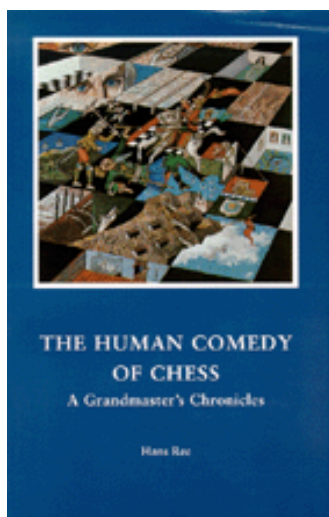




COLUMNISTS

Dutch Treat

Hans Ree

*The Human Comedy
of Chess*

by Hans Ree

YouTube and the Breyer Debate

Anand, who was in Moscow for the great blitz tournament played last Saturday and Sunday, said that it had been interesting for him to follow the Breyer debate in the regular Tal Memorial, a tournament in which he had not taken part. I found that debate quite interesting too, especially because something had happened that might be called a hypernovelty: a top player showing his opening preparation on a video that can be seen on the popular YouTube website.

In the first round of the Tal Memorial, Alexei Shirov and Shakhriar Mamedyarov played a short and sharp game that ended in a draw by perpetual check. For Mamedyarov it had been all home preparation, but Shirov had to improvise. Of course it had not been Shirov's intention to play a game of which all moves were already known to his opponent. He had been surprised by Mamedyarov's novelty.

However, this novelty had already been shown by Mamedyarov on the website www.youtube.com, though probably inadvertently. How could that happen?

At the Essent tournament in the Dutch town Hoogeveen, which had been played somewhat earlier, Judit Polgar had lost with white against Mamedyarov. During the post mortem Mamedyarov showed her how she should have played, and he also showed the defense that he had prepared, had she done so. This was exactly what he was actually going to play a few weeks later in Moscow against Shirov.

The Dutch chessplayer Peter Doggers made a video of the post mortem between Polgar and Mamedyarov and put it on his website www.doggers-schaak.nl and subsequently on YouTube. He didn't know that he had brought an important opening novelty into the public domain, otherwise he might have had a pang of conscience.

The video can still be seen by searching for 'Mamedyarov' on YouTube. If you watch it unprepared and don't speak Russian, you won't be able to understand what the post mortem was about, but someone who had made a study of this particular line of the Breyer variation would grasp what was going on. Shirov would have recognized the defense that Mamedyarov was showing to Polgar, if the unlikely idea had come to him to have a look at YouTube.

Polgar and Mamedyarov knew that they were being filmed, but Mamedyarov probably did not realise that his opening preparation thereby would be displayed in the show-window. It is a strange idea that in the future chessplayers during their preparation may search for their opponent's name at YouTube