{Qb5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qg4}} \) as satisfactory for Black, with the idea 18 \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qf3}} \)++; I think that 17 \( \text{\textit{Qb1}} \) is better, when the same trick leads to a difficult endgame following 17...\( \text{\textit{Qg4}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qf3}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{Qxf3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxf4}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{Qc1}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{Qg3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qb8}} \)? (17...\( \text{\textit{Qb6}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{Qxc4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxc4}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{Qxc4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{Qfd1}} \) and Black had counterplay but White’s extra pawn granted him a small advantage.

We now return to 9...b6 (D):

10 \( \text{\textit{Qf3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qb7}} \)

Dembo suggests 10...\( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \)??, intending a reorganization along the lines of ...\( \text{\textit{Qa5}} \), ...c5, ...\( \text{\textit{Qc7}} \) and ...\( \text{\textit{Qg4}} \) or ...\( \text{\textit{Qe6}} \). There is almost no experience with this, and it’s not clear which of several options is best for White. For example:

\( \text{\textit{a}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{Qc1}} \) and then:

1) 11...\( \text{\textit{Qa5}} \)? 12 \( \text{\textit{Qc2}} \) c5 13 \( \text{\textit{Qd3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qb7}} \) “and Black, with ideas of ...c4 and ...f5, has assumed the initiative” – Dembo. Perhaps, but after 14 0-0, 14...f5 is loosening; for example, 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 exf5 \( \text{\textit{Qxf3}} \) 17 gxf3 \( \text{\textit{Qxf5}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{Qfd1}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qc8}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{Qa4}} \) Also 14...c4 15 \( \text{\textit{Qe2}} \) f5 16 exf5 gives White a small positional edge; for example, 16...\( \text{\textit{Qxf5}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{Qcel}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qaf8}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{Qh4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qf7}} \) 19 f4.

2) 11...\( \text{\textit{Qb7}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qbl}} \) e5 13 d5 \( \text{\textit{Qe7}} \) 14 c4 \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \) and after 15 \( \text{\textit{Qd3}} \) f5 “Black is in the driving seat” (Dembo). But again, that isn’t clear to me, and at any rate, 15 \( \text{\textit{Qd1}} \) looks pleasant for White; e.g., 15...\( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \) (15...\( \text{\textit{Qf5}} \) 16 d6 \( \text{\textit{Qc8}} \) 17 c5) 16 cxd5 \( \text{\textit{Qc8}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{Qb5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qe7}} \) 18 0-0 \( \text{\textit{Qd6}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{Qfd1}} \) ±. None of this is to say, however, that White gets more than a modest edge in these lines.

b) 11 \( \text{\textit{Qd3}} \) is also natural; e.g., 11...\( \text{\textit{Qa5}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qc2}} \) c5 13 0-0 \( \text{\textit{Qxd4}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{Qxd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qb7}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{Qe2}} \) and now 15...\( \text{\textit{Qac8}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{Qfd1}} \) or 15...\( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \)? 16 d5 \( \text{\textit{Qe5}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{Qdxe5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxe5}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{Qac1}} \) ±

c) 11 h4!? with the idea h5 attempts to take advantage of the fact that ...\( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \) not only temporarily releases central pressure and moves away from the kingside, but that it also takes valuable time: 11...\( \text{\textit{Qa5}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qc2}} \) c5 13 dxc5!? \( \text{\textit{Qb7}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{Qbl}} \) bxc5 15 h5 \( \text{\textit{Qe6}} \).

11 \( \text{\textit{Qd3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \)

11...c5 12 0-0 \( \text{\textit{Qd6}} \) (12...\( \text{\textit{Qxd4}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{Qxd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \) and now 14 \( \text{\textit{Qad1}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qac8}} \) 15 d5 \( \text{\textit{Qa5}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{Qb4}} \) was V.Milov-Krasenkow, European Ch, Antalya 2004, but I think 14 \( \text{\textit{Qfd1}} \) is more accurate) 13 \( \text{\textit{Qfd1}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qa5}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{Qc2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxd4}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{Qxd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qac8}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{Qe2}} \) is a typical position with chances for both sides; one new idea is that if Black plays
...e6, White can consider h4-h5 in conjunction with e5. Compare the next note.

12 d1 Qa5 13 wb1 c5 14 0-0 cxd4 15 cxd4 (D)

15...Qac8

15...e6 can weaken the dark squares, although that needn't be too serious; for example, 16 h4!? (16 Qf4 Qac8 17 Qb5 Qe7 18 Qfe1 ± has the idea d5, but reserves e5 as well) 16...Qac8 17 h5 (17 Qc1 is a calmer approach) 17...gxh5!? (a tough decision, as Black eliminates both hxg6 and h6, but of course weakens his position; 17...Qc4! is natural and probably equal - then an ambitious possibility is 18 Qg5?! intending 18...h6 19 Qxc4 Qxc4 20 Qe5 Qxe5 21 dxe5, but this is unclear) 18 d5!? Qc4 (18...exd5?! 19 exd5! f5 20 Qh4 with a strong initiative - Flear) 19 Qd4 f6 (V.Milov-Rowson, French Team Ch, Port Barcares 2005) and here either 20 Qc3 or 20 Qfe1 keeps White in front.

16 d5 Qc4

16...Qd6 can be met by 17 Qc1, intending 17...e6 18 Qd2!.

17 Qd4

Exchanging the bishops makes life a bit more difficult for Black.

17...Qxd4 18 Qxd4 Wxa4 (D)

18...e5 has been assessed as equal, but I disagree:

a) 19 Qf3 f6 and now 20 h3 (I.Sokolov-Krasenkov, British League (4NCL) 2005/6) may be slightly better than 20 Qxc4, as played in the game I.Sokolov-Cheparinov, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010, but 20 Qc1 Qd6 21 Wb4 looks best.

b) I think White still has a meaningful advantage (based upon space) after 19 Wb4! Qd6 20 Qb5!.

19 Qe2!?

19 Qfe1 also presents problems: 19...Qc7 (19...Wxa3 20 Qf1 is slightly better for White; 19...Wb5! 20 Qe2 Qc7 21 Wc1! attacking c4 and eyeing h6; 19...Qc5!? 20 h4 (20 Wb5! Wxb5! 21 Qxb5 Qc5 22 Qc1! Qe5 23 Qe2 a6 24 Qxc5 bxc5 25 Qc3 ±) 20...Qa5 (20...Wb5 21...Qc8 21 h5) 21 Wc1 Qfc8 22 Qxc4 Qxc4 23 Wc3 with excellent attacking chances, V.Milov-Krasenkov, European Ch, Warsaw 2005. Upon 23...Wxa2, 24 Wg5! (Milov) is strong.

19...Qxa3

19...Wxa5 20 Wc1 lets White shift to the kingside.

20 Wb2 Qc2!?

20...Qc5 21 h4 Qc2 ± is more accurate.

21 Qg4! Qc7??

A blunder. White still gets a dangerous attack after 21...Qc5 22 Qe6! fxe6 23 Qxe6+ Qf7 24 Wc5!.

22 Qe6!

White is winning. After 22...fxe6 23 Qxe6+ Qf7 24 Wc5 Qc8 (Khairullin-Kurnosov, Rogaška Slatina 2011), the easiest course was 25 d6! exd6 26 Qxd6, with unstoppable threats.

Yes, that was fun. But in conclusion, I can't emphasize enough that the main goal of both the 7 Qg5 and 7 Wxa4+ variations is not so much to obtain minor theoretical advantages (which is sometimes impossible anyway if Black plays accurately), as to get playable, strategically complex middlegames and endgames, an aim which these variations accomplish better than most.
The common theme in the lines covered in this chapter is that Black plays an early \ldots c5, provoking White to advance by d5. Black has a wide range of ways to handle the resulting situation, the main ones being to gambit by \ldots b5, seeking queenside pressure (Benko Gambit), or to play \ldots e6 and exchange on d5, creating a queenside majority (Modern Benoni). But there are several other options, including lines where Black blocks the centre completely. Therefore I'll hold off on the strategic commentary for now, and discuss themes as and when they become relevant.

The chapter is structured as follows:

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10.2: Benko Gambit 205
10.3: Other Benoni Systems 214

10.1) Modern Benoni

1 d4 \l女性朋友
For lines after 1\ldots c5 2 d5 where the game does not transpose back to a Modern Benoni, see Section 10.31.

2 c4 c5 3 d5 (D)

3\ldots e6

This introduces the Modern Benoni. There are several other moves, some which are liable to transpose back to Modern Benoni lines, while providing additional options along the way, while others head off in different directions entirely:

a) The most important of these lines is 3\ldots b5, the Benko Gambit – see Section 10.2.

b) 3\ldots \lamathe4 is the Vulture – see Section 10.34.

c) 3\ldots d6 4 \lmatc3 and now 4\ldots e5 is covered in Section 10.32, while 4\ldots g6 5 e4 \amatg7 6 h3 0-0 will transpose to King's Indian lines: 7 \amatg5 is 8.23 and 7 \amat e3 is 8.12. There you will find analysis of early \ldots b5 options, for example, in addition to the standard \ldots e6 lines.

d) 3\ldots e5 is a Czech Benoni; see Section 10.32.

e) 3\ldots a6 is answered with the no-nonsense 4 a4 in a substantial majority of grandmaster games. That fits in with White's plans versus just about every conceivable system, and restricts Black's options later; e.g., he may have wanted to play \ldots \lamat a6-c7, and there are lines in which \ldots b5 is played without the support of \ldots a6. That doesn't mean that you can't play 4 \lmatd2, 4 \amatc2 or 4 f3, for example, or even 4 \lmatc3 b5 5 e4!! b4 6 \amat a4 \amatxe4 7 \amat d3 followed by \lmatc5, which appears favourable for White – this is covered in Section 12.55.

f) 3\ldots g6 4 \lmatc3 \amatg7 5 e4 0-0 (for 5\ldots d6 on this or the next move, see the King's Indian chapter – Section 8.12 or 8.23) 6 \amatd3 e6!! is a unique move-order. 7 e5 (this apparently yields some advantage, but the more restrained 7 \amatge2 exd5 8 exd5 can't be bad, and 7 \amatg5 might ultimately transpose to our main line after 7\ldots exd5 8 exd5 d6 9 h3 or 7\ldots d6 8 h3 exd5 9 \lmatx5; in these lines exd5 is also a good option, as we saw in the King's Indian chapter) 7\ldots \lamat e8 8 \amatf3 exd5 9 cxd5 (9 \amatg5!?! f6 10 exf6 \amat xf6 11 \amatxf6 \amatxc6 12 cxd5 d6 13 \amat e2 is an alternative) 9\ldots d6 10 \amatg5 f6 (10\ldots \amatc7 11 exd6 \amatxd6 12 0-0) 11 exf6 \amatxf6 12 \amat h6 (12 \amatf2 \amatg4) 12\ldots \amatg7 13 \amatxg7 \amatxe2 14 h3 \amatxe8+ 15 \amatf2 ±.

4 \lmatc3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 (D)
The Snake Benoni, \(5...\text{d}6\), is covered separately in Section 10.35, as its themes have very little in common with the Modern Benoni.

Black has created the imbalance he sought: he has a queenside majority and a half-open e-file. On the other hand, White has a central majority and the d5-pawn provides him with a space advantage.

\[6\text{ e}4\text{ g}6\text{ }7\text{ }\text{\underline{d}3}\]

This move introduces a modern set-up that has taken over Benoni practice. I don't think there is any profitable way for Black to deviate if White chooses the move-order \(7\text{ h}3\text{ g}7\text{ }8\text{ \underline{d}3}\).

\[7...\text{g}7\]

As on move 3, \(7...\text{a}6\text{ a}4\) doesn't limit White much, since a4 is almost always the main response to \(...\text{a}6\) in the lines below. Black on the other hand has forfeited the possibility of \(\text{\underline{e}a}6-\text{c}7\) or playing \(...\text{b}5\) without the preparatory \(...\text{a}6\).

\[8\text{ h}3\text{ 0-0 }9\text{ \underline{g}5} (D)\]

We have reached our main line. This invites comparison with \(9\text{ \underline{f}3}\), the 'Modern Classical', which can arise from playing \(\text{\underline{f}3}\) on any of moves 4 through to 9. At first sight, White's \(\text{\underline{g}5}\) seems to be a poor substitute for \(\text{\underline{f}3}\), since it fails to help White get castled. On the other hand, White retains the choice between \(\text{\underline{g}e}2\) and \(\text{\underline{f}3}\) as the position requires. Furthermore, White manages to sidestep some of the problems with \(9...\text{b}5\) that have plagued the \(9\text{ \underline{f}3}\) version – or at least great complicated and sharpened its theory.

There's a fair amount of history with the \(\text{\underline{g}5}\) system, but it has the advantage of being little-known (books on the Benoni have neglected it to a large degree), and even the Benoni player who is aware of the existence of \(9\text{ \underline{g}5}\) may nevertheless not have taken it seriously enough to prepare in any depth against it. One reason I've chosen this system is that it is consistent with one of our repertoire options versus the King's Indian Defence, and in fact, if you read that chapter you will see that by playing \(9\text{ cxd}5\) in the main 6 \(\text{\underline{g}5}\) c5 variation, White would actually transpose to this position. Furthermore, in the development of that King's Indian line, we examined many variations which also arise from \(1\text{ d}4\text{ \underline{f}6}\text{ 2 c}4\text{ c}5\text{ 3 d}5\text{ d}6\text{ 4 \underline{c}3}\text{ g}6\text{ 5 e}4\text{ \underline{g}7}\), material that you need to know in order to have a complete repertoire.

Let's jump right in. After \(9\text{ \underline{g}5}\), Black can play:

10.11: \(9...\text{\underline{e}8}\) 197

10.12: \(9...\text{\underline{b}d}7\) 200

10.13: \(9...\text{\underline{h}6}\) 201

10.14: \(9...\text{\underline{d}7}\) 204

Other moves:

a) In the scheme of move-orders I have chosen, the usual \(9...\text{a}6\) is always transpositional; e.g., after \(10\text{ a}4\), \(10...\text{\underline{b}d}7\text{ 11 \underline{f}3}\) and \(10...\text{\underline{e}8}\text{ 11 \underline{f}3}\) are dealt with under the move-orders \(9...\text{\underline{b}d}7\text{ 10 \underline{f}3}\text{ a}6\text{ 11 a}4\) and \(9...\text{\underline{e}8}\text{ 10 \underline{f}3}\text{ a}6\text{ 11 a}4\), respectively.

b) \(9...\text{\underline{e}8}\) (\(D\)) has the idea of unpinning the knight while hitting e4.

White can parry the attack on e4 in a few ways, but the easiest is \(10\text{ \underline{e}2}\) ('!' \text{ECO}; Balashov gives \(10\text{ \underline{g}e}2\text{ c}4\); then \(11\text{ \underline{c}2}\text{ b}5\text{ 12 a}3\) resembles later lines and offers an edge; White could also win a pawn by \(11\text{ \underline{x}f}6\) \(\text{\underline{x}f}6\)
12 $\text{xc}4$, but he'd be on the defensive for some time) 10...a6 11 a4 $\text{bd}7$ 12 $\text{f}3$ $\text{e}5$ 13 0-0 (13 $\text{xe}5$!? $\text{xe}5$ 14 $\text{d}2$ $\text{h}5$!? 15 $\text{g}4$ $\text{xf}6$ 16 a5 $\pm$) 13...$\text{fd}7$ (called '?!' by Balashov, who gives 13...$\text{xf}3$+ 14 $\text{xf}3$ $\text{d}7$; then a sample line is 15 $\text{xe}2$ f5 16 f4 $\text{xf}6$ 17 e5 $\text{h}5$ 18 e6!? $\text{g}3$ 19 $\text{c}2$ $\text{xf}1$ 20 $\text{xf}1$ with more than enough compensation) 14 $\text{d}2$ $\text{xd}3$ 15 $\text{xd}3$ and now, instead of 15...$\text{e}5$ 16 $\text{f}3$ f5 17 f4 $\text{xf}7$ (Spassky-J.Polgar, Budapest (5) 1993), when White stands considerably better after Ftačník's 18 $\text{h}4$!, 15...$\text{h}6$ 16 $\text{h}4$ $\text{e}5$ was suggested. Nevertheless, White still has the advantage after 17 $\text{xe}3$ g5 18 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{xe}5$ 19 $\text{c}4$ $\text{d}7$ 20 a5 $\text{b}5$ 21 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{xe}5$ (not 21...$\text{xf}1$? 22 $\text{g}4$) 22 f4 $\text{xf}4$ 23 $\text{xf}4$ $\text{d}4$ 24 $\text{xd}4$ cxd4 25 $\text{xb}5$ $\text{xb}5$ 26 $\text{f}6$ $\pm$

c) 9...a5 10 $\text{f}3$ ($D$) has some interesting consequences:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image1}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image2}
\end{figure}

10.11)

9..$\text{e}8$ ($D$)

This straightforward move may prove better than playing an early ...$\text{h}6$ and then ...$\text{e}8$. Since White isn't castling next move, Black wants to exert pressure on the e-pawn and set up tactics based upon the e-file; e.g., he threatens 10...$\text{xe}4$! 11 $\text{xe}4$ (11 $\text{xd}8$ $\text{xc}3$+) 11...$\text{xf}5$. In this section I'm not including lines with ...$\text{h}6$, which will be seen in 10.13.

10 $\text{f}3$

White's favourite piece deployment in the Benoni; notice that this protects $g5$.

However, 10 $\text{ge}2$ is also logical and simpler to master. White wants to block the e-file and also keep open the possibility of f4. Without going into heavy details, the game Goldin-Pigusov, Novosibirsk 1993 continued 10...a6 11 a4 $\text{bd}7$ 12 0-0 $\text{b}8$ (12...$\text{e}5$ 13 $\text{c}2$ is unclear) 13 $\text{h}1$ (a little slow; 13 $\text{g}3$! is
White’s best chance for advantage, and 13 a5 b5 14 axb6 \( \text{Kb6} \) 15 a2 is double-edged, with plenty of play for both sides) 13...h6 14 h4 \( \text{Qe5} \) 15 f4 \( \text{Qxd3} \) 16 \( \text{Kxd3} \), assessed as ‘+’ by ECO, but that seems unjustified; it’s a position in which anything can happen, and I think that ‘dynamically equal’ is more accurate.

10...c4
Note that lines with the natural move ...h6 will tend to transpose to Section 10.13 (9...h6), but there are also unique instances. Here are other moves of interest:

a) 10...b5? is better played via 9...h6 10 a.e3 b5, as in Section 10.132, because here 11 \( \text{Kxb5} \) hits the rook on e8.

b) 10...\( \text{Qa6} \) is instructive, because it illustrates what happens if Black isn’t careful to overprotect e5: 11 0-0 h6 12 a.f4 (12 a.e3 c4 13 c2 b5 14 a3 transposes to note ‘c’ to Black’s 13th move in Section 10.131) 12...c4 13 c2 b5 14 a3 \( \text{Wb6} \) 15 \( \text{Wd2} \) h5 16 \( \text{Ke1} \) c5 17 a.h6 a5 18 e5! (D).

This typical central breakthrough is White’s most deadly weapon in these types of position: 18...dxe5 19 \( \text{Ke5} \) f5? (19...\( \text{Qb3} \)!) 20 a.xb3 cxb3 21 b.xg7 \( \text{Wxg7} \) 22 \( \text{Wf4} \) \( \pm \) 20 a.xf5 \( \text{Qb3} \) 21 \( \text{Wf4} \) \( \text{Qaxl} \) 22 b.xg7 \( \text{Wxg7} \) 23 a.xal b4 (23...gx5 24 a.g5+ \( \text{Qf8} \) 25 h6+ \( \text{g8} \) 26 c6 is winning for White) 24 a.a4 a.b8 25 a.e6! ++ G.Grigore-Florea, Romanian Ch, Bucharest 1998, with the idea 25...fxe6 26 a.g5.

c) 10...a6 11 a4 and now 11...\( \text{Qbd7} \) transposes to Section 10.12. After 11...\( \text{Wb6} \)?!, 12 0-0 \( \text{Wxb2} \) 13 a.c1 \( \text{Qbd7} \) 14 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Wb6} \) 15 a.c4 \( \text{Wc7} \) 16 f4 gave White an attack in the game Beliavsky-Striković, Čačak 1997. Of course, White doesn’t have to commit so much, and 12 \( \text{Wc2} \) offers him a safe edge.

11 a.c2 b5 (D)

12 a3
To stop ...b4. Obviously bad are 12 a.xb5? \( \text{Wxa5} \) 13 a.c3 a.xe4 and 12 d.d4? a.xe4. Nevertheless, White often has a choice and can allow ...b4, counting upon his superior development, by 12 0-0?!. I think this deserves serious attention:

a) 12...b4 13 a.xb5 h6 14 a.xf6 a.xf6 15 d.d2 c3! (15...a.xb2 16 a.xb4 a.xal 17 a.xal a5 18 \( \text{Wxd6} \) \( \pm \) 16 bxc3 a.a6 17 c4! a.xal 18 a.xal a.xb5 19 cxb5 a6! (19...a5 20 e5! dxe5 21 \( \text{Wxh6} \) 20 a.xh6 a.d7 21 b6 a.xb5 22 e5! dxe5 23 c.g5 a.6f6 24 a.h7+ c.f8 25 d6 e4 26 a.b3 \( \pm \) offers White a pleasant initiative; a.b3 and d7 are thematic moves.

b) 12...h6 13 a.xf6! a.xf6 14 d.d2. The exchange on f6 is normally bad, but White has such a lead in development and central play that it works here; e.g., 14...a.a6 (14...g.g7 15 a.xb5 a.xb2?! 16 a.ab1 a.g7 17 a.6f4) 15 e5! a.xe5 16 a.xe5 a.xe5 17 a.xh6 \( \pm \).

12...\( \text{Qd7} \)
This idea will be seen again in 10.14; Black wants to get developed and reserve the possibility of ...a5 and ...b4. Here 12...h6 13 a.e3 transposes to Section 10.131, while 12 a.b7 13 0-0 apparently doesn’t leave Black with anything better than 13...a6, transposing to line ‘a’ below. Other moves:

a) 12...a6 13 0-0 a.b7 14 a.e1 a.b7 15 d.d2 \( \text{Wb6} \) 16 a.e3 (D) pits White’s central space and control of d4 versus Black’s queenside majority attack and his mostly active pieces.
We see this kind of position with the inclusion of ...h6 in 10.13. It is in a sort of dynamic equilibrium, but White's practical chances are probably better, since they are based upon central and kingside action. There are too many directions in which play can go, so I'll give a couple of examples and refer you to that section for more themes:

a1) 16...\(\text{\&}c7\) 17 \(\text{\&}d4\) (another approach is 17 \(\text{\&}h6\) \(\text{\&}ac8\) 18 \(\text{\&}ad1\) \(\text{\&}b6\) 19 \(\text{\&}xg7\) \(\text{\&}xg7\) 20 \(\text{\&}d4\) \(\text{\&}e7\) 21 \(\text{\&}f4\) ±) 17...\(\text{\&}ac8\) 18 \(\text{\&}h2\)! \(\text{\&}c5\) 19 \(\text{\&}ad1\) \(\text{\&}a8\)!? 20 f4 \(\text{\&}b8\) and here 21 \(\text{\&}g4\) was complicated and obscure in Yermolinsky-Wedberg, New York 2000, but 21 f5 is an attractive try, since Black's pieces are some distance from the kingside. White will reorganize with \(\text{\&}fl\) and \(\text{\&}de1\), which makes it difficult for Black to shift his pieces and use his e5 outpost. This kind of position is more dependent upon the skill of the players, however, than upon an unstable theoretical assessment.

a2) 16...\(\text{\&}c5\) 17 \(\text{\&}d4\) \(\text{\&}fd7\) 18 \(\text{\&}xg7\) \(\text{\&}xg7\) 19 \(\text{\&}e3\) \(\text{\&}g8\) 20 \(\text{\&}ae1\) is probably about even, but the weakness of the squares around Black's king makes his defence a bother; e.g., 20...\(\text{\&}e5\) 21 \(\text{\&}xe5\) \(\text{\&}xe5\) 22 f4 \(\text{\&}e7\) 23 \(\text{\&}h2\) a5 24 f5! with a promising attack, Bochev-Betker, corr. 2007.

These are just examples, of course; one advantage of this variation is that the positions are relatively unexplored and full of possibilities.

b) 12...\(\text{\&}a6\) is an important attempt either to support ...b4 or to get the knight into the action via c5. 13 0-0 (D) and now:

b1) 13...b4?! 14 axb4 \(\text{\&}xb4\) 15 \(\text{\&}a4\) \(\text{\&}d7\) (15...\(\text{\&}f8\) 16 \(\text{\&}b5\) ±) 16 \(\text{\&}d2\) ±.

b2) 13...\(\text{\&}b8\) 14 \(\text{\&}d4\) \(\text{\&}d7\) 15 \(\text{\&}c6\) \(\text{\&}xc6\) 16 dxc6 ± Chow-Dejmek, Dallas 1996.

b3) 13...\(\text{\&}b6\) 14 \(\text{\&}d2\) \(\text{\&}c5\) 15 a4 \(\text{\&}a6\) 16 axb5 \(\text{\&}xb5\) 17 \(\text{\&}e2\) ±.

b4) 13...\(\text{\&}c5\) 14 \(\text{\&}e1\) (14 \(\text{\&}d2\) has also been played with fair success) 14...h6 (14...\(\text{\&}b6\) 15 \(\text{\&}d2\) a5 16 e5! \(\text{\&}xe5\) 17 \(\text{\&}xe5\) and here instead of 17...\(\text{\&}f5\)?, as played in Rogozenko-Marin, Bucharest 1993, Knaak suggests 17...\(\text{\&}b7\) 18 \(\text{\&}ad1\) ±) 15 \(\text{\&}f4\) \(\text{\&}b7\) and now 16 \(\text{\&}d2\) was very messy in Delemarre-Avruch, Wijk aan Zee 2000. Avrukh's 16 \(\text{\&}c1\) a5 17 \(\text{\&}xb5\) \(\text{\&}xe4\) 18 \(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}xe4\) looks better, as long as you play 19 a4! ±; White's pieces are better overall and Black's d-pawn is in trouble. 13 0-0 a5 (D)
... \( \text{Db3} \). Then 19 \( \text{Dxa4} \) produces a modest plus after 19...\( \text{Dxd5} \) (19...\( \text{Dxa4} \) 20 \( \text{Dxe4} \) ±) 20 \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{Dxe3} \) 21 \( \text{Dxe3} \) \( \text{Dxe8} \) 22 \( \text{Dd2} \).

b) The alternative approach is 14 \( \text{Dc1} \) \( \text{Dc6} \) (14...\( \text{Wc8} \) 15 \( \text{Dd4} \) \( \text{Dd7} \) 16 \( \text{Df3} \) ± \( \text{Dh5} \) 17 \( \text{Dxf5} \) \( \text{Dxe5} \) 18 \( \text{exf5} \) \( \text{Dxe1} \) 19 \( \text{Dxe1} \) \( \text{Dxe5} \) 20 \( \text{g4} \) ± Dumitrache-Popa, Romanian Team Ch, Baile Tusnad 1997). Now 15 \( \text{e5} \), queried by Hazai, is in fact good provided that White answers 15...\( \text{Dxe5} \) with 16 \( \text{Dd5} \) \( \text{Dh6} \) (16...\( \text{Wb6} \)?! 17 \( \text{Dxe5} \) \( \text{Dc5} \) 18 \( \text{Df3} \) \( \text{Dxd6} \) 19 \( \text{Dad1} \) \( \text{Dd6} \) 20 \( \text{Df5} \) \( \text{Dxf5} \) 21 \( \text{Dxf7}+ \) \( \text{Dh8} \) 22 \( \text{Dxd5} \) and White wins) 17 \( \text{Dh4} \) b4 18 \( \text{a3} \) (18 \( \text{Dd5} \) \( \text{g5} \) 19 \( \text{Dxe7}+ \) \( \text{Dxe7} \) is more complex) 18...\( \text{Dxe5} \) 19 \( \text{Dxe5} \) \( \text{Dd6} \) 20 \( \text{Dc1} \) \( \text{Dd5} \) 21 \( \text{Dxd5} \) \( \text{Dxe1} \) 22 \( \text{Dxe1} \) \( \text{Dd7} \) 23 \( \text{g3} \) ±.

10.12)

9...\( \text{Dbd7} \) (D)

This tends to transpose to 9...\( \text{Dc8} \) or 9...\( \text{h6} \) lines.

As usual, 11 0-0 \( \text{b5} \) 12 \( \text{a3} \) (or 12 \( \text{Dd2} \)) 12...\( \text{c4} \) 13 \( \text{Dc2} \) is possible, but this time I’ll focus upon queenside restraint.

11...\( \text{Dc8} \)

11...\( \text{Wc7} \) 12 \( \text{Dc1} \) \( \text{Db8} \) 13 0-0 \( \text{c4} \) 14 \( \text{Dc2} \) \( \text{b5} \) 15 \( \text{b4} \) is a typical way to block Black’s queen-side advance in the Benoni, worth remembering for other situations.

12 0-0 \( \text{h6} \)

12...\( \text{Wc7} \) 13 \( \text{Dc1} \) \( \text{Dc8} \) 14 \( \text{Dc1} \) ? \( \text{c4} \) 15 \( \text{Df1} \) \( \text{b5} \) 16 \( \text{AXB5} \) \( \text{AXB5} \) 17 \( \text{Dd4} \) \( \text{Dad8} \) 18 \( \text{b4} \) ± \( \text{cxb3} \) 19 \( \text{Dcxb5} \) \( \text{Dxb6} \) 20 \( \text{Dc6} \) \( \text{Wxa5} \) 21 \( \text{Dxb3} \) \( \text{Wa4} \) –– Avrukh-Berend, Groningen 1993.

13 \( \text{Dc3} \) g5 14 \( \text{Dc1} \)

Or 14 \( \text{Dd2} \), with the standard ideas.

14...\( \text{g4} \)

14...\( \text{Df8} \)?! just asks for 15 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 16 \( \text{Dxe5} \) ±.

15 \( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{Dxg4} \) 16 \( \text{Df4} \) (D)

16...\( \text{Df6} \)

16...\( \text{Df6} \) could be countered by 17 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) (17...\( \text{Dxe5} \) 18 \( \text{Dxe5} \) \( \text{Dxe5} \) 19 \( \text{Dxe5} \) 20 \( \text{Dxe5} \) \( \text{Df3} \) and \( \text{Dc4} \) or \( \text{Dc1} \) next) 18 \( \text{Dc8} \) with great activity; for example, 18...\( \text{Dg6} \) 19 \( \text{Dxg6} \) \( \text{Dxg6} \) 20 \( \text{Dd6} \), etc.

17 \( \text{Dg3} \) \( \text{Dc5} \) 18 \( \text{Dc2} \) (D)

18...\( \text{Dxf3} \) ?

18...\( \text{Dg6} \) is better, although 19 \( \text{a5} \) ± keeps White in control.

19 \( \text{gxh6} \)

White has a significant advantage. Yermolinsky-J.Watson, Chicago 2003 went 19...\( \text{Dxe5} \) 20 \( \text{Dd4} \) \( \text{Dd4} \) 21 \( \text{Dd3} \) \( \text{Dd4} \) and here 22 \( \text{a5} \) was good, but 22 \( \text{e5} \) would have been practically decisive.
Just about every line above can be played with the interpolation of ...h6 and \( \text{Be}3 \). In general, it's a nice trade-off for White (the bishop is well-placed and the h6-pawn can be vulnerable), but Black is out of the pin and that presents him with some new opportunities. Two lines are the most critical:

10.131: \( 10...\text{Be}8 \) 201
10.132: \( 10...\text{b}5! \) 203

The alternatives often resemble lines from previous sections, but there are some unique features involving ...h6:

a) \( 10...\text{a}6 11 \text{a}4 \) (or \( 11 \text{xf}3 \text{b}5 12 \text{0-0} \pm \), as we've seen in other variations) \( 11...\text{bd}7 12 \text{xf}3 \text{bb}8 13 \text{wd}2 (13 \text{0-0}! \text{with the idea } 13...\text{b}5 14 \text{axb}5 \text{axb}5 15 \text{xf}5 \text{xe}4 16 \text{a}7) 13...\text{h}7 (13...\text{b}5!? 14 \text{axb}5 \text{axb}5 15 \text{axh}6 \text{b}4 16 \text{Be}2 \text{e}8 - Rogozenko; Black has some compensation, though perhaps not enough for full equality) 14 \text{f}4! (14 \text{0-0} \text{b}5) 14...\text{e}8 15 \text{0-0} \text{with a slight advantage for White, Rogozenko-Stefanov, Eforie 1993).}

b) \( 10...\text{d}7 11 \text{xf}3 (11 \text{a}4 \pm) 11...\text{b}5 12 \text{wd}2 (12 \text{0-0} \text{e}8 13 \text{a}3 \pm) 12...\text{e}8 13 \text{axh}6 \text{b}4 14 \text{xf}7 \text{xf}7 15 \text{c}2 \text{xe}4 16 \text{xe}4 \text{xe}4 17 \text{0-0} \text{f}6? (17...\text{e}8 18 \text{g}3 \pm 18 \text{g}3 \pm \text{xf}4 19 \text{xf}1 \text{xf}3 (Yermolinsky-MacIntyre, Philadelphia 2002) and now 20 \text{e}4! \text{wh}4 21 \text{gxf}3 wins).

c) \( 10...\text{a}6 11 \text{wd}2 \text{h}7 12 \text{ge}2!? (I like 12 \text{xf}3 because one of White’s goals after ...\text{a}6-c7 is to enforce e5) 12...\text{c}7 13 \text{a}4 \text{b}6 14 \text{d}7 15 \text{ab}1 (15 \text{f}4 \text{fe}8 16 \text{c}4) 15...\text{a}5!? (Chernin-Kaminski, Polanica Zdroj 1992; 15...\text{wh}7 16 \text{b}4 \pm) and now most moves are fine, but Chernin recommends 16 \text{f}4! with an advantage, presumably to be followed by \( \text{g}3 \).

10.131)

10...\text{Be}8 (D)

11 \text{xf}3

11 \text{ge}2 is a natural option, even if it doesn’t cover e5: \( 11...\text{bd}7 12 \text{g}3 \text{a}6 13 \text{a}4 \text{e}5 14 \text{e}2 \text{h}7 15 \text{0-0} \text{wh}4 \text{(! Yermolinsky). Now instead of } 16 \text{h}1?! (Yermolinsky-Sherzer, USA Ch, Durango 1992) 16...\text{f}5, \text{Yermolinsky suggests } 16 \text{we}1 \text{with the idea } 16...\text{f}5 17 \text{f}4 (I like 17 \text{exf}5! \text{xf}5 18 \text{d}1 \pm 17...\text{f}7 18 \text{d}3. \text{Then } 18...\text{fxe}4 19 \text{cxe}4 \text{gives White a plus, because } 19...\text{xb}2 20 \text{a}2 \text{g}7 21 \text{bl}! \text{d}7 22 \text{e}2 \text{b}5 23 \text{f}5! \text{xf}5 24 \text{xf}5 \text{gxf}5 25 \text{xf}5 \pm \text{yields both attacking chances and a positional advantage.}

11...\text{c}4 12 \text{c}2 \text{b}5 13 \text{a}3 (D)

This has been a very popular position with an extraordinary winning percentage for White (19 wins, 8 draws, and 2 losses in my database, with a 400 point performance rating advantage!). Although many of the games are competitive, it appears that giving up d4 is too high a price to pay for a queenside attack that turns out to be ineffective.

13...\text{a}5

Black tries to react aggressively before he is squeezed by White’s space advantage. This has been a popular move but is rather loosening.
Most other moves lead to positions with a similar set of themes:

a) 13...\texttt{b7} 14 0-0 \texttt{a6} resembles line 'd' below; e.g., 15 \texttt{d2} \texttt{h7} 16 \texttt{f1} \texttt{bd7} 17 \texttt{d4} \texttt{c7} 18 \texttt{e2} \texttt{ad8} 19 \texttt{a1} \texttt{b8} 20 \texttt{a2} (20 \texttt{e3}!?) 20...\texttt{e7} (Moldovan-Bartel, Litomysl 2005) and now the consistent 21 \texttt{b4} or 21 \texttt{a4} \texttt{de8} 22 axb5 axb5 23 \texttt{b4} would keep Black under pressure.

b) 13...\texttt{d7} 14 0-0 \texttt{a6} 15 \texttt{d2} \texttt{h7} 16 \texttt{e1} \texttt{c7} 17 \texttt{d4} (or 17 \texttt{f4}!?) 17...\texttt{e5}! 18 \texttt{e5} \texttt{dxe5} 19 \texttt{xd7} \texttt{g8} 20 \texttt{xd7} \texttt{g8} 21 \texttt{b4} \texttt{g7} 22 \texttt{d4} +– Atalik-Vasilievich, Cappelle la Grande 1997; Black will lose the c-pawn as well.

c) 13...\texttt{a6} 14 0-0 \texttt{b4}?! (an aggressive pawn sacrifice for activity) 15 axb4 \texttt{cxb4} and although 16 \texttt{xax7} \texttt{xax7} 17 \texttt{a7} \texttt{xh3}! 18 \texttt{xe3} \texttt{xc2} 19 \texttt{xc2} should have resulted in some advantage for White in Comas Fabrego-Aкопian, Ubeda 2001, 16 \texttt{d2}! is better and safer; e.g., 16...\texttt{exc2}?! (16...\texttt{f6} 17 \texttt{d4} \texttt{xh3} 18 \texttt{b5}! \texttt{g7} 17 \texttt{b2} \texttt{e7} 18 \texttt{f1} \texttt{b7} 19 \texttt{xc4} with a winning position for White.

d) The lines after 13...\texttt{a6} 14 0-0 \texttt{bd7} (D) illustrate several of White's key ideas:

d1) Here's a salutary lesson about the power of White's \texttt{e5} advance: 15 \texttt{e1} \texttt{c7} 16 \texttt{d2} \texttt{h5} 17 \texttt{ad1} \texttt{c5} 18 \texttt{d4} \texttt{d7} 19 \texttt{f4} \texttt{h7} 20 \texttt{xe7} \texttt{g7} 21 \texttt{e5} and Black is lost! Flear-Salsado, Castellar 1996 continued 21...\texttt{xe5} 22 \texttt{exf5} \texttt{xf6} 23 \texttt{d6} \texttt{d8} 24 \texttt{xd5} \texttt{c8} 25 \texttt{d7} \texttt{g6} 26 \texttt{g3} \texttt{xe7} 27 \texttt{dxe7} \texttt{xe7} 28 \texttt{xe6} and White won.

d2) 15 \texttt{d2} \texttt{h7} 16 \texttt{ae1} (16 \texttt{f1} \texttt{c7} 17 \texttt{ad1} \texttt{b7} 18 \texttt{d4}; both 16 \texttt{d4} and 16 \texttt{d4} are good alternatives) 16...\texttt{c7} 17 \texttt{d4} \texttt{c5}?! (these positions aren't horrible for Black but it takes patience to play them; better is 17...\texttt{g8} 18 \texttt{e2} \texttt{b7} 19 \texttt{f1} and White has a slight advantage) 18 \texttt{e5}! \texttt{xe5} 19 \texttt{xe5} \texttt{d8} 20 \texttt{d4} \texttt{xe1}?! (20...\texttt{d6}) 21 \texttt{f6} \texttt{d6} (1.Sokolov-M.Nils, Swedish Team Ch 2001/2) and now the clearest method is 22 \texttt{xc4}! \texttt{g8} 23 \texttt{xe3} ± with the idea 23...\texttt{ed7} 24 \texttt{xf7}! \texttt{xf7} 25 \texttt{f6}+ \texttt{xe6} 26 \texttt{dxe6}+ \texttt{g8} 27 \texttt{xc6}.

