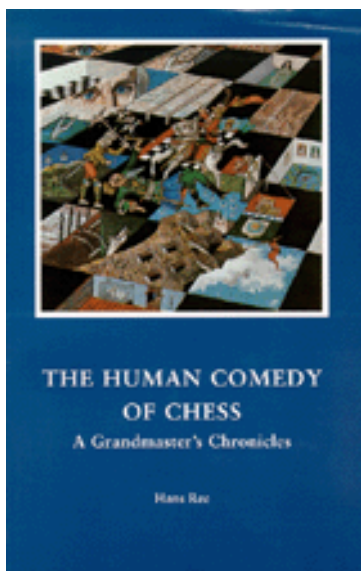




## COLUMNISTS

*Dutch Treat*

Hans Ree

*The Human Comedy  
of Chess*

by Hans Ree

## Seautoscopic Vision

It might have been a question for the Holiday Quiz. Who wrote this, in the latest issue of *New in Chess*? “All in all I should be happy with my performance in Bled, having garnered 11 points out of 12 games. Yet I still regret that I lost a game in my first Olympiad.”

It wouldn't have been a difficult question, for there was only one player in Bled who scored 11 out of 12, the seventeen-year old Chinese girl Zhao Xue. She certainly has the right spirit, regretting her one loss instead of glorifying in her eleven wins.

By the way, here is another Chinese saying, culled from *New in Chess*, 2001 No. 7. About his game against Rublevsky from the Russia-China match in Shanghai, Zhang Pengxiang wrote: “I just hoped this game might be a mirror to reflect my shortcomings in any field.”

And by the way again, the latest issue of *New in Chess* may be read with grim satisfaction by Richard Forster, for it strengthens his case against FIDE's time schedule. The magazine had great trouble persuading players to annotate one of their games from the Bled Olympiad.

Khalifman writes that when he went over his games he found that “all games were played at such a low level that I just wouldn't dare to annotate them for you, dear readers.” Morozevich could only find “a weak but instructive game.” And Granda Zuniga couldn't find a game that really satisfied him either.

But this is not my subject now; the subject is the late Dutch grandmaster Hein Donner and women's chess. Until his death in 1988, Donner stayed firmly convinced that neither women nor computers were able to play chess, shaking off all evidence to the contrary with a firm: “Only a fool like you could believe such a thing.”

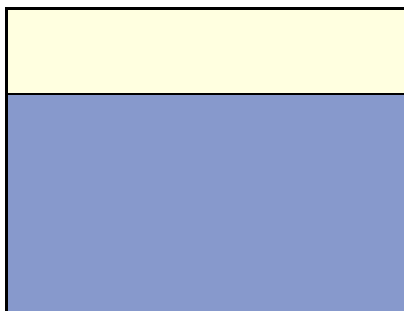


### The Chess Cafe

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I had to give a lecture on Donner some time ago; I re-read his works, both on chess and on general subjects, and so I renewed my acquaintance with his theory of the *seautoscopic vision*, i.e., seeing yourself in others.

It was a term invented by Donner in 1971, when he wrote a book on his friend the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch. When you look at something, you see yourself, and this applies especially to Mulisch, Donner claimed, probably correctly.

One year later, in 1972, Donner applied his seautoscopic theory to another subject, the Dutch television programs about the Spassky-Fischer match. These programs were tremendously popular and crowds who hardly knew the rules of chess were watching them. They were hosted by Max Euwe and Pim Mührling, an IM.

Mührling played the dumb guy of a comical duo, asking dumb questions in the way of: "But pawns can't go back, or am I wrong, Mr. Euwe?" Mührling was an intelligent man, but his face didn't show it and neither did the remarks he made on TV.

And this, according to Donner, was the secret of his success. The TV-viewer, leaning back on his couch, saw a World Championship game explained and was baffled by it. But on the screen he saw a man, an international master of FIDE, who seemed to understand as little of it as he did himself, and who looked rather dumb into the bargain. The viewer saw himself, and he relished it.

If Donner's theory was right, it would explain the fact that TV shows about chess events hardly ever come off. They do it wrong, by choosing a host who looks bright, lively and knowledgeable, someone like Danny King, who looks very good on TV. They should do the opposite, trying to find the dumbest looking guy from the chessworld and having him explain the games in as dumb a way as possible, so that the viewer could exert his seautoscopic vision and enjoy the sight of his equal.

Donner's seautoscopic theory can also be applied to himself. His style in chess was often called dry or pragmatic, dull even. It is remarkable how often Donner accused other players of a dull style.

He mentioned Milan Vidmar, a sprightly tactician, as the prototype of a dull chessplayer, probably because the Yugoslav professor had

committed the sin of being an amateur chessplayer.

An even greater sin in the eyes of Donner was it to be a woman chessplayer and Gaprindashvili and Chiburdanidze were singled out by him as players who were so dull that he was almost ashamed to be a chessplayer himself. In fact, both Gaprindashvili and Chiburdanidze were and are lively attacking players. They were both weaker than Donner, but their style was more attractive. Donner only appeared to be describing Vidmar, Gaprindashvili and Chiburdanidze; when he looked at them, he was describing himself.