\texttt{14 \texttt{b5} \texttt{xe4} 15 0-0 (D)}

B

\texttt{15 \texttt{a6}}

This is the best way to keep things moving. Otherwise:

a) 15...\texttt{xb2} is well met by 16 \texttt{xh6}! \texttt{h8} (16...\texttt{xal}?! 17 \texttt{f6} 16 \texttt{d4}) 17 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{e4} 18 \texttt{e1} ±.

b) 15...\texttt{d7} 16 \texttt{f4} (or 16 \texttt{a4} ±) 16...\texttt{a6} 17 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{e4} (17...\texttt{b5} 18 \texttt{f3}! \texttt{b8} 19 \texttt{b1} ±) 18 \texttt{d6} \texttt{h4} (18...\texttt{g4} 19 \texttt{c2}?! 20 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 21 \texttt{f7}! \texttt{xf7}! \texttt{xf7} 22 \texttt{xc4}) was played in the game Gyimesi-J.Horvath, Hungarian Ch, Balatonlelle 2002, when White's best
course would have been 19 ¤xc4! ¤xh3 20 \\
\_c6! ©c7 21 f4! ±.

16 ©fd4 ©xb5

White also stands better following 16...©c5
17 ©d2 ©xb5 18 ©xb5 ©b6 (18...©ba6 19 \\
\_xh6 ±) 19 a4 ±.

17 ©xb5 ©xb2

Now:

a) 18 \_bl \_g7 19 ©f3 takes the initiative.
White will recover the pawn; for instance, 
19...©f6 20 ©f4! ©e5 21 ©xc4 ©bd7 (not 
21...©xd5? 22 ©e4 ©xe3 23 fxe3 d5 24 ©bd1) 
22 ©xd6 ±.

b) 18 ©xh6 (D) and then:

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

b1) 18...©c3 19 ©xc3 ©xc3 20 ©a4! ©e5
21 ©c1 ©b2 22 ©xc4 ± Kizov-Omeri, Venice 
2010.

b2) After 18...©h4, the game I.Ivanisević-
Stefanopoulos, Panormo Zonal 1998 continued 
19 ©b1 ©c3 20 ©xc3 ©xc3 21 ©c1 ©e5 22 \\
\_g5 ©d4 23 ©d1 ©a7 24 ©a4 ©c8 25 h4.

White's bishops have gained excellent range
and now he attacked the already weakened
kingside: 25...c3 26 ©c2 ©a6 27 ©h5 ©c4? (after 
27...©c5 28 ©e3! ©g7 29 hxg6 fxg6 30 ©d4 \\
©e7 31 ©e1 ©xa4 32 ©xa4 it will be difficult
to save the c-pawn; e.g., 32...©c7 33 ©b6! c2 34 \\
©c6 ©xc6 35 ©xc6 28 ©c6! ©b8 29 hxg6 \\
©xb1 30 ©xb1 ©c5 31 ©e8 fxg6 32 ©xg6+ ©g7 33 ©f6 ©a6 34 ©e1 ©f8 35 ©e7+ 1-0.
35...©xe7 36 ©xe7 ©xe7 37 ©e6+ and mate
next move.

10.132)

10...b5!? (D)

Rarely if ever played, theoreticians and an-
notators don't take this move seriously, but
White needs to play accurately:

11 ©xb5

11 e5 hasn't been played or mentioned as
far as I know, but it deserves consideration:
11...©f7! (11...©xe5 12 ©xe5 b4! 13 ©xb4 \\
©e8 14 ©b5 ©d7 15 a4! ±) 12 ©d3 (12 ©e5
13 ©xb5 c4! 14 ©f3 ©d3+ 15 ©f1 fxex6 16 \\
©d2 with a mess; dynamic equality seems a
fair assessment) 12...©d6 13 ©b5 a6 14 ©c7 ©a7 \\
15 ©b3 ©f6 16 ©d1 ®h8! (16...©xd6 17 ©e6 ±; 
16...©xb2 17 ©xb2 ®xe2 18 ©f3 ©g7 19 \\
0-0 ±) 17 ©e6 fxex6 18 dxex ©c6! 19 exd7 \\
©xd7 20 ©e2 ©d4 21 ©c4 ©xd4 22 0-0 ©a7 \\
23 ©xd4 ©xd4 24 ©xd4+ ©xd4 25 ©d1 and
White's advantage is minimal, although it's cer-
tainly worth playing out.

11...©a6!?

Or:

a) 11...©xe4?! 12 ©xe4 ©a5+ 13 ©c3 \\
©xc3+ 14 bxex ©xc3+ 15 ©f1 ©a6+ 16 ©e2 \\
©xe2+ 17 ©xe2 ©f5 (Atalik-Derieux, Groningen 
1999) 18 ©c2! leaves White a piece ahead for
insufficient compensation.

b) 11...©e8 12 ©c3 ©a5 (12...©xe4?! 13 \\
©xe4 f5 is well met by 14 ©c3! f4 15 ©xg6 \\
©e7 16 ©g2! fxex3 17 0-0 ±) 13 ©d2 ©bd7! \\
(13...©a6 14 ©g2 ©b4 15 ©bl ©a6 16 0-0 \\
©d3 17 b3 ©h5 18 a3 ©d8 19 ©a2 ±; 13...©a6 \\
14 ©c2 ©d7 15 ©g2 ©e5 16 0-0 ©d3 17 b3 \\
±) 14 ©g2 ©e5 15 ©c2 ©c4 16 0-0! ©xb2 ©xe2 \\
17 ©c1 ©a6 (17...©c4 18 ©xh6 ±) 18 ©xb2 ©xe2 \\
19 ©f1 ©c4 20 ©a4 ©ed8 21 ©c6 ±.

c) 11...c4 12 ©c ©a6 13 ©e2 ©e8 14 \\
©bc3 (14 ©ec3! ±) 14...©b8 15 ©b1 ©b4 16 \\
0-0 ©e7 17 f3 ©h5 (Poluliahkov-Chigvintsev,
Krasnodar 1997) 18 $\text{a}4$! offers White a substantial advantage.

12 $\text{e}2$!

12 a3 $\text{e}8$ 13 $\text{c}3$ is an alternative.

12...$\text{b}8$ 13 0-0 $\text{w}d7$ 14 $\text{dec}3$! (D)

14 $\text{bc}3$ is also better for White, with the idea 14...$\text{a}xb2$ 15 $\text{wc}1$.

14...$\text{cxb4}$ 15 $\text{e}2$! $\text{e}8$ 16 a3 a6 17 $\text{axb4}$

Gulko-Sherzer, USA Ch, Durango 1992. This is called 'unclear' in various sources, but 22 $\text{w}d2$! $\pm$ wins the b- or h-pawn, and 22...$\text{g}3$ 23 $\text{f}e1$ $\text{xe}2+$ 24 $\text{xe}2$ g5 25 $\text{c}1$! (25 $\text{xb4}$ $\text{xc}4$ 26 $\text{el}$ $\pm$) 25...$\text{d}7$ 26 $\text{xb4}$ doesn’t help matters.

In general, this line affords White a modest advantage if Black plays accurately, and there’s a lot of unexplored territory.

10.14)

9...$\text{d}7$ (D)

This rather eccentric move meets with the approval of some theoreticians, although White appears able to come out with his standard advantage. Black’s first idea is ...b5.

10 $\text{f}3$

Some players will prefer to clamp down on ...b5, and that should leave White in good shape as well. 10 a4 $\text{a}6$ 11 $\text{f}3$ and now:

a) 11...$\text{w}b6$?! 12 $\text{bl}$?! (or 12 $\text{b}1$ $\text{b}4$) 12...$\text{b}4$ gives White a choice between 13 $\text{e}2$ and 13 0-0 $\text{xd}3$ 14 $\text{xd}3$ $\text{f}e8$ 15 $\text{d}2$ $\pm$ with $\text{c}4$ coming next. White’s space and pressure on d6 and e5 mean more than the bishops; e.g.,

15...$\text{xc}7$ 16 $\text{c}4$ a6 17 $\text{xf}6$! (17 $\text{f}4$ $\text{f}8$ 18 a5 $\text{b}5$ 19 $\text{xb5}$ axb5 20 $\text{b}6$ gives White a slight edge) 17...$\text{xf}6$ 18 $\text{g}3$ $\text{e}5$ 19 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{xe}5$ 20 $\text{f}4$ $\text{ee}8$ 21 $\text{f}5$! with kingside threats.

b) 11...$\text{b}6$ and here:

b1) 12 0-0 $\text{xd}3$?! 13 $\text{wd}3$ is nice for White, so Black should wait on the exchange, while White can play $\text{f}e1$ and think about e5, as well as $\text{c}4$ or $\text{f}1$.

b2) Another move is 12 $\text{e}2$, when after 12...h6, the best way to play it is 13 $\text{h}4$, so that Black has to create weaknesses if he wants to put the centre under pressure; e.g., 13...$\text{e}8$ 14 $\text{d}2$ $\text{wc}7$ 15 0-0 with the idea of $\text{g}3$ and $\text{c}4$, as well as clamping down on the queenside. Black’s knight on b4 can sometimes just be out of play.

b3) 12 $\text{bl}$!? (ambitious) 12...$\text{e}8$ 13 0-0 a6 14 $\text{wd}2$ (perfectly good, but 14 $\text{f}e1$ $\pm$ is more flexible, as tends to be true in all these lines; the queen ‘may end up somewhere else) 14...b5?! (14...$\text{b}6$) 15 $\text{f}4$ $\text{e}7$ 16 $\text{d}1$? $\text{d}5$ 17 $\text{wd}2$ (17 $\text{h}2$! $\pm$ keeps an eye on d6) 17...$\text{f}6$?! (17...$\text{f}8$ 18 axb5 $\text{xb}5$ 19 $\text{f}1$) 18 $\text{c}3$ f5 19 exf5 gxf5 (Potapov-Baryshpolets, Pardubice 2007) and now White can get a clear advantage by 20 axb5 axb5 21 $\text{xa}8$ $\text{xa}8$ 22 $\text{e}1$ $\text{f}8$ 23 $\text{g}5$!; in view of 23...f4 24 $\text{xe}7$+ $\text{h}8$ 25 $\text{c}5$ dxc5 26 $\text{g}6$.

10...b5 11 a3

11 0-0 c4 12 $\text{c}2$ $\text{e}8$ (12...b4?! 13 $\text{de}2$ $\pm$ Müller) 13 a3 transposes to Section 10.11.

11...c4 12 $\text{c}2$ $\text{a}6$ 13 0-0 b4 14 axb4 $\text{xb}4$ 15 e5 dx$e$ 16 $\text{xe}5$

Black has weaknesses on the queenside and the d-pawn is dangerous, though White should only be a little better at this point. The game
P. Vargha-Sikora Lerch, Slovakian Team Ch 1998/9 went 16...h6 17 h4 dxc2 18 wxc2 f5 19 a4 g5?! 20 c6 d7 21 g3 ± (21...d3 22 fe1 fe8 23 xe8+ xe8 24 w6+! and b7) 22 xe4 xe4 23 xc4 fe8 24 ad1 xb2 25 fe1 f5. Now 26 d6! is the clearest way to secure White's virtually winning position.

10.2) Benko Gambit

1 d4 f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 (D)

This is the Benko Gambit, which has stood the test of time for the 40 years or so since it really began to take hold. At the moment there are few systems that really threaten to get a meaningful advantage against the Benko. The currently most popular one – accepting the gambit pawn, playing g3, castling, and shoring up the queenside with a variety of subtle ideas – isn't appropriate for this book, both because there are way too many details and deviations to deal with, and also because just recently Black has developed some new approaches that could make the g3 systems only good enough for equality anyway.

What is the point of 3...b5? Black takes aim at the base of White's pawn-structure on c4. Once that breaks down, he can attack the pawn on d5, or at least keep White's pieces tied to its defence. Therefore it is natural for White to try to achieve the move e4, not only gaining space and cramping Black, but also reinforcing the key d5-square. With that in mind, I've chosen a direct approach beginning right on move 4:

4 wxc2 (D)

By playing 4 wxc2, White avoids these issues, threatens e4, and also controls c4 in lines where the battle for that square will prove important. The obvious drawback to 4 wxc2 is that it brings the queen out early and doesn't develop a minor piece. In addition, although the move e4 will critically strengthen White's centre, White for the time being reduces his control over d5. It's interesting to see how these trade-offs play out. I believe that 4 wxc2 gives White some advantage in every line. We now examine:

10.21: 4...b7 207
10.22: 4...e6 208
10.23: 4...a5+ 209
10.24: 4...bxc4 212

Other moves are not necessarily worse than those four, but have somewhat less independent theory attached to them:

a) 4...b4 5 e4 d6 6 f4 (6 a3 a5 7 f4 e5 8 fxe5 dxe5 9 axb4! cxb4 10 c5 and instead of the desperate 10...d5??, which Black ventured in Vidarte Morales-Adel Lahchaichi, Spanish Team Ch 2011, 10...b3 11 c3 bd7 is playable) 6...c7 7 f3 g6 8 d3 g4 9 b2 xf3 10 xfx3 bd7 11 a4! e5 (11...g7? 12 e5 and e6) 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 g5 e7 14 0-0 h6 15 f3 e5 16 h4 g8 17 f5! gave White a
nearly winning position in Moskalenko-Mela, Ampolla rapid 2006.

b) 4...g6 and here:

b1) 5 \texttt{f3} \texttt{g7} 6 \texttt{cxb5} (6 e4 ±) was played in the game Korchnoi-Topalov, Antwerp 1997. Now 6...\texttt{xd5}! is unclear, e.g., 7 e4 \texttt{d4} 8 \texttt{xc5} a5 or 7 ...\texttt{xc5} \texttt{b7} 8 e4\texttt{a6}! 9 bxa6 \texttt{c8}.

b2) 5 e4! d6 6 \texttt{cxb5}! \texttt{g7} 7 \texttt{f3} a6 8 \texttt{f3} was the move-order of Georgiev-Galburd in line 'c' below, which is favourable for White.

c) 4...d6 5 e4 g6 (5...b4 transposes to line 'a' above) 6 \texttt{cxb5} \texttt{g7} 7 \texttt{f3} 0-0 8 \texttt{c3} a6 9 a4 (D) and now:

\begin{itemize}
  \item C) 9...e6 10 \texttt{dxe6} \texttt{xex6} 11 \texttt{e2} (11 \texttt{e3}! \texttt{we7} 12 \texttt{d1} ±) 11...d5 12 \texttt{exd5} \texttt{exd5} 13 \texttt{exd5} \texttt{xd5} 14 0-0 \texttt{xb5} 15 \texttt{xb5} \texttt{a6} 16 \texttt{e3} \texttt{fc8} 17 \texttt{ad1} (Yermolinsky-Wheeler, Kings Island 1995) and now Yermolinsky gives 17...\texttt{we4}! 18 \texttt{b3} \texttt{g5} \texttt{we4} 20 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{xb2} 21 \texttt{exe6} (21 \texttt{d6}! \texttt{c7} 22 \texttt{c6} \texttt{a5} 23 \texttt{fd1} is also good) 21...\texttt{xa6} 22 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{a5} ±.

  \item C2) 9...\texttt{xb5} 10 \texttt{xb5} \texttt{a6} (10...\texttt{a6} 11 0-0 \texttt{xb5} 12 \texttt{xb5} \texttt{a6} 13 \texttt{d2} \texttt{b6} 14 \texttt{c3} \texttt{fb8} 15 \texttt{d2} ± V.Georgiev-Galburd, Bansko 2010) 11 0-0 \texttt{b4} (Gurieli-Gaprindashvili, Women's Candidates (2), Tbilisi 1980) and now 12 \texttt{we2}! safely keeps White's pawn.

In general, White just seems a pawn up in these lines for minimal compensation. It is a bad sign in the Benko Gambit when White can get castled and play e4 in one move.

d) 4...\texttt{a6}!? (D).

This deserves very careful attention, because recently it has gained advocates who seem to think that it's a good antidote to 4 \texttt{we2}. I'll give two answers:

\begin{itemize}
  \item D1) 5 \texttt{c3}!? is Moskalenko's proposal. He points out that Black can't put both a pawn and a knight on b4! Play can go:

    \begin{itemize}
      \item D11) 5...\texttt{b4} 6 \texttt{wd1} has the idea 6...\texttt{bxc4} 7 a3!, when de Dovitiis analyses 7...\texttt{b7} 8 axb4 \texttt{cxb4} 9 \texttt{d2} \texttt{xd5} 10 e4 \texttt{b6} and his 11 \texttt{wd4} preserves an advantage but 11 \texttt{xb4} \texttt{xe4} 12 \texttt{e2}! e6 13 \texttt{c3} appears easier.

      \item D12) 5...\texttt{b4} 6 \texttt{d4} 7 \texttt{xe4} 7 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{b7} 8 \texttt{c2} ±.

      \item D13) 5...\texttt{bxc4} 6 \texttt{a3} ± (6 \texttt{e4} \texttt{b4} 6...\texttt{e7} 7 e4 exd5 8 exd5! ± (if 8 e5!?, 8...\texttt{b7}! will give Black three pawns and sufficient counterplay for the piece).

    \end{itemize}

  \item D2) 5 a3! (D) and then:

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item D21) After 5...b4, simply 6 e4 d6 7 \texttt{d3} with an edge may be best, but the pawn-storm by 6 f4 g6 7 e4 d6 8 e5!? is also interesting; e.g., 8...\texttt{d7} 9 \texttt{f3} \texttt{h6}?! 10 e6 \texttt{fxe6} 11 \texttt{dxe6} \texttt{b6} and now 12 \texttt{d3} produced some advantage in V.Georgiev-Nestorović, Skopje 2011, while 12 f5! \texttt{xc1} 13 \texttt{wxc1} ± is better still.

\end{itemize}
d22) 5...bxc4 6 e4 e6 (6...b7 can be met by 7 Qxc4 e6 8 Qc3 exd5 9 exd5 Qc7 10 Qd3, while after 6...Qc7, 7 Qxc4 e6 transposes to the next but one bracket, but 7 Qf3 is also attractive, in view of 7...e6?! 8 d6! Qb5 9 e5 ±) 7 Qxc4! (or 7 dx6 fx6 8 e5 Qd5 9 Qd2 ±) 7...exd5 (7...Qc7 8 Qc3 exd5 9 exd5 ±) 8 exd5 (D) offers White a slight advantage.

Now a key decision presents itself for Black:

d221) 8...d6?? loses to 9 Qa4+.

d222) 8...Qe7 is passive: 9 Qf3 (I like this simple move, although the position after 9 Qc3 0-0 10 Qge2 d6 11 0-0 Qc7 12 b4! has proven favourable for White) 9...0-0 10 Qc3 d6 11 0-0 Qc7 12 Qe1 ±.

d223) 8...Qb7 9 Qe2+ (9 Qd3 and 9 Qc3 also offer White an edge) 9...Qe7 9...Qe7?? 10 Qe3 Qb8 11 Qc7 ± 10 d6 Qxg2 11 Qxa6 Qxh1 12 dxex7 (or 12 Qc3) 12...Qxe7 13 Qf4 with the bishop-pair and a distinct advantage for White.

d224) 8...Qd6 (Black’s most aggressive reply) 9 Qc3 0-0 10 Qf3 Qe8+ 11 Qe3 Qg4 and here:

- d2241) 12 0-0 yields an advantage. Then 12...Qxe3? 13 fx3 Qxe3 14 Qd3 Qxf1? 15 Qxf1 gives White a winning attack, so the best try appears to be 12...Qxh1! 13 Qxh2 Qxh2+ 14 Qf1 Qxh2+ 15 Qg1 Qxc4 16 Qf3 d6 17 Qf4! Qb7 18 Qf5 Qc7 19 Qxd6 ± with the idea 19...Qxd5?? 20 Qxe8+ Qe8 21 Qd7.

- d2242) 12 Qe4 Qe7 (12...Qxe3?? 13 fx3 Qe7 14 Qg5 with a clear advantage for White) 13 Qg5 (or 13 Qxd6 Qxd6 14 0-0 ±) 13...g6 14 Qe2! Qxe3 15 Qxe3 Qc7! 16 0-0 f5 17 Qxd6 Qxd6 18 Qg3! Qxg3 19 d6+ Qg7 20 hgx3 Qa6 21 dx7 Qxc4 22 Qf3 d5 23 Qc3 ± intending b3.

10.21)

4...Qb7 (D)

This is not one of Black’s best moves, I think, but it illustrates a direct attempt to break down White’s cramping centre, and the basic strengths of White’s position.

5 e4

Threatening e5.

5...Qxc4

5...d6 6 exb5 g6 7 Qc3 Qg7 8 Qf3 0-0 9 Qc4 a6 10 0-0 leaves the bishop passively placed on b7, and Black has nothing serious to compensate for the pawn.

6 Qxc4

Or 6 Qc3 d6 (6...e6 7 Qxc4 transposes to the main line) 7 Qxc4 Qbd7 8 Qf3 g6 (Genovese-Gardon, Palermo 2000) and now the natural moves 9 0-0 Qg7 10 h3 0-0 11 Qe1 ± prepare Qf4, Qad1 and an eventual e5.

6...e6

This is really the only point behind ...Qb7; otherwise the bishop belongs on a6.

7 Qc3 exd5 8 exd5 d6 9 Qge2 Qe7

9...g6 10 0-0 Qg7 is slow: 11 Qb3! Qb6 (11...Qe7 12 Qf4 0-0 13 Qg3 ± and Qf1) 12 Qf4 Qbd7 13 Qb5 ±.

10 0-0 0-0 11 Qg3 Qbd7 (D)

11...Qf7, as chosen in Alonso Roselli-Plaskan, Šibenik 2007, is well answered by 12 Qe1, when 12...Qe5 is answered by 13 Qf5, while 12...Qf6?! 13 Qce4! ± has the ideas 13...Qb6 14 Qf4 and 13...Qe5 14 Qf5.
12 b3

An idea worth remembering: White doesn’t mind ceding the bishop-pair if it secures his control over d5; the good bishop and knights are well-placed to exploit his space advantage. Nevertheless, 12 Qf5! is the most pointed move, when Black is cramped and should probably try 12...g6 13 Qxe7+ fxe7 14 Qh6 Qf8 15 Qd2 ±.

12...Qb6 13 Qd1!?

Or 13 Qb2!? , initiating a typical sacrificial theme that you’ll often see in d-pawn openings like the Nimzo- and Queen’s Indian Defences: 13...Qfxd5 14 Qxd5 Qxd5 (14...Qxd5 15 Qe4! Qb6 16 Wxb7 Qxc4 17 Qxg7! Qa5 18 We4 ± with the idea 18...Qxg7 19 Qf5+ (Qf6) 15 Qxg7! Qxg7 16 Qc3+ f6 (after 16...f6 17 Qh5+ Qg6 18 Qd3+ White retrieves the piece with the better game) 17 Qf5+ Qh8 18 Qf1 and Black has to return the material.

13...Qe8

13...Qxc4 14 bxc4 Qe8 15 Qf5 Qf8 16 Qg5 ±.

14 Qb2 Qc7 15 Qf5 Qc8

15...Qf6? 16 Qe4 is already winning for White: 16...Qcx5 (16...Qe8 17 Qxf6+ Qxf6 18 Qe1 ← Qbd7 19 Wd2 h6 20 Qe3) 17 Qxd5 Qxd5 18 Qxd5! Qxd5 19 Qxf6+ gxf6, and now the attractive 20 Qd2 Qe6 21 Qg5+ fxg5 22 Qh6# (de Dovitiis).

16 Qxe7+ Wxe7 17 Qe1 Wh4 18 Qe4

Now Black must worry about both d6 and his king: e.g., 18...Qd8 19 Wc3 Wh6 20 Qd1. After 18...Qcx5?, Malakhatko-Simonet Pons, Istanbul Olympiad 2000 continued 19 Qxd5 Qxd5 20 Qd6 Qf4 21 Wc4 Qe6 22 Qe5 Qg6 23 Wh4 Qxh4 24 Qec1 Qf5 25 Qxf5 Qxf5 26 Qxc5 ±. With rooks on the board, the opposite-coloured bishops probably won’t save Black.

10.22)

4...e6

This is similar to the Blumenfeld Counter-gambit; the difference is that White’s knight is still on g1 instead of f3, and his queen is on c2 instead of d1. Thus White is able to fortify his centre:

5 e4 Qxc4

5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

10...

10...

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5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

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5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

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5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

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5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

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5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

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5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

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This is similar to the Blumenfeld Counter-gambit; the difference is that White’s knight is still on g1 instead of f3, and his queen is on c2 instead of d1. Thus White is able to fortify his centre:

5 e4 Qxc4

5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.

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This is similar to the Blumenfeld Counter-gambit; the difference is that White’s knight is still on g1 instead of f3, and his queen is on c2 instead of d1. Thus White is able to fortify his centre:

5 e4 Qxc4

5...exd5 6 Qxd5 c4 (D) (6...Wc7 7 Qxb5!? Wxe4+ 8 Wxe4+ Qxe4 9 Qc3 Qxc3 10 Qxc3) is an attempt to develop rapidly by ...Qc5, ...0-0 and ...Qe8 and take the initiative.
9 \( \text{ge}2 \)

I think this may well be the best move, because the knight can prove influential on g3. On the other hand, putting the knight on f3 has the advantage that it can support the c4-bishop by \( \text{d2} \). White should be able to get something out of his space advantage after 9 \( \text{f3} \).

Following 9...0-0 10 0-0 \( \text{bd7} \) (10...\( \text{g4} \) 11 \( \text{d2}! \) \( \text{bd7} \) 12 h3 \( \text{h5} \) 13 f4 is dangerous for Black, J.Horvath-K.Rovid, Hungarian League 2003) 11 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b6} \) (Drozdovsky-S.Kasparov, Internet blitz 2006), I like 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 13 \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{a6} \) 14 b3, although White's advantage is not so large. In this set-up with ...\( \text{e7} \), variations including the move ...\( \text{a6} \) are discussed briefly under the move-order 4...\( \text{a6} \) (note 'd' to Black's 4th move in Section 10.2).

9...0-0 10 0-0 \( \text{bd7} \) 11 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 12 b3 (D)

Now:

a) 12...\( \text{b8} \) 13 \( \text{e1} \) (13 \( \text{b2!} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 14 \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{g4} \) 15 \( \text{abl} \) ±) 13...\( \text{xc4} \) 14 \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{g4} \) (the problem is that Black lacks room to manoeuvre, so he embarks on a tactical adventure) 15 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f6} \) (15...\( \text{e5} \) 16 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 17 \( \text{ad1!} \) \( \text{d6} \) 18 \( \text{b5} \) 16 h3 \( \text{xf2!} \) 17 \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{d4+} \) 18 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{f6} \)+ 19 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 20 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xa1} \) (20...\( \text{g6} \) 21 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 22 \( \text{xc5} \) ±) 21 \( \text{xf6+} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 22 \( \text{bl} \) \( \text{xb1}+ \) 23 \( \text{xb1} \) \( \text{e5} \) 24 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{f5} \) 25 \( \text{f4} \) ± Sedlak-Vučković, Mataruška Banja 2007.

b) 12...\( \text{g4} \) 13 \( \text{d3}?! \) \( \text{g6} \) 14 h3 \( \text{e5} \) and instead of 15 \( \text{e2?!} \) f5!, which equalized in Erdos-Bologan, Caleta 2011, White should activate his forces by 15 \( \text{h6!} \) \( \text{e8} \) 16 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 17 \( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{exd7} \) (17...\( \text{bxd7} ?? \) 18 f4) 18 \( \text{ae1} \)+.

10.23)

4...\( \text{wa5+} \) (D)

This move has seldom been played, but is the one recommended by Nicolai Pedersen, whose book on the Benko Gambit has changed my opinion of two major variations. That alone is enough to elevate it from the status of a note to a section, in spite of the fact that there's so little over-the-board experience with it (except by transposition; see below). Incidentally, although Pedersen tends to be dismissive of some of the early-move deviations against the Benko, he obviously respects 4 \( \text{c2} \), saying not only that 4...\( \text{wa5+} \) is the best move, but also that "Against other moves, I think White has good chances of an edge."

White has two common ways of meeting 4...\( \text{wa5+} \) that have enough content to merit their own section, and since it's not clear which is better, it would do to look at both:

10.231: 5 \( \text{d2} \) 210

10.232: 5 \( \text{d2} \) 211
A third reply has almost no history in practice but is quite interesting and I think just as good as the other two: 5 ∆c3 (D).

Now:

a) White has good chances after 5...b7 6 e4 b4 7 ∆d1 d6 8 ∆f3, when the b7-bishop is locked in.

b) It's also not clear how Black should set up after 5...b4 6 ∆d1 followed by e4. Probably ...d6 and ...g6 is best, because ...e6 followed by ...exd5 only accentuates White's central space superiority. To be sure, White's advantage in any of these positions is a modest one, but I don't think most players would be thrilled about taking Black's side.

c) 5...∆a6 ('! Pedersen, who is one of the few who have addressed 5 ∆d2! (not mentioned by Pedersen, who correctly notes that after 6 a3 b4 Black is slightly better; one point is 7 ∆d1 b3+ 8 ∆c3 ∆b4!) 6...bxc4 (after 6...b4 7 ∆d1 and e4, it's hard to see what Black has gained by putting the knight on a6 and queen on a5) 7 a3! d6 (7...∆b8 8 ∆b1 ∆b6 9 e4 ∆b3 10 ∆c1 doesn't help Black's cause) 8 ∆f3 g6 (no better is 8...e6 9 ∆d1 followed by e4 and ∆xc4; or 8...∆c7 9 e4 ∆a6 10 e5! ∆d7 11 e6!, and 11...∆f6 is forced, when 12 ∆g5 is strong) 9 ∆b1 (eliminating the idea of ...∆b4; 9 ∆e4 ∆d8 10 ∆xf6+ exf6 11 e3 ∆g7 12 ∆xc4 is also somewhat better for White) 9...∆g7 10 e4 0-0 11 ∆xc4 with a solid advantage in space and potential activity.

10.231)

5 ∆d2

Pedersen says that this is "probably the only serious attempt to get an edge".

5...b4 6 e4 d6 7 ∆d3

If White isn't aiming for a set-up with f4, he might play 7 ∆f3 and 8 h3, delaying a decision as to where to put his king's bishop. See the next note.

7...∆bd7 (D)

8 f4

I prefer 8 ∆f3, when 8...g6 9 0-0 ∆g7 10 h3 0-0 11 a3 ∆b7 is assessed as "roughly equal" by Pedersen. I don't want to overstate my case. But I think White maintains a definite edge in such positions, albeit nothing of major proportions. Here's a sample line to give some idea of how play might follow if a set of natural structural changes occurs: 12 ∆e3 ∆c7 13 axb4 cxb4 14 ∆d4 (or 14 ∆bd2 ∆c5 15 ∆b3 ∆fd7 16 ∆bd4) 14...∆c5 (14...a6 15 ∆d2 ∆c5 16 ∆b3 ∆fd7 17 ∆a5 gives White a slight advantage) 15 ∆b5 ∆wd7 16 e5! ∆e8 17 exd6 exd6 18 ∆a5! (threatening ∆xd6) 18...∆xd3 19 ∆xd3 a6 (19...∆xb2 20 ∆d2 ∆g7 21 ∆xb4 gives White a pleasant queenside initiative) 20 ∆d4 ∆d8 and now 21 ∆a2 ± or 21 ∆a4 a5 22 ∆d2 ±.

8...g6!

In a rare test of 4...∆a5+ 5 ∆d2, Kutsin-Trifonov, Kiev 1999 continued 8...g5?! 9 fxg5 (9 e5 dxe5 10 fxg5 might be even stronger - Pedersen) 9...∆g4 10 ∆f3 ∆g7 11 0-0 ∆ge5 12 ∆e2 (Pedersen calls this "good for White") 12...∆a6. Then White's clearest course is 13 ∆xe5 ∆xe5 14 ∆e3 ∆c8 15 ∆d2 with the idea a3 and/or ∆f3.

9 ∆f3 ∆g7 10 0-0
10...e5?! dxe5 11 fxe5 Qg4 12 e6 is a little premature in view of 12...Qde5.

10...0-0 11 h3 Qc7 12 a3 a5 13 Qbd2
Preventing simply Qae1 and e5.

13...b7
13...Qxe8 14 Qae1 (14 Qf2?!) 14...e5!? is a thought, when White can try to attack along the f-file by 15 fxe5 Qxe5 16 Qxe5 Qxe5 17 Qf2. Then Black can use the e5 outpost by ...Qd7; however, it comes at the cost of having to play ...f6. The resulting position almost certainly favours White in a theoretical sense, but is so solid that there's a question whether White can actually get through.

14 Qae1 a4!?
It's difficult to prevent e5; even 14...Qe8 invites 15 e5?! (15 Qf2 a4 16 Qh4) 15...dxe5 16 fxe5 Qxe5 17 Qxe5 Qxe5 18 Qe4, when the c5-pawn falls (18...Qd6 19 Qf2).

15 e5!
White's dream move in the Benko.

15...dxe5 16 fxe5 Qh5!? (D)
16...Qe8 17 Qf4 leaves Black terribly passive.

17 e6!?

17 g4! Qg3 18 Qf2 threatens Qf4, winning the knight on g3. This compels 18...f5 (18...Qxe5? 19 Qf4 Qxf3+ 20 Qxf3) 19 Qg5! Qxe5 20 Qe6+ when, the logical 20...Qe4 fails to 21 Qf4 Qxb2 22 Qxe4 Qxe4 23 Qxe4! Qf6 24 Qe5! Qxe5 25 Qxe5 with a winning game.

17...fxe6 18 Qxg6! hxg6 19 Qxg6 Qd6??
Black blunders fatally. Either 19...Qf4 20 Qxf4 Qxf4 21 Qxe6+ Qh8 22 Qxe7 Qf6 23 Qe2 or 19...exd5 20 Qxh5 Qd6 21 Qh4 keeps him in the game, although White has an advantage in both cases.

20 Qh6 exd5 21 Qxg7 Qxg7 22 Qg5
1-0 Moskalenko-R.Gonzalez, Mollet del Valles 2011.

10.232)
5 Qd2 (D)

This move hasn't been played with this move-order as far as I can tell. However, it is the position arising from the fairly well-known 4 Qd2 Qa5 5 Qc2, a transposition that is easy to miss. This is quite a legitimate option for White.

5...bxc4

This seems to be the preference of most grandmasters. 5...g6 (5...d6 is similar) 6 e4 Qg7 looks too passive: 7 Qf3 (or 7 cxb5) 7...0-0 8 Qe2 (this retains some advantage, but 8 cxb5! a6 9 a4 is a very nice version of the conventional Benko, since White castles freely and owns c4).

8...Qxc4 9 0-0 d6 10 Qxc4 Qc7 11 Qd2 Qbd7 12 Qa5 Qb6 (Arkhipov-Lependin, Novokuznetsk 1999) and here 13 Qae1! readies the e5 advance, which is White's real goal.

6 e4 Qa6

This is the most popular move. Now White has to let Black get rid of his problematic queen's bishop, but he still keeps his space and positive prospects. Other moves:

a) 6...g6 7 Qxc4 d6 (7...Qg7 8 Qf3 0-0 9 0-0!? Qa6? 10 e5! Qe8 11 b3 Qc7 and now 12 Qe4! is terribly strong, but 12 a2 e6! 13 d6 Qd5 14 Qe4 ± wasn't bad in the game Lamprecht-S.Petrosian, Hamburg 1999) 8 Qe2 (I like 8 Qf3 in these positions) 8...Qg7 9 0-0 0-0 10...
A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE

6...e6 7 a4 exd5 (7...a6 8 f3 d4 9 cxd5 exd5 10 a3 a5 14 c1 a6 15 b5 w d8 16 a3 with a slight advantage for White, Topalov-Mayer, Dornbirn 1990.)

b) 6...e6 7 a4 exd5 (7...a6 8 f3 d4 9 cxd5 exd5 10 c3 d6?? 11 0-0 0-0 12 a3 a6 13 b3 1-0 Beliaevsky-Bukal, Nova Gorica 1999; 7...b7?! 8 f3 exd5 9 a4 c6 10 d6 11 c1 a6 12 h4 g6 13 a5 c5 b7 14 c3 and Black's position is a mess) 8 exd5 d6 (D) and now:

b1) 9 f3 e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 c1 e8 12 d4! with the idea 12...c4 13 fxe4 d7 14 d2 c7 15 c3 ±.

b2) 9 b4?! is a computer-suggested gambit that actually makes a lot of sense. All of White's other pieces will be aggressively-placed, a bishop on b2 makes life difficult for Black, and in any case this doesn't give him time for...g6. Play might go 9...x b2 10 c5 d6 11 g3 f5 in N. Nikolic-Ilic, Sutomore 2004. Then 13 h4 won the f-pawn with a very slight advantage, but 13...c4 is better, with the idea 13...dxe2? 14 cxd6+ d7 15 f7 f3 16 gxf3 g8 17 e6! ±.

5...d6

Or:

b) 5...a6? 6 f3 d6 7 a3 (White doesn't want to play c4 yet and have his queen brought to c4, where it will be attacked and lose time) 7...g6 8 c4 g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 c1 transposes to note 'b' to White's 9th move below.

c) 5...a6!? is normally answered with 6 c4 b4 7 w e2 w a5 8 c3, but White can also try to make the knight move irrelevant by 6 a3 (transposing into 4...a6 5 a3 bxc4 6 e4 – note 'd22' to Black's 4th move in Section 10.2), while 6 c3 transposes to line 'd13' of that same note.

6 c4 g6 7 f3

Pedersen thinks that White is slightly better after 7 f4 g7 8 f3, which could be true, but it's a bit loosening. Incidentally, don't fall for 7...w a6 9 c7 10 0-0 g6 11 b3! h7 12 b2 ± M. Thinius-Heinemann, Bundesliga 1992/3. 10 0-0 w c4 11 f3

This is a typical advantage for White, particularly with a lead in development and control of c4. Black therefore tried 11...dxe4 12 c1 f5 in N. Nikolic-Ilic, Sutomore 2004. Then 13 h4 won the f-pawn with a very slight advantage, but 13...d3! is better, with the idea 13...dxe2? 14 cxd6+ d7 15 f7 f3+ 16 gxf3 g8 17 e6! ±.
b3? $\mathcal{D}xe4!$, as leading grandmaster Ivan Sokolov once did!

7...g7 8 0-0 0-0 (D)

9 h3

This semi-waiting move is played partly to prevent $...\mathcal{D}g4-e5$ (and $...\mathcal{D}g4$), but also to give a bishop on f4 an escape-square on h2 and reserve the option of bringing a knight to a3. Nevertheless, White may do just as well with common-sense moves, as follows:

a) Moskalenko, perhaps the leading advocate of 4 $\mathcal{D}c2$, likes the position after 9 $\mathcal{D}c3$, which can arise by various move-orders. Then 9...a6 is supposed to be the theoretical problem, but White can play 10 $\mathcal{D}b5$! (Moskalenko himself has experimented with 10 $\mathcal{D}xa6 \mathcal{D}xa6$ 11 $\mathcal{D}f4$, which has consistently led to small advantages) 10...xb5 11 $\mathcal{D}xb5 \mathcal{D}b6$ 12 $\mathcal{D}e2$ $\mathcal{D}bd7$ 13 $\mathcal{D}d2$? (keeping Black’s knight out of g4; 13 $\mathcal{D}d2$ ± is possible) 13...$\mathcal{D}c7$ 14 $\mathcal{D}b1$ a5 (Moskalenko-Mahaiłovs, Barbero del Valles 2009) and the easiest path to an advantage is 15 $\mathcal{D}c4 \mathcal{D}b6$ 16 $\mathcal{D}a3$! ±, when Black lacks a queenside attack and White’s bishop-pair gives him the advantage.

b) 9 $\mathcal{A}e1$ $\mathcal{A}a6$ (9...$\mathcal{D}fd7$ 10 $\mathcal{D}f4$ $\mathcal{D}b6$ 11 $\mathcal{D}c2$ $\mathcal{G}g4$ 12 $\mathcal{D}bd2$ a5 13 h3 $\mathcal{D}xf3$ 14 $\mathcal{D}xf3$ ± Summermatter-Bischoff, Leukerbad 1992) 10 $\mathcal{D}a3$ also yields a modest positional advantage; e.g., 10...$\mathcal{D}fd7$ (D) and now:

b1) 11 $\mathcal{A}f4$ $\mathcal{D}b6$ 12 e5 $\mathcal{D}xc4$ (12...dxe5 13 $\mathcal{A}xe5$ $\mathcal{D}xd5$ 14 $\mathcal{A}d1$! ±; e.g., 14...$\mathcal{D}xc4$ 15 $\mathcal{D}xc4$ $\mathcal{E}e6$ 16 $\mathcal{A}e3$ $\mathcal{D}xe3$ 17 $\mathcal{X}xe3$ $\mathcal{W}a5$ 18 $\mathcal{A}xg7$ $\mathcal{G}xg7$ 19 $\mathcal{D}xe5!$ ± 13 $\mathcal{D}xc4$ dxe5 14 $\mathcal{A}xe5$ f6 15 $\mathcal{A}xb8$ $\mathcal{X}xb8$ 16 $\mathcal{A}d1$ ± Bender-Pavlović, Zagreb 2007.

b2) 11 $\mathcal{D}d2$ $\mathcal{D}b6$ 12 $\mathcal{A}c3$ $\mathcal{D}xc3$ 13 $\mathcal{W}xc3$ $\mathcal{D}xc4$ 14 $\mathcal{D}xc4$ $\mathcal{A}xc4$ 15 $\mathcal{W}xc4$ $\mathcal{D}d7$ 16 $\mathcal{W}c3$ ± Chuprikov-Aveskulov, Alushta 2005. White is set for an e5 break, which isn’t disastrous for Black, but guarantees White an edge.

9...$\mathcal{D}bd7$

Probably this is the best move. The fact that he has played 9 h3 enables White to answer 9...a6 with one knight move or another: 10 $\mathcal{D}bd2$ (with the idea $\mathcal{B}b1$ and b3; also good is 10 $\mathcal{D}a3$ $\mathcal{W}c8$ 11 $\mathcal{D}b5$!; compare line ‘a’ of the previous note) 10...$\mathcal{D}fd7$ 11 $\mathcal{B}b1$ $\mathcal{D}b6$ 12 b3 $\mathcal{W}c8$ (12...$\mathcal{D}xc4$ 13 $\mathcal{D}xc4$ $\mathcal{D}d7$ 14 $\mathcal{A}b2$ ±) 13 $\mathcal{A}b2$ $\mathcal{A}xb2$ 14 $\mathcal{A}xb2$ $\mathcal{B}d8$ 15 $\mathcal{M}e1$ threatening e5, Ilincić-Vajda, Budapest 2005.

10 $\mathcal{D}c3$ $\mathcal{D}b6$ 11 $\mathcal{A}e2$ (D)

11...$\mathcal{A}e8$

Or:

a) 11...$\mathcal{D}bd7$?! (changing plans, but it’s instructive anyway) 12 $\mathcal{A}f4$ $\mathcal{W}b6$ 13 $\mathcal{M}fe1$ $\mathcal{B}b8$ 14 $\mathcal{A}abl$ $\mathcal{A}a6$ 15 e5! (almost always the key move, and one you seldom get to make successfully in
the main-line Benko Gambit) 15...dxe5 16 ∅xe5 ∅xe5 17 ∅xe5 ∅bc8 18 ∅bd1 ∅xe2 19 ∅xe2 ∅b7 20 d6! exd6 21 ∅xd6 ∅d8?? (21...c6 22 ∅d3! -- Moskalenko) 22 ∅xf6 ∅e8 23 f4 +-- Moskalenko-Robles Garcia, Montcada i Reixac 2009.

b) 11...a5 12 a4 ∅e8 13 ∅f4 (13 ∅b5!? 13...c7 14 ∅ad1 ∅a6 15 ∅e1 f6?? (a real concession; it is better to allow e5 with a small advantage for White after 15... ∅xe2 16 ∅xe2 ∅a6 17 e5 ∅b4 18 ∅e1) 16 b3 ∅d7 17 ∅d2 ∅xe2 18 ∅xe2 e5?! (18... ∅a6) 19 dxe6 ∅xe6 20 ∅e3 ± Erdos-Van Assendelft, Warsaw 2010.

12 ∅f4 ∅c7 13 ∅ad1 ∅b8

Black wants to hold up e5 by attacking d5, a tactic reminiscent of the Modern Benoni.

14 ∅e1 ∅c8 15 ∅h6 ∅a6 16 ∅e1 f6

The same conundrum for Black: whether to allow e5 or make this weakening move.

17 ∅f4!?

17 ∅h4 attempts to start a direct attack; e.g., 17... ∅xe2 18 ∅xe2 ∅b8 19 ∅d3 ∅f7 20 ∅g3 ∅a6 21 ∅xg7 ∅xg7 22 ∅h6; this is neither forced nor necessary but it hints at one of the problems with...f6.

17... ∅b8 18 b3 ∅xe2 19 ∅xe2

White is slightly better, Sachdev-Meenakshi, Olongapo City (women) 2010.

10.3) Other Benoni Systems

In this section we’ll cover other lines besides the Modern Benoni and Benko Gambit which begin with 1...c5 or 2...c5. These are in divided into the following subsections:

10.31: 1 d4 c5 2 d5 Misc. 214
10.32: Czech Benoni (...e5) 217
10.33: Benoni without ... ∅f6 219
10.34: The Vulture (3... ∅e4) 221
10.35: Snake Benoni (5... ∅d6) 222

10.31)

1 d4 c5 2 d5 (D)

Now we have another split:

10.311: 2...f5 214
10.312: 2...d6/2...e5 216

Another hypermodern try is 2...b5, when 3 e4 already attacks the pawn on b5, and after 3...a6, 4 c4! is one good solution: 4... ∅xc4 (4...d6 5 cxb5 ∅f6 6 ∅c3 is a poor Benko Gambit, because Black never interfered with White’s castling plans) 5 ∅xc4 d6 6 ∅f3 g6 can be answered slowly by 7 0-0 ∅g7 8 ∅e1 ∅f6?! 9 e5 dxe5 10 ∅xe5, or radically with 7 e5?! ∅g7 (7...dxe5 8 ∅xe5 ∅f6 9 ∅xf7! ∅xf7 10 d6+ e6 11 ∅f3+ and ∅xa8) 8 ∅c3 dxe5 9 0-0 ∅f6 10 ∅xe5 0-0 11 ∅e1 ±.

10.311)

2...f5 (D)

This hybrid of a Dutch and Benoni is sometimes called the ‘Clarendon Court’, although the name varies by country. It has been subject to a surprising amount of analysis.

3 ∅c3

Another good approach is 3 e4 fxe4 4 ∅c3 ∅f6, and now:

a) 5 f3 exf3?? (other moves transpose to lines in the note to Black’s 4th move: 5...e5 6 fxe4 d6 is ‘a3’; 5...d6 is ‘a’, and 5...e6 is ‘b1’) 6
\[ \text{\(Q\text{x}f3\, d6\, Q\text{g}5\!\!\!\, (\text{with the idea}\, Q\text{h}b5\!\!)\, 7...a6\, Q\text{d}3\, g6\, 0-0\, g7\, 10\, Q\text{e}2!\, \text{intending}\, Q\text{f}4.\) } \]

b) \[ \text{5\, Qh3?!\, g6\, 6\, Qg5\, Qg7\, 7\, Qc4\, 0-0\, 8\, 0-0\, d6\, 9\, Qgx4\, Qxe4\, 10\, Qxe4\) and the e6-square is still a problem for Black, although this is playable.} \]

c) \[ 5\, g4\] is a sort of 'main line':

\begin{itemize}
  \item[c1)] \[ 5...g6?\, 6\, g5\, Qh5\, 7\, Qe2\, Qg7\, 8\, h4\, Qf5\, 9\, h5\, Qg7\, 10\, Qxe4\, \text{\(Q\text{c}7\!\!\!\, 11\, Q\text{xf}3\, d6\, 12\, h6\, Qf8\??\, 13\, b3\, Qd7\, 14\, Qb2\, Qg8\, 15\, Qd2\) with domination of the board.} \]
  \item[c2)] After 5...e6?!\, 6\, dxe6 yields a small edge, but I like 6\, Qh3?!\, Qxd5\, 7\, Qxd5\, Qxe5\, (D) with some edge due to Black’s weaknesses.
  \item[c3)] \[ 5...h6!\, 6\, Qg2\, d6\, 7\, Qxe4\, (D) with some edge due to Black’s weaknesses. \]
\end{itemize}

Then upon 7...Qxg4, Avrukh mentions 8\, Qxe2?!\, (this is promising, as is 8\, Qe2!\, intending \(Q\text{f}4\)\, 8...Qa6\, 9\, Qh3\, Qe5\, (9...Qf6?!\, 10\, Qxf6+\, gxf6\, 11\, \text{\(Q\text{h}5\#\), 9...h5\, 10\, Qf3\, Qc7?!\, 11\, Qf4\, e5?!\, 12\, dxe6\, \text{\(Q\text{xe}6?\), 13\, 0-0} \) gives White a winning position)\, 10\, f4\, Qh3\, 11\, Qxh3\, Qxf7\, 12\, f5!\, \text{\(Q\text{d}7\)\, 13\, Qxf4!\, intending 13...\, \text{\(Q\text{xf}5\)\, 14\, Qf1, when Black has two pawns but can hardly move without getting into trouble, e.g., 14...Qxg6\, 15\, Qd6\, \text{\(Q\text{xf}6\)\, 16\, Qe5\, 17\, Qf7, 3...Qg6\, 4\, Qf3\, e5.)} \]

This is recommended by the experts of this opening:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a)] \[ 4...d6\, 5\, e4\, fxe4\, 6\, fxe4 looks good for White: \]
    \begin{itemize}
      \item[a1)] \[ 6...Qbd7\, 7\, Qf3\, g6\, 8\, Qg5\, Qe5?!\, (or 8...Qb6?!\, 9\, Qb5+\!)\, 9\, Qb5+\, Qd7\, 10\, Qxe6\, Qa5\, 11\, Qxd7+\, \text{\(Q\text{xd7}\)\, 12\, 0-0} with a huge advantage for White. \]
    \end{itemize}
  \item[a2)] \[ 6...a6\, 7\, Qf3\, ±. \]
  \item[a3)] \[ 6...e5\, 7\, Qb5+\, (7\, Qf3\, favours White slightly)\, 7...Qd7\, 8\, Qxd7+\, Qxd7\, 8\, Qf3\, Qa6\, (to meet Qg5 with 8...Qc7)\, 10\, 0-0\, Qe7\, 11\, Qh4?!\, 0-0\, (11...g6\, 12\, Qf3)\, 12\, Qf5\, ±. \]
\end{itemize}

b) \[ 4...e6\, 5\, e4 and now: \]

\begin{itemize}
  \item[b1)] \[ 5...fxe4\, 6\, fxe4\, Qxd5?!\, 7\, e5!\, Qe7\, 8\, Qf3\, d6\, 9\, Qb5+\, Qd7\, 10\, 0-0\, Qxe5\, 11\, Qe1\, ±. \]
  \item[b2)] \[ 5...Qxd5\, 6\, Qxd5\, (6\, Qxd5\, ±)\, 6...Qc7\, 7\, Qf4\, d6\, 8\, Qc4\, Qe5\, 9\, Qxe5\, Qxe5\, Qd5\, 10\, Qe2 “with the more comfortable position” (Maurits Wind). \]
\end{itemize}

5\, Qh3?!\

5\, e4\, f4\, 6\, g3\, d6\, (6...Qh5\, 7\, d6! – Levitt)\, 7\, Qh3?!\, (7\, \text{\(Q\text{xf}4\)\, Qh5\, 8\, Qe2?}) is a nice way to gain a modest advantage while avoiding complications; e.g., 7...Qxh3\, (7...Qxh3\, 8\, Qg4; 7...Qd7\, 8\, Qe2\, g5\, 9\, Qd2\, a6\, 10\, 0-0-0\, b5)\, 8\, Qxh3\, Qh5\, 9\, Qe2! with the idea 9...Qxg3\, 10\, Qg5.

5...d6\, (D)
10.312)

2...d6

2...e5 can transpose after 3 c4 d6, but also tips Black's hand, so that White might forego 3 c4 in favour of 3 d3.

3 c4

In reality, this move-order is relatively rare due to the fact that 3 d3 is particularly effective here, but moving the c-pawn is consistent with the rest of this book, so I'll give it a look.

3...e5

Establishing the structure for the Semi-Benoni and Czech Benoni. Naturally Black can also play 3...e6, when 4 d3 exd5 5 cxd5 g6 6 e4 g5 is a Modern Benoni without ...d6. To be consistent with our repertoire, White should play 7 d3, and if Black replies 7...d7, then we have reached Section 10.33.

4 e4 (D)

This is called a Semi-Benoni, and it can change into a Czech Benoni (see 10.32) if Black plays ...d6 soon. I'm not going to cover all the slippery details, but here are a few lines:

4...d7

Black would like to swap off his 'bad' bishop with ...g5. Alternatively:

a) 4...f5?! 5 exf5 xf5 6 d2 d6 7 d3 g6 8 d3 d7 9 d3 controls e4 and f5, while e6 remains a sore spot.

b) 4...g6 5 d3 d6 6 d3 d7 can be met by 7 h3 0-0 8 g4?! , intending 8...f5 9 xf5 xf5 10 f3, or by 7 h4?! h6 8 h5?! (8 d3 also yields a slight advantage) 8...g5, after which 9 dge2 with d3 is customary, although there are other plans. A funny possibility at this point is 9 g4?! , producing a position in which White can slowly but surely build up for a queenside break and try to win on that side alone. That may seem implausible, but with open files and threats of sacrifices on c5, for example, White can exert great pressure. He also has f5 available for a well-timed knight jump, whereas Black's knights have no access to f4.

5 d3

You can also argue that the exchange of bishops costs Black time, so that 5 d3 g5 6 xg5 xg5 7 d3 e7 can be followed by almost any normal set-up to White's advantage; e.g., 8 g3 d6 9 g2 0-0 10 0-0, with the idea of a later f4 or b4.

5...g4

Renewing the ...g5 idea, which White's next move again frustrates.

6 d2 (D)

6...d6

6...g5 is met by 7 a4+! d7 8 b3 xd2+ 9 xd2 ± (Kasparov). Toth-Hammer, Biel 1981 is a nice example of space exploitation in the opening: 6...d7 7 e2 gf6 8 h3 h5 9 c2 0-0 10 g4! g6 11 d3 d8 12 d1! c7 13 g3 ±; later h4-h5 and d5 followed.

7 e2

7 a3?! f6 8 d3 0-0 9 h3 d7 10 g4 b8 11 d1 b5 12 b3 with an initiative for White (Kasparov).

7...f6 8 a3 0-0 9 0-0 g6

This is Kasparov-Torre, Baku 1980, which continued 10 d1! d7 11 d3 d8 12 b4 e8 13 b2 f6 (13...f5 14 b5! d8 15 f4 ± Kasparov) 14 b3 b6 15 h1 g7 16 f4 ±.
Space is a mighty asset against the structure with c5, d6 and e5.

10.32) Czech Benoni (...e5)

1 d4 8f6

The defining feature of the Czech Benoni is that Black plays ...c5, ...c5 and ...e5, leading to a blocked central structure. 1...c5 2 d5 d6 3 c4 e5 4 8c3 8f6 is one of several other sequences that lead to the same position.

2 c4 c5 3 d5 e5

After 3...d6 4 8c3 g6 (4...e5 is a Czech Benoni) 5 e4 8g7 6 h3 0-0, 7 8g5 and 7 8e3 transpose into positions examined in Chapter 8 on the King's Indian, Sections 8.23 and 8.12 respectively.

4 8c3 d6 5 e4 (D)

We have arrived at the Czech Benoni, a relatively mainstream variation which has always had a decent reputation. On the other hand, its passivity is discouraging to some players.

5...8e7

Black can play any number of moves, of course, but this is the main one by a good margin. If Black decides to fianchetto by 5...8bd7 6 8d3 g6, Avrukh points out that White can play along the lines of 7 8g5 8g7 8 f3 and "get a favourable version of a Sämisch-type position, as Black lacks counterplay on the queenside." I would say 'very favourable'. One of his examples continues 8...a6 9 8ge2 h6 10 8e3 h5 11 8d2 (versus ...8h6) 11...h4 (lest White play h4) 12 8g5! 8h7 13 a4 8h5 14 g3 h3 (Calvo-Diez del Corral, Montilla 1976) and here he recommends 15 8d1 "followed by 8f2 and, at some point, 8g1 and 8f1". Regardless of the details, this is an excellent way to set up. I should also note that if you play 6 h3 g6 7 8g5, as in our King's Indian lines, then 7...8g7 8 8d3 0-0 9 8f3 is still an excellent position for White, with g4 and perhaps h4 at a later point.

6 8f3

Now that Black is no longer fianchettoing his king's bishop, White can play this way without worrying about an early ...f5, and so move-order becomes less important. Another possibility is to play 8d3 and 8ge2.

6...0-0

6...8bd7 7 8d3 8f8 with the idea ...8g6 is a typical plan for Black. Then 8 h3 h5 9 g3 8g6 10 h4 (stopping ...8h4) restricts Black's knight, with some advantage; e.g., 10...8g4 11 8e2 a6 12 a4 b6 13 8h2! (Mellano-J. Fernandez, Buenos Aires 1991) and after the correct 13...8xe2 14 8xe2, White simply controls more of the board.

7 h3 (D)

I'm going to recommend the set-up with 8f3, h3 and 8d3, which can be played against almost any slow system.

7...8e8

Black also has a plan with ...8e8 and ...8f8-g6; e.g., 7...8bd7 8 8d3 a6. I'll present a couple of different approaches for White:

a) 9 a4 (the only potential drawback to this move is that White may want to castle queenside; it might be wise to wait until ...b5 is a threat) 9...8h5!? 10 8e2 (10 g3 is a good alternative, as in so many of our h3 King's Indian positions) 10...g6 11 g4 (11 8g3!? 8xg3 12
fxg3 is very interesting, and perhaps even best) 11...\( \text{Q}g7 \) 12 \( \text{Q}g3 \) \( \text{h}8 \) 13 \( \text{Q}e3 \) \( \text{f}6 \)! 14 \( \text{W}c2!? \)(14 \( \text{h}6! \)) 14...\( \text{Q}g8 \) (14...\( \text{h}5! \) 15 \( \text{Q}e2! \) ±) 15 \( \text{Q}e2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) (Lautier-Nisipeanu, French Team Ch, Noyon 2005) and now 16 \( \text{Q}f1 \), intending a5 and b4, is good, since White comes out better after 16...\( \text{d}5 \) 17 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{Q}x5 \) 18 \( \text{Q}x5 \) \( \text{Q}x5 \) 21 \( \text{Q}x5 \) \( \text{Q}x5 \) 22 \( \text{Q}x5 \) \( \text{Q}x5 \) 23 a5.

b) 9 g4 \( \text{Q}e8 \)(again with the idea of ...\( \text{Q}f8\)-\( \text{g}6 \)) 10 \( \text{Q}g1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 11 g5 \( \text{Q}h5 \) 12 \( \text{Q}xe5 \) g6 13 \( \text{Q}g4 \) \( \text{Q}xg4 \) 14 \( \text{Q}h6+ \) \( \text{Q}xh6 \) 15 \( \text{Q}xh6 \) \( \text{Q}h4 \) 16 \( \text{Q}d2 \) was better for White in Reshevsky-Miles, Philadelphia 1987.

8 \( \text{Q}d3 \) (D)

8...g6

Black's idea is to play ...\( \text{Q}g7 \) and ...f5. When White stops that with \( \text{Q}h6 \), he can play ...\( \text{Q}d7\)-\( \text{f}6 \), ...\( \text{Q}h8 \), and ...\( \text{Q}g8 \). As you can imagine, this isn't terribly practical, and White has an excellent record in this variation. Black can also forego ...g6 with 8...\( \text{Q}d7 \). Then:

a) After 9 a3 g6 10 \( \text{Q}h6 \) \( \text{Q}g7 \) 11 g4 \( \text{Q}h8 \) 12 \( \text{W}d2 \) \( \text{Q}f6 \) Black has completed a textbook reorganization, but White has space in the centre and on the kingside, where he can soon launch an attack. But in Pytel-A Smith, Manchester 1981, another opportunity soon appeared: 13 0-0-0 \( \text{Q}d7 \) 14 \( \text{Q}c2 \) a6? 15 \( \text{Q}xe5! \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 16 d6 \( \text{Q}c6 \) 17 \( \text{dxe7} \) \( \text{W}xe7 \) 18 \( \text{Q}d5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 19 f3 \( \text{Q}ab8 \) 20 h4! and White's coming attack with \( \text{h}5 \) was decisive.

b) 9 g4 \( \text{a}6 \) 10 a4 \( \text{Q}b8 \) 11 \( \text{Q}g1 \)! (a good prophylactic move, discouraging ...f5) 11...\( \text{Q}c7 \)(11...g6 12 \( \text{Q}h6 \) \( \text{Q}g7 \) 13 \( \text{W}e2 \) ± Kasparov; this resembles our main line) 12 b3 (12 a5 ± Razuvaev; then Black will find it difficult to achieve anything on the queenside) 12...\( \text{Q}e8 \) 13 h4! \( \text{b}5 \) (13...\( \text{h}6 \) 14 h5! \( \text{Q}f6 \) 15 g5 \( \text{x}g5 \) 16 \( \text{x}g5 \) - Kasparov) 14 g5!? (after 14 \( \text{c}xb5 \) \( \text{a}xb5 \) 15 \( \text{a}xb5 \) \( \text{Q}b6 \) a sample line is 16 h5 \( \text{Q}d7 \) 17 g5 \( \text{Q}a8 \) 18 \( \text{Q}xa8 \) \( \text{Q}xh2 \) 19 \( \text{Q}e2 \) \( \text{Q}a5 \) 20 \( \text{Q}d2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 21 \( \text{Q}g3 \) \( \text{Q}a3 \) 22 \( \text{Q}h2 \) \( \text{Q}f8 \) 23 \( \text{Q}g4 \) ±) 14...\( \text{Q}f8 \) 15 h5 \( \text{Q}d7 \) (15...\( \text{bxc4} \) 16 \( \text{Q}xc4 \) ±) 16 \( \text{Q}h2 \) \( \text{bxc4} \) 17 \( \text{Q}c4! \) f5 18 \( \text{exf5} \)! (18 \( \text{gxf6} \) \( \text{Q}xf6 \) 19 \( \text{Q}f3 \) ±) 18...\( \text{Q}xf5 \) 19 \( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{Q}d7 \) 20 \( \text{Q}e3 \) e4 21 \( \text{h}2 \) \( \text{Q}d8 \) (Kasparov-Miles, Basel (1) 1986) and now Kasparov gives 22 \( \text{Q}c2 \)! \( \text{Q}f7 \) 23 0-0-0 \( \text{Q}d7 \) 24 f4! ±.

9 \( \text{Q}h6 \)

9 g4 \( \text{Q}d7 \) is, by transposition, Ivanchuk-Seirawan, Reykjavik 1990. This game was a lesson in space advantages and appropriate exchanges: 10 \( \text{Q}e3 \) \( \text{Q}g7 \) 11 \( \text{Q}g1 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 12 \( \text{W}e2 \) h5 (D).

This is an important type of position that White has to be ready for. Generally he doesn't want to play g5, after which Black has stopped White's kingside attack and can strike back with ...f6 when it's convenient; this theme arises in many positions. White should arrange either to defend the g4-pawn or to sacrifice it to open the h- and g-files. The game continued 13 \( \text{Q}d2 \) \( \text{Q}d7 \) 14 f3 \( \text{Q}h7 \) 15 0-0-0 \( \text{Q}g5 \) (exchanging dark-squared bishops, but the 'bad' bishop was also a good defender of the dark squares!) 16 \( \text{Q}xg5 \) \( \text{xg5} \) 17 \( \text{W}g2 \) ± \( \text{Q}e7 \)(17...h4 18 \( \text{W}f2 \) \( \text{Q}h3 \) 19 \( \text{W}xh4 \) \( \text{Q}xh4 \) 20 \( \text{Q}xh4 \) with a crushing attack - Cox) 18 h4 \( \text{Q}h7 \) 19 \( \text{Q}g3 \) a6 20 g5. Now this move is OK, because ...f6 doesn't energize a dark-squared bishop on e7; in the meantime, White prepares f4, and won with the long-term strategy of exploiting his space and Black's
weaknesses: 20...f6 21 gxf6 \( \text{Bxf6} \) 22 \( \text{Bdf1} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) 23 f4 exf4 24 \( \text{Bxf4} \) \( \text{Bxf4} \) 25 \( \text{Wxf4} \) \( \text{Bf8} \) 26 \( \text{Wf6} \) \( \text{Wxe5} \) 28 \( \text{Bxg6} \) \( \text{Bxg6} \) 29 \( \text{Wxg6} \) \( \text{Bh8} \) 30 \( \text{Cc4} \) \( \text{Bf5} \) 31 \( \text{Wxe5+} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 32 \( \text{Wxe5+} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 33 \( \text{Bd6} \) 1-0.  

9...\( \text{Bd7} \) 10 \( \text{g4} \) (D)  

This is your basic clampdown on ...\( f5 \).  

10...\( \text{Bd7} \) 11 \( \text{We2} \)  

White has many approaches. A cute build-up was 11 \( \text{Bd2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 12 \( \text{Be2}?! \) (12 0-0-0 \( \text{Bh8} \) 13 \( \text{Bdg1} \) is of course fine) 12...\( \text{Bh8} \) 13 \( \text{Bag1} \) \( \text{Bg8} \) 14 h4 f6 (14...\( \text{Bxh6} \) 15 \( \text{Wxh6} \) f6 16 \( \text{Bd2} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) 17 \( \text{Bc2} \) a6 18 \( \text{Bb1} \) b5? 19 \( \text{Bg5!} \) fxg5 20 hxg5 \( \text{Bg8} \) 21 \( \text{Wxh7+} \) \( \text{Bf7} \) 22 \( \text{Bh6} \) with a killing attack; well, maybe 12 0-0-0 was better after all, but this is a nice line) 15 \( \text{Be3} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) (Barbero-Partos, Dubai Olympiad 1986) and now Barbero gives 16 \( \text{Bg2} \) with an advantage. Instead, 16 h5 g5 17 \( \text{Be1} \) \( \text{Bh6} \) 18 f3 \( \text{Bf7} \) 19 \( \text{Cc2} \) a6 20 \( \text{Bb1} \) is an example of the kind of stabilization of the kingside followed by queenside action that I’ve mentioned before. In this particular case, White stands extremely well. Note that a white knight can get to f5 at the right moment, whereas Black’s knights cannot access f4.  

11...\( \text{a6} \) 12 0-0-0 \( \text{Bf6} \) 13 \( \text{Bdg1} \)  

Now:  

a) If Black sits around, he has to be careful about the f4 break; e.g., 13...\( \text{Bh8} \) 14 \( \text{Bb1} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) 15 \( \text{Bd2}! \) \( \text{Bb8} \) 16 \( \text{Bc3} \) b5 17 f4!.  

b) 13...\( \text{Bd7} \) 14 \( \text{Bd2} \) (a noteworthy reorganization) 14...b5 (14...\( \text{Bh8} \) 15 h4 \( \text{Bg8} \) 16 \( \text{Be3} \) h5 17 g5 \( \text{Bxe8} \) 18 f4 \( \text{f4} \) +– Spassky-Ghitescu, Beverwijk 1967) 15 h4 \( \text{Bd5} \) 16 h5 \( \text{Bb8} \) 17 hxg6 fxg6 18 f4! b4 19 \( \text{Bd1} \) exf4 20 e5! +– Enklaar-Šahović, Wijk aan Zee 1972. After 20...\( \text{dxe5} \) 21 \( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{gxg7} \) 22 \( \text{Bxe5} \) White wins a piece and maintains the mating attack.  

10.33) Benoni without ...\( \text{Bf6} \)  

1 d4 \( \text{e6} \)  

Here we turn our attention to a modified version of the Modern Benoni where Black plays ...\( \text{Bf6} \) instead of ...\( \text{d6} \). 1...\( \text{e6} \) is really the most likely way to get into such a position. If instead Black plays 1...c5 2 d5 \( \text{e6} \), many players will choose 3 \( \text{Cc3} \) or 3 \( \text{e4} \), rather than 3 \( \text{c4} \) exd5 4 cxd5 \( \text{d6} \), which reverts to the line under question. Another possible move-order is 1...c5 2 d5 \( \text{d6} \), but then there’s always the chance that an eventual ...exd5 will be met by exd5. In the end, 1...\( \text{e6} \) is the move-order with which White, in playing the repertoire I have recommended, will have the hardest time avoiding a ...\( \text{Bf6} \) Benoni.  

2 \( \text{c4} \) c5 3 d5 exd5 4 cxd5 \( \text{d6} \) 5 \( \text{Cc3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 6 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{Bg7} \) 7 \( \text{Bd3} \) \( \text{Bf6} \) (D)  

This rare move (instead of the main variation 7...\( \text{d6} \) \( \text{f6} \)) makes a certain amount of sense, keeping the g7-bishop’s diagonal unmasked and giving Black the opportunity to play ...\( f5 \). However, Black no longer gets any pressure on \( \text{e4} \), and the e-file is blocked, whereas handy Benoni moves like ...\( \text{Bf4} \), ...\( \text{Bh5} \) and ...\( \text{Bfd7} \) are no longer available. The knight on \( \text{e7} \), by contrast with that on \( \text{f6} \), lacks good squares to go to. Finally, Black’s pawn on \( \text{d6} \), which is seldom a problem in the main line (even if more active defences aren’t available, ...\( \text{Bd8} \) is a handy defensive move to have in reserve), becomes hard to defend in certain cases.
8 f4

A very rare move, but I think it’s useful to target d6 right away. Naturally 8 f3 is often played here, as is 8 g5. The important alternative 8 h4! is underestimated but apparently very effective, now that h5 can’t be answered by ...xh5; for example, 8...0-0 8...h6 9 h5! with the idea 9...g5 10 f4; 8...d7 9 h5; 8...h5 9 g5! 9 h5 f5?! (9...d7 10 f3 ±) 10 hxg6 hxg6 11 f3 fx4 12 xe4 f5 13 g5 e7 14 g4 d4 15 e3 f6 16 h7 ± J.Ivanov-Reinaldo Castineira, Pamplona 2009.

8...a6

Because of the bishop on f4, 8...a6 with the idea ...c7 runs into 9 b5 0-0 10 d2 ± threatening xd6 or xd6. 8...0-0 may transpose to the main line; in any case, Black will probably want to play ...a6 soon.

9 a4

9 f3, allowing 9...b5, is also promising, because White develops so rapidly: 10 0-0 (or 10 d2 to cover b2, intending 10...b4 11 d1) 10...0-0 (notice that Black can’t play the natural ...d7, and 10...b4 11 a4 favours White, in part because c4 will prove a good square for White’s pieces; even White’s knight on a4 might reroute to that square via b2) 11 h3 c7 12 f2 ±.

9...0-0 10 f3 (D)

10...c7

Preparing ...d7. Other moves:

a) 10...g4 11 h3 xf3 12 xf3 c7 13 g3 shows up the weakness of d6. Play might continue 13...c8 14 a5 b5 15 axb6 xb6 16 a2, with the idea 16...b3 17 0-0! xc3? 18 b1 ±.

b) 10...e8 11 0-0 d7?! (11...f5? 12 b3! xe4 13 xe4 f5 14 fe1 ±) 12 xd6 b6 13 e5! xb2 14 c1 ±.

11 d2

A knight on c4 will attack both d6 and b6. For want of games with 8 f4, I’ll supply some analysis. Two good alternatives (both aimed against ...g4) are 11 h3 ± and 11 b3 d7 12 0-0 ±.

11...d7

11...e8 12 e2! (12 c4 is more complicated, but still to White’s advantage following 12...xc3+ 13 bxc3 xd5 14 xd6 c6 15 f3 with the idea 15...f5 16 e5!) 12...d7 (12...d7? is strongly met by 13 c4 intending 13...e5 14 xe5 xe5 15 xe5 dxe5 16 d6; 12...f5 13 c4 d8 14 d3 leaves Black at a loss) 13 c4 c8 14 d3 ± 15 g3 xe4 16 h4!, not just winning d6 but going for the kill with h5.

12 c4 e5 13 xe5 xe5 14 xe5 dxe5 15 h4 h5

Black doesn’t want to allow h5 when his dark squares are so vulnerable to moves like d2-h6.

16 d2 d7 17 e2 c8 (D)

In order to blockade on d6.

18 g4!

With Black’s dark-square weaknesses on the kingside, a direct attack should work. Naturally White needn’t play so radically.

18...xg4

18...hxg4 is well met not only by 19 h5, but also 19 d6! d8 (19...xd6 20 xd6 xd6 21 d1; 19...xd6 20 0-0-0) 20 h5 g5 21 0-0-0 with ideas of d5 or e3, among others.

19 xg4 hxg4 20 h5 e7?
But 20...\(\text{\texttt{d}}\text{6}\) 21 \(\text{\texttt{h}}\text{6}\) is no fun.

\begin{align*}
21 \text{\texttt{d}}\text{6} & \Rightarrow \text{\texttt{w}}\text{xd6} \\
21...\text{\texttt{d}}\text{xd6} & \text{loses to 22 \text{\texttt{d}}\text{d5} \text{\texttt{w}}\text{d8} 23 \text{hxg6}} \\
& \text{fxg6 24 \text{\texttt{w}}\text{h6}.} \\
22 \text{\texttt{d}}\text{d5} & \text{\texttt{e}}\text{7} \\
\text{Neither 22...\texttt{f}5 23 \texttt{g}5 nor 22...\texttt{g}7 23 \texttt{g}5} \\
& \text{saves Black.} \\
23 \text{\texttt{w}}\text{h6} \\
\text{White wins.}
\end{align*}

10.34) The Vulture (3...\texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{e}4)

\begin{align*}
1 \text{d4} & \text{\texttt{f}}\text{6} 2 \text{c4} \text{c5} 3 \text{d5} \Rightarrow \text{\texttt{d}}\text{e}4 (D) \\
\text{The Vulture is the brainchild of the wonderfully creative Stefan Bucker. It is an opening that is easy to dismiss, but has survived many refutation attempts over the years.}
\end{align*}

4 \text{\texttt{w}}\text{c2}

This is the most popular and perhaps critical line. 4 \text{\texttt{w}}\text{d3} is a good alternative if White needs one; the move-order 4 \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{f}3 \texttt{\texttt{a}}\text{5}+ 5 \texttt{\texttt{f}}\text{d}2 with the idea of \texttt{\texttt{w}}\text{c2} and/or \texttt{f}3, as in S. Ernst-Van Dorp, Wolvega 2010, is also of interest, because it preserves c3 for the \texttt{b}1-knight. If Black adopts the Czech Benoni structure we'll see below, then \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{f}3-d2 and \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{c}3 is the same as \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{d}2 and \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{e}2-c3; compare what follows.