Donner was a member of *Discendo Discimus*, a club in The Hague. The name means "by learning we learn", which is rather silly, but the club is justifiably proud of its long history and would never consider changing the name.

If proof were still needed that Donner's theory about the dullness of women chess was faulty, it was delivered in a game played this year in a tournament organized by his old club. He wouldn't mind, for he was not a victim of his theories; he liked to play with them.

Tea Lanchava, originally from Georgia, is one of the best women players in the Netherlands. This game won the tournament's brilliancy prize.

**White: Lanchava Black: Van der Lijn**

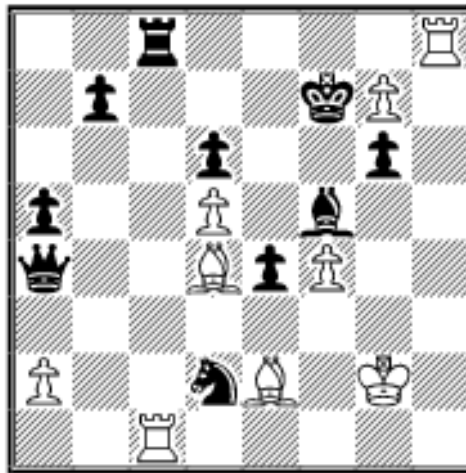
**1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. Ng1-f3 g7-g6 3. c2-c4 Bf8-g7 4. Nb1-c3 0-0 5. e2-e4 d7-d6 6. Bf1-e2 e7-e5 7. d4-d5 a7-a5 8. h2-h4 Nb8-a6 9. Nf3-d2 h7-h5 10. Nd2-f3 Na6-c5 11. Nf3-g5 c7-c6 12. Bc1-e3 c6xd5 13. e4xd5 Bc8-d7** A good plan seems 13...e4 followed by Bf5 and eventually Nf6-d7-c5

**14. f2-f3 Ra8-c8 15. Qd1-d2 Rf8-e8 16. Ng5-e4 Nc5xe4 17. Nc3xe4 Bd7-f5 18. Ne4-f2 e5-e4 19. f3-f4 Nf6-d7** Bringing the Knight to c5 is the right plan, but it gives White the opportunity to attack violently on the King's flank. The consequences were impossible to calculate at this moment. **20. g2-g4** This is practically forced, otherwise Black would obtain a big advantage.

**20...h5xg4 21. h4-h5 g4-g3 22. Nf2-g4 g3-g2 23. Rh1-h2 Nd7-c5 24. Ke1-f2 Nc5-d3+ 25. Kf2xg2 Nd3xb2 26. h5-h6 Nb2xc4**

**29. Ng4xf6+ Kg8-f7 30. Nf6xe8 Qd8xe8 31. Rh2-h8 Qe8-a4** After 31...Qd7 White

### 32. Ra1-c1



second by the computer, but quite difficult for a human:  
32...Bh3+.

Then White would have a difficult choice. 33. Kxh3 is wrong because of 33...Qa3+. If White tries to be clever and plays 33. Kh2, then after 33...Rg8 34. Rc7+ Bd7 35. Bg4 Black has the defense 35...Nf3+, after which the advantage would be his. So best for White would be 33. Rxh3 Qxd4 34. Rxc8 Kxg7 35. Rc7+ Kg8 (not 35...Kf6 because of 36. Rh8) 36. Rc8+ with a draw.

**32...Qa4xd4** Now it's over at once.

**33. Rc1-c7+** One more nice move. Black resigned, for he will be mated after 33...Rxc7 34. g8Q+.

And, to come back where we started, on the day that I read Zhao Xue's firm statement in *New in Chess*, I also learned that she had won the U-20 Girls World Championship in Goa, India. Here is one of her games from that tournament, not so dull either.

**White: Zhao Xue Black: Makka, Round 12**

**1. d2-d4 d7-d5 2. c2-c4 c7-c6 3. Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 4. Qd1-c2 g7-g6 5. Bc1-f4 d5xc4 6. Qc2xc4 Bf8-g7 7. Nb1-c3 0-0 8. e2-e4 b7-b5 9. Qc4-b3 Qd8-a5 10. Bf1-d3 Bc8-e6 11. Qb3-d1 b5-b4 12. Nc3-b1 Rf8-d8 13. Nb1-d2 h7-h6 14. h2-h3 Qa5-b6 15. Bf4-e3 Qb6-b7 16. Nd2-b3 Be6xb3 17. a2xb3 Nb8-d7 18. Qd1-c2 Nf6-e8 19. e4-e5 Ne8-c7 20. 0-0 e7-e6 21. Rf1-c1 Nd7-b8 22. Qc2-d2 Kg8-h7 23. h3-h4 h6-h5 24. Nf3-g5+ Kh7-g8 25. Qd2-c2 Nc7-d5**



**26. Bd3xg6 f7xg6 27. Qc2xg6 Qb7-e7 28. Ng5xe6 Rd8-d7 29. Ne6-g5 Rd7-b7 30. Ra1-a5 Nd5-b6 31. e5-e6 Nb6-c8 32. Ra5-f5** Black resigned.

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