4...\texttt{\texttt{a}}\text{5}+ 5 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{d}2}

It can be difficult to adjust to a surprise system, so try to be familiar with either this line or the challenging continuation 5 \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{c}3 \texttt{\texttt{x}}\text{c}3 6 \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{d}2!. Then 6...\texttt{\texttt{a}}\text{a}4?! 7 \texttt{\texttt{x}}\text{c}3 isn't appealing for Black, so he normally sets up a Czech Benoni structure with 6...\texttt{e}5 7 \texttt{\texttt{c}}\text{x}3 \texttt{\texttt{w}}\text{c}7 and ...d6. Then a sort of 'main line' goes 8 f4 d6 9 \texttt{\texttt{f}}\text{3} (D), and now:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) Bucker recommends 9...\texttt{e}xf4 with an '!', but this is risky as it opens the long diagonal and strips the king of protection. White should open the e-file, and can even do so immediately by 10 e3! (10 g3!? is another way to open lines); e.g., 10...\texttt{\texttt{w}}\text{e}7 11 \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{f}3 \texttt{\texttt{e}}\text{xe3} 12 0-0 or 10...\texttt{\texttt{e}}\text{xe3} 11 \texttt{\texttt{d}}\text{d}3 with the idea 0-0 and \texttt{\texttt{a}}\text{e}1. This really looks pretty tough for Black.
  \item b) 9...\texttt{d}7 10 e3 \texttt{g}6 11 h4 \texttt{g}7 12 h5 goes way back to Tatai-Bucker, corr. 1984. 12...\texttt{b}6 (what else?) and now:
  \begin{itemize}
    \item b1) The game Gahwens-Gal ninis, Germany (team event) 1989/90 continued 13 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}\text{x}e5} \texttt{\texttt{d}xe5} 14 0-0-0 \texttt{\texttt{g}}\text{4}, and here 15 d6! ± is particularly hard to meet, since after 15...\texttt{\texttt{w}}\text{c}6 16 \texttt{\texttt{w}}\text{f}2 both 16...\texttt{\texttt{x}}\text{f}3 17 \texttt{\texttt{w}}\text{h}4! and 16...0-0-0 17 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}\text{e}2} leave Black trying to unravel.
    \item b2) 13 \texttt{\texttt{d}3} is also good, and if Black tries to go queenside with 13...\texttt{\texttt{g}}\text{4}, 14 h6 \texttt{\texttt{f}6} 15 \texttt{\texttt{f}xe5} \texttt{\texttt{d}xe5} 16 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}2}!} looks strong, among others; e.g., 16...\texttt{\texttt{d}7} 17 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{g}5} 18 \texttt{\texttt{d}f}3 \texttt{\texttt{f}xe3}+ 19 \texttt{\texttt{h}1} 0-0 20 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}5}} \texttt{\texttt{d}8} 21 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}e}1} \texttt{\texttt{a}h}6 22 \texttt{\texttt{w}f}2, with most of these moves apparently forced.
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

5...\texttt{\texttt{f}6!} (D)

Bucker and others some time ago began to prefer this approach. The original idea was the more provocative 5...\texttt{d}6, which is what you'll find covered in most books (if they mention the Vulture at all). Then 6 \texttt{b}3 is a problem, a main line proceeding 6...f5 (6...e5 7 \texttt{\texttt{b}2} f6 8 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{\texttt{d}f}7 9 \texttt{\texttt{d}3} \texttt{g}6 10 \texttt{h}4 \texttt{\texttt{g}8} 11 \texttt{f}5 12 \texttt{h}xg6 \texttt{hxg6} 13 \texttt{\texttt{c}3} \texttt{\texttt{c}7} 14 \texttt{g}4 \texttt{e}4? 15 \texttt{\texttt{e}4}! and Black's position won't hold up) 7 \texttt{\texttt{b}2} e6 8 \texttt{\texttt{c}3} \texttt{\texttt{w}b}6 (8...\texttt{\texttt{d}8} 9 \texttt{\texttt{g}f}3 \texttt{\texttt{a}6} 10 \texttt{e}4!) 9 \texttt{\texttt{b}2} \texttt{\texttt{g}8} 10 \texttt{\texttt{g}f}3 (or 10 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}3} intending \texttt{\texttt{g}f}4) 10...\texttt{\texttt{d}8} 11 \texttt{\texttt{c}e}3 \texttt{\texttt{b}6} 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}3} ±.
6 e4 d6
Black is setting up a Czech Benoni structure with ...d6 and ...e5; Bücker has also played 6...c7 with the same purpose.

7 $\text{d}f3$
I think White gets a small advantage after 7 $\text{d}e2$ e5 8 $\text{d}c3$ $\text{e}7$ 9 $\text{d}e2$ $\text{bd}7$, intending ...$\text{d}f8$-$g6$, and now something along the lines of 10 a3 $\text{d}d8$ 11 $\text{b}1$ $\text{f}8$ 12 $\text{f}1$ $\text{g}6$ 13 $\text{d}e3$ with the idea $\text{f}5$.

7...e5 8 $\text{d}3$ $\text{e}7$ 9 a3
Now 9...0-0 can be met by 10 h3 $\text{h}5$ 11 g3, and 9...$\text{bd}7$ with 10 h3?! $\text{d}8$ (10...$\text{f}8$ 11 b4! $\text{xb}4$? 12 $\text{b}3$) 11 $\text{f}1$ $\text{h}5$ (11...0-0 12 $\text{g}3$) 12 $\text{e}3$ $\text{f}4$ 13 $\text{f}1$ ± followed by g3. Naturally, both sides can vary in several ways, even to the extent of pursuing entirely different plans. But this is a start.

10.35) Snake Benoni (5...d6)

1 d4 $\text{f}6$ 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 $\text{c}3$ exd5 5 cxd5 $\text{d}6$ ($D$)

This odd-looking idea has been fairly well-known for a quarter of a century, and has always had its adherents, but I wonder if it's going to survive as a serious system.

If you are looking for an outright refutation of the Snake and don't mind devoting many hours to the effort, you can attack by 6 e4 0-0 7 f4, virtually forcing Black to sacrifice a piece with 7...$\text{x}e4$ 8 $\text{xe}4$ $\text{e}8$ 9 $\text{e}2$ and now 9...$\text{c}7$ 10 g4 or 9...$\text{f}8$ 10 g4. Lengthy analysis convinces me that this does ultimately favour White's extra piece, even though at one point he will have to escape with his king to d1 and suffer some discomfort. But that's open to argument and anyway not in the spirit of this book. So I'll recommend a solid approach instead:

6 $\text{d}f3$ $\text{c}7$
This is a move Black normally plays sooner or later. He can delay it, but shouldn't leave it too long. 6...0-0 can be met by 7 $\text{g}5$ $\text{e}8$ (7...h6 8 $\text{h}4$ doesn't normally affect things much in these lines; a unique try is Magermanov's 8...b5?!, but simply 9 e3 with the idea 9...b4?? 10 $\text{e}4$ or 9...a6 10 $\text{x}f6$ $\text{xf}6$ 11 a4 b4 12 $\text{e}4$ $\text{e}7$ 13 $\text{d}3$! favours White) 8 e3 ($D$), and now:

7...h6 9 $\text{h}4$ a6 (9...g5 10 $\text{g}3$ $\text{x}g3$ 11 hxg3 $\text{g}7$ 12 d6 gives White a clear advantage, Vaganian-Hodgson, Sochi 1986) 10 a4 $\text{f}8$ 11 d6! $\text{e}6$ 12 $\text{c}4$ $\text{xd}6$ 13 $\text{b}3$ and Black is in big trouble: 13...$\text{e}6$! (13...g5 14 $\text{e}5$! $\text{e}6$ 15 $\text{xe}6$ $\text{fxe}6$ 16 $\text{g}3$) 14 $\text{xe}6$ $\text{fxe}6$ 15 e4 $\text{c}6$ (G.Georgadze-Lima, Elgoibar 1997) 16 e5! g5 17 $\text{g}3$ $\text{h}5$ 18 $\text{c}2$ $\text{e}8$ 19 0-0 ±.
b) 8...\(\text{c7}\) is Black's main idea, to restrain White's centre with \(\text{...d6}\) and, if appropriate, to put pressure on e4 with \(\text{...\text{a5}}\). It's interesting to compare this with the Leningrad Variation of the Nimzo-Indian (1 d4 \(\text{\text{d6}}\) 2 c4 e6 3 \(\text{\text{c3 a4}}\) \(\text{\text{b4}}\) 4 \(\text{\text{g5 c5}}\) 5 d5), in which Black's bishop gets to b4 in one move, rather than taking three to get to a5! One nice example is 9 d6! \(\text{\text{a5}}\) 10 \(\text{\text{c4 c6}}\) 11 0-0 (11 \(\text{\text{b3}}\) forces 11...\(\text{\text{xc3}}\) + 12 \(\text{\text{xc3}}\) with a solid advantage for White) 11...\(\text{\text{xc3}}\) 12 \(\text{\text{xc3 e5?!}}\) 13 \(\text{\text{xe5 xe5}}\) 14 f4! \(\text{\text{xe3}}\) 15 \(\text{\text{wd2 e8}}\) 16 \(\text{\text{a1 e7 d6}}\) 18 \(\text{\text{xf6}}\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 19 \(\text{\text{xf6}}\) 20 \(\text{\text{xc4 e4}}\) 21 \(\text{\text{xc4}}\) 22 \(\text{\text{xc3}}\) 23 \(\text{\text{a4 f5}}\) 24 \(\text{\text{xf7}}\) ! with the idea \(\text{\text{f1}}\) is killing.

7...\(\text{\text{a5}}\) 8 \(\text{\text{g5}}\) (D)

Now we have these examples:

a) 8...h6 9 \(\text{\text{h4}}\) and then:

a1) 9...\(\text{\text{xf6}}\) 10 \(\text{\text{xf6}}\) \(\text{\text{b2}}\) 11 \(\text{\text{g5}}\) \(\text{\text{g8}}\) 12 \(\text{\text{b1 xc3+}}\) 13 \(\text{\text{xc3}}\) \(\text{\text{xc3+}}\) 14 \(\text{\text{c2}}\) \(\text{\text{g6}}\) 15 \(\text{\text{b3}}\) \(\text{\text{g7}}\) (Arkell-Bezold, French Team Ch 2001) and now 16 \(\text{\text{d3}}\) \(\text{\text{c6}}\) 17 \(\text{\text{g3}}\) b6 18 \(\text{\text{h4}}\) \(\text{f6}\) 19 \(\text{\text{g2 b7}}\) 20 0-0 gives White much the better pawn-structure and a plan of e4 and \(\text{\text{f5}}\).

a2) 9...\(\text{\text{xc6}}\) 10 \(\text{\text{b6}}\) 11 \(\text{\text{a4}}\) \(\text{\text{b7}}\) 12 0-0 \(\text{\text{xc3}}\) 13 \(\text{\text{d3}}\) 0-0 14 \(\text{\text{a1}}\) \(\text{\text{e8}}\) 15 \(\text{\text{d2}}\) \(\text{\text{c6}}\) 16 \(\text{\text{e4}}\) ! \(\text{\text{b5}}\) 17 \(\text{\text{e5}}\) \(\text{\text{g7}}\) 18 \(\text{\text{g3?!}}\) (19 \(\text{\text{b3!}}\) -- and f4 follows -- Moskalenko) 19...\(\text{\text{xe4}}\) ! 20 \(\text{\text{xf6+}}\) \(\text{\text{xf6}}\) 21 \(\text{\text{d5}}\) ! \(\text{\text{g6}}\) ? 22 \(\text{\text{g4}}\) \(\text{\text{d6}}\) 23 f5! \(\text{\text{f5}}\) 24 \(\text{\text{h5}}\) +- Moskalenko-Almeida, Banyoles rapid 2006.

b) 8...\(\text{\text{xf6}}\) 9 \(\text{\text{xf6}}\) \(\text{\text{b2}}\) 10 \(\text{\text{g5}}\) \(\text{\text{xc3+}}\) (10...\(\text{\text{g8?!}}\) 11 \(\text{\text{h1 xc3}}\) 12 \(\text{\text{c3}}\) \(\text{\text{xc3+}}\) 13 \(\text{\text{d2 xc3+}}\) 14 \(\text{\text{h4}}\) \(\text{g6}\) doesn't improve matters) 11 \(\text{\text{xc3}}\) \(\text{\text{xc3+}}\) 12 \(\text{\text{d2}}\). This favours White, in spite of Black's discovery 12...\(\text{\text{e5?!}}\) (12...\(\text{\text{c4}}\) 13 \(\text{\text{c1 xd6}}\) 14 e3!), to which White should reply 13 e3! \(\text{\text{d6}}\) 14 \(\text{\text{c4}}\) ! \(\text{\text{g8}}\) 15 0-0 \(\text{\text{xd6}}\) 16 \(\text{\text{e4 xd1}}\) 17 \(\text{\text{fxd1}}\) \(\text{\text{e7}}\) 18 \(\text{\text{bxc5}}\) 19 \(\text{\text{d4}}\), when Black has three isolated pawns to deal with, and sensitive squares such as d5 and f5; e.g., 19...\(\text{\text{xf5}}\) 20 \(\text{\text{g3}}\) \(\text{\text{e6}}\) 21 \(\text{\text{d3}}\) might follow.

7 \(\text{d6}\)

Some people believe this forcing method is a virtual refutation of the Snake.

7 \(\text{g5}\) is the positional approach: 7...\(\text{d6}\) 8 \(\text{e3}\) 0-0 9 \(\text{e2}\) (9 \(\text{d3}\) is more aggressive, especially with White's lead in development) 9...a6 (9...\(\text{a5}\) 10 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{b7}\) 11 0-0 \(\text{a6}\) 12 \(\text{c4}\) \(\pm\) ) 10 a4 \(\text{b7}\) (10...\(\text{a5}\) 11 \(\text{d2 b7}\) 12 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{c7}\) 13 \(\text{a5}\) \(\pm\) ) 11 0-0 \(\text{h6}\) 12 \(\text{h4}\) \(\text{e8}\) 13 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{b8}\) 14 \(\text{b1}\) (preparing to answer ...\(\text{b5}\) with \(\text{axb5}\) and b4, a standard Benoni plan) 14... \(\text{e7}\) 15 \(\text{c2}\) \(\text{f8}\) 16 \(\text{f1}\) g5 17 \(\text{d3}\) 18 b4! \(\text{xb4}\) 19 \(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{a5}\) 20 \(\text{b1}\) \(\text{c3}\) 21 \(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{d5}\) 22 \(\text{d4}\) \(\text{f6}\) (Tkachev-S.Savchenko, Cannes rapid 2000) and now 23 \(\text{b6}\) ! \(\text{e6}\) 24 \(\text{c4 xc4}\) 25 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{e4}\) 26 \(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{g3}\) 27 \(\text{f3}\) with the idea \(\text{h1}\) is killing. 7...\(\text{a5}\) 8 \(\text{g5}\) (D)
11 Dutch Defence

1 d4 f5 (D)

The Dutch Defence isn’t a regular choice in elite tournaments nowadays, but is perfectly respectable and has always had a following of experienced grandmasters. Perhaps surprisingly, each of its three main versions – the Leningrad, Classical and Stonewall Variations – has held up theoretically into the present. All of them include ...f5 and ...tt:lf6 at some point, but then go different directions: the Leningrad is characterized by ...g6, ...i.g7 and ...d6; the Classical by ...e6 and ...d6; and the Stonewall by ...c6, ...d5 and ...e6. On top of that, Black can reach these formations by various move-orders; for example, we saw the Stonewall via 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 tt:lc3 e6 4 e3 f5 in Chapter 5. The main lines we shall examine are:

11.1: 1 d4 f5 225
11.2: 1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 232

Various forms of the Dutch can arise from first moves other than 1...f5. It might be useful to explain this up front in the context of our repertoire. First, there’s simply 1...f5, which I propose to answer with 2 tt:lc3. Against other move-orders, I will use 2 c4. In 11.2 I cover 1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5. Notice that immediately below and in my note to 2 tt:lc3 in Section 11.1, I discuss 2 c4 in the context of a repertoire and in particular, I examine Black’s other first moves that lead to a Dutch by transposition. I’ve presented it in this way because you might want to use 2 c4 against every Dutch move-order including 1...f5. In this note, I’ll discuss two of Black’s other attempts to employ the Dutch Defence and how you can respond to them:

a) Versus 1...g6 2 c4 (a move-order that cuts out any Dutch transpositions, 2 e4 i.g7 3 c4, is covered in Section 12.34) 2...f5, one option is 3 tt:lc3 tt:lf6, transposing to line ‘a’ of my note after White’s 2nd move in Section 11.1. But there’s also a good alternative in 3 h4! tt:lf6 4 h5 tt:xh5 (D).

Now:
a1) 5 lhh5! gxh5 6 e4. White threatens mate and best play is 6...d6 (6...i.g7 7 tt:xh5+ tt:t8 8 tt:xh5+ i.g8 9 i.f3 d6 10 tt:h5) 7 tt:xh5+ tt:t7 8 tt:xh5+ e6 9 tt:h3 with a pawn and excellent attacking chances for the exchange (compare various h4 lines below).

a2) 5 e4! may be even better: 5 ...tt:lf6 6 exf5 gxf5 7 i.f3 d6 8 tt:lc3 with development, activity and structural superiority – more than enough positional compensation for a pawn.

b) 1...d6 2 c4 f5 is an unusual move-order that can be answered simply by 3 tt:lc3 tt:lf6, which is discussed below under the move-order 1...f5 2 c4 tt:lf6 3 tt:lc3 d6 – see line ‘b’ of the
note to White's 2nd move in Section 11.1, where I recommend 4 \( \texttt{g5} \). Alternatively, since \( \ldots \text{d6} \) weakens the light squares, adventurous souls could venture upon \( 3 \text{ g4!} ? \text{ fxg4} 4 \text{ h3} \), a gambit that I don't recommend in other contexts, but which has more positional basis here. The idea is to control the \( \text{e6} \)-square, which has been weakened by \( \ldots \text{d6} \).

11.1)

1 d4 f5 2 c3

This is a relatively uncomplicated and efficient way to cut down on the many move-order challenges that the Dutch Defence presents in, say, lines where White plays \( g3 \), not to mention the dense theory associated with those lines. White's initial idea is very straightforward: to develop and play \( 3 \text{ e4} \), thus gaining a central advantage. As mentioned, \( 2 \text{ c4} \) is important not only because I am recommending it by transposition versus some Dutch move-orders, but because you may want to construct a complete repertoire around it (which also means you need a recommendation against the Leningrad).

The following analysis should prove useful: 2 c4 \( \texttt{f6} \) (2 \( \ldots \text{g6} \) was discussed above, via the move-order 1 \( \ldots \text{g6} \) 2 c4 \( \text{f5} \), where we examined \( 3 \text{ h4!} \); against other second moves we can play as in the main lines below with \( \texttt{c3} \), \( \texttt{e3} \), \( \texttt{d3} \), etc., and often transpose directly to them) 3 \( \texttt{c3} \) (D).

The only problem here is that White's best lines are very tactical and require some memorization, which isn't quite what I'm trying to do with this repertoire. Nevertheless, let me give you a starting point. The two arguably most important moves are:

a) \( 3\text{g6} 4 \text{ h4!} \). This is a recurring theme against \( \ldots \text{g6} \) lines:

   a1) 4\( \text{ g7} \) 5 \( \text{ h5} \) \( \texttt{dxe5} \) 6 \texttt{e4!} is known to give White a favourable initiative, but that takes some time to prove, so you might want to check out the books and databases. One important line is 6\( \texttt{f6} \) (6\( \ldots \text{fxe4} \) 7 \texttt{g4} \( \texttt{f6} \) 8 \( \texttt{g5} \) 7 \texttt{exf5} \( \texttt{gxf5} \) 8 \( \texttt{g5} \) with an attack.

   a2) 4\( \ldots \text{d6} \) 5 \( \texttt{h5} \) \( \texttt{dxe5} \) 6 \texttt{e4!} (D) (this is held to be advantageous in most sources; 6 \texttt{h5} \texttt{gxf5} 7 \texttt{e4} \texttt{w7}! is very complex and dynamically equal).

\[ \text{B} \]

Now:

   a21) 6\( \texttt{f6} \) 7 \( \texttt{d3} \) \( \texttt{fxe4} \) 8 \( \texttt{xe4} \) and now 8\( \texttt{e6?} \) 9 \( \texttt{xf6+} \texttt{exf6} \) 10 \( \texttt{xf6+} \texttt{gx6} \) or 8\( \texttt{g7} \) 9 \( \texttt{xf6}+ \texttt{fx6}?! \) 10 \( \texttt{h7}! \) \texttt{h7} 11 \( \texttt{xf6}+ \texttt{f7} \) 12 \texttt{h5} \( \texttt{d6} \) 13 \texttt{d5} ±.

   a22) 6\( \ldots \text{fxe4} \) 7 \( \texttt{xe4} \) \( \texttt{f5} \) 8 \( \texttt{g5} \) (or 8 \( \texttt{d3} \)) 8\( \ldots \texttt{f7} \) 9 \( \texttt{xd3} \) (threatening 10 \( \texttt{xf5} \), winning a piece) 9\( \texttt{xd3} \) 10 \( \texttt{xd3} \) \( \texttt{h6} \) 11 \( \texttt{d3} \) with pressure that is worth more than a pawn.

b) In order to avoid that fate, 3\( \ldots \text{d6} \) with the idea of playing \( \ldots \text{g6} \) next is recommended by leading Leningrad Dutch experts. I propose 4 \( \texttt{g5} \), when Black must tread carefully:

   b1) After 4\( \ldots \text{e6} \), the moves 5 \( \texttt{e3} \), 5 \( \texttt{h3} \) and of course 5 \( \texttt{f3} \) are logical and objectively strongest. If you want something very simple that gives you a minor but distinct positional edge, there's 5 \( \texttt{e4} \) \( \texttt{fxe4} \) 6 \( \texttt{xe4} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 7 \( \texttt{xf6}+ \) \( \texttt{xf6} \) 8 \( \texttt{gf6} \) 0-0 and now 9 \( \texttt{d3} \)! \( \texttt{c6} \) 10 \( \texttt{xf6+} \) \( \texttt{xf6} \) 11 0-0 or 9 \( \texttt{e2} \).

   b2) 4\( \ldots \texttt{d7} \) 5 \( \texttt{c2} \) (I also like 5 \( \texttt{h3} \) with the idea 5\( \ldots \texttt{h6}?! \) 6 \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{f7} \) 7 \( \texttt{xf6} \) \( \texttt{xf6} \) 8 \texttt{h4},}
or 5...e5 6 e3 c6 7 â7 e7 8 â7 e2 h6 9 â7 h4 0-0 10 dxe5 Qxe5 11 0-0 ±) 5...g6 6 e3 â7 g7 7 Qf3 0-0 8 â7 e2 h6 9 â7 h4 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 â7 g3 â7 e7 12 0-0-0 c6 13 h3 a6 14 â7 h2 b5 15 â7 h4 â7 f7?! 16 g4 ± Salov-Rivas, European Team Ch, Haifa 1989.

We now return to 2 â7 c3 (D):

Black wants to prevent e4, so his normal responses are:

11.11: 2...d5 226
11.12: 2...â7 f6 229

You won't see many other moves played with regularity, but these two are important:

a) 2...e6 gives up the centre. After 3 e4, we have:

a1) 3...fxe4 â7 e5 dxe5 6 (or 5 â7 d3 ±) 5...â7 xf6 6 â7 f3 â7 c6 6...â7 e7?? â7 g5 â7 f5 8 â7 xe7 â7 xe7 9 â7 d3 ± Korchnoi-Midjord, Siegen Olympiad 1970; 6...â7 d6 7 â7 d3 b6 8 â7 e4 â7 c6 9 â7 g5 â7 f7 10 d5 ± Winants-Rej, Germany (Under-18) 1980) 7 â7 d3 â7 e7 8 0-0-0 9 c3 â7 f7 10 â7 g5! â7 h8 11 â7 g5 ± Drzaga-Weritz, Dortmund 1993.

a2) 3...â7 b4 4 â7 e5 â7 xc3+ 5 bxc3 â7 xf5 6 â7 d3 d6 7 â7 e2 and White is looking at a combination of â7 e1, â7 f4 and d5 to exploit the weakness on e6; e.g., 7...â7 f6 8 0-0-0 9 â7 c5?? 10 d5 â7 f7 11 c4 â7 d5? 12 cxd5 c4 13 â7 d4! cxd3 14 â7 xd3 and already Black's position is indefensible, Hrktko-Wimbersky, corr. 1990.

b) If Black heads for a Leningrad set-up with 2...g6, then 3 e4 fxe4 4 â7 xe4 is possible, but the real problem is 3 h4! (D). Then:

b1) 3...â7 g7 4 h5 â7 c6 5 â7 f3 d6 (5...d5 6 â7 f4 a6 7 e3 â7 h6 and now apart from 8 h7xg6 hxg6 {Debarnot-Larsen, Las Palmas 1976} 9 â7 d2 and 0-0-0 with an advantage, White has the strong move 8 â7 g5! with the idea â7 f3-g3 and 0-0-0) 6 h7xg6? (6 e4! fxe4 7 â7 xe4 followed by â7 d3) 6...hxg6 7 â7 h8 â7 xh8 8 â7 g5 ± Argandona Riveiro-Perez Aranda, Torrelavega 2002.

b2) 3...â7 f6 4 h5 and now:

b21) 4...â7 xh5 5 â7 xh5! gxh5 6 e4 launches a terrific attack, with a clear advantage following 6...d6 7 â7 xh5+ â7 d7 8 â7 xf5+ e6 (8...â7 e8 9 â7 h5+ â7 d7 10 â7 c4 c6 11 â7 f4 â7 c7 12 â7 e5! and White wins material, even after 12...â7 g4! 13 â7 h2) 9 â7 h3 and White already has a pawn for the exchange with moves ahead such as â7 c4, â7 e2-f4, and simply â7 e3 with 0-0-0.

b22) 4...â7 g7 5 h6 (5 hxg6 hxg6 6 â7 xh8+ â7 xh8 7 â7 d2! intending â7 h6 is also good, and perhaps clearer) 5...â7 f8 6 â7 g5 d5 7 â7 d2 e6 8 0-0-0 â7 b4 9 f3 ± Möhring-Knežević, Hradec Kralove 1977/8.

11.11)
2...d5 3 â7 f4 (D)

This natural move brings the bishop in front of the pawn-chain about to be formed with e3, and it introduces the idea of â7 b5.

3...â7 f6

a) 3...c6 4 e3 â7 f6 transposes to our main line. Let's note that a potential drawback to an early ...c6 is that a later ...c5 (a critical reply to some of White's strategies) will come at a loss of tempo, so these lines tend to be easy for White to handle with natural moves.

b) 3...e6 4 e3 (or 4 â7 f3) 4...â7 f6 transposes to note 'a' to Black's 4th move; White has
particularly many 4th-move alternatives in this case, but I don’t think they’re necessary.

c) 3...a6 is widely recommended, preventing \( \mathbb{Q}b5 \) and intending \( ...c5 \) in many lines. Then 4 e3 \( \mathbb{Q}f6 \) is covered in note ‘b’ to Black’s 4th move below.

4 e3

4 \( \mathbb{Q}b5 \) \( \mathbb{Q}a6 \) 5 c4 e6 6 e3 transposes to line ‘a1’ of the next note. If Black intends to play \( ...a6 \) or \( ...c6 \), he might want do this as early as possible to eliminate this possibility.

4...c6

Or:

a) 4...e6 5 \( \mathbb{Q}b5 \) (D) forces a commitment:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\end{array}
\]

a1) 5...\( \mathbb{Q}a6 \) allows White a pleasant edge after 6 c4 \( \mathbb{Q}b4+ \) 7 \( \mathbb{Q}c3 \) 0-0 8 \( \mathbb{Q}f3 \) ±.

a2) 5...\( \mathbb{Q}d6 \) is less compromising. Then:

a21) Suetin suggests 6 c4 and says that it’s clearly better for White. As you can imagine, the computer is not thrilled with taking on doubled pawns after 6...\( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \) 7 \( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \), after which Black has tempting options of \( ...dxc4 \), isolating White’s d-pawn, or an eventual \( ...c5 \). However, with White having traded his bad bishop for Black’s good one, in addition to opening the e-file against Black’s weakness on e6, the human assessment deserves consideration.

\[a22) \] 6 \( \mathbb{Q}xd6+ \) \( \mathbb{Q}xd6 \) 7 \( \mathbb{Q}xf3 \) \( \mathbb{Q}c6 \) 8 \( \mathbb{Q}e2 \) 0-0 0-0 a6 10 b3 (White can play for a normal bishop-pair position by 10 c4!? \( \mathbb{Q}xc4 \) b5 12 \( \mathbb{Q}e2 \) with the idea of \( a4 \), \( h3 \) and potentially \( \mathbb{Q}d2 \) and \( \mathbb{Q}f3 \)) 10...\( \mathbb{Q}e7 \) (10...\( \mathbb{Q}e4 \) 11 c4 \( \mathbb{Q}c3 \) 12 \( \mathbb{Q}d2 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xe2+ \) 13 \( \mathbb{Q}xe2 \) ±) 11 c4 \( \mathbb{Q}xc4 \) 12 \( \mathbb{Q}xc4 \) e5 13 \( \mathbb{Q}g5 \) h6 14 \( \mathbb{Q}xf6 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xf6 \) 15 \( \mathbb{Q}b1 \) ± V.Milov-Kindermann, Biel 1995.

b) 4...a6 is logical. Then:

b1) A common strategy for White in these positions is the g4 advance; e.g., 5 h3 e6 6 g4!? \( \mathbb{Q}d6 \) 7 \( \mathbb{Q}f3 \) (D).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\end{array}
\]

7...\( \mathbb{Q}c6 \) (7...\( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \) 8 \( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \) 0-0 9 \( \mathbb{Q}xf5 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xf5 \) 10 \( \mathbb{Q}d3 \) \( \mathbb{Q}e4 \) 11 \( \mathbb{Q}ge2 \) followed by \( b1g1 \) and 0-0-0 gives White easy play) 8 \( \mathbb{Q}xf5 \) 0-0! (8...e5 9 \( \mathbb{Q}xc5 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xe5 \) 10 \( \mathbb{Q}g2 \) 0-0 11 0-0-0 \( \mathbb{Q}c6 \) 12 \( \mathbb{Q}f3 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xf3 \) 13 \( \mathbb{Q}xf3 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \) 14 \( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \) \( \mathbb{Q}h5 \) 15 \( \mathbb{Q}g4 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xf5 \) 16 \( \mathbb{Q}d3 \) \( \mathbb{Q}e5 \) 17 \( \mathbb{Q}d4 \) ± Epishin) 9 0-0-0 \( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \) 10 \( \mathbb{Q}xf4 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xf5 \) 11 \( \mathbb{Q}d3 \) \( \mathbb{Q}e4 \) 12 \( \mathbb{Q}ge2 \) \( \mathbb{Q}e7 \) 13 \( h4 \) ± Epishin-Malaniuk, Tashkent 1987. After the continuation 13...\( \mathbb{W}d6 \) 14 \( \mathbb{W}xd6 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xd6 \) 15 \( \mathbb{Q}f4 \) c6 16 \( \mathbb{Q}d1 \), Black is still stuck with his very bad bishop and White has just enough pieces on the kingside to stir up some trouble. If need be, he also has realistic chances on the queenside.

b2) 5 \( \mathbb{Q}d3 \) e6 6 \( \mathbb{Q}f3 \) c5 7 \( \mathbb{Q}xc5 \) \( \mathbb{Q}xc5 \) 8 0-0 0-0 0-0 \( \mathbb{Q}e2 \) \( \mathbb{Q}c6 \) 10 c4 (D).

An unusual position; White is breaking up Black’s central majority and wants to exert some pressure in that area by, for example, \( \mathbb{Q}c1 \),
b3, \( \text{fd1} \) and at the right moment, \( \text{e5} \) or \( \text{d4} \). Black has some space and decent central control, but his queen's bishop is bad and his rooks are going to have difficulties finding good squares:

b21) 10...d4 11 exd4 \( \text{cxd4} \) 12 \( \text{e4} \) 13 \( \text{f2} \) 14 \( \text{ad1} \) ± Svetushkin-M. Grünberg, Bucharest 2003.

b22) 10...\( \text{e7} \) leaves d5 a little loose. There might follow 11 cxd5 (or 11 \( \text{e4} \) d7 12 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{ac8} \) 13 cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \) 14 \( \text{x5} \) 15 \( \text{c4} \) ± Beim-Renner, Bad Wiessee 2002) 11...exd5 (11...\( \text{xd5} \) 12 \( \text{g3} \) d7 13 a3 \( \text{d8} \) 14 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{a7} \) 15 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{e4} \) 16 \( \text{h4} \) f6 17 \( \text{b3} \) ±) 12 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{a5} \) 13 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{e4} \) 14 \( \text{ac1} \) ±.

b23) 10...\( \text{b4} \) 11 \( \text{c3} \) (11 \( \text{d4} \) is another approach) 11...\( \text{xd3} \) 12 \( \text{xd3} \) dxc4 13 \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 14 \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15 \( \text{b3} \) b5 16 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{d8} \) 17 \( \text{xd7} \) ?! (17 \( \text{e2} \) ± is more ambitious) 17...\( \text{x7} \) 18 a4 bxa4 19 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 20 \( \text{c6} \)! ? \( \text{xf4} \) 21 \( \text{exf4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 22 \( \text{b6} \) with some pressure; e.g., 22...\( \text{c7} \) 23 \( \text{fc1} \).

\( \text{5...g6} \)

a) 5...\( \text{e6} \) 6 \( \text{d3} \) g6 7 h4! h6 8 \( \text{e5} \) g8 9 f3 (one of a few reasonable courses; Bareev suggests 9 \( \text{e2} \), but overall I think 9 \( \text{xd2} \) ! and 10 0-0-0 is strongest) 9...\( \text{bd7} \) 10 \( \text{e2} \)! (10 \( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 11 \( \text{d2} \) ! with the idea 0-0-0; Black's pieces don't coordinate and his position is rather fragile; e.g., 11...\( \text{h5} \) 12 \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{g7} \) 13 0-0-0 \( \text{f6} \) 14 \( \text{f2} \) !) 10...\( \text{h5} \) 11 c3?! (11 \( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 12 \( \text{h2} \) ±) 11...\( \text{xf4} \) 12 \( \text{xf4} \) h5 = Bareev-Onishchuk, Elista Olympiad 1998.

b) A pure Stonewall isn't usually the best course versus \( \text{f4} \) and \( \text{f3} \), but naturally it's playable. 5...\( \text{e6} \) 6 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 7 \( \text{e2} \) !, as in the game Sorokin-Piskov, Minsk 1990, is promising because it prepares an early c4 (after a3) and reinforces f4. Because...\( \text{e6} \) interrupts the communication between the c8-bishop and the g4-square, White can also consider playing h3 and g4 at the right moment, even at the cost of a pawn.

\( \text{6 d3 g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 e2! (D)} \)

A key idea in this line: White prepares c4, but also covers the critical f4-square in case of an attack on the bishop.

\( \text{8...e4} \)

White's control of e5 combined with the c4 advance give him the better game in any case; for example, 8...\( \text{h6} \) 9 c4 \( \text{e6} \) 10 cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \) and instead of 11 \( \text{xe5} \), which gave White a very modest advantage in Komarov-Galdunts, Metz 1994, I think he can more profitably retain the bishop by 11 \( \text{g3} \); e.g., 11...\( \text{d7} \) 12 \( \text{d2} \) (or 12 a3 \( \text{f6} \) 13 \( \text{c2} \)) 12...\( \text{h7} \) 13 \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{f6} \) (13...\( \text{g8} \) 14 e4!) 14 h3 \( \text{e4} \) 15 \( \text{xe4} \) !\( \text{xe4} \) 16 \( \text{d5} \) ±.
9 c4 \( \text{h8} \)

9...e6 10 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{d7} \) 11 h3 gives the bishop an escape-square on h2. White can begin an attack on the queenside.

10 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{e6} \)

Now:

a) 11 \( \text{xg7}+ \text{xg7} \) 12 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 13 \( \text{c1} \) leaves White with the better pieces.

b) 11 b4! \( \text{d6} \) 12 \( \text{xg7} \) 13 \( \text{xg7} \) 14 \( \text{e4} \) 14...\( \text{f6} \) 15 cxd5 \( \text{e7} \) 16 b5 \( \text{d4} \) (16...\( \text{b6} \) 17 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{c6} \) 18 \( \text{e5} \) ±) 17 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 18 \( \text{c2} \) gave White a hefty advantage in Khalifman-Topalov, Las Palmas 1993.

11.12)

2...\( \text{f6} \) 3 \( \text{f4} \) (D)

This uncommon move was actually assigned a '?' in one source. The argument against putting the bishop on f4 is that it will be kicked away by ...e5 with gain of tempo. But it’s not clear that this will ever happen (or should, anyway), and 3 \( \text{f4} \) is a logical developing move that a number of strong players have chosen. Instead, 3 \( \text{g5} \) is the overwhelming preference in practice, when I feel that Black can equalize, but that’s also a strategically rich variation.

3...\( \text{d6} \)

Consistent with playing for ...e5, and with the Leningrad (...g6) as well as the Classical (...e6)! Alternatively:

a) 3...\( \text{h5} \)!! 4 \( \text{g5} \) (I like 4 \( \text{e5} \) d6 5 e3!! ±, and even 4 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 5 \( \text{xf4} \) is attractive)

b) 3...\( \text{g6} \) 5 e3 \( \text{g7} \) 6 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 7 \( \text{f3} \) d6 8 0-0 is slightly better for White.

b) 3...\( \text{g6} \) has a tendency to transpose to other lines, but has a couple of possible disadvantages at such an early stage. One is that White can play \( \text{xd2} \) without preliminaries and have the irritating possibility of \( \text{h6} \) (possibly in conjunction with 0-0-0 and h4-h5). The more important problem is that, as always, White can attack ...g6 immediately with 4 h4! \( \text{g7} \) 5 h5 \( \text{xf5} \) 6 \( \text{xf5} \) g5 7 e3 0-0 8 \( \text{d2} \) (D), and even though Black has managed to castle, this position is very difficult to defend:

The play is fascinating; here is a sample of the analysis:

b1) 8...\( \text{xe8} \) can be answered by 9 \( \text{xe8} \) ! \( \text{xe8} \) 10 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{e6} \) 11 \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{bxa6} \) 12 \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{d7} \) 13 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{e8} \) 14 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 15 \( \text{xf3} \) , when Black’s pawn-structure is considerably worse than White’s. Actually, 9 \( \text{h4} \) isn’t so bad either.

b2) 8...d6 9 \( \text{d3} \) c6 10 \( \text{c4}+! \) d5 11 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 12 0-0-0 \( \text{d6} \) 13 \( \text{h4} \) and \( \text{h1} \).

b3) 8...\( \text{e6} \) 9 \( \text{d3} \) d6 (9...\( \text{xe8} \) ? is well met by 10 \( \text{h2} \), while 10 \( \text{xe8} \) \( \text{xe8} \) 11 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{a6} \) 12 \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{b7} \) 13 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 14 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 15 \( \text{gxf3} \) , when Black’s pawn-structure is considerably worse than White’s. Actually, 9 \( \text{h4} \) isn’t so bad either.

b) 14...\( \text{xe4} \) 14...\( \text{xf6}+ \) \( \text{xf6} \) 15 \( \text{g5} \) 15 e3 \( \text{xf5} \) 16 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 17 \( \text{xf6} \) 18 \( \text{d5} \) ) 11 \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{d7} \) ! 12 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d6} \) (12...\( \text{xe4} \) 13 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 14 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 15 \( \text{g5} \) 15 \( \text{xf4} \) 16 \( \text{xf6} \) 17 \( \text{xf6} \) 18 \( \text{h4} \) threatens exf6 with ongoing pressure; for example, 14...\( \text{d8} \) 15 \( \text{g3} \) d5 16 \( \text{g5} \) with the idea f3.

4 e3 (D)
4 \( \varnothing f3 \) will be played in this set-up anyway to restrain \( ... e5 \), and may be more accurate, even if it usually transposes. In that case, White gets a unique option against the Leningrad set-up \( 4...g6 \), i.e., \( \varnothing d2 \) with the idea of \( \varnothing h6 \), exchanging Black's valuable bishop. There can follow \( 5...h6!? \) (this weakens g6) \( 6 e3 \varnothing g7 7 \varnothing d3 \) (with the idea e4) \( 7...\varnothing c6 8 \varnothing e4!? \) (8 h3 is more conventional, thinking about g4; for example, \( 8...g5 9 \varnothing h2 \varnothing e6! 10 e4 fxe4 11 \varnothing xe4 0-0 12 0-0-0 \pm \) intending b1 and h1e1) \( 8...g5 9 \varnothing g3! f4?! \) (9...\( \varnothing b4 \) 10 exf5 \( \varnothing d3+11 \varnothing xd3 \varnothing d7 12 0-0-0 \varnothing xf5 13 \varnothing c4 c6 14 h1e1) 10 \( \varnothing xf4 \) gxf4 11 e5, and White wins the piece back with advantage in view of \( \varnothing g6+ \) and \( \varnothing xf4(+) \).

Now Black must choose which system he wants to go into:

11.121: \( 4...e6 \) 230
11.122: \( 4...g6 \) 231

11.121)

\( 4...e6 \)

This transposes to a Classical set-up \( (...\varnothing e7 \) and \( ...0-0) \), when it's not clear whether White is better off with \( \varnothing c3 \) and \( \varnothing f4 \), or c4, \( \varnothing c3 \) and \( \varnothing d3 \), as in our main anti-Classical system.

\( 5 h3 \varnothing e7 6 \varnothing d3 0-0 7 \varnothing f3(D) \)

White's typical mode of development.

\( 7...\varnothing e8?! \)

In view of the next note, Schipkov proposes \( 7...\varnothing c6 \) with idea of \( ...\varnothing b4 \) or \( ...\varnothing e8 \). This is definitely an improvement, when I think White should play \( 8 a3 \varnothing e8 (8...a6 9 0-0 b5 10 \varnothing h2 \pm \) and 11 e4), and now:

\[ a) 9 \varnothing e2 \]

\( \varnothing e2 \) is not bad in itself, but is unresponsive, and transposes to the main line below.

\[ b) 9 0-0! \] looks better, planning \( 9...\varnothing g6 10 \varnothing b5 \varnothing d8 11 c4 \pm \).

8 \( \varnothing e2?! \)

This has been played in several games, but Schipkov points out that White also has \( 8 g4! \), when an exchange on f5 or g4 will pry open either the g- or h-file, while White can exercise his option of \( \varnothing e2 \) and g5 followed by e4 in some lines. Black can doubtless stay in the game, but it looks rather depressing for him.

8...\( \varnothing c6 (D) \)

This position is at any rate instructive. In two games White has castled queenside, but since e4 can only be stopped at the price of ceding the e5-square, there's no hurry. Here's an alternative idea:

9 a3

White calmly prevents \( ...\varnothing b4 \). Now:

\[ a) 9...a6 10 g4 \varnothing d8 11 gxf5 exf5 can be met by 12 \varnothing d2(!) \pm or 12 0-0-0. \]
b) 9...h8 10 0-0 (not 10 e4? e5!, a motif worth remembering) 10...d7 (10...g6 11 g3 h5 12 e4) 11 e4 fxe4 (11...e5? 12 dxe5 fxe4 13 dxe4 dxe4 14 dxe4 f5 15 e3 ±) 12 dxe4 d5! (12...h5 13 g3 f7 14 d2) 13 h2 f4 14 xf4 xf4 15 c3 (or 15 xae1!!?) 15...e5 16 d5 c8 17 c4 with a positional advantage. Mere analysis, but in general White seems to be controlling the play.

c) 9...d8! 10 0-0 e5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 c4+ h8 13 h2 reaches a position in which I'm not sure what either side is doing next.

11.122)

4...g6
Black finally achieves his Leningrad set-up.
5 f3
This doesn’t seem necessary, but it’s important to look at an example of this basic kind of position. As always, 5 h4! (D) is important, and apparently strong (are we surprised?), with these responses:

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B
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a) Vorotnikov-Glek, Russian Ch, St Petersburg 1998 is instructive: 5...h6 (criticized as unnecessary, but see line 'b' for what happens after 5...g7) 6 d3 (6 c4 g7 7 f3!) 6...c6 7 f3 g4! (after 7...g7, 8 w2 is normal and good; Tyomkin gives 8 e4, but it leads to only a very small plus) 8 d5! cxe5 9 dxe5 dxe5 (9...dxe5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 h5 g5 and now Tyomkin offers 12 g4 ±, while 12 e4 and 12 b5+ are also good) 10 e4 e6! (10...c6 11 h5) 11 b5+?! (11 w2! and 0-0-0 gives White an excellent game) 11...d7 12 dxe6 xb5 13 xb5 c6 and here White should have played 14 c3, but he has lost most of his advantage.

b) The continuation that supposedly makes the weakening 5...h6 unnecessary is 5...g7 6 h5 (queried, as usual, this time by Tyomkin, but unlike so many annotators, at least he considers the move!) 6...xh5 7 xh5 gxh5 8 xh5+ f8 (D), when Black has a clear advantage according to Tyomkin. But let’s see; White appears to have his usual choice of good moves:

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W
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b1) 9 0-0-0 w8 10 h3 (10 w2?) 10...f7 11 f3 h6 12 e4 e5 13 dxe5 c6! 14 e5!! (14 w3?!) 14...dxe5 15 c5! (White can also play 15 e3 xf5 16 g3, intending h4 and/or c5+!) 15...dxe5 16 d+ f7 17 d5! with the idea 17...c6? (17...xf5 18 w3!) 18 c4, when White is a rook down but winning.

b2) If that looks unclear, 9 e2 is also attractive, and perhaps better, with the possibility of h5 in many lines. For example, 9...w8 10 h3 e5 11 h5 and now 11...d8 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 d1, 11...w6 12 w4! f6 13 h6+ g7 14 c6! 15 dxe5 dxe5? 16 b4+ d8 17 xh1+ x7 18 d+ or 11...w7 12 d5 w8 13 h2! c6 14 c3, when remarkably, Black still can’t consolidate (...f4 is always answered by f3).

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5...g7 6 c4!? (D)
Now:
```a) 6...c6 7 0-0 e6 8 d3 (8 w2 ±) 8...0-9 w2 ± with the idea e4, Nett-Vinkes, email 2002.

b) 6...e6 and here 7 c5?! wastes time and loses control of the centre. M.Jørgensen-Elka, Copenhagen 2001 went 7...w7 8 h4 h6 9 f3
A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE

...e6 and ...f5. We consider it in Section 12.42 via the move-order 1 d4 e6 2 c4 b4+ 3 c3 f5.

b) Trying to get to a Stonewall by 3...d5 can run into 4 cxd5 exd5 5 g4 (or 5 d3 g6 6 g5 e7 7 e3 ±) 5...f6 (5...d6?! 6 d5 e6 7 xxd6 wxd6 8 c3) 6 c4 d6 7 h3 0-0 8 e3 c6 9-0-0 e4 10 f3 cxc3 11 bxc3 ±. If Black wants to play this set-up, then it is safest to do so after White has played a slower move, such as e3, as we see in the next note.

c) 3...c6, again trying for ...d5, fails to equalize following 4 e4! (4 e3 d5 transposes to Section 6.1, where White has the aggressive option of 5 g4 as well as the more methodical 5 h3) 4...fxe4 5 dxe4 b4+ 6 d2 xd2+ 7 wxd2 d5 8 c3 d6 9 f3 ±.

4 f3

This time there’s a twist. This is a slightly eccentric move which, however, is consistent with the normal set-up. White wants to take away e4 from Black’s knight, and either develop the c1-bishop or play e3 first, then use the combination of the moves d3, dge2 and wc2, or place the knight on h3, from where it can go to f4 or f2. White can slowly expand on any sector of the board, most frequently the centre and queenside.

Nevertheless, 4 e3 (D) is the normal and arguably more flexible move, so let’s take a look.

If White isn’t heading for a position with d3, then he’ll usually play f3 later anyway. Here are a few snippets:

a) The Nimzo-type move 4...b4 transposes to note ‘b2’ to White’s 4th move in Section 12.42.
b) 4...d5 5  \&d3 c6 transposes into the note to Black's 5th move in Section 6.12 (Semi-Slav/Stonewall hybrid).

c) 4...\&e7 5  \&d3 0-0-6  \&ge2 d6 7 \&c2 \&c6 8 a3  \&d7 9  \&d2 \&c8?! 10 f3 e5 (Seirawan-Short, Tilburg 1990) 11 d5  \&d8 12 0-0?! ± (Seirawan).

d) 4...b6 5  \&d3  \&b7 6 f3 is the conventional formation. Kiselev-Agrest, St Petersburg 1993 continued 6...\&h5?! (after 6...\&e7, a typical plan is 7  \&ge2 0-0 8-0-0 \&e8 9 a3, intending to force through b4) 7  \&h3 \&h4+ 8  \&f2 \&c6 9 g3 (9 d5?! \&e5 10  \&f2) 9... \&c8. Here Palliser gives the ingenious line 10 g4!?! fxg4 (10...\&xf6! 11 gxf5 exf5 12  \&xf5 0-0?! 13 0-0 may be a little better for White, but really isn't clear) 11 fxg4  \&c6 12 g5  \&g8 13 \&h5+  \&d8 which he calls unclear, but 14 \&f1 gives White a pleasant advantage; for example, 14...\&e8 15 \&h3 (even 15 \&xe8+  \&xe8 16 \&g4 followed by \&d2, 0-0-0 and a kingside pawn advance is annoying) 15...\&e7 16 \&fe4 and Black needs a plan.

Let's return to 4 f3 (D):

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

4...\&b4

This has been the choice of the majority of titled players. Otherwise:

a) 4...\&c6 is the move Dutch Defence expert Schipkov prefers, with the idea that 5 e4? fxe4 6 fxe4 \&b4 favours Black. It's surprising that this has only been used a few times over the years. Then 5 e3 introduces our standard plan. Some rather random analysis: 5...b6 6 \&h3 \&b7 7  \&e2 and now 7...\&e7 8 0-0-0 9 a3 ± intending \&e2 and b4; this is only marginally better for White, however, and 7...\&d6?! is interesting) 7  \&d3 (or 7  \&d2, intending a3, \&c2, etc.) 7...0-0 8 0-0  \&b7 9 \&c2 and I lean towards White, although obviously Black is right in the mix.

b) 4...\&e7 5 e4 (generally this isn't the point of 4 f3, but when Black plays so slowly it seems to work; 5  \&h3 has been tried as well, and of course there's always 5 e3 0-0 6 \&d3, etc.) 5...f6 4 d6 (6...\&b4?! 7 a3 \&xc3+ 8 bxc3 d5? 9 e5 \&e4 10 \&h5+ g6) 11 \&b6 with the idea \&d3 left Black struggling in Ipinza Carmona-Da Silva, corr. 2003) 7 \&f3 0-0 and instead of 8 \&d3?! e5! 9 d5 c6, when Black was at least equal in P.Hoffmann-Lohse, Berlin 2007, 8 \&e2! c5 (8...e5?! loses a pawn for inadequate compensation) 9 d5 \&g4 10 0-0 is a little better for White.

5 \&d2 0-0

5...b6 is also employed, and in fact was the move-order of Ivanisević-Sedlak below.

6 a3 (D)

6 e3 usually transposes, since a3 will follow.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

6...\&xc3

After 6...\&e7, White can choose 7 e3, when he benefits from the extra move \&d2. In Alexandrova-Manakova, European Women's Ch (blitz), Antalya 2002, White played along the same lines with 7 \&c2?! (7 e4 is premature because Black can become active by 7...f6 8 fxe4 d5 9 e5 \&e4) 7...d6 8 e5 9 \&d3 exd4?! (9...g6 doesn't seem much better; e.g., 10 \&ge2 c6 11 0-0-0?! a5 12 h3 \&a6 13 g4 with a kingside initiative) 10 exd4 c5 11 d5 g6 12 \&ge2 \&bd7 13 f4 (13 \&f4! \&e5 14 0-0 ±) 13...\&g4 14 0-0 \&f6 15 h3 ±.

I think it's fair to say that most of White's advantages in this section are relatively minor.
ones, but at the least reflect better practical chances.

7 \textit{\#xc3 (D)}

\textbf{B}

7...\textit{\#b6}

7...d6 8 e3 \textit{\#e8 (8...\textit{\#e7 9 \textit{\#c2 c5 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 \textit{\#d3 \textit{\#c6 12 \textit{\#h3 e5, M.Santos-De Toledo, São Paulo 2009, 13 0-0! \pm}) 9 \textit{\#d2 \textit{\#c6 10 \textit{\#d3 e5 11 \textit{\#e2 \pm Kempinski-Gleizerov, Stockholm 2000. White can’t claim more than a slight edge here; as Dunnington nicely summarizes, “Black has succeeded in staking a claim for the centre but must be careful not to unleash his opponent’s bishops. White’s flexibility is such that it is possible to castle on either side.”}

8 e3

\begin{itemize}
\item a) 8...a5 9 \textit{\#h3 \textit{\#b7 10 \textit{\#d3 \textit{\#c6 11 0-0 \textit{\#e7 (Ivanisević-Sedlak, Belgrade 2009) and now White can play for a primitive central advance; e.g., 12 \textit{\#e2 a4? 13 \textit{\#a5 14 e4 \pm, etc.}
\item b) 8...\textit{\#b7 9 \textit{\#d2 a5 10 \textit{\#h3 a4 11 \textit{\#d3 \textit{\#c6 12 0-0 \textit{\#a5 13 \textit{\#a1 is a similar story, although White will lose a tempo. Nevertheless, the game Kempinski-Grabarczyk, Polish Ch, Plock 2000 saw White retain a little advantage after 13...\textit{\#b3 14 \textit{\#c2, and then a larger one following 14...c5?! 15 d5! (when you have the two bishops, this resource is often available) 15...\textit{\#xd5 16 \textit{\#xd5 (after 16...\textit{\#xd5 17 \textit{\#xf5 h6? 18 \textit{\#h7+ \textit{\#h8 19 \textit{\#xg7+! White has a decisive attack) 17 e4!? (Tymkin correctly gives 17 \textit{\#xf5!, when White clearly stands better) 17...\textit{\#c6 (17...\textit{\#f7 18 e5 \textit{\#d5 19 \textit{\#xf5 h6 \pm improves) 18 \textit{\#f4 b5 19 e5 \textit{\#d5 20 \textit{\#xd5 \textit{\#xd5 21 \textit{\#xf5, when White’s attack was hard to counter.}}}}\end{itemize}
12 Assorted Defences

In this chapter, we deal with options for Black that don't fit into any of the earlier chapters. Many of these are logical and respectable opening lines, while others are tricky and trappy, and a few are verging on the bizarre. As always, I'll be seeking to find ways to put Black under positional pressure and to identify lines that will give us scope to outplay our opponents in a strategic struggle.

The chapter is structured as follows:
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12.5: Assorted Systems 258

12.1) Budapest Defence

1 d4 ¤f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ¤g4 (D)

This is the Budapest Defence. Despite its outward appearance as an aggressive gambit, it is really a positional opening more than an attacking one. Black breaks up White's centre and intends to win back his pawn on e5 in the next few moves.

4 ¤f4

I'm recommending this move, which is almost entirely strategic in nature, and tries for lasting positional advantages, which include the bishop-pair and enemy pawn weaknesses. It has been favoured by many if not most of the world's top players.

4...¤b4+

Black has only one major non-transpositional move at this point. After all, White is threatening h3 to kick the knight away.

a) 4...¤c6 5 ¤f3 ¤c5?! (for 5...¤b4+ 6 ¤bd2, see the main line) 6 e3 ¤e7 (6...f6 7 exf6 ¤xf6 8 ¤d2! and Black has little or nothing for his pawn) 7 ¤c3 ¤gxe5?? (7...¤b4 8 ¤b3 ±) 8 ¤x e5 ¤xe5 9 ¤d5 ¤d6 10 ¤h5! ¤b4+ 11 ¤d1 0-0 12 ¤xe5 ¤e5 13 ¤f6+ 1-0 E.Klein-Martinez Catalan, World Under-14 Ch, Fond du Lac 1990.

b) 4...g5!? (D) is an aggressive line which, however, involves Black creating serious weaknesses in the hope that dynamic play will compensate.

It is not surprising that few grandmasters are willing to make that trade-off, and yet theory indicates nothing approaching a refutation. I'll recommend 5 ¤g3 (5 ¤d2 is a very popular alternative, with the idea ¤c3; I think it also leads to some advantage, but nothing special) 5...¤g7 6 ¤f3 and now:

b1) 6...¤e7? 7 ¤c3 ¤xe5 (after 7...¤c6 8 ¤d5 ¤d8 9 e6! White breaks through to c7: 9...d6 10 exf7+ ¤xf7 11 ¤d2 h6 12 h4 ++) 8
b31) 7 0-0-0 0-0-0 8 0-0 0-0 9 e3 d6 10 c5! (a common theme, here and in other lines of our Budapest lines) and now:

b311) 10... 0-0-0 11 cxd6 (after 11 h4, the queenless middlegames after 11...dxc5 12 hgx5 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd1+ 13 } \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd1 } \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd1+ } \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd1+=\textit{W}} \text{xd1!} \) 14 0-0-0 slightly favour White) 11...dxc5 12 h4! g4 13 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{a4+} \) \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{d7} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd7+} \) \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd7} \) 15 0-0-0 with a very large advantage; for example, 10...\( \text{\textit{W}} \text{f6} \) 11 0-0-0 12 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd6} \) 13 0-0-0+ 14 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{a4+} \) \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{d7} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{b4} \) 0-0 15 \text{\textit{W}} \text{d1} (or 15 h5) 15...\( \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} \) 16 h5 \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} 17 \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} 18 \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} 19 \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} 20 \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} 0-0 with an extra pawn.

b312) 10...dxc5 11 \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd8+} \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd8} 12 0-0-0+ 13 0-0-0 13...\( \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{d4} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xe5} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xe5} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xe5} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xe5} \) 21 \text{\textit{W}} \text{c6} 0-0+ 19 \text{\textit{W}} \text{d1} \pm.

b32) Taylor advocates 7 h4, saying, “White stands clearly better here.” The most important line is 7...\( \text{\textit{W}} \text{gxe5} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xe5} \) 9 hgx5 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{c4} \).
ASSORTED DEFENCES

$\text{\textcopyright\textregistered}\ dxc5 16 f3 \pm \text{Van der Sterren-G.West, Canberra 1991.}$

6 $\text{\textcopyright\textregistered} e3 \text{We7} (D)$

6...f6?! 7 exf6 $\text{Wxf6}$ is an interesting gambit, but I think a strong and direct reply is 8 e3! $\text{Wxb2}$ 9 $\text{a3 c3}$ (9...$\text{xd2}$+ 10 $\text{xd2}$ d6 11 $\text{e2 f6}$ 12 0-0 0-0 13 c5 \pm) 10 $\text{bl Wxa3}$ 11 $\text{xc7}$ 0-0 12 $\text{e2} \pm$.

egin{tabular}{c}
$\text{\textcopyright\textregistered} e3 \text{gx}e5 8 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 9 \text{xe}2$
\end{tabular}

This position has a terrific record for White over the years. Although White's advantage is a moderate one, his position is easier to play. I'm going to cite Tim Taylor’s book on the Budapest a lot, because he draws the critical lines of the battle so well.

9...0-0

This is the only way to get to Black's most promising defence. Over the years it hasn’t always been the favourite. Here’s a smattering of alternatives; notice how often White gets the bishop-pair and then, either immediately or slowly, cracks open lines on the queenside. This is why the Budapest player would love to hold on to his dark-squared bishop (or exchange it for its white counterpart) if he can.

a) 9...b6 10 0-0 $\text{b7}$ (10...$\text{xd2}$? 11 $\text{Wxd2}$ $\text{b7}$ 12 c5! threatens $\text{Aac1}$ and $\text{Wc3}$, and the continuation 12...$\text{xc5}$ 13 $\text{wa5}$ d6 14 $\text{xe5}$ $\text{dxe5}$ 15 $\text{f1c1}$ c6 16 $\text{xc5}$ f6 17 $\text{c4}$ left White positionally winning in Solozhenkin-Stiazhkin, Leningrad 1990) 11 $\text{f3}$ $\text{xf3}$ (11...$\text{g6}$? 12 $\text{xc7}$?) 12 $\text{xf3}$ $\text{d8}$ (12...$\text{xf3}$ 13 $\text{xf3}$ 0-0 14 $\text{b7}$! with the idea 14...d6?? 15 a3) 13 $\text{e2}$ a5 14 a3 $\text{d6}$ 15 $\text{bl} \pm$ Epishin-Leuba, San Bernardino 1992.

b) 9...$\text{xd2}$+ 10 $\text{Wxd2}$ d6 11 0-0 $\text{d7}$ 12 $\text{Aac1}$ $\text{c6}$ 13 b4 0-0 14 c5 \pm Brglez-Mlacnik, Bled 1992.

c) 9...d6? (D).

Now White has two effective moves, with ideas that complement one another:

12.11: 7 e3 237

12.12: 7 a3 240

12.11)

7 e3 $\text{gx}e5$ 8 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{xe}5$ 9 $\text{e2}$

At the time I first wrote about this opening (17 years ago), this was the latest finesse, used to avoid White's early queenside action. It commits Black to exchanging his dark-squared bishop, however, which has proved increasingly problematic over the years. After 10 0-0, we have:

1) 10...$\text{xd2}$ 11 $\text{Wxd2}$ b6 12 e4?! (12 b4 $\text{b7}$ 13 c5 \pm; compare later lines) 12...$\text{b7}$ 13 f3 0-0 14 $\text{g3}$ f5?! 15 $\text{exf5}$ $\text{xf5}$ 16 f4 $\text{c6}$ 17 $\text{Ae1}$ $\text{f6}$ 18 $\text{g4}$ \pm Fedorowicz-Shain, New York 1991.
c2) 10...d7 (preventing w a4+ and preparing to meet b b3 with ...a4) 11 a3 xd2 12 wxd2 and now:

c21) 12...f6!? 13 b4 d8 14 h5+! f7 (Epishin gives both 14...g6 15 e2 ± and 14...g6 15 c5 ±) 15 c5 b5 16 fd1 d5 (16...a4? 17 d1 xc5 18 wb2 ± Epishin) 17 e4! (ripping open the position) 17...a4 (17...g6?! 18 exd5 gxh5 19 a4! ±; 17...d4 18 e5! ±) 18 exd5 xd1 19 xd1 0-0 20 d6 cxd6 21 cxd6 w6 22 f3 h8 23 d7?? b6 (Ivanchuk-Epishin, Terrassa 1991) and here 24 b5! e5 25 xd5 fxe5 26 c6 ± was best. A lovely exploitation.

10 0-0

White's idea here, made famous by Karpov, is b b3 followed by a3, forcing the bishop back, after which White can open lines, usually by c5. This brings up the question of why White can't play 10 a3 here, which would contrast with our main line where Black can play ...a4 in response to a3. After 10...c5 11 b3 White gains the bishop-pair (although how you do so can matter), so 10...xd2+ 11 wxd2 d6 might follow, when 120-0 a5 transposes to note 'a22' to Black's 10th move in Section 12.11. White does well there, so perhaps he should consider this move-order, although naturally Black has alternatives.

10...g6!

This is a way to deny White the bishop-pair, recommended by Taylor. For years, over many hundreds of games, Black has had trouble in positions in which he trades his b4-bishop for a knight, either directly or in a few moves. Without going into massive depth, let's consider a few examples:

a) 10...a5 can be countered in at least two ways:

a1) 11 b3 is direct; e.g., 11 a4 12 a3 b5 13...g3 f5 15 b4 h8?! 16 b5 e8 17 c5! (we shall see this idea again) 17...d8 18 cxd6 cxd6 (the weak d-pawn open again) 17...f7 20 w4 b6 21 h4 b3 22 d2 f7 23 h5 f7 24 f3 f5 25 b4 e6 26 c6 f6?! (but White was dominating the game anyway) 27 a4 and White wins, Benko-Ragozin, Budapest-Moscow 1949. A satisfying game.

We now return to the position after 9...0-0 (D):

a2) Taylor is devastatingly critical of the exchange 10...xd2?! 11 xd2, and rightly so, as in practice, Black is ground down by the bishops a frightening percentage of the time. This is
similar to the examples above, which may be
getting tiresome: 11...d6 12 ała1 (12 b4 ăd8
13 ăc3 f6 14 ăd1 ăf5 15 ăd2 ăg6 16 ăad1
ăf7 17 a3 ăe6 18 c5, Bluvshtein-Miezis, Cal­
via Olympiad 2004) 12...ăe6 13 ăfd1 f6 14
ăc3 ăf7 15 ăg3 (Solozhenkin-Miezis, Gaul-
dal 2001) and now White threatens 16 c5, while
15...b6 16 f4 ăd7 17 ăf3 is depressing for
Black.

c) 10...d6 11 ăb3 (11 ăf3 ă± has also been
used successfully) 11...b6 12 a3 ăc5 13 ăxc5
bxc5 14 b4! ăd7 15 ăg4! (D).

B

This position has been established as diffi­
cult for Black, the classic example being 15...a5
(15...ăe8 16 ăc1 a5 17 ăd7 ăxd7 18 bxc5
dxc5 19 ăxc7!?) 16 ăxd7 ăxd7 17 bxc5 dxc5
18 ăd5 (here too, 18 ăxc7! is the right move­
order) 18...ăa6!, Karpov-Short, Candidates (1),
Linares 1992. This is one of the stem games for
this variation. Karpov won, but here 19 ăb7! is
superior to his 19 ăe5.

d) 10...ăe8 has its points after 11 ăb3, but I
think White retains a solid plus following 11
ăf3! d6 12 a3 ăc5 13 b4 ăxf3+ 14 ăxf3 ăb6
15 ăc2 ă±.

11 ăg3 ăd6 12 ăxd6 ăxd6 (D)

Here Taylor gives various games and analy­
sis to show that Black, having conceded noth­ing
in the way of weakness or minor pieces,
stands level. Although I agree that this is the
best that Black can do, I think it takes accurate
play here to avoid the sort of problems we’ve
seen above, whereas White isn’t risking any­
thing. Perhaps this is a matter of taste. In any
case, I think his lines themselves indicate that
White can play for a win. For example:

w

a) Taylor gives 13 ăc1 ăe5 (hitting the b­
pawn; otherwise 13...ăe7 14 c5 ă±) 14 ăc2 d6
15 ăf3 ăe7 (D), and makes it seem like a posi­tion
that you’d want to play as Black.

w

But White doesn’t have to agree to an early
draw:

a1) I suggest 16 ăd4!; for example, 16...ăd8
(16...b6? 17 ăf3) 17 ăfd1 (17 ăb3! is also
complex, with the idea 17...c5 18 ăcd1 b6 19
ăf3 ăb8 20 ăd2 ăb7 21 ăxb7 ăxb7 22 ăe4)
17...ăe5 18 ăe4 g6 19 ăb5?! a6 20 ăc3 ă±.

a2) There are other interesting possibilities
too; for example, the game he cites went 16
ăfd1 b6 and although White eventually won
following 17 b4, Black could have defended
adequately. Here I wonder about the simple se­
quence 17 ăd4 ăb7 18 ăf3 ăxf3 19 ăxf3, which
holds forth chances because White can
double on the d-file and try to break with c5, in
conjunction with ăd4, from where the knight
eyes f5 and c6. Even a bind with e4 could ap­
pear. The obvious counter is 19...f5, but .f4
will be answered by e4 or $\text{c}1$; e.g., 20 b4 $\text{f}4$ 21 $\text{e}1$ $\text{fxe}3$ 22 $\text{xe}3$ $\text{fd}7$ 23 c5 $\pm$.

a3) Also, Taylor correctly points out that 16 c5 $\text{dxc}5$ 17 $\text{wx}c5$ $\text{xc}5$ 18 $\text{xc}5$ $\text{c}6$ is objectively drawn, but even here do you really want to wait around with nothing to do after 19 $\text{d}4$, when Black’s bishop has no particularly good place to go and White can play a minority attack b4-b5 or perhaps expand in the centre?

b) The game Zimmerman-Pavlenko, Moscow 1991 went 13 $\text{c}4$ $\text{e}7$ (Black has to play accurately: 13 ... $\text{e}5$ 14 $\text{c}3$ $\pm$; 13 ... $\text{xd}1$ 14 $\text{fxd}1$ $\text{d}6$ 15 c5 $\text{f}5$ 16 $\text{cxd}6$ $\text{fxe}4$ 17 $\text{d}7$ ± 14 $\text{c}3$ $\text{d}6$ 15 $\text{d}5$ (White can always vary and at least pose practical problems; for example, 15 $\text{xd}4$, when 15 ... $\text{e}8$ 16 $\text{d}5$ $\text{wd}8$ 17 $\text{ad}1$ keeps Black under some pressure) 15 ... $\text{wd}8$. At this point Taylor suggests that Black accede to a repetition after the best move 16 $\text{db}3$ with 16 ... $\text{b}8$, and if 17 $\text{wa}3$ then 17 ... $\text{a}8$. If White avoids the repetition with 18 $\text{ad}1$, he gives 18 ... $\text{e}6$ “with no problems”, but some might find such positions annoying to play; e.g., 19 $\text{d}2$ (19 f4!! is also troublesome) 19 ... $\text{e}8$ 20 $\text{f}1$ $\text{b}6$ 21 $\text{c}3$. A lot of this depends upon the level of Black’s defensive skill, of course; what seems awkward to some of us might be effortless to a top professional.

12.12) 7 a3

This reaches positions similar to the previous section, but has some handy move-order advantages, useful for White even if plays 7 e3 and transposes at the right moment. I’ll skip most of the details to get to the main issue.

7 ... $\text{gxe}5$ 8 $\text{xe}5$

Not, of course, 8 $\text{axb}4$?? $\text{d}3$#!

8 ... $\text{xe}5$ 9 e3 $\text{c}5$ (D)

Taylor discovered this truly ingenious idea when looking for an alternative to 9 ... $\text{xd}2+$, which has a poor record for the same reasons that move did in Section 12.11. First notice that 9 ... $\text{e}6$? 10 $\text{c}4$ is a positional disaster. And you’ve seen all the themes associated with 9 ... $\text{xd}2+$ 10 $\text{xd}2$, but here are some lines from this exact position: 10 ... 0-0 (10 ... $\text{d}6$ 11 $\text{c}2$ $\text{d}7$ 12 0-0 transposes to note ‘c2’ to Black’s 9th move in Section 12.11) 11 c5! has the idea 11 ... $\text{xc}5$ 12 $\text{c}1$ $\text{d}6$ 13 $\text{xd}6$ $\text{cxd}6$ 14 $\text{d}1$; instead, 11 ... $\text{e}8$ 12 $\text{c}1$ $\text{d}6$ 13 $\text{cxd}6$ $\text{cxd}6$ gives White a weakness on d6 to target, and of course the bishop-pair.

10 $\text{b}3$!

Taylor’s idea is that 10 b4 $\text{d}4$ is approximately equal, something that can only be established with some concrete analysis because it depends on several tactical tricks (a timely ... $\text{g}6$ is usually the key). But I also wonder about 10 $\text{c}2$, when 11 b4 $\text{d}4$ 12 $\text{c}1$ really is a threat, because even on 12 ... $\text{d}6$, 13 c5 can follow. So play might go 10 ... $\text{d}6$ (10 ... $\text{a}5$ 11 $\text{b}3$ $\text{a}7$ 12 $\text{d}5$! $\text{d}6$ 13 c5!; 10 ... $\text{g}6$? 11 $\text{xc}7$ d6 12 $\text{a}5$) 11 0-0 0-0 12 b4 $\text{b}6$ 13 $\text{c}2$ (with the idea $\text{b}3$) 13 ... $\text{d}7$ (13 ... $\text{e}8$ 14 $\text{b}3$) 14 $\text{c}1$! (intending c5); for example, 14 ... $\text{d}8$ 15 c5 $\text{d}6$ 16 $\text{c}5$ $\text{a}5$ 17 $\text{b}3$ $\text{a}4$ 18 $\text{b}2$ $\text{xb}3$ 19 $\text{xb}3$ b6 20 $\text{xb}6$ $\text{axb}6$ 21 $\text{f}1$ ±.

10 ... $\text{d}6$

10 ... $\text{b}6$?! 11 c5 $\text{xc}5$ 12 $\text{xc}5$ $\text{xc}5$ 13 $\text{c}1$ ±.

11 $\text{d}4$ (D)
Now 11...f6 is Taylor's suggestion (otherwise 11...b6 12 c5! bxc5 13 dxc5 dxc5 (13...0-0 14 c4) 14 wxe5 wxe5 15 dxe5 forks two pawns). Then:

a) Taylor gives 12 c5 dxc6 13 wxe4 wxf4 14 wxf4 d6, when I think 15 b5 d7 16-0-0-0-0 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 c4+ wh8 19 ffd1 c5 20 d5 looks promising.

b) Furthermore, what about 12 w2, now that the weakening ...f6 has been played? For example, 12...c6 13 f4 g6 14 e5 b6 15 cxb6 axb6 16 f3 d6 17 e4 c5 20 f4 d5 with an obvious advantage for White.

I think this 4 f4 system will serve you very well.

12.2) Fajarowicz Gambit

1 d4 f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 wxe4 (D)

This move defines the Fajarowicz Gambit, a provocative and unrefuted offshoot of the Budapest.

4 a3

Stopping ...b4+ and preparing wc2, to expel the intrusive knight. The advance b4 will be useful at some point. Black has tried several answers:

12.21: 4...w6 241
12.22: 4...wh4 242
12.23: 4...b6 243
12.24: 4...d6 244

Or:

a) 4...a5 is a move that Black would like to make, but it comes at the cost of a tempo: 5 wc2! (after 5 w3 c6, the easiest answer is 6 wc2, when 6 d5 transposes back to this 4...a5 line; note that this sequence is equivalent to 4...c6 5 f3 a5) 5...c5 (5...d5 6 exd6 and now 6...f5 7 c3! d6 e4 ± or 6...d6 7 d6 c6 8 e4 ± 6 f3 d6 7 c3 c6 8 e4 ± 6 f3 d6 7 c3 (or 7 f4 d6 8 g3 c5 9 e3 b6 10 c3 b7 11 d3 + 7...d6 8 g5 8 exd6 d6 9 c3 0-0 10 d1 ± 8...f6 9 exf6 gxf6 10 h4 ± Hermesmann-Roes, Dortmund 1987.)

b) With 4...c5, Black acknowledges that the knight will be attacked and so begins the trek back to e6, where it often ends up anyway. Of course there's a thing called development, and another called the centre, so 5 c3 is already clearly better for White; e.g., 5...c6 6 f3 g6 7 g3 g7 8 h3 0-0 9 xe6! dxe6 (9...fxe6 10 g5 we8 11 b5 c6 12 d2) 10 wxd8 xd8 11 g5 e8 12 b5 a6 13 d1 ±.

12.21)

4...c6 5 f3 d6

Black has never been able to make this move work. After 5...a5 6 wc2, 6...c5 transposes to note 'a' above (about 4...a5), while 6...d5 7 e3 c6 8 b2 c5 9 e2 e7 10 0-0-0-0-0 11 d1 gives White a clear advantage (Avrukh).

6 wc2 (D)

6...d5

a) 6...f5?! was essentially refuted over 50 years ago by 7 c3!, when Black is in trouble:

a1) 7...g3 8 e4 a4 8...xe4 9 cxe4 cxb1 10 g5 e7 11 cxe7 xe7 12 exd6 c6d6 13 0-0-0-0 ± Avrukh; after the knight on h1
falls, White will have a material advantage as well) 9 exf5 dxe5 (after 9...\(\texttt{c}6\), 10 \(\texttt{c}2\) or 10 \(\texttt{c}3\) is simply much better for White) 10 \(\texttt{b}3\) d4 (10...\(\texttt{b}5\) 11 \(\texttt{d}d1\) \(\texttt{c}8\) 12 \(\texttt{x}d5\), with the idea \(\texttt{x}d3\) or \(\texttt{g}3\) and \(\texttt{g}2\), is virtually winning for White) 11 \(\texttt{x}d4\) (or 11 \(\texttt{x}d4\) \(\texttt{e}4\) 12 \(\texttt{xe}4\) +) 11...\(\texttt{xd}4\) 12 0-0. Black's position is already close to hopeless.

a2) 7...\(\texttt{xf}5\) 8 \(\texttt{xd}4\) \(\texttt{f}5\) 9 \(\texttt{c}2\) (9 \(\texttt{g}3\) \(\texttt{e}7\) 10 \(\texttt{c}2\) \(\texttt{c}5\) 11 \(\texttt{b}4\) \(\texttt{e}6\) 12 \(\texttt{x}d6\) \(\texttt{c}6\) 13 \(\texttt{g}2\) \(\texttt{g}3\) \(\texttt{g}3\) with the idea \(\texttt{x}d3\) or \(\texttt{g}3\) and \(\texttt{g}2\), is virtually winning for White) 11...\(\texttt{xd}4\) or 11 \(\texttt{x}d4\) \(\texttt{e}4\) 12 \(\texttt{xe}4\) + 11...\(\texttt{xd}4\) 12 0-0. Black's position is already close to hopeless.

a3) 7...\(\texttt{xf}2\) 8 \(\texttt{xf}5\) \(\texttt{x}h1\) 9 \(\texttt{e}6\)!! (even better is simply 9 \(\texttt{g}3\) ± 9...\(\texttt{x}e6\) 10 \(\texttt{x}e6\) \(\texttt{e}7\) 11 \(\texttt{d}5\) \(\texttt{h}6\) 12 \(\texttt{g}3\) \(\texttt{g}3\) 13 \(\texttt{g}2\) \(\texttt{g}3\) 14 \(\texttt{x}g3\) \(\texttt{x}g7\) 15 \(\texttt{h}h3\) ± Reshefsky-Bisguier, New York 1954/5.

b) 6...\(\texttt{c}5\) is best, but insufficient after 7 \(\texttt{b}4\) \(\texttt{d}6\) 8 \(\texttt{d}x\texttt{xe}5\) \(\texttt{d}x\texttt{xe}5\) 9 \(\texttt{c}3\) \(\texttt{d}4\) 10 \(\texttt{d}4\) \(\texttt{x}d6\) 10 \(\texttt{d}x\texttt{e}5\) \(\texttt{e}5\) 13 \(\texttt{d}x\texttt{e}5\) \(\texttt{x}e5\) 14 \(\texttt{x}e5\) \(\texttt{x}e5\) 15 \(\texttt{d}d4\) ± Fuzishawa-Borwell, corr. 2004.

7 \(\texttt{e}3\) (\(\texttt{D}\))

\(\texttt{B}\)

7...\(\texttt{e}6\)

a) 7...\(\texttt{c}5\) 8 \(\texttt{c}3\) \(\texttt{g}6\) (N.Pedersen-Sisser, Dieren 2004) and now 9 0-0 with the idea \(\texttt{d}d1\), or 9 \(\texttt{d}b2\) \(\texttt{x}d2\) 10 \(\texttt{x}d2\) \(\texttt{d}4\) 11 \(\texttt{h}g6\) \(\texttt{h}xg6\) 12 \(\texttt{c}4\) (Avrukh).

b) 7...\(\texttt{g}4\) 8 \(\texttt{c}d5\) \(\texttt{x}d5\) 9 \(\texttt{c}4\) \(\texttt{a}5\)+ 10 \(\texttt{d}b2\) (or 10 \(\texttt{b}4\) \(\texttt{x}b4\) 11 \(\texttt{x}a6\) \(\texttt{x}a1\) 12 \(\texttt{x}b2\)) 10...\(\texttt{x}f3\) 11 \(\texttt{g}3\) \(\texttt{g}3\) 12 \(\texttt{x}d2\) \(\texttt{x}e5\) 13 \(\texttt{c}3\) with a killing position, Fuzishawa-Borwell, corr. 2004.

8 \(\texttt{c}2\)

Just as good is 8 \(\texttt{d}b2\) \(\texttt{x}d2\) 9 \(\texttt{x}d2\) \(\texttt{d}xc4\) 10 \(\texttt{c}xc4\) \(\texttt{c}c4\) 11 \(\texttt{h}c4\) ± and \(\texttt{c}3\), Fokin-Beltugov, Orsk 2000.

8...\(\texttt{c}7\) 9 0-0 0-0 10 \(\texttt{d}d1\) \(\texttt{f}5\)

Yrjölä-Hamdouchi, Manila Olympiad 1992. Now 11 \(\texttt{c}x\texttt{d}5\) \(\texttt{x}d5\) 12 \(\texttt{c}c3\) \(\texttt{x}c3\) 13 \(\texttt{h}c3\) ± is straightforward.

12.22)

4...\(\texttt{h}4\) (\(\texttt{D}\))

A strange move which will lose time; it has nonetheless been used by strong players.

5 \(\texttt{g}3\)

5 \(\texttt{c}3\)! (Benjamin and Schiller) is also strong; e.g., 5...\(\texttt{c}5\) (5...\(\texttt{c}c5\) 6 \(\texttt{xc}5\) \(\texttt{xc}5\) 7 \(\texttt{f}f3\)! \(\texttt{xc}4\) 8 \(\texttt{xc}4\) ± 6 \(\texttt{c}c3\) \(\texttt{xc}4\) 7 \(\texttt{c}c1\) ± intending 7...\(\texttt{b}3\)? 8 \(\texttt{xc}5\).

5...\(\texttt{h}5\) 6 \(\texttt{g}2\)

6 \(\texttt{d}5\) \(\texttt{c}c5\) (Naumkin-G.Mohr, Voskresensk 1990) 7 \(\texttt{c}c3\) \(\texttt{c}6\) 8 \(\texttt{d}d1\) \(\texttt{e}5\) 9 \(\texttt{f}f4\) \(\texttt{f}f6\) 10 \(\texttt{h}3\) ±.

6...\(\texttt{e}5\) 7 \(\texttt{f}f3\)

Or 7 \(\texttt{c}2\) (Avrukh).

7...\(\texttt{e}7\)

Or:

a) 7...\(\texttt{c}5\) 8 \(\texttt{d}4\) \(\texttt{f}6\) (after 8...\(\texttt{d}6\)±, as in Effert-Brandics, Kecksmet 1990, 9 \(\texttt{h}d5\) "[winds] on the spot" – Avrukh, with the idea \(\texttt{b}4\)) 9 \(\texttt{c}3\)! \(\texttt{c}6\) 10 \(\texttt{f}f4\) \(\texttt{d}6\) 11 \(\texttt{b}4\) \(\texttt{xc}4\)? 12 \(\texttt{c}c1\) ±.

b) 7...\(\texttt{h}5\) 8 \(\texttt{c}2\) \(\texttt{d}6\) 9 \(\texttt{c}3\) \(\texttt{d}6\) (Babula-Ramik, Moravian Team Ch 1997/8) and now 10 \(\texttt{h}3\) with the idea 10...\(\texttt{c}7\) 11 \(\texttt{g}4\) \(\texttt{g}6\) 12 \(\texttt{a}4\)+ ± \(\texttt{d}7\)? 13 \(\texttt{b}3\) \(\texttt{c}6\) 14 \(\texttt{h}4\) was easiest.

c) 7...\(\texttt{a}5\)+ 8 \(\texttt{d}2f2!\) (after 8 \(\texttt{b}2\) \(\texttt{c}5\)?, as in Pelletier-Flunkert, Orange 1994, Avrukh finds
9 b4 \( \text{h} \)xb4 10 axb4 \( \text{w} \)xa1 11 \( \text{d} \)xe4, winning) 8...\( \text{d} \)xd2 9 \( \text{d} \)xd2 \( \text{c} \)c5 10 \( \text{d} \)c3 \pm. Black will be lucky to get his pieces out.

d) 7...\( \text{w} \)f6 8 \( \text{w} \)c2 \( \text{d} \)c5 9 \( \text{d} \)c3 \( \text{d} \)e6 10-0-0\( \text{d} \)c6 11 \( \text{d} \)d5 \( \text{w} \)d8 12 b4 \( \text{e} \)e7 13 \( \text{d} \)b2 +-- Yrjölä-Fossan, Gausdal 1988.

8-0-0 d6 9 \( \text{d} \)d4 c6 10 b4

Or 10 \( \text{w} \)c2!.

10...g6

Now 11 \( \text{h} \)b2 \( \text{w} \)f6 (11...\( \text{g} \)g7? 12 \( \text{w} \)xc6!) 12 \( \text{d} \)c3 \( \text{g} \)g7 13 b5! c5 14 \( \text{d} \)c2 0-0 15 \( \text{d} \)e3 gave White 'only' a pleasant positional advantage in Kutirov-Kurajica, Strumica 1995. 11 \( \text{w} \)d3! \( \text{w} \)f6 12 \( \text{d} \)c3 \pm improves.

12.23)

4...b6 (D)

This indirect move is a more serious try than the previous two lines. Moskalenko thinks that this is Black's best option.

5 \( \text{d} \)d2!

Black's last move wasn't a blunder because the obvious 5 \( \text{w} \)d5?! is met by 5...\( \text{d} \)c5, and the queen will be trapped if it takes the rook.

5...\( \text{b} \)b7

Or:

a) 5...\( \text{d} \)c5 6 \( \text{g} \)gf3 \( \text{b} \)b7 7 b4 \( \text{d} \)xe6 has been the fashionable recommendation: 8 \( \text{h} \)b2 d6 (8...a5 can be met by 9 b5 or 9 \( \text{d} \)c3!) and now Avrukh offers the line 9 exd6 \( \text{w} \)xd6 10 g3?! (10 e3 \( \text{d} \)d7 11 \( \text{h} \)h3 seems awfully strong) 10...0-0 11 \( \text{d} \)g2 (I like 11 \( \text{d} \)h3 a5) 12-0, but there's not much difference) 11...a5. Now he gives 12 b5 \( \text{d} \)d7 13 0-0 \( \text{d} \)xc5 14 \( \text{w} \)c2 with White better, but it seems to me that 12 \( \text{d} \)c3, holding on to c5 a little longer, would be a simpler course. At any rate, a pawn is a pawn.

b) 5...\( \text{d} \)xd2 6 \( \text{w} \)xd2 \( \text{b} \)b7 (6...g6?! 7 \( \text{d} \)f3 \( \text{g} \)g7? 8 \( \text{d} \)g5) 7 \( \text{d} \)f3 (D) and now:

b1) 7...\( \text{w} \)e7 8 \( \text{w} \)c2 \( \text{d} \)c6 (8...g6? 9 \( \text{g} \)g5) 9 \( \text{d} \)c3 0-0-0 (not 9...g6? 10 e6 f6 11 exd7+, as the knight isn't on b8 to recapture) 10 0-0-0 \( \text{w} \)e6 11 e3 \( \text{e} \)e7 and after 12 \( \text{d} \)e2, Avrukh rather cruelly remarks: "You would need to be Lev Gutman to believe that Black has anything for the pawn in this position." Well, a little, I think, but at any rate, 12 \( \text{d} \)d3! is stronger, with a clear advantage.

b2) 7...\( \text{d} \)c6 8 \( \text{d} \)c3 \( \text{w} \)e7 9 e3 0-0-0 10 \( \text{w} \)c2 f6 11 exf6 gxf6 12 \( \text{d} \)d3 would be similar; then 12...\( \text{d} \)e5 13 \( \text{d} \)xe5 fxe5 14 \( \text{d} \)e4 c6 15 \( \text{d} \)d1 \( \text{w} \)b8 16 0-0 gives White a large advantage, because 16...d5 17 exd5 cxd5 18 \( \text{w} \)b3 \( \text{w} \)e6 19 f4! is very strong.

6 \( \text{w} \)c2

White can also choose 6 \( \text{g} \)gf3 or 6 \( \text{d} \)xe4 \( \text{d} \)xe4 7 \( \text{f} \)f4; e.g., 7...\( \text{d} \)c6 8 \( \text{d} \)f3 h6 9 e3 g5 10
A STRATEGIC CHESS OPENING REPertoire FOR WHITE

244 g3 g7 11 d3 xd3 12 xd3 xe7 13 0-0 with an obvious if undramatic advantage, Bellmann-Polzer, corr. 2001.

6...xd2
After 6...f5 7 exf6 xf6 8 gxf3 a5 9 b3 xa6 10 b2 c5 11 g3 Black doesn’t have a lot for a pawn.

7 xd2 a5
Timoshchenko-Welling, Ostend 1991. 8 xf3 c5 9 b3 leaves White with a solid extra pawn.

12.24)

4...d6 (D)

Black plays for activity.

5 xf3
5 xc2 looks quite good to me too; for example, 5...f5? (5...d5 is answered by 6 e3!, while after 5...c5 6 b4 xe6 7 exd6 xd6 8 b2 c5 9 bxc5 xc5 10 e3 White’s pieces will come out very actively) 6 c3 d5 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 xc3 8 xf5 xd5 9 e6! f6 10 e4 and already White is winning, M. Röder-Stefanova, Groningen 1996.

5 exd6?! xd6 offers Black very active play for the pawn; note that he threatens 6...xf2 7 xf2 g3+.

5...f5
White stands simply better after 5...dx5 6 xd8+ xd8 7 xe5 xe6 8 e3 d6 9 (Avrukh).

6 g3
I’ll just follow Avrukh with this; he’s found a few very accurate moves for White.

6...c6

6...h5 7 g2 c6 8 d4 xd4 9 xd4 c5 10 xe3 ± F. Levin-Gutman, German Ch, Altenkirchen 2001.

7...4h4!
Avrukh’s improvement on 7 exd6?! xd6 8 e3 f6, which gives Black good compensation.

7...e6
7...d7 8 g2 c5 9 b4 e6 10 exd6 xd6 11 b2 0-0 12 f3 ± (Avrukh).

8 g2
Now:

a) Avrukh analyses 8...c5 9 b4 d7 10 exd6 xd6 11 d2 (defending the c4-pawn) 11...0-0 12 0-0 a5 (I think 12...e5! 13 a2 f6 14 h3 b6 15 c2 e8 ± is a little better) 13 b5 c5 14 a2 c5 15 c2 ±.

b) After Gutman’s suggestion 8...f5, Avrukh offers up 9 exf6 xf6 10 c3! xc4 11 wa4 c6 11 d5 12 b3 a6 13 d4 d7 14 g5 12 xc6+ bxc6 13 cxc6+ d7 14 c4 c6 15 e4 “with a clear advantage”.

12.3) Systems with ...d6 and/or ...g6

Our largest topic here is the Modern Defence, where Black fianchettoes without playing an early ...xf6. There is also a variety of lines with ...d6 but without an early ...g6, perhaps most notably 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5. We divide the section as follows:

12.31: 1...d6
12.32: ...d6 and ...xf6: Irregular Lines
12.33: Old Indian Defence
12.34: Modern Defence

12.31)

1 d4 d6
This is sometimes used as a universal first move. Black is willing to play a Pirc Defence after 2 e4, and can choose a variety of set-ups after 2 xf3 and 2 c4.

2 c4 e5 (D)

An important move, since in order to be consistent with the rest of the book, White really has to play 3 d5. Alternatively, 2...g6 3 e4 g7 is covered in the Modern Defence section (12.34), and 2...xf6 is discussed in Sections 12.32 and 12.33. Finally, 2...f5 is a form of the
Dutch Defence – see note ‘b’ at the start of Chapter 11.

3 d5
It may seem a bit strange to commit to this advance so early, but after 3 \( \text{xc}3 \) exd4 4 \( \text{xd}4 \), you have entered into an extremely complex English Opening variation with unavoidable tactics (Black’s pieces come out very rapidly), and after 3 \( \text{f}3 \), you have to consider 3...e4, which is heavily analysed and a great favourite of 1...d6 players.

3...f5
A bothersome continuation. Other logical moves tend to transpose elsewhere; for example, 3...\( \text{f}6 \) 4 \( \text{c}3 \) is in the next section (or will transpose to the Old Indian or King’s Indian), and 3...g6 can go into a King’s Indian or Modern, for example. One unique move-order after 3...g6 is 4 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 5 e4 f5?! , when White gets the better game by 6 exf5 gxf5 (6...\( \text{xf}5 \) gives up e4 to 7 \( \text{d}3 \) or 7 \( \text{ge}2 \) and 8 \( \text{g}3 \) ) 7 \( \text{h}5+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 8 \( \text{h}3+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 9 \( \text{h}4 \) (9 \( \text{d}1 \), with the idea \( \text{g}5 \), might be even better) 9...h6 10 f3 \( \text{bd}7 \) 11 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 12 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 13 \( \text{e}3 \) and 0-0-0, Murugan-Koshy, Indian Ch, Muzaffapur 1998.

Although highly unusual from this move-order, 3...c5 4 e4 would transpose to the Semi-Benoni (Section 10.312).

4 e4 \( (D) \)
This is the most interesting and challenging move. You can of course simply develop by, e.g., 4 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 5 g3 \( \text{e}7 \) (5...g6 6 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 7 0-0 0-0 8 \( \text{c}3 \) ) 6 \( \text{g}2 \) 0-0 7 0-0, but White can’t claim any meaningful advantage in a position like this.

4...fxe4

After 4...\( \text{f}6 \) 5 exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 6 \( \text{c}3 \), with the idea \( \text{ge}2-g3 \) and \( \text{g}5 \), White wins the light squares without having to give up a pawn. An uncomplicated example: 6...\( \text{bd}7 \) 7 \( \text{ge}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) (7...\( \text{e}7 \) 8 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 9 \( \text{d}3 \) e4 10 \( \text{c}2 \) 0-0-0 11 0-0 \( \text{c}5 \) 12 \( \text{e}2 \) c6 (12...a5 13 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{fd}7 \) 14 \( \text{ge}4 \) ) 13 \( \text{e}3 \) cxd5 14 \( \text{xc}5 \) ! \( \text{d}5 \) 15 cxd5 \( \pm \) Arutinian-Sturm, Dresden 2009.

White has a strong passed pawn, while Black has a weakness on e5.

5 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 6 \( \text{ge}2 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 7 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 8 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 9 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 10 h4 \( \text{d}7 \)

Covering f5; both Palliser (who likes White) and Lakdawala (who likes Black) give this an ‘!’. An alternative line might go 10...h5 11 \( \text{e}2 \) f5 12 \( \text{hx}5 \) \( \text{hx}5 \) 13 \( \text{fx}5 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 14 g4! \( \text{hx}4 \) 15 \( \text{g}3! \) !

11 f3 exf3 \( (D) \)

11...f5 12 h5 \( \text{f}7 \) 13 fxe4 fxe4?! (13...f4 14 \( \text{f}5 \) is better for White, although not by much) 14 \( \text{cxe}4 \) \( \pm \) Mikhailovsky-Milos, Cappelle la Grande 2000.
12 \text{Wxf3}!?

12 gxf3! is a promising alternative:

a) 12...f5 13 h5 f7 14 d3 e4 (14...f4 15 f5 d8 16 c4f4 h4+ 17 e2 should be good for White) 15 fxe4 f4 16 c4f5. According to Yrjölä and Tella, this is unclear, but White has a great game with his knight on f5.

b) Yrjölä and Tella don’t analyse 12...h5?! Then one idea is 13 w3b3 (or 13 a3 d5 14 b3 with the point 14...b6?! 15 c5!) 13...b6 (13...c6 14 c5! dxc5 15 0-0-0 with an attack) 14 c5?! (or 14 0-0-0 when I’m not sure how Black untangles; e.g., 14...a6 15 a3 c8 16 c3 f5 17 c4d1 is awkward) 14...c8 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 0-0-0 d7 17 h3 a6 18 f5! and again White stands better.

12...h5 13 a3 xd3 14 cxd3 g4 15 c4e4

15 f5 c6a6 (15...w2xg2? 16 0-0-0 is too good for White) 16 0-0-0 c5 17 c2 (17 f5?! 17 wxc4 18 f3 cxd7 19 b3 bx4 20 b1, with the idea a3, is just a mess, but at least Black has two pawns.

15...c7 d6 is also hard to assess.

16.f8g7 17 ceg3 c5 18 wc2 a5 19 0-0

This position is unclear; objectively Black can probably defend, but he has to untangle somehow, and White’s compensation, highlighted by the monster on f5 versus the weakening on e7, is clearly worth a pawn.

12.32) ...d6 and ...\text{c6f6}:

Irregular Lines

1 d4 c6 2 c4 d6 3 c3 e5

3...f5 (D) is called the Janowski Indian.

Rather than the sharp f3 e5 5 e4 exd4, I’ll recommend the calm g3 c6 (4...e5 5 c2c6 6 f3 f5 5 c2g2 6 f3 cxd7 7 h4!? (7-0 is the main line, also slightly better for White) 7...exd4 8 c5f5! (ECO queries this and gives 8 w6d4, that assessment appears to be correct in view of 8...c6 9 0-0 c7 10 c4f4) 8...d3 (D. Gurevich–Gheorghiu, New York 1986) and now 9 0-0 (or 9 wxd6+ cxd6 10 w6d6 cxb2 11 cxb2 a5+ 12 c1 f5) 9...w5 10 e4 is better for White, who will have all sorts of open lines for a pawn.

4 d5 (D)

This section covers lines that don’t transpose into the Old Indian, that is, we’re not concerning ourselves with 4...c7d7, which is in 12.33.

4...\text{c6f5}

4...c5 e4 is a Czech Benoni (Section 10.32).

5 g3

I like this approach better than 5 f3 e4 which, again, is very complicated and can become tactical. That might be fine except that I think Black gets equality after the smoke clears.

5...h6

Alternatives:

a) White has met 5...c6e4 with 6 c6xe4, but I like 6 c6d3! cxf2 (6...c6c3 7 c6c5 a4 8 g3 f3 f7) 7 c6xf5 c6c4 8 c6g2 c6 9 c6c2 c6xg3 10 c6hx3 ±.

b) 5...c6e7 6 g2 c6d7 7 e4 c6g6 8 c6c2!? a5 9 c6f3 c6c5 10 c6b4 ±.

6 c6g2 e4?! 7 f3

Or 7 c6c2 c6e7 8 c6b3!? c6 9 c6h3 c6h3 10 c6xh3 5 11 0-0 c6h7 12 f4 exf3 13 exf3 ±.

7...c6e7 8 c6c4+ 9 c6e4

8...c6e4+ 9 c6d3! c6c3 10 c6c5.
9 \( \text{Qxe4} \text{Qxe4} \) 10 \( \text{Qf3} \text{d7} \) 11 0-0
11 \( \text{Qd4} \text{!} \) is better still.
11...a5 12 \( \text{Qd4} \text{Qdc5} \) 13 \( \text{Qfs} \text{We5} \) 14 \( \text{Qe3} \)
White has a large advantage, Hamann-Vasantadis, Vrnjačka Banja Zonal 1967.

12.33) Old Indian Defence

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{Qf6} \)
We can get to the same position by 1...d6 2 c4 e5 3 d5 Qf6 4 Qc3 Qbd7 5 e4. For other possibilities with that move-order, see Section 12.31.

2 c4 d6 3 Qc3 Qbd7
Other moves were considered in Section 12.32. Note that 3...e5 4 d5 Qbd7 5 e4 is another route to the Old Indian.

4 e4 e5
This is one of the basic positions of the Old Indian. White can now maintain the tension by 5 Qf3, but it is also promising, and consistent with our repertoire choices against several related systems, to gain space by...

5 d5 (D)

![Diagram showing position after 5 d5](B)

5...\( \text{Qe7} \)
This is the defining Old Indian Defence move. With this particular move-order, Black can play 5...Qc5 right away, although this knight often wanders to the kingside in the Old Indian. Then 6 \( \text{Qf2} \) is an obvious idea; after 6...a5 7 h3 it could transpose to our King's Indian lines following 7...g6 8 \( \text{Qg5} \) (or 8 \( \text{Qe3} \)), while upon 7...\( \text{Qe7} \), the set-up with h3, \( \text{Qe3} \) and \( \text{Qf3} \) makes sense. You can also set up a Sämisc structure with 6 f3 a5 7 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) (7...g6 8 \( \text{Qd2} \) is a poor version of the Sämisc King's Indian for Black) 8 \( \text{Qd2} \) followed by \( \text{Qge2} \) and in some cases 0-0-0, g4 and \( \text{Qg3} \).

6 \( \text{Qd3} \) 0-0 7 h3
This is sort of an all-purpose set-up against systems with ...Qf6, ...d6 and ...e5 and it's had good success in this position. Although some players use it with \( \text{Qge2} \), I'd rather play \( \text{Qf3} \) and watch over the g5-square.

7...\( \text{Qe8} \)
This retreat usually has the initial idea of...

a) 7...Qc5 8 \( \text{Qc2} \) a5 9 \( \text{Qf3} \) Qfd7 10 g4 (not a bad move, although normally you only want to play this when all your pieces are out and you have an attacking plan; preventing ...f5 isn't necessary as it can be in the King's Indian) 10...Qb6 11 \( \text{Qe2} \) Qd7 12 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qba4} \) 13 Qd1?! Qa6 14 b3 \( \text{Qc5} \) 15 a3 \( \text{Qe8} \) 16 \( \text{Qc3} \) Qd7?!
(that's nine knight moves for Black, but this is the first one that really looks wrong!) 17 \( \text{Qbl} \) with a pleasant space advantage for White, Suetin-Sutterer, World Seniors Ch, Bad Wildbad 1993.

b) 7...a5 8 \( \text{Qe3} \) Qc5 9 \( \text{Qc2} \) Qfd7 10 Qf3 Qe8 11 0-0 Qb8?! (Black never gets uncramped, but it's hard to do so in this structure; e.g., 11...h6 with the idea ...Qg5 is countered by 12 \( \text{Qd2} \) and 11...Qf8, heading for g6, loses the e-pawn after 12 \( \text{Qxc5} \) Qxc5 13 \( \text{Qxe5} \) 12 a3 Qf8 13 \( \text{Qe2} \) c6 14 b4 Qa6 15 Qxc6?! (or 15 \( \text{Qfb1} \) and \( \text{Qa4} \)) 15...bxc6 16 b5 Qxb5 17 Qxb5 \( \text{Qac5} \) 18 a4 \( \text{Qb7} \) 19 \( \text{Qac1} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) 20 \( \text{Qfd1} \) with a slight advantage for White, Anastasian-Alfonsi, Bastia rapid 1999.

8 \( \text{Qf3} \) (D)
8...g6
8...c5 transposes to a Czech Benoni line – see the note to Black's 8th move in Section 10.32.

9 g4 \( \text{c}5 \) 10 \( \text{c}2 \text{a}5 \) 11 \( \text{g}7 \text{g}7 \) 12 \( \text{e}3 \text{b}6 \)
Now 13 a3± \( \text{d}7 \) 14 b4 axb4 15 axb4 \( \text{b}1 \text{al} \) 16 \( \text{b}1 \text{al} \) \( \text{d}7 \) 17 \( \text{e}2! \) \( \text{c}8 \) 18 \( \text{a}4! \) \( \text{a}4 \) 19 \( \text{a}4 \) gave White a large positional advantage in Pliaconov-Trusheliov, St Petersburg 2000. 13 \( \text{d}2 \) is another idea.

12.34) Modern Defence

1 d4 g6 2 c4 \( \text{g}7 \) 3 e4 (D)
This set-up is the most consistent with the other openings in this book (and avoids 3 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 4 d5 \( \text{x}c3+ \), although I believe that's ultimately a poor variation).

For one thing, if Black plays ...\( \text{c}5 \) over the next few moves, we've already seen the main set-ups he can employ in Chapter 10 on Benoni Systems. And if Black plays 3...d6 4 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \), we have a King's Indian that's consistent with our repertoire.

3...d6
3...\( \text{c}6 \) is an ambitious idea, trying to economize on the move ...d6 while occupying the centre. One straightforward answer is 4 \( \text{f}3 \) e5 (4...d6 5 d5 \( \text{e}5 \) 6 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{x}f3+ \) 7 \( \text{x}f3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 8 0-0 0-0 9 \( \text{c}3 \) 5 10 \( \text{g}5 \) h6 11 \( \text{e}3 \)±) 5 \( \text{g}5?! \) (D) with these ideas:

a) 5...f6?? 6 \( \text{c}3 \) exd4 7 \( \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{g}e7 \) 8 \( \text{c}3 \) d6 is passive anyway, but White makes immediate progress by 9 \( \text{e}2 \) (or 9 c5!? \( \text{d}5 \) 10 \( \text{x}c6 \) \( \text{x}c6 \) 11 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 12 \( \text{x}c5 \)±) 9...0-0 10 c5! \( \text{d}5 \)? (10...\( \text{d}4 \) 11 \( \text{d}4 \) f5 12 \( \text{c}4 \)±)

Here the material splits into:

12.341: 4...\( \text{c}6 \) 249
12.342: 4...\( \text{d}7 \) 250

Or:

a) 4...\( \text{f}6 \) is a direct transposition to the King's Indian Defence.

b) 4...e5 is held in some suspicion because of the queenless middlegame 5 dxex5 dxex5 6 \( \text{xd}8+ \) \( \text{xd}8 \) 7 f4!, which is held to favour White. That's definitely worth investigating. From our point of view, the move 5 d5 is logical,
transposing into a King's Indian after 5...\(\text{c}6\) \text{h}3, or Section 12.342 after 5...\(\text{d}7\) \text{h}3. Note that we already saw this position in Section 12.31 via 1 \text{d}4 \text{d}6 2 \text{c}4 \text{c}5 3 \text{d}5 \text{g}6 4 \text{c}3 \text{g}7 5 \text{e}4, and we analysed the move 5...f5?! there.

c) 4...f5 5 exf5 \(\text{x} f5\) is a rarer option:

c1) 6 \(\text{d}3\)?? \(\text{x} d4\) 7 \(\text{x} f5\) \(\text{x} c3+\) 8 bxc3 \text{g}5 9 \text{h}5+ \text{d}7 10 \text{xf5+} \text{e}6 (Portisch-Bilek, Sousse Interzonal 1967) 11 \text{b}5+ \text{c}6 12 \text{c}5! \text{f}6 13 \text{e}2 d5 14 \text{b}2 a6 15 \text{f}8 \text{c}8 16 0-0 \text{f}8 17 \text{ab}1 with an attack; for example, 17...\text{a}5 18 \text{a}4 \text{c}4 19 \text{c}6.

c2) 6 \text{f}3 ? \text{h}6 7 \text{e}2 (or 7 \text{h}3 0-0 8 \text{e}3 \text{c}6 9 \text{g}4 \text{d}7 10 \text{g}2 ±) 7...0-0 8 0-0 \text{a}6 (Polugaevsky-Bilek, Lipetsk 1968) and along with effective moves such as 9 \text{d}5 and 9 \text{h}3, 9 a3 stops \(\text{xb}4\) and prepares \(\text{ec}1\); e.g., 9...c5 10 \text{e}1 \text{f}7 11 \text{e}3 \text{cxd}4 12 \text{x} d4 \text{d}7 13 \text{f}3 \text{b}8 14 \text{d}2 (or 14 \text{h}3) 14...\text{e}5 15 \text{d}5+ \text{h}8 16 \text{f}3! and Black's centre and queenside are increasingly exposed.

12.341)

4...\text{c}6 (D)

\text{c}3

A straightforward move. 5 \text{d}5 \text{d}4 6 \text{e}3 \text{c}5 7 \text{ge}2 \text{wb}6 is regarded as somewhat in White's favour, but we can avoid the complications associated with that line and reach the same modest assessment.

5...\text{e}5

5...\text{f}6 6 \text{d}5 \text{e}5 7 \text{f}4 \text{ed}7 8 \text{f}3 0-0 9 \text{e}2 \text{e}6 10 \text{dx} e6 \text{fx} e6 11 \text{g}5 \text{e}7 12 0-0 with a nice advantage, Tal-Christiansen, Wijk aan Zee 1982. One idea is 12...\text{h}6 13 \text{h}3 \text{a}6 14 \text{c}2, aiming at \text{g}6; e.g., 14...\text{f}7 15 \text{ad}1 \text{b}6 16 \text{e}5! \text{dxe}5 17 \text{d}3, etc.

6 \text{ge}2 (D)

The very well-known line 6 \text{d}5 \text{ce}7 is an alternative if you aren't happy with my main line. Then 7 \text{f}4 is one possibility, while I think that 7 \text{c}5 \text{f}5 8 \text{cd}6 \text{cd}6 9 \text{b}5+ \text{f}8 10 \text{f}3! (instead of the book move 10 \text{f}3) is good, but that's another story.

6...\text{h}6

This threatens \(\text{g}4\) and keeps the idea of \(\text{f}5\) alive. Other moves:
a) 6...\text{f}5 7 \text{ex} f5 \text{xf}5 8 \text{d}5 \text{ce}7 9 \text{g}3 \text{f}6 10 \text{d}3 and White takes over the e4-square with advantage, Larsen-Ganong, St John 1970.
b) 6...\text{f}6 7 \text{d}5 \text{e}7 8 \text{f}3 is not an ideal Sämisch King's Indian for Black; e.g., 8...0-0 9 \text{d}2 \text{c}6 (9...\text{d}5 10 \text{g}4; 9...\text{d}7 10 \text{h}4) 10 \text{d}1 \text{a}6 11 \text{e}2 \text{b}5 (11...\text{x} d5 12 \text{xd}5 \text{b}5 13 0-0 \text{d}7 14 \text{d}3 \text{f}5 15 \text{a}4 ±) 12 \text{dx} c6 \text{xc}6 13 \text{b}3 with a positional advantage for White.

7 \text{f}3

7 \text{d}5 also suffices for an edge; for example, 7...\text{b}8 (7...\text{e}7 8 \text{h}3?! \text{f}5 9 \text{g}3 \text{f}7 10 \text{g}2 \text{h}6 11 \text{h}6 \text{h}6 12 \text{eb}6 \text{eb}6 13 \text{d}2 \text{f}7 13 0-0-0 0-14 \text{f}4!? slightly favours White, Grigorian-Rukavina, Rijeka 2010) 8 \text{f}3 \text{f}5 9 \text{d}2 \text{f}7 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 \text{bl} c5 12 \text{xf}5 \text{xf}5 (12...\text{ex} f5+?! 13 \text{al} a6 14 \text{g}3 ± with the idea h4-h5) 13 \text{f}4 \text{d}7 14 \text{d}3 \text{f}6 (Damjanović-Kotov, Paris 1968) 15 \text{fx} e5! \text{xe}5 16 \text{g}5 with the better pawn-structure and a healthy advantage.

7...\text{f}5 8 \text{d}5 \text{e}7 9 \text{d}2 (D)

9...\text{f}7

Many King's Indian players will be tempted into 9...\f4 10 \text{f}2 \text{g}5, but with White's king
missing from the kingside and a ready-made queenside attack, they won’t be happy; for example, 11 c5 0-0 12 0-0-0 g4 13 b1 g6 14 c1 d7 15 b3 h4 (Malakhatko-Tiller, Tromsø 2009) and now 16 e1! (or 16 g1 gxf3 17 xh4 xh4 18 gf3 ±) 16...g6 17 c4 ± is quite sufficient for a substantial advantage.

10 c1

10-0-0 is an obvious alternative, and 10 c5 is a good option too; for example, 10...f4 11 f2 g5 12 c1 (12 0-0-0 g6 13 b1 ±) 12...g6 (Stohl-Seirawan, Manila Interzonal 1990) and now 13 b5+ with the idea 13...d7 (13...f8 14 e2) 14 xd7+ xd7 15 d3 g4 16 0-0-0 gives White a very comfortable game.

10...c5

Blocking the queenside is a good idea. Other moves:

a) 10...g8 11 c5 (11 exf5 gxf5 12 d3 ±) 11...h6 12 b5+!? d7 13 xd7+ xd7 14 xh6 xhx6 15 d3 ±.

b) 10...0-0 11 d3 c6 12 e2 cxd5 13 cxd5 d7 14 a4 ± Szabo-Suttles, Hastings 1973/4. Black has little play in these lines.

11 d3

11 a3 0-0 12 b4 b6 13 e2 h5 14 d3 h7 (Åkvin-Böhm, Eksjö 1974) and now 15 d1 with the idea e2 was suggested, while 15 b1 is a sensible move.

11...b6 12 b4 0-0 13 e2 h8 14 a4!

White’s attack is faster than in the previous note.

14...a5 15 bxc5 dxc5 16 b5??

± Foisor-Carlier, European Junior Ch, Groningen 1976/7.

This can go every which way.

5 h3

White can play a number of other moves, but in order to be consistent with our repertoire we’ll start with this. 5 e3 e5 6 d5 and h3 is another way to do so.

5...e5 6 d5 e7?!

After 6...gf6, 7 g5 or 7 e3 enters our King’s Indian repertoire. The text-move is quite rare, but has a certain logic, especially as an h-pawn advance will now cost White a tempo, and I’ll simply cover some obvious continuations.

7 f3 (D)

7...0-0

7...f5 8 g5 exerts pressure on the light squares; e.g., 8...f6 9 e5 xf5 (9...gxf5 10 e2 0-0 11 0-0) 10 d3 0-0 11 0-0 ± with the
ASSORTED DEFENCES

idea 11...\(\mathcal{D}d4\) 12 \(\mathcal{D}e2\); otherwise Black's position is a little passive.

8 g4?! a5

8...f5?! is dubious because of 9 \(\mathcal{D}g5\) \(\mathcal{D}c5?!\)
10 gxf5 gxf5 11 \(\mathcal{D}g1\) h6 12 b4! ±.

9 \(\mathcal{A}e3\) \(\mathcal{D}c5\) 10 \(\mathcal{D}d2\)

10 \(\mathcal{A}e2\) is also logical, discouraging 10...f5 due to 11 gxf5 gxf5 12 \(\mathcal{D}g1\).

10...f5

10...d7 can be answered by 11 \(\mathcal{A}e2\) or 11 \(\mathcal{D}b3?!\).

11 gxf5 gxf5 (D)

12 h4

Thinking about \(\mathcal{A}xc5\) and \(\mathcal{h}3\) to control the light squares.

12...\(\mathcal{A}xe4\) 13 \(\mathcal{D}dxe4\) fxe4 14 h5 h6 15 \(\mathcal{W}d2\)

15 \(\mathcal{D}f5\) 16 \(\mathcal{A}xe4\) \(\mathcal{A}xe3\) 17 fxe3 \(\mathcal{A}f5\) 18 \(\mathcal{D}d3\)

White has a modest advantage. This coverage is nowhere near comprehensive, of course, and there are many other ways to answer Black's set-up.

12.4) Systems with \...e6 and/or \...b6

In this category we have two major systems and an older and rarer idea:

12.41: English Defence

12.42: 1...e6 2 c4 \(\mathcal{B}b4+\)

12.43: 1...\(\mathcal{D}f6\) 2 c4 b6

The English Defence features \...e6 and \...b6 (without \...\(\mathcal{D}f6\)), inviting White to set up a huge centre, which Black will then attack from all angles. We shall choose a move-order that gives Black less to bite on. Section 12.42 is a subtle sequence by which Black may seek a favourable transposition to a number of standard openings, while there arise several independent ideas in the process. My suggestion tends to lead to Nimzo-type positions. 1...\(\mathcal{D}f6\) 2 c4 b6 is a line you are more likely to find in games collections by the 'old masters' than in your next tournament, but it has undergone a slight revival among theoreticians and illustrates some important themes of the Indian systems.

The move-order 1 d4 e6 can also be used in another way: 2 c4 c5 heads for Benoni structures; viz. 3 d5 exd5 4 cxd5 d6 5 \(\mathcal{D}c3\) g6 6 e4 \(\mathcal{A}g7\) 7 \(\mathcal{D}d3\), when 7...\(\mathcal{D}f6\) transposes to the main line of the Modern Benoni in Section 10.1, and the rarer 7...\(\mathcal{D}e7\) was examined in Section 10.33.

12.41) English Defence

1 d4 e6 2 c4 b6

The English Defence took a huge leap in popularity after Black began to realize that after 3 e4 \(\mathcal{B}b7\), White's centre could be put under a lot of pressure, assisted by many enjoyable tactical tricks.

3 a3 (D)

This move, preventing \...\(\mathcal{B}b4\), is the bane of English Defence players. Odessky, a leading English Defence expert, repeatedly bemoans Black's fate for having to play against it and says that the assessment jumps between ± and ±. He himself shows that things aren't so bad, but still, the majority of highly-rated players
employ 3 a3, and this is clearly the choice for a strategically-minded player.

3...\textbf{b7}

Or:

a) With 3...g6, Black delays the development of his \textit{c8}-bishop, thinking that it might go to a6 in some lines: 4 \textit{c3} \textit{g7} 5 \textit{f3} (5 e4 \textit{dxe7} 6 \textit{f3} transposes) 5...\textit{dxe7} 6 e4 0-0 7 \textit{a2} \textit{b7} 8 0-0 ±.

b) 3...f5 4 \textit{c3} \textit{f6} 5 d5 (5 \textit{f3} \textit{b7} 6 g3 is a solid alternative) 5...\textit{a6} implements that idea: 6 b3 (6 e3 is also feasible) 6...g6 7 \textit{b2} \textit{g7} 8 g3 0-0 9 \textit{g2} \textit{e4} 10 \textit{c1} \textit{xc3} 11 \textit{xc3} \textit{xc3}+ 12 \textit{xc3} ± Salov-Short, Madrid 1997.

\begin{center}
4 \textit{c3} (D)
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

4...\textbf{f5}

The most popular move by some margin, but there are respectable alternatives:

a) The easiest set-up against 4...g6 is 5 e4 \textit{g7} 6 \textit{f3} \textit{e7}, and while 7 d5!? has worked well in practice, 7 \textit{a2} 0-0 8 0-0 d6 9 \textit{e3} \textit{d7} 10 \textit{xd2} ± is more natural.

b) 4...\textit{f6} is the main alternative. It invites 5 \textit{f3}, transposing to a main line of the Queen's Indian Defence. This is a perfectly good option for White and probably the main reason English Defence players prefer 4...f5. But 5 d5 (D) is thematic, involves ideas which will apply elsewhere and avoids heavy Queen's Indian theory! So here's an overview of that move:

\begin{itemize}
  \item b1) 5...\textit{xd5} 6 \textit{cxd5} and then:
  \begin{itemize}
    \item b11) 6...\textit{b5} has been played numerous times and still passes muster in the theory books, but I have to admit that I'm sceptical for more than one reason:
      \begin{itemize}
        \item b111) It's unclear why after years and years of games with 6...b5, 7 \textit{xb5}(!) hasn't been played! To me, 7...\textit{xd5} 8 \textit{g5} \textit{b7} 9 \textit{xf6} gxf6 10 e3 certainly looks good for White, and he also comes out better following 7...\textit{xd5} 8 e4 \textit{f6}; for example, 9 e5 (or 9 \textit{c4}) 9...\textit{f4} 10 \textit{c2} \textit{c5}! 11 \textit{e3}!, in view of 11...\textit{xe3}!? 12 \textit{xc7} \textit{f8} 13 fxe3 \textit{h4}+ 14 g3 \textit{xc3} 15 \textit{hgx3} \textit{g3}+ 16 \textit{d2} \textit{h1} 17 \textit{c5}+ \textit{g8} 18 \textit{xa8} ±.
        \item b112) 7 e4 b4 8 axb4 \textit{xb4} 9 \textit{d3} and I think White can be happy; e.g., 9...c6 (9...\textit{e7} 10 \textit{f5}! \textit{xd5} 11 0-0 \textit{xc3} 12 bxc3 \textit{xc3} 13 \textit{b3} \textit{b4} 14 \textit{d4}! with multiple threats, beginning with \textit{f5} and now 10 \textit{dxc6} yielded a small edge in Baburin-Speelman, Copenhagen 1996, but 10 e5! \textit{xd5} 11 \textit{g4} is strong; e.g., 11...\textit{g6} 12 \textit{f3}! h5 13 \textit{d4} a5 14 0-0 \textit{a6} 15 \textit{e4} \textit{xc3} 16 bxc3 \textit{xc3}?! 17 \textit{g5} ±.
        \item b12) 6...\textit{d6} 7 \textit{f3} 0-0 (D).
      \end{itemize}
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
and now 9...c6?? fails to 10 ��e4, so 9...a5 10 e3 ��a6 11 ��c4 ��c5 12 ��d4 ��e7 13 0-0 a4 14 e4 d6 15 ��f1 (might follow) 9 e3 ��e7 (9...a5 10 ��c4 ��a6 11 0-0 ��c5 12 ��d4 ±) 10 ��c4 h6 11 ��f4 ��h5 12 ��e5 ��f6 13 ��d4! ± Karpov-Miles, Las Palmas 1977. White has a space advantage which he converted into victory in grand style.

b13) 6...g6 7 e4 ��g7 8 ��d3 0-0 9 ��f3 (9 ��ge2 c5 10 0-0 d6 11 h3 ��bd7, Plachetka-Šahović, Vrnjačka Banja 1985, and now 12 ��g3 a6 13 a4 ��e8 14 ��e3 ��e5 15 ��e2 is a pleasant version of a normal Modern Benoni line) 9...d6 10 0-0 ��e8 11 ��e1 ��bd7 12 ��g5 h6 13 ��f4 ��c5 14 ��c2 a5 15 ��b1 with a slight advantage for White.

b2) 5...��d6 (this development may look eccentric, but if Black plays meekly and develops quietly, White will consolidate his space advantage and secure a dominant game) 6 ��f3 (versus 5...��e5) 6...0-0 (6...c6 7 e4 exd5 8 e5! Sethuraman-Mihopoulos, Vrachati 2011) 7 e4 (or 7 g3) 7...exd5 8 exd5 c6 9 ��e2 (D) with this choice:

b21) 9...��a6 10 0-0 ��c7 11 dxc6 dxc6 12 ��g5 ±.

b22) 9...exd5 10 cxd5 ��a6 11 0-0 (11 ��d4 ��e5) 11...��e8 12 ��g5 (12 ��b5 ��e7 13 ��e1 is a messy alternative) 12...h6 13 ��h4 ��c5 14 ��d4 ��c4 15 ��xe4 ��xe4 16 ��f5 ��e5 ±/½ Knaak-Planinc, Polanica Zdroj 1979; here 17 ��d3! ��xb2 18 ��ad1 is good; e.g., 18...��e8? (18...��xh4 19 ��xh4 ��e8 20 ��f5 ±) 19 ��d2 ��e5 20 f4 ��c7 21 ��g3 and Black's position is indefensible.

5 d5 ��f6

5...��e7 6 g3 ��f6 (with the idea ...��xc3+, and in some cases ...��e7-c8-d6!) 7 ��c2 (I like this move; 7 ��d2 is more common, but the bishop might be better placed on e3, f4 or even b2) 7...��e7 8 ��g2 0-0 (8...��e8 9 ��f3 ��d6 10 ��f4! ±) 9 ��h3 ��a6 10 0-0 ��c5 11 ��f4 (11 ��e3 ±) 11...��g6 12 ��xg6 hxg6 13 ��e3 ��xc3?! (but White stands better in any case) 14 ��xc3 with an obvious advantage for White, Ibragimov-Kalinichev, Bad Wiessee 1998.

6 g3 (D)

6...��a6

With 6...g6, Black reasons that while White's d5 advance has blocked off the b7-bishop, it has also opened the other long diagonal, so he may as well put his bishop on g7. Compared to our main line with ...��d6-e5, however, Black is never threatening ...��xc3, so that after 7 ��g2 ��g7 8 ��h3! 0-0 9 0-0 ��a6, White can play 10 b4!, leaving the a6-knight stuck on the side of the board: 10...��e4 (10...��xd5?! 11 ��xd5 ��xd5 12 ��xd5+ ��xd5 13 ��xd5+ ��h8 14 ��g5 ��e8 15 ��ad1 ��f7 16 ��f4 c6 17 ��d3 ±) 17 Farago-Z. Varga, Pecs 1998) 11 ��xe4 ��xe4 (11...��xal 12 ��g5 ��e8 13 ��xal ��xe4 14 ��h6 ��f7 15 ��d1! has the idea of ��g5 with a devastating attack) 12 ��b1 ��xd5 13 ��xd5 ��e7 14 ��g5 ��h8 15 ��xe4 with an extra pawn and a positional advantage, Piket-Plaskett, Mondariz Zonal 2000.

7 ��g2 ��c5 8 ��h3

The modern preference, although 8 ��f3 is still unclear.

8...��d6

Practically the only move Black ever plays, and for good reason; he is badly cramped, but
now intends to play ...\( \text{e}5 \) with excellent pressure on White's centre. 8...\( g6 \) 9 \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{d}a6?! \) (9...\( \text{d}cxe4 \) 10 \( \text{d}xe4 \) \( \text{fxe}4 \) 11 \( \text{d}xe6 \) \( \text{dxe}6 \) 12 0-0 \( \text{g}7 \) 13 \( \text{d}f4 \) ±) 10 0-0 \( \text{g}7 \)? 11 \( \text{d}xe6 \) (a trick to remember) 11...\( \text{x}g2 \) 12 \( \text{x}g2 \) 0-0 (after 12...\( \text{d}xe6 \) 13 \( \text{w}a4+ \) White nets a piece) 13 \( \text{exd}7 \) ± \( \text{w}x\text{d}7 \) 14 \( \text{d}b2 \) \( \text{w}c6+ \) 15 \( \text{d}d5 \) \( \text{w}x\text{c}4 \) 16 \( \text{d}xf6 \) \( \text{x}f6 \) 17 \( \text{c}c1 \) \( \text{w}e4+ \) ± 18 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{w}e8 \) 19 \( \text{d}d3! \) \( \text{b}5 \), Tkachev-Hamdouchi, Cannes 2001. White stands much better; for example, 20 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{fxe}4 \)? 21 \( \text{fxe}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 22 \( \text{d}g5! \) is simply winning.

9 0-0

Complex and highly strategic positions result from 9 \( \text{d}f4 \) and 9 \( \text{d}b5 \); e.g., in the latter case 9...\( \text{e}5 \) 10 \( \text{f}4 \)! (10 \( \text{d}f4 \) \( \text{d}6! \)) 10...\( \text{d}6 \).

9...
\( \text{e}5 \) 10 \( \text{c}2 \) 0-0 (D)

This position has been tested repeatedly over the years. The best and most practical way to handle it is to reinforce \( \text{d}5 \):

11 \( \text{d}1 \)

11 \( \text{d}2 \) and 11 \( \text{d}f4 \) are accepted alternatives.

11...\( \text{w}e7 \) 12 \( \text{d}f4! \)

Odessky suggests that this is the most accurate move-order and that Black has "no useful moves!" Similar but perhaps less accurate is 12 \( \text{e}3 \) (intending \( \text{d}4 \) at the right moment) 12...\( \text{d}cxe4?! \) 13 \( \text{d}xe4 \) \( \text{d}xe4 \) 14 \( \text{d}a1 \) \( \text{c}5 \) with counterplay, Sher-Lempert, Erevan 1996.

After 12 \( \text{d}f4 \), Odessky gives...

12...\( \text{a}5 \) 13 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}ce4 \) 14 \( \text{d}xe4 \) \( \text{d}xe4 \) (D)

Now after 15 \( \text{cabl} \) he says, “the knight is driven away from e4”. However, 15...\( \text{g}5 \) 16 \( \text{d}d3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 17 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{exd}5 \) 18 \( \text{cxd}5 \) \( \text{a}8 \) keeps Black right in the game. And yet there’s another issue after 14...\( \text{d}xe4 \): White can play 15...

d\( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{d}xe6 \) 16 \( \text{c}5! \) \( \text{bxc}5 \) (16...\( \text{d}xc5?? \) 17 \( \text{d}xc5 \); 16...\( \text{d}xf4 \) 17 \( \text{d}xf4 \) \( \text{bxc}5 \) 18 \( \text{d}a1 \) ±) 17 \( \text{d}a1 \), and he retains a small but annoying edge following 17...\( \text{d}6 \) 18 \( \text{d}e4 \) \( \text{d}xe4 \) 19 \( \text{d}e4 \) \( \text{f}e8 \) 20 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 21 \( \text{d}c5 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 22 \( \text{d}c3 \). Overall, that seems the correct assessment of the move 3 \( \text{a}3 \) in the English Defence.

12.42)

1 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 2 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}4+ \)

This is a kind of hybrid between the Bogoljubov-Indian and English Defences. It is quite a respectable move.

3 \( \text{c}3 \) (D)

Objectively, 3 \( \text{d}2 \) is probably the most challenging move (although 3...\( \text{a}5 \) is a bother), but 3 \( \text{c}3 \) fits in nicely with the rest of our repertoire.

B

3...\( \text{f}5 \)

This leads to Dutch-type positions. There are some important alternatives:

a) 3...\( \text{f}6 \) is the Nimzo-Indian.
b) 3...d5 transposes to 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 c3 8b4 in Section 3.6.

c) 3...b6 4 e3 8xc3+ (4...b7 5 8e2 and now 5...8f6 transposes to Section 7.22, while 5...f6 6 a3 8xc3+ 7 8xc3 8f6 8 8e2 0-0 0-0 is a fairly straightforward two-bishops position, with the possible continuation 9...8e8 10 f3 8c6 11 8d2 8g6 12 8e1 ± 5 bxc3 8b7 6 f3!? and now:

c1) 6...8h4+ 7 g3 8h5 8 e4 f5 (8...8c6 9 8h3 8ge7 10 8f4 8a5 11 8d2 0-0 12 8d3 ±) 9 exf5 8xf5 10 8d3 8f7 (10...8h5!! 11 8f4 d6? 12 8e2 8f7 13 8h3 h6 14 0-0 ± Neiman-Bricard, French Ch, Narbonne 1997) 11 8f4 d6 12 8h3 h6 (Stohl) 13 0-0 8d7 14 c5! bxc5 15 dxc5 8xc5 16 8b5+ 8e7 17 8e3 with good attacking chances for the pawn.

c2) 6...f5 7 8h3 (D) and then:

B

\[
\begin{array}{c}
B
\end{array}
\]

Now 4...8f6 is a Nimzo-Indian (Section 7.1) and 4...f5 5 8e2, intending 6 a3, doesn’t accomplish much for Black, but he can try:

d1) 4...8xc3+ 5 bxc3 d6!? (the most common move here; 5...8f6?! 6 8d3 with the idea 8e2, e4, etc., is essentially a Sämisc Variation of the Nimzo-Indian a full tempo down because Black voluntarily played ...8xc3 without White playing a3; 5...f5 allows 6 e4! fxe4 7 8h5+ g6 8 8xc5 6 8d3 (6 8g4?!). This can lead in various directions; for example, 6...e5?! (6...8c6 7 8e2 8ge7?! 8 0-0 0-0 9 8e2 8g4?!).)

d2) 4...8c6 5 8e2 (D) (5 d5 8xc3+ 6 bxc3 and now 6...8ce7 is unclear, but better than 6...8a5?! 7 8d3 8f6 8 e4 e5 9 f4 d6 10 8f3 0-0 11 0-0 8c7 12 8e1 ±) and here:

d21) 5...exd4 6 exd4 and then:

d211) 7 a3 8xc3+ 8 8xc3 dx4 9 8xc4, and now after 9...8 xd4 10 8e3 or 9...8xd4 10 8e2 White has very good compensation, so a key line is 9...8ge7! 10 0-0 0-0 11 8g5 h6! 12 8xe7 8xe7 13 8e1; e.g., 13...8b6 14 d5!! 8xb2 15 d6 8c6 16 8e3. Black may be equal but still has some problems to solve; obviously both sides can deviate.
This discourages ...b6 and covers e4. I shall mention two other natural replies:

a) 4 \( \text{wc2 f6} \) 5 \( \text{d2} \) (5 \( e3 \text{De4} \) transposes to note ‘b1’ to Black’s 4th move at the start of Chapter 7 – on the Nimzo-Indian) \( 5...0-0 \) 6 \( e3 \) \( b6 \) 7 a3 \( \text{xc3} \) 8 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 9 \( f3 \) a5 10 \( \text{d3} \) a4 11 \( \text{De2} \) ± Kempinski-Ostrowski, Mistek 1997.

b) White can also play 4 \( e3 \), which is consistent with our repertoire versus the Nimzo-Indian. Then:

- b1) 4...\( b6 \) 5 \( \text{De2 f6} \) 6 a3 \( \text{e7} \) 7 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{b7} \) 8 \( \text{c2} \) 0-0 9 0-0 ±

- b2) 4...\( \text{f6} \) can also be answered by 5 \( \text{De2} \) and 6 a3, which is handy. Another approach is 5 \( \text{d3} \) 0-0 6 \( \text{wc2} \) b6 (6...\( d6 \) 7 \( \text{De2} \) c5 8 a3 \( \text{xc3} + 9 \text{xc3?} \) \( \text{c6} \) 10 0-0 a5 11 b3 \( \text{e7} \) 12 \( \text{b2} \) with a slight advantage for White, Taimanov-Kärner, USSR Team Ch, Riga 1968) 7 \( \text{De2} \) \( \text{b7} \) (7...\( \text{f4} \) is another transposition to note ‘bl’ to Black’s 4th move at the start of Chapter 7) 8 0-0, with a set-up we see in the Dutch Defence chapter; e.g., 8...\( \text{c6} \) 9 a3 \( \text{d6} \) (Ligterink-Renet, Budel 1987) and now 10 f3 and 10 \( e4 \) both slightly favour White.

b3) 4...\( \text{xc3} + 5 \text{xc3} \text{f6} \) 6 \( \text{d3} \) b6. We’ve seen this kind of thing before. White sets up with the standard pawn-structure; for example, 7 \( \text{h3} \) 0-0 8 0-0 \( \text{c6} \) 9 \( f3 \) \( \text{a6} \) 10 \( \text{we2} \) \( \text{d5} \) (10...\( \text{d5} \) 11 cxd5 \( \text{xd3} \) 12 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 13 c4 \( \text{d7} \) 14 \( \text{b2} \) ±) 11 e4 d5 12 e5!? (12 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 13 \( \text{c2} \) threatens \( \text{g4} \) and \( e5 \), with \( \text{e1} \) in reserve) 12...\( \text{xc4} \) 13 exf6 cxd4 14 \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 15 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 16 \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 17 \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 18 \( \text{xf4} \) ±.

4...\( \text{f6} \) 5 \( \text{g2} \) 0-0 \( \text{(D)} \)
6 \( \square h3 \) is eccentric (literally) but playable; for example:

a) 6...d5 7 0-0 (7 cxd5 exd5 8 \( \square f4 \) c6 9 0-0 \( \pm \)) 7...c6 8 \( \square b3 \) \( \square a6?! \) 9 \( \square f4 \) \( \square d6 \) 10 \( \square d3! \) \( \square c7 \) (Grau-Alekhine, Warsaw Olympiad 1935) and now 11 c5! \( \square e7 \) 12 \( \square f4 \) would accentuate White's advantage.

b) 6...d6 7 \( \square b3 \) (7 0-0 is also possible) 7...\( \square c6 \) (7...c5?!?) 8 d5 (8 0-0 a5 9 d5 exd5 10 cxd5 \( \square e5 \) 11 \( \square e3 \) \( \pm \)) 8...exd5 9 cxd5 \( \square d4 \) 10 \( \square d1 \) \( \square b5 \)! 11 \( \square d3 \) \( \square x c3 \) 12 bxc3 \( \square c5 \) is equal, M.Werner-Weiner, 2nd Bundesliga 1985/6.

6...\( \square e7 \) 7 a3 \( \square x c3+ \) 8 \( \square x c3 \) d6
8...a5 9 b3 \( \square e4 \) 10 \( \square c2 \pm \) Andreev-Kozlov, St Petersburg 2008.

9 b4 a5 10 b5 \( \square b d7 \)
Now:

a) 11 \( \square b 2 \) \( \square e 8 \) (11...\( \square b 6 ! \) 12 a4 \( \square e 4 \) 13 \( \square c 2 \) e5! =) 12 \( \square c 3 \) \( \square e 4 \) 13 \( \square c 2 \) \( \square d 6 \) 14 0-0 b6 15 \( \square e 1 ! \) \( \square d 7 \) (15...\( \square b 7 \) 16 \( \square d 3 \) \( \pm \)) 16 f3 \( \square g 5 \) 17 \( \square d 3 \) \( \pm \) Landa-Balashov, Taganrog 2011.

b) 11 \( \square h 3 ! \) improves: 11...\( \square e 4 \) 12 \( \square c 2 \) e5 13 \( \square b 2 \) exd4 14 \( \square x d 4 \) \( \pm \).

My suspicion is that most of these lines are objectively equal or close to equal, but that Black must play more accurately than his opponent, and so White is more likely to get the advantage in over-the-board play. 2...\( \square b 4 + \) as a whole looks like a fully playable variation.

### 12.43)

1 d4 \( \square f 6 \) 2 c4 b6 (D)

**W**

3 \( \square c 3 \)
Avrukh proposes 3 f3, but in the variation 3...\( \square c 6 ! ? \) (suggested by Kogan) 4 \( \square c 3 \) e5 5 d5, he only gives 5...\( \square e 7 \). However, Black can use his lead in development to play 5...\( \square a 5 ! \) 6 e4 (6 e3?! is possible, but 6...c6 at any rate leaves Black with no problems) 6...\( \square b 4 \) (6...\( \square d 6 \) is more direct and at least equal) 7 \( \square d 2 \) \( \square b 7 \) 8 a3 \( \square d 6 \) 9 b4 a5 \( \mp \) (or 9...0-0).

3...\( \square b 7 \)

After 3...e6 we saw 4 a3 \( \square b 7 \) in note 'b' to Black's 4th move in Section 12.41, on the English Defence. The natural 4 e4 has also scored very well in practice, since with the knight on f6, Black lacks the type of all-out counterplay he gets in the English Defence when White sets up a large pawn-centre.

4 \( \square c 2 \) (D)

This old method is still valid.

4 f3 d5 5 cxd5 \( \square x d 5 \) 6 e4 \( \square x c 3 \) 7 bxc3 e5! is extremely unclear, while 4 d5 e6 5 a3 is the English Defence line referred to in the previous note.

### B

4...d5

Other moves don't challenge the centre sufficiently:

a) 4...e6 5 e4 favours White: 5...d6 (5...\( \square b 4 \) can be met by 6 \( \square d 3 \) or even 6 e5 \( \square e 4 \) 7 a3; 5...\( \square c 6 \) 6 \( \square f 3 \) e5 7 dxe5 \( \square g 4 \) 8 \( \square f 4 \) \( \square c 5 \) 9 \( \square b 3 \) \( \pm \) 6 \( \square f 3 \) (6 f4?! \( \pm \)) 6...\( \square e 7 \) 7 \( \square d 3 \) \( \square b d 7 \) 8 0-0 \( \pm \).

b) 4...c5 5 d5 g6 6 e4 d6 7 f4! (7 \( \square f 3 \) gives White a slight advantage) 7...\( \square b d 7 \) 8 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square b 8 ! \) (8...\( \square b 7 \) 9 e5 dxe5 10 fxe5 \( \square g 4 \) 11 e6 fxe6 12 \( \square g 5 \) \( \square f 8 \)! 13 \( \square e 2 \) \( \pm \) \( \square e 5 ? ? \) 14 0-0!) 9 \( \square d 3 \) \( \square g 7 \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \square e 2 \) \( \square e 8 \) 12 \( \square d 2 \) \( \square c 7 \) 13 \( \square f 2 \) e6 14 f5! exf5 15 exf5 \( \pm \) with ideas of \( \square h 4 \), \( \square a 1 \) and \( \square h 5 \).

5 cxd5 \( \square x d 5 \) 6 e4
6 \( \text{Nf3} \) secures a safe edge: 6...e6 (6...g6 7 e4 \( \text{dxc3} \) 8 bxc3 \( \text{g7} \) 9 \( \text{b5+} \) \( \text{d7} \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \text{f4} \) a6 12 \( \text{d3} \) is also slightly better for White, Quinteros-Planinc, Ljubljana/Portorož 1973) 7 e4 \( \text{dxc3} \) 8 bxc3 \( \text{e7} \) 9 \( \text{b5+} \) c6 10 \( \text{d3} \) c5 11 0-0 \( \text{exd4} \) 12 \( \text{exd4} \) 0-0 13 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{c6} \). Here Avrukh gives 14 a3 and says, “This simply transposes to a position from the Petrovian Variation of the Queen’s Indian Defence.” While that’s true, White also hasn’t been demonstrating an advantage in that variation. However, 14 \( \text{We2} \) saves White a very valuable tempo on the main line; e.g., 14...\( \text{C8} \) (14...\( \text{b4} \) 15 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{c8} \) 16 \( \text{ac1} \) 15 \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{wd6} \) 16 \( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{a5} \) and now White can launch the thematic attack 17 \( \text{d5}! \) \( \text{xc1} \) (17...\( \text{exd5} \) 18 \( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{xc8} \) 19 \( \text{exd5} \) with a dangerous attack and a troublesome d-pawn that seems to survive) 18 \( \text{xc1} \) (18 \( \text{xc1} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 19 \( \text{exd5} \) g6 20 \( \text{a6} \) \( \pm \) 18...\( \text{exd5} \) 19 e5 \( \text{wd7} \) (19...\( \text{wh6} \) is answered with 20 \( \text{c7} \) or 20 \( \text{d4}! \) \( \text{ac8} \) 21 \( \text{xc8}+ \) \( \text{xc8} \) 22 e6!! \( \pm \) 20 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 21 \( \text{df5} \) \( \text{we6} \) 22 \( \text{g4} \) g6 23 \( \text{h6+} \) \( \text{g7} \) 24 \( \text{wf4} \) \( \text{wh8} \) 25 \( \text{g4} \) \( \equiv \) with compensation worth well more than a pawn.

6...\( \text{dxc3} \) 7 bxc3 e5! (D)

White would simply be better if it weren't for this move with the idea ...\( \text{wh4} \).

8 \( \text{d3} \) exd4 9 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{c6} \)

Black can’t completely neutralize White’s initiative by 9...d3 10 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{c5} \) 11 0-0-0-0 because of 12 \( \text{g5}! \).

10 0-0 0-3

10...\( \text{dxc3}?! \) is difficult for Black after the simple 11 \( \text{wc3} \), or even 11 \( \text{g5} \) with the idea 12 \( \text{dl} \).

11 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{c5} \) 12 e5 h6

Zilberstein-Bronstein, USSR Ch, Baku 1972. Now 13 e6! \( \text{fxe6} \) (13...0-0 14 \( \text{e7}+ \) \( \text{h8} \) 15 \( \text{c4} \) 14 \( \text{g6+} \) \( \text{f8} \) 15 \( \text{f4} \) \( \equiv \) supplies more than enough compensation; Black’s king is really in the way.

12.5) Assorted Systems

We are close to completing our repertoire, and all that remains is to consider a few of Black’s more offbeat ideas, some of which still need to be treated with a little respect. Our main themes here are lines with an early ...\( \text{d6} \), and ideas with ...a6 and/or ...b5:

12.51: 1 \( \text{d4}\) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{c6} \)

12.52: 1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{c6} \)

12.53: 1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{b5} \) 2 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{a6} \)

12.54: 1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{b5} \) 2 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{b7}?! \)

12.55: 1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{a6} \)

12.56: 1 \( \text{d4} \) e5?!

12.51)

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{c6} \) (D)

This is known as the Black Knights Tango. It is a respectable if still uncommon way of meeting \( \text{d4} \) which resembles a mirror-image Alekhine Defence if White continues 3 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{e5} \) 4 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{f4} \), etc. If White does chase the knight in that way, it turns out that, unlike the line 1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{ac6} \) 2 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{e5} \) (Section 12.52), Black gets strong counterplay against White’s centre. This result is to some extent logical as ...\( \text{d6} \) is more immediately active than \( \text{c4} \), and furthermore, \( \text{c4} \) exposes White along the e1-a5 diagonal to ...\( \text{b4} \). So I’ll recommend a calmer solution.
3...d3

Now White is threatening 4.d5 for real, and Black has two serious methods of anticipating this:

12.511: 3...d6 259
12.512: 3...e6 260

12.511)

3...d6

Now after 4.d5, 4...Qe5!? is possible, and has scored rather well (with a lead in performance rating for Black), and even 4...Qb8, intending ...c6 to break up the centre, isn’t bad. Instead, White usually plays:

4.Qc3 e5

The consistent move; anyway, at some point White’s d5 advance will become a bother, so Black can’t delay this indefinitely.

5.d5 Qe7 6.e4 (D)

b) 7.dxe5 Qxe5 Qg7 9.b5+ Qd7 and now both 10.Qf4 and 10.f4 give White the better game.

c) 7...a6 8.Wa4+ Qd7 (8...Qd7 9.b5!; 8...Qd7 9.cxd6 cxd6 10.Qb5 initiates a lengthy forcing sequence: 10...Qg8 11.Qg5 f6 12.Qc1 fxg5 13.Qc7+ Qf7 14.Qxa8 Qe5! 15.Qxe5 dxc5 16.Qb3 Qd6 17.Qb6 h6 18.Qd3 Qg7 19.Qd2! Qc7 20.Qdxc4 ± 9.Qb3 Qb8 10.Qe3 ±, in view of 10...Qg7 11.cxd6 cxd6 12.Qb6 Wc8 13.Qb4.

d) 7...Qg7 8.cxd6 (after 8.b5+, 8...Qd7 9.cxd6 Qxd6 transposes, while 8...Qd7 9.b3 ± is one good way to play it) 8...Qd6 9.b5+(9.Wa4+ is also good) 9...Qd7 10.0-0 (or 10.Qe3 0-0 11.Qd2 f5 12.f3) 10...0-0 11.Qe3 f5 11...h6 12.Qd2! f5 13.f3 Qxf6 14.Qxe2 Qd7 15.Qc4 Qc8 16.a4 ± Fyllingen-Hagesäther, Norwegian Team Ch 1997) 12.Qg5 Qf6 and now 13.b2! h6 (13...fxe4 14.Qxe4 Qf5 15.Qg5 Wb6 16.Qd2 and White has a modest edge) 14.Qe6 Qxe6 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.Wb3 b6 (16...d5 17.Qc5) 17.Qad1 left White only slightly better in J.Cooper-Trois, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1978, but 13.Qb3! fxex4 14.c4! Qh8 15.Qxe4 Qf5 16.Qxf6 Qxf6 17.Qe6 Qxe6 18.dxe6 Qxe3 19.fxex3!, planning ...Qd5, is much more promising.

7.g3

Several good moves are possible here, but this one is simple, preventing ...Qf4 and getting developed.

7...Qe7 8.Qg2 0-0 (D)

6...Qg6

This is not an ideal place for the knight, and it prevents Black from fianchettoing, but there isn’t a good alternative. At first it looks as though 6...Qg6 might get Black into a conventional King’s Indian, but that dream is shattered by 7.c5! This is an invaluable break which causes Black more problems than he should want to deal with. In fact, 7.c5! has scored so well that it has almost completely driven 6...Qg6 from high-level play:

a) 7.Qd7?? 8.cxd6 cxd6 9.Qb5! Qc5 (not 9...Qb8?? 10.Wa4) 10.b4 (or 10.Qe3 a6 11.Qxe5! ±, hoping for 11...dxc5?? 12.Wa4!) 10...Qxe4 11.Wc2, with threats on both c7 and e4.
h4! h6 11 h5 \( \Box \)h8 12 \( \Box \)f3 a5 13 \( \Box \)e3 with space and better development) 10...\( \Box \)g5 11 \( \Box \)xg5 (or 11 \( \Box \)e3 \( \Box \)e3) 11...\( \Box \)xg5 12 h4 \( \Box \)d8 13 \( \Box \)e3, Chernin-Bla tny, New York 1996.

9...\( \Box \)e8

9...c6 10 \( \Box \)d3 \( \Box \)c7 11 \( \Box \)e3 \( \Box \)d7 (11...\( \Box \)g4 12 \( \Box \)d2 \( \Box \)d7 13 h3 \( \Box \)f6 14 \( \Box \)ac1) 12 \( \Box \)ac1 ±. 10 \( \Box \)e3 f5 11 exf5 \( \Box \)xf5 12 \( \Box \)d2 \( \Box \)g5 (D)

4 a3

White stops ...\( \Box \)b4, as we did versus the English Defence. An alternate line for the strategic player is 4 \( \Box \)c3 \( \Box \)b4 5 \( \Box \)c2. On the other hand, 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 \( \Box \)c7 6 dxc3 \( \Box \)e7 leads to a double-edged position in which White is unlikely to do better than equalize.

4...d6

This may look a little strange, but Black has in mind ...g6, ...\( \Box \)g7, ...0-0 and ...e5, reaching a sort of King’s Indian, and in this position he feels that the loss of time by ...e6-e5 will tend to be negated by White’s slow move a3. Other moves have their own drawbacks:

a) 4...g6 5 \( \Box \)c3 \( \Box \)g7 6 e4 (6 d5 \( \Box \)c7 7 d6 !?) and then:

a1) 6...d5?! 7 e5 \( \Box \)c4 8 \( \Box \)d3 \( \Box \)xc3 9 bxc3 dxc4 10 \( \Box \)xc4 (D).

B

A nice attacking set-up for White: 10...\( \Box \)a5 11 \( \Box \)d3 c5 12 \( \Box \)g5?! (12 0-0 is also good) 12...\( \Box \)c7 13 \( \Box \)d2 (13 h4 h6 14 \( \Box \)e3 and 13 0-0 also offer White an edge) 13...0-0 14...cxd4 14 cxd4 \( \Box \)c7 15 \( \Box \)b5+ \( \Box \)c6? 16 \( \Box \)c1 \( \Box \)xd4 17 \( \Box \)xc6 +– Bocharov-Vlassov, Russia Cup, Tomsk 2001) 14 0-0 \( \Box \)c7 15 \( \Box \)d4 \( \Box \)b7 17 \( \Box \)f6+ \( \Box \)xf6 18 \( \Box \)xf6 \( \Box \)d6 19 \( \Box \)g4 with good chances; against 15...\( \Box \)c6, instead of ECO’s 16 \( \Box \)f3, 16 \( \Box \)e4! \( \Box \)xd4 17 \( \Box \)f6+ \( \Box \)f8 18 \( \Box \)e1! is virtually winning – the attack is far too strong) 16 \( \Box \)e4! \( \Box \)xd4 17 \( \Box \)f6+ \( \Box \)h8 18 \( \Box \)e1 +– Rogozenko-Vlassov, Internet rapid 2001.

a2) 6...d6 7 \( \Box \)e2 0-0 8 0-0 \( \Box \)e8 9 \( \Box \)c3 (or 9 h3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 \( \Box \)e3 ±; for example, 11...\( \Box \)h5 12 \( \Box \)xd8 \( \Box \)xd8 13 \( \Box \)fd1 \( \Box \)f4 14 \( \Box \)f1 c6 15 e5) 9...e5 10 d5?! (10 dxe5 \( \Box \)xe5 11

With this flexible move, it appears that Black is seeking some kind of Nimzo- or Bogo-Indian (after ...\( \Box \)b4), or Queen’s Gambit Declined (after ...d5).
\( \text{\textcopyright{Assorted Defences} 261} \)

\[ \text{x}e5 \text{x}e5 12 f3 \pm 10... \text{d}d4 11 \text{e}e1 \text{x}e2+ 12 \text{x}xe2 \text{f}h5 13 \text{d}e1!? \] (13 \h is has the idea 13... \text{f}f4 14 \text{x}f4 \text{f}x4 15 \text{d}d2 \text{g}5 16 \text{e}e1! \h 17 e5 \pm 13... \text{f}f4?! 14 \text{c}c2 \text{f}5 15 \text{f} f3 \text{f}xe4 16 \text{x}xe4 \text{b}6 17 \text{d}d3 \text{h}6 18 \text{h}1 \text{h} with a positional edge for White due to the outpost on e4 and prospects of playing c5, Portisch-Wilhelmi, Frankfurt rapid 1997.

b) 4...d5 5 \text{c}c3 and now:

b1) 5...\text{dxc}4 6 \text{e}4 \text{a}5 7 \text{x}xc4 \text{xc}4 8 \text{w}a4+ \text{d}d7 9 \text{w}xe4 \text{c}5 10 \text{e}e3! with a slight advantage for White, Yakovich-Vlassov, Moscow Ch 1996.

b2) 5...\text{e}7 can be met with 6 \text{f}f4 0-0 7 \text{d}3; Black’s knight is poorly placed on c6.

b3) Orlov’s 5...g6 is well answered by 6 \text{f}f4 \text{e}6 7 \text{g}g7 \text{h}c1 0-0 9 \text{h}h3 \text{d}d7 10 \text{d}3 \pm Silman-Franett, Las Vegas 1992. White has a classic advantage based on Black’s cramped pieces.

b4) 5...a6 6 \text{cxd}5 \text{exd}5 7 \text{g}g5 \text{e}7 8 e3 \text{h}6 9 \text{h}h4 0-0 10 \text{\textcopyright{d}d3} \text{e}6 10... \text{f}e4 11 \text{x}e7 \text{d}xd3 12 \text{x}xd8 \text{x}xd8 13 \text{b}b1 \text{e}d7 14 \text{c}c1 c6 15 \text{b}b4 \pm Kasparov) 11 0-0 \text{d}7 12 \text{g}3 \text{d}6 (Kasparov-Yermolinsky, Erevan Olympiad 1996) 13 \text{w}c2 \text{xe}5 14 \text{x}g3 \text{x}g5 15 \text{a}a4 c6 16 \text{b}b4 \pm Kasparov.

5 \text{\textcopyright{c}c}3 \text{g}6 6 \text{g}5 (D)

A rather unusual move. White is willing to give up the bishop-pair to consolidate his space advantage. Objectively, White will only get a minor edge against precise play, but he achieves a safe position from which to outplay the opponent.

6...h6

This is the main move. In games without it, White can consider favourable simplification; e.g., 6...\text{g}7 and then:

a) 7 \text{d}e4?! h6 8 \text{x}xf6 \text{x}xf6 9 \text{x}xf6+ \text{x}f6 10 \text{e}4 (space!) 10...e5 11 d5 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}8 11... \text{d}d4! 12 \text{x}xd4 \text{exd}4 13 \text{w}d2 \text{c}6 14 \text{d}d3 \text{w}g7 15 0-0 0-0 16 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}1 \text{c}5 17 b4 \pm 12 \text{\textcopyright{c}c1}? \text{d}7 13 b4 a5 14 \text{d}d3 c6 15 dxc6 (15 0-0 c5!? \pm) 15...bxc6 16 0-0 \text{f}8 17 \text{d}d1 \text{g}7 18 \text{e}e2 c5!? 19 b5 with a clear advantage for White in Wang Yue-Deepan Chakravarthy, World Under-16 Ch, Iraklion 2002.

b) 7 \text{e}3 and now:

b1) 7...a5, to hold down the queenside, leads to a typical position following 8 \text{d}d3 0-0 0-0 9 \text{e}e4 10 d5 \text{d}e7 11 \text{w}c2 (11 \text{e}4 is an odd King’s Indian; White gets a quick b4 in and I suspect he has an edge, but this is hard to assess) 11...h6 12 \text{h}h4 \text{\textcopyright{h}5} 13 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}x7 (not terrible, but a little strange; 13 \text{w}e2 f5 14 \text{d}d2 \text{f}6 15 \text{f}3 keeps things flexible) 13...\text{w}xe7 (Zdebskaya-Toth, Balatonlelle 2003) and now 14 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}2 f5 15 \text{f}3 slows Black down before White proceeds on the queenside.

b2) 7...0-0 8 \text{e}4 \text{d}b8 9 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}2 2 (9 h4! \text{d}d7 10 \text{h}h5 \pm 9...\text{\textcopyright{d}d}7 10 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}3?! \text{b}6 11 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}2 \text{\textcopyright{d}b}7 12 \text{d}d1 (12 \text{h}h4 creates an escape-square versus ...h6, ...g5 and ...\text{h}5) 12...\text{w}e7 13 0-0 \text{h}4 14 \text{h}h4 \text{g}5 15 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}3 \text{\textcopyright{h}5} 16 \text{d}5! \text{\textcopyright{d}x}g3 17 \text{h}xg3 \text{\textcopyright{d}e}5 18 \text{\textcopyright{d}e}5 \text{\textcopyright{d}x}e5 19 \text{f}3 \text{\textcopyright{d}a}8 20 \text{\textcopyright{d}b}5 a6 21 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}4 \text{\textcopyright{d}x}d4 22 \text{ex}d4!? with a slight advantage for White, Ehlvest-Nakamura, Minneapolis 2005.

7 \text{\textcopyright{h}4} g5!?

7...\text{g}7 8 \text{e}e4 \text{d}e7!? 9 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}3 \text{f}5 10 \text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 11 0-0, as in Pecorelli Garcia-Delgado, Varadero 2000, pits the bishop-pair against White’s territorial advantage in the centre and (soon) on the queenside.

8 \text{g}3 (D)

8...\text{g}4

8...\text{g}7 9 e3 (9 \text{h}3, versus ...\text{g}4 and to preserve the bishop on h2, is the kind of position White should like) 9...\text{w}e7 9...\text{\textcopyright{h}5}? 10 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}2 (10 \text{h}3 is again possible) 10...\text{b}6 11 0-0-0 (11 \text{d}d8 12 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}4 \pm) 11...\text{\textcopyright{b}7} 12 \text{d}5! \text{\textcopyright{d}b}8 (Morgan Nuque-J.Stone, Dos Hermanas 2004) and now White gets a comfortable advantage with the centralizing 13 \text{\textcopyright{d}d}4!, having \text{\textcopyright{d}d}3 and even dx6 in mind.

9 \text{\textcopyright{g}1}
9 d5 gxf3 10 dxc6 bxc6 11 gxf3 is also interesting.

Aficionados of the Smyslov Variation versus the King’s Indian will recognize that several of the positions in this section resemble that variation. Usually both players will castle queenside before initiating action.

12 d3
White wants to control f5 in case of ...e5.

12...g7 13 e2 e5 (D)
This is Sashikiran-Bologan, Linares 1999, which continued 14 dxe5 dxe5! (14...dxe5 can be met by 15 wc2 or 15 e4) 15 wc2 d7 16 0-0-0 g5 17 df4 0-0-0 =. I think White should have tried 14 d5; e.g., 14...b8 (14...e7 15 wb3 and now 15...f5 16 e4! or 15...h6 16 0-0-0 f8 17 h2, thinking about simply h1) 15 wc2 d7 16 0-0-0 c6 17 ef5 (White has been seeking this exchange of light-squared bishops) 17...c5 18 xc8 xc8 19 df1 with the moves e4 and f4 or f3 in mind.

Black is playing a mirror-image Alekhine Defence. The idea is to tempt White’s pawns forward and then break up the centre.

3 f4
This is White’s most forcing and ambitious move. 3 e4 yields a small but pleasant advantage after 3...e6:

a) 4 c3 exd5 5 exd5 is good, with the idea 5...f6 6 w2 7 d6! cxd6 8 g5 ±.

b) 4 dx6?! fxe6 (after 4...dx6 5 wxd8+ xd8, one idea is 6 f4 d6 7 d2 intending to play c3, f4 and 0-0-0) 5 c3! (this forces Black to make a committal move) 5...b6!? (5...c5?! 6 h5+ costs Black a piece; 5...f6 6 f4 c6 7 e5 g8 8 f3 ± 6 f3 (or 6 f4 f7 7 f3 ± 6...f7!! (after 6...xf3 f7 8 g3! it’s hard for Black to develop; e.g., 8...f6 9 e2! g6 10 f3 d6 11 e5 h5 12

12.52)
\[ w \text{g4 } \text{exf3} 13 \text{xf3} \text{d5} 14 \text{g4 } \text{g7} 15 \text{h6} \text{planning } 0-0-0 \text{ and } h4) 7 \text{d3 } \text{b7} 8-0-0 \text{f6} 9 \text{e2 } \text{e7} 10 \text{e5 } \text{d5} 11 \text{xd5 } \text{xd5} 12 \text{e4 } \text{xe4} 13 \text{xe4} \pm. \]

3...\text{g6} 4 \text{e4} \text{e5} \\
4...\text{e6} 5 \text{dxe6! transposes.} \\
5 \text{dxe6! (D)} \\
Not 5 f5? \text{h4+} 6 \text{d2 } \text{f6!} 7 \text{f3} (7 \text{d3 } \text{b4} or 7 \text{d3 } \text{exe4+} 8 \text{xe4 } \text{xe4} 9 \text{fxg6 } \text{wxg2+} 10 \text{e2 } \text{wxd5+} \text{and Black ends up with four pawns and an attack for the piece}) \\
7...\text{exe4+} 8 \text{e2 } \text{f4+} 9 \text{xe4 } \text{xf4} 10 \text{xf4 } \text{exf4} 11 \text{f3 } \text{f6.} \\

\[ \text{g6+} \text{h4} (D) \]

5...\text{fxe6} \\
5...\text{dxe6} 6 \text{wxd8+ } \text{xd8} \text{gives White a pull; e.g.,} 7 \text{f3 } \text{c5} 8 \text{c3 } \text{f6} 9 \text{d3 } \text{a6} 10 \text{h3 } \text{d7} 11 \text{d2 } \pm \text{with the idea } 0-0-0. \\
6 \text{f3} \\
6 \text{h4?! is an original idea. White has the better of it after } 6...\text{c5?!} \text{ (6...\text{dxc4} 7 \text{g4! } \text{d6} 8 \text{dxc4} 9 \text{wxe4 } \text{d7} 10 \text{e5 } \text{dxe5} 11 \text{e6+ } \text{f6} 12 \text{g5!).} \\
6...\text{c5} 7 \text{c3 } \text{h6} \\
7...d6 8 \text{d4 } \text{b6} 9 \text{dxb6 } \text{axb6} 10 \text{h4} \text{with an advantage for White – Ruban.} \\
8 \text{f5! } \text{h4 (D)} \\
8...\text{exf5} 9 \text{d5 } \text{c7} (9...\text{c7} 10 \text{dxc6 } \text{dxc6} 11 \text{dxc6 } \text{dxc6} 12 \text{dxc6 } \pm \text{(Minasian & Nandanian).} \\

From the position after 8...\text{h4}, Ara.Minasian-Teran Alvarez, Ubeda 1999 continued 9 \text{g3?! } \text{dxf3+} 10 \text{hxf3} \text{with only a slight edge. Instead,} 9 \text{d5?! is practically winning; e.g.,} 9...\text{exf5} (9...0-0 10 \text{h5 traps the knight on h4, as does} 9...\text{g6} 10 \text{g3} 10 \text{h5+ } \text{g6} 11 \text{exf5 } \text{dxf5} 12 \text{dxe4!} \text{. White attacks two pieces and} \\

\[ w \text{g4 } \text{exf3} 13 \text{xf3} \text{d5} 14 \text{g4 } \text{g7} 15 \text{h6} \text{planning } 0-0-0 \text{ and } h4) 7 \text{d3 } \text{b7} 8-0-0 \text{f6} 9 \text{e2 } \text{e7} 10 \text{e5 } \text{d5} 11 \text{xd5 } \text{xd5} 12 \text{e4 } \text{xe4} 13 \text{xe4} \pm. \]

3...\text{g6} 4 \text{e4} \text{e5} \\
4...\text{e6} 5 \text{dxe6! transposes.} \\
5 \text{dxe6! (D)} \\
Not 5 f5? \text{h4+} 6 \text{d2 } \text{f6!} 7 \text{f3} (7 \text{d3 } \text{b4} or 7 \text{d3 } \text{exe4+} 8 \text{xe4 } \text{xe4} 9 \text{fxg6 } \text{wxg2+} 10 \text{e2 } \text{wxd5+} \text{and Black ends up with four pawns and an attack for the piece}) \\
7...\text{exe4+} 8 \text{e2 } \text{f4+} 9 \text{xe4 } \text{xf4} 10 \text{xf4 } \text{exf4} 11 \text{f3 } \text{f6.} \\

Black can’t save them both with 12...\text{d6?} \\
(12...\text{d5} 13 \text{dxc5} 0-0 14 \text{d3 } \pm ) \text{because of} 13 \text{d5 } \text{d7} 14 0-0-0 \text{b6} 15 \text{b5!}. \\

12.53) \\
1 \text{d4} \text{b5} 2 \text{e4} \text{a6 (D)} \\

\[ w \text{g4} \text{dxe6} \text{b5} \text{dxe6} 6 \text{wxd8+ } \text{xd8} \text{gives White a pull; e.g.,} 7 \text{f3 } \text{c5} 8 \text{c3 } \text{f6} 9 \text{d3 } \text{a6} 10 \text{h3 } \text{d7} 11 \text{d2 } \pm \text{with the idea } 0-0-0. \\
6 \text{f3} \\
6 \text{h4?! is an original idea. White has the better of it after } 6...\text{c5?!} \text{ (6...\text{dxc4} 7 \text{g4! } \text{d6} 8 \text{dxc4} 9 \text{wxe4 } \text{d7} 10 \text{e5 } \text{dxe5} 11 \text{e6+ } \text{f6} 12 \text{g5!).} \\
6...\text{c5} 7 \text{c3 } \text{h6} \\
7...d6 8 \text{d4 } \text{b6} 9 \text{dxb6 } \text{axb6} 10 \text{h4} \text{with an advantage for White – Ruban.} \\
8 \text{f5! } \text{h4 (D)} \\
8...\text{exf5} 9 \text{d5 } \text{c7} (9...\text{c7} 10 \text{dxc6 } \text{dxc6} 11 \text{dxc6 } \text{dxc6} 12 \text{dxc6 } \pm \text{(Minasian & Nandanian).} \\

From the position after 8...\text{h4}, Ara.Minasian-Teran Alvarez, Ubeda 1999 continued 9 \text{g3?! } \text{dxf3+} 10 \text{hxf3} \text{with only a slight edge. Instead,} 9 \text{d5?! is practically winning; e.g.,} 9...\text{exf5} (9...0-0 10 \text{h5 traps the knight on h4, as does} 9...\text{g6} 10 \text{g3} 10 \text{h5+ } \text{g6} 11 \text{exf5 } \text{dxf5} 12 \text{dxe4!} \text{. White attacks two pieces and} \\

This is called the St George Defence, and is better known via the move-order 1 \text{e4} \text{a6} 2 \text{d4} \text{b5}. \\
3 \text{f3 } \text{b7} 4 \text{d3 } \text{f6} \\
4...\text{e6 will usually transpose, although White gets time to play } 5 0-0 \text{ and } \text{wxe1, for example, or} 5 \text{a4. The main point would be to avoid the following note ‘b’}. \\
5 \text{bd2} \\
Or: \\
a) Another effective line is 5 \text{wxe2 } \text{e6} 6 \text{a4 } \text{c5} (6...\text{dxc6?!}) 7 \text{dxc5 } \text{dxc5} 8 \text{bd2 } \text{b4} 9 \text{e5 } \text{d5} 10 \text{d4 } \text{e7} \text{and now } 11 0-0 \text{ or } 11 \text{g5, but I think the knight move is better, reserving } \text{wxe2} \text{as an option.}
b) Avrukh believes that 5 e5 \( \Box d5 \) 6 \( \Box g5! \) gives Black "serious problems". His analysis goes 6…e6 (6…\( \Box b4 \) 7 \( \Box e4 \) \( \Box x e 4 \) 8 \( \Box x e 4 \) gives White much better prospects – Avrukh) 7 \( \Box f3! \) f5 (7…\( \Box e 7 \) 8 \( \Box x h 7! \) \( \Box c 6 \) 9 c3 0-0-0 10 \( \Box e 2 \) f6 11 a4 may not be so clear but is better for White) 8 exf6 (8 \( \Box c 3 \) \( \Box b 4 \) 9 \( \Box b 7 \) \( \Box 8 c 6 \) 10 \( \Box x b 5 \) axb5 11 \( \Box x b 5 \) \( \Box d 4 \) with counterplay) 8…\( \Box x f 6 \) 9 \( \Box x h 7! \) and "White has an extra pawn", Kozhukharov-Vasilev, Sofia 2006. But Black can still cause some difficulties with 9…\( \Box x f 3 \) (or 9…\( \Box d 6?! \) ) 10 \( \Box g 6 + \) \( \Box d 8 \) 11 \( \Box f 3 \) \( \Box e 7 \) followed by …\( \Box x f 3 \), which at any rate is less than a clear advantage. So maybe the main line with 5 \( \Box b d 2 \) is just as good or better.

5…e6 6 0-0 (D)

B

6…c5

6…\( \Box e 7 \) is more cautious but gives White time to achieve his goals; for example, 7 e5 \( \Box d 5 \) 8 a4 b4 9 \( \Box e 4 \) 0-0 (9…a5 10 c4 bxc3 11 bxc3 with c4 next, Oll-Bogaerts, European Junior Ch, Groningen 1984/5) 10 \( \Box f g 5 \!) (10 c4 bxc3 11 bxc3 \( \pm \) ) 10…h6 (10…g6 11 \( \Box g 4 \) is getting very dangerous) 11 \( \Box h 7 \) \( \Box x h 7 \) 12 \( \Box c 5 + \) \( \Box g 8 \) 13 \( \Box x b 7 \) \( \Box c 8 \) 14 \( \Box a 5 \) \( \pm \), threatening \( \Box x h 6 \).

7 dxc5!?

7 c3 is also possible, with a normal edge deriving from superior central control. Then Black has to be careful not to fall a tempo behind our main line by 7…\( \Box e 7 \)?! (7…cxd4 8 cxd4 is more precise, when 8…\( \Box e 7 \) follows, but not 8…\( \Box c 6 \)?! 9 d5! exd5 10 e5?!; e.g., 10…\( \Box h 5 \) 11 \( \Box b 3 \) with the idea g4, leading to 11…g6 12 \( \Box g 5 \) \( \Box e 7 \) 13 \( \Box h 6 \) \( \Box f 8 \) 14 \( \Box d 2 \) \( \pm \) ) 8 dxc5 \( \Box x c 5 \) 9 e5 \( \Box d 5 \) 10 \( \Box e 4 \) \( \Box e 7 \) 11 \( \Box g 5 \).

7…\( \Box x c 5 \) 8 e5 \( \Box d 5 \) 9 \( \Box e 4 \) \( \Box e 7 \) 10 a4 b4 11 \( \Box f d 2 \)! (D)

11 c4 bxc3 12 bxc3, with the idea \( \Box a 3 \), is good, but the text-move threatens \( \Box c 4 \) and is even more convincing.

B

11…0-0

11…\( \Box c 6 \) 12 \( \Box c 4 \) 0-0 13 \( \Box h 5 \) g6 14 \( \Box h 6 \) f5 and now 15 \( \Box g 5 \) \( \Box x g 5 \) 16 \( \Box x g 5 \) \( \pm \) is sufficient.

12 \( \Box h 5 \)

Or 12 \( \Box c 4 \) f5 13 exf6 \( \Box x f 6 \) 14 \( \Box x f 6 + \) \( \Box x f 6 \) and now 15 \( \Box h 5 \) yielded some advantage in Khasangatin-Kutuzov, Pardubice 2004, but 15 \( \Box g 4 \) gives White a significant positional edge and the initiative.

12…g6 13 \( \Box h 6 \) f5 14 exf6 \( \Box x f 6 \) 15 \( \Box x f 6 + \) \( \Box x f 6 \)

Now:

a) 16 \( \Box h 4 \) gives White pleasant dark-square control.

b) 16 \( \Box c 4 \) and now in the game Leski-Boog, Geneva 1986 Black blundered with 16…\( \Box e 4 \)?? (16…\( \Box d 5 \) would limit White's advantage). Then 17 \( \Box x e 4 \)! \( \Box x e 4 \) 18 \( \Box d 6 \) wins; for example, 18…\( \Box x c 2 \) (18…\( \Box c 6 \) 19 \( \Box g 5 \) \( \Box c 7 \) 20 \( \Box e 7 \) 19 \( \Box g 5 \) \( \Box b 6 \) 20 \( \Box e 8 \) \( \Box f 7 \) (20…\( \Box x e 8 \) 21 \( \Box f 6 \) 21 \( \Box f 6 + \) \( \Box h 6 \) 22 \( \Box x h 7 \)!!).

12.54)

1 d4 b5 2 e4 \( \Box b 7 \)!

I simply don't believe in this one.

3 \( \Box x b 5 \)

It's amazing that the majority of players choose 3 \( \Box d 3 \) or 3 f3 here.

3…\( \Box x e 4 \) 4 \( \Box f 3 \) (D)
Now White is playing a Sokolsky position a full tempo up, i.e., a reversed version of 1 b4 e5 2 a3xb4 3 a3xe5 a3f6 with the extra move d4. This happens to be a variation in which White (playing 1 b4) struggles even to equalize. Often in a ‘reversed’ opening, an extra tempo comes with some compensating disadvantages, however slight, but there don’t seem to be any here.

\[4...e6 5 0-0 a3f6 6 c4\]

When strong players have reached this position, they have almost always chosen this move, which again is quite effective in the reversed position. White could also play 6 a3, continuing 6...a7 7 c4; in this case, Black should avoid 6...c5? 7 a3c3 a3b7 8 d5!, when the e-pawn hangs, but 8...a3b6? virtually loses to 9 a3g5! (or 9 a3e5 a3e7 10 a3c4 a3d8 11 a3g5).

\[6...a3e7 7 a3c3 a3b7 (D)\]

\[8 a3a4\]

This multi-purpose move is also used to good effect in the reversed position. One point is that a later d5 can’t be answered by ...c6, while the bishop will be well-placed for attacking purposes on c2. Instead, the game Kramnik-Carlsen(!), Moscow rapid 2011 continued 8 d5 (also strong) 8...0-0 9 a3f4 a3a6 10 a3e1 a3e8 11 a3d4 a3b4 (11...a3d6?!?) 12 a3g5 a3e8? 13 a3e3?! (13 a3a4! wins) 13...c6 14 a3xa6 a3xa6 15 a3h5 f6 16 a3h3 fxe5 17 a3h7+ a3f7 18 a3h5+ (18 dxex6+ dxex6 19 a3e4) 18...a3g8 19 a3h7+ a3f7 20 a3e4 ±. Probably the last 1...b5 with 2...a3b7?! that we’ll see on this level for a long time!

\[8...0-0 9 d5\]

Or

a) 9 a3c2 d6 and now 10 d5 is still good, or 10 a3e1 a3bd7 11 a3f4 ±.

b) 9 a3e1 d6 10 d5! e5 and although 11 a3e3 was better for White in Danielsen-J.Fries Nielsen, Klaksvik 2006, he could have achieved the desired 11 c5! for free in view of 11...dxc5 12 a3xe5 a3xd5 (12...a3xd5? 13 a3g5 +– with the idea 13...a3b7 14 a3b3 or 13...c6 14 a3xd5 a3xd5 15 a3b3! a3xd1 16 a3xd1) 13 a3g4 (13 a3f3?!) 13...a3xc3 14 bxc3 ±.

9...a3a6 10 a3 a3c5 11 a3c2 a3a5 12 a3e3 a3xd5 13 a3xd5 g6? 14 a3e1 a3h5 15 a3e5

Or 15 a3d2!; White is beginning to take charge.

15...a3g7? 16 a3d4

By now Black is really in a bad way; for example, 16...d6 17 a3c6 ±. Instead 16...a4? was played in the game Wojtkiewicz-Bronstein (yes, that one!), Reykjavik 1994, when 17 a3g4 with the idea a3xe7 is practically resignable for Black; the only chance is 17...f6, but 18 a3b5! a3a6 19 a3xa4 gives White a pawn and a huge position.

\[12.55)\]

\[1 d4 a3f6 2 c4 a6\]

This move isn’t awful, but Black doesn’t have time to enjoy such luxuries. The same position could also arise via 1 d4 a6 2 c4 a3f6, although it’s unclear how Black benefits with that move-order.

\[3 a3c3 c5 (D)\]

Black’s idea is to reach Benko lines while denying White several of his options with respect to declining the pawn or accepting it while leaving the knight on b1. However, the
move ...a6 itself may turn out to be not so useful in certain lines.

4 d5

4 dxc5 is a conservative response which gives a small but definite advantage, as the move ...a6 isn't so useful here: 4...e6 5 e4 Qc6 (5...Wc7?!) can be met favourably by 6 b4, while 6 f4 Qxc5 7 e5 Qg8 8 Qe4 may be stronger) 6 Qe3 Qa5 7 Qa4 (7 a3 Qxe4 8 Qg2±) 7...Qxa4 8 Qxa4 Qxe4 9 f3 Qf6 10-0-0±. Kaidanov calls this a clear advantage; Black is certainly cramped.

4...b5 5 e4

5 Qc2?! is also possible; compare our 4 Qc2 lines versus the Benko Gambit. Instead 5 cxb5 axb5 6 Qa4 Qa6 7 Qc3 (both sides have alternatives in this sequence) transposes to a standard Benko Gambit Accepted, an opening we are avoiding in this repertoire.

5...b4 6 Qa4 Qxe4 7 Qd3 Qf6 8 Qxc5 e6 (D)

Now Levitt gives 9 Qa4?! exd5 10 Qe3 dxc4, which is at best unclear, but 9 Qc4! seems to be a big improvement; for example, 9...exd5 10 cxd5 Qb7 (10...Qxd5?? 11 Qe2 Qe7 12 Qc4 Qf6 13 Qd6+ Qf8 14 Qf7) 11 Qg5 Qxd5 12 Qe2 Qe6 13 f4! d5 14 Qxf6+ gx6 15 Qh4 ±.

12.56)

1 d4 e5?!

Come now.
2 dx5 Qc6

The Englund Gambit. The problem is that White has no weaknesses and is equal in development!

2...d6 3 exd6 Qxd6 was once promoted by Smith & Hall, but 4 Qf3 (or 4 Qc3) 4...Qc6 5 Qg5 with the idea e3 looks like a refutation.

3 Qf3 Wc7

Or:

a) The Hartlaub Gambit, 3...d6, is even worse than 2...d6 due to 4 Qg5!, recommended by Valeri Bronznik, who quotes 4...Wd7 5 exd6 Qxd6 6 Qc3 Qb4 7 Qxd7+ Qxd7 (A.Kolev-Strickler, Lenk 1989) 8 Qd2! ±.

b) Bronznik says something about Black having slight chances of gaining compensation after 3...Qc5 4 Qc3 (he likes 4 Qf4 ±) 4...f6 5 exf6 Qxf6 6 Qg5, but I can't imagine it.

c) I'll take Bronznik's word for it and borrow his analysis on 3...Qge7 4 Qc3 (D):

Now Levitt gives 9 Qa4?! exd5 10 Qe3 dxc4, which is at best unclear, but 9 Qc4!
terrific development and a meaningful advantage.

c2) 4...\( \text{Ng6} \) 5 \( \text{Ng5} \) \( \text{Ne7} \) 6 \( \text{Nxg7} \) \( \text{Kxg7} \) 7 \( \text{Nd5} \) \( \text{Kd8} \) 8 \( \text{Kd2!} \) (this is Petri’s move, based upon 8...\( \text{Nxg7??} \) 9 \( \text{Kxe5} \) \( \text{Kxe5} \) 10 \( \text{Kc3} \) 8...h6 (8...0-0 9 \( \text{Kg5!} \) \( \text{Kxe7} \) 10 \( \text{Kxe7+} \) \( \text{Kxe7} \) 11 \( \text{Kxe7} \) \( \text{Kxe7} \) 12 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{Kx8} \) 13 \( \text{Nd4!} \) 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 \( \text{Kc3} \) \( \text{Kb8} \) 11 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{Kxg5} \) 12 \( \text{Kxe5} \) \( \text{Kxe5} \) 13 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{Kxe8} \) 14 g4! d6 15 \( \text{Kg1} \) ± (all analysis by Bronznik).

We now return to 3...\( \text{Ke7} \) (D):

4 \( \text{Kf4} \)

Probably not the clearest line, but I am including it to challenge some published assessments. Two other good moves:

a) 4 \( \text{Kbd2} \) \( \text{Kxe5} \) 5 \( \text{Kxe5} \) \( \text{Kxe5} \) 6 \( \text{Kf3} \) \( \text{Kf6} \) 7 \( \text{e4} \) ±. White has space, a central advantage and potential play against Black’s exposed queen.

b) 4 \( \text{Kc3} \) \( \text{Kxe5} \) 5 \( \text{Kd5} \) (the simple 5 \( \text{e4} \) has also scored well in practice) 5...\( \text{Kxf3+} \) 6 \( \text{Kxf3} \) \( \text{Kd8} \) 7 \( \text{Kd4} \) (7 \( \text{Kf4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 8 \( \text{e4} \) ±) 7...d6 (San Marco’s 7...\( \text{Ke7??} \) is best: 8 \( \text{Kg5} \) \( \text{Kf6} \) 9 \( \text{Kf4} \) ±) 8 \( \text{Kg5} \) \( \text{f6} \) (8...\( \text{Kd7??} \) 9 \( \text{Kd3} \) \( \text{Kxh3} \) 10 \( \text{Kxe7+} \) and White wins, Korchnoi-E.Koning, Deurne 1978) 9 \( \text{Kd2} \) \( \text{Kxe7} \) 10 \( \text{c4} \) (10 \( \text{Kgl} \) is also possible) 10...\( \text{Kd6} \) (10...\( \text{c6} \) 11 \( \text{Kd4} \) ±) is given by Smith & Hall, but Schiller points out the direct 11 \( \text{Kxf6+} \) \+ \( \text{Kxf6} \), winning.

4...\( \text{Wb4} \) 5 \( \text{Kd2} \) \( \text{Kxb2} \) 6 \( \text{Kc3} \)

The classic Englund Gambit trap runs 6 \( \text{c3}?? \) \( \text{b4} \) 7 \( \text{Wd2} \) \( \text{Kxc3} \) 8 \( \text{Wxc3} \) \( \text{Kc1#} \).

6...\( \text{b4} \) 7 \( \text{Kb1} \) \( \text{Kxa3} \) (D)

8 \( \text{Kb3} \)

8 \( \text{Kd5} \) is also strong but a little complicated, so I’ll just show the main variation: 8...\( \text{Kxa5} \) 9 \( \text{Kb5} \) \( \text{Kd2+} \) 10 \( \text{Kxd2} \) \( \text{Kd8} \) 11 \( \text{e4} \) (or Avrukh’s 11 \( \text{Kg5}! \), which probably simplifies matters) 11...h6 (11...a6 12 \( \text{Bb3} \) \( \text{Kxa2} \) and instead of 13 \( \text{Kxe2} \), 13 \( \text{Kd3} \) \( \text{Kb1+} \) 14 \( \text{Kbl} \) \( \text{Kb5} \) 15 \( \text{c4} \) is simple enough; for example, 15...\( \text{Kge7} \) 16 \( \text{Kg5} \) \( \text{Kxe5} \) 17 \( \text{Kxf7} \) \( \text{d6} \) 18 \( \text{f4} \) 12 \( \text{Kc4} \) (12 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 13 \( \text{Kc4} \) \( \text{Kf8} \) was Grob’s old analysis, many years before computers, which Benjamin refuted with 14 \( \text{Kf4}! \) 12...\( \text{Kge7} \) 12...\( \text{Kg5} \) 13 \( \text{h3} \) – Benjamin) 13 0-0 \( \text{Kg6} \) 14 \( \text{Bb3} \) \( \text{Kb5} \) 15 \( \text{Kbe3} \) ±.

8...\( \text{Wxa5} \) 9 \( \text{a3} \)

9 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{Kge7} \) 10 \( \text{Kb5} \) is also good.

9...\( \text{Kxc3} \)

The greedy 9...\( \text{Kxa3??} \) loses to 10 \( \text{Kb5} \) \( \text{Kd6} \) 11 \( \text{e4} \) (Bücker).

10 \( \text{Kxc3} \) \( \text{Wc5} \) 11 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{Kge7} \) 12 \( \text{Kd3} \) \( \text{Kg6} \)

12...0-?; as played in Ullrich-Petri, Darmstadt 1993, can be met by the direct 13 \( \text{Kxh7+} \) \( \text{Kxh7} \) 14 \( \text{Kg5+} \) \( \text{Kg6} \) 15 \( \text{Kxe4} \) with the win of the queen or mate.

13 0-0 \( \text{Kxe5} \) 14 \( \text{Kxe5} \) \( \text{Kxe5} \) 15 \( \text{Kd2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 16 \( \text{Kb4} \) \( \text{Kb6} \) 17 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{Kf7} \)

Pitkaenen-Nicholls, corr. 2009. Now White would have done well to play 18 \( \text{Kc4} \); e.g., 18...\( \text{d6} \) 19 \( \text{Kd5} \) \( \text{Kf5} \) 20 \( \text{Kc3} \) \( \text{Kb6} \) 21 \( \text{Kf5} \) \( \text{Kg6} \) 22 \( \text{Kh4} \) 0-0 23 \( \text{Kf2} \) ±.
Index of Variations

A: 1 d4 d5
B: 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e6
C: 1 d4 d6 2 c4 g6
D: 1 d4: Other Lines

A)

Now:
A1: 2...e6
A2: 2...c6
A3: Other Moves

A1)

2 ... e6
3 d3 f6 8
3...b6?! 65
3...f5 66
3...a6 66
3...b4 66
3...c6 100
3...e7 22 4 cxd5 exd5 5 f4:
  a) 5...f6 26
  b) 5...c6 24
3...c5 28 4 cxd5:
  a) 4...cxd4 59
  a1) 5 wxd4 60
  a2) 5 a4+ 60 5...d7 6 w xd4 exd5 7 w xd5
c6 8 f3 f6:
a21) 9 w d3! 64
a22) 9 b3 62
  b) 4...cxd5 28 5 f3 c6 6 g3 f6 7 g2 29
c7 8 0-0 0-0 9 g5:
  b1) 9...e6 30
  b2) 9...c4 32
  b3) 9...cxd4 36 10 f3 d6 11 e3 e8 12
c1 f8:
  b31) 13 b3 37
  b32) 13 a3 39
  4 cxd5 exd5
4...cxd5 8
g5 9

B:

5 ... e7 10
5...c6 18 6 e3 f5 7 f3 19
6 e3 c6
7 d3 0-0
8 f3 bd7
9 c2 e8
10 0-0 f8
11 h3 13

Now:
11...g6 15
11...e6 17

A2)

2 ... c6 86
3 d3 f6 91
3...a6 86
3...xc4 87
3...e5 90
3...e6 100 4 e3:
  a) 4...d6 100
  b) 4...f6 105
  c) 4...f5 100:
    c1) 5...d3 103
c2) 5 g4 101:
    c21) 5...fxg4 101
c22) 5...d6 102
  4 e3 e6 105
  4...f5 92
  4...g4 93
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4...a6 97

5  f3  bd7
5...a6 105
6  b3 106
6 ...  d6 108
6...b6 112
7  e2 0-0
8  0-0 109

Now:
8...e4 109
8...e8 110
8...b6 111

A3)

2  ...
2...dxc4 68
2...f6?! 42
2.c5 64
2.e5 54 3 dxe5 d4 4 f3 c6 5 bd2 55:
a) 5...g4 56
b) 5...ge7 57
c) 5...f5 58
2...f5 42:
a) 3 cxd5 45
b) 3 f3 43 3...e6 4 c3 c6 5 wb3 wb6 6
c5!:
b1) 6...c7 43
b2) 6...xb3 44
2...c6 46 3 f3 g4 4 c3 47 4...e6:
a) 5 cxd5 49
b) 5 f4 52:
b1) 5...xf3 53
b2) 5...f6 54
c) 5...g5 49:
c1) 5...f6 49
c2) 5...e7 51
3  f3  f6 72
3...a6 69
3...c5 71
4  e3  e6 75
4...e6 73
4...g4 74
5  xc4  c5
6  0-0  a6
6...cxd4 76
7  d3

Now:
7...cxd4 80
7...c6 81
7...bd7 82 8 e1 b5:
a) 9 e4 84
b) 9 a4 85

B)

1  d4  f6
2  c4  e6
3  c3  b4
3...d5 8
4  e3  b6 126
4...d6 115
4...e4 116
4...e6 146
4...d5 143
4...0-0 139 5 e2 d5 6 a3 e7:
a) 7 d4 140
b) 7 cxd5:
b1) 7...xd5 140
b2) 7...xd5 142
4...c5 117 5 e2:
a) 5...b6 137
b) 5...xd4 117 6 exd4:
b1) 6...0-0 118 7 a3:
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b12) 7...e7 120
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b21) 7 c5 121
b22) 7 a3 124
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5...0-0 133
5...b7 133
5...e4 134
5...c5 137
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6...g3 127
6 a3 130

C)

1  d4  f6
2  c4  g6
3  c3

Now:
C1: 3...d5
C2: 3...g7

C1)

3  ...
3...d5 178
4  cxd5  xd5
5  e4  xc3
A Strategic Chess Opening Repertoire for White

6

6...bxc3  ♗g7

6...b6 178
6...c5 179

Now (after 6...♗g7):
7  ♗g5 180 7...c5 8 ♢d3:

a) 8...cxd4 181
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c) 7...♗d7 189

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3...

3...♗g7 148
4 e4
d6

5...

5 h3 148

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A

Now (after 7 ♗f3):
7...

7 e5 166

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1...e5?! 266
1...♗b5 2 e4:

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a) 2...b5 214
b) 2...♗f5 214
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c2) 3...c6 232
c3) 3...♗b4 254
c4) 3...♖f6 232
d) 2...♖b4+ 254 3 ♗c3:

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9...we8 196
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9...e8 197
9...h6 201 10...e3:
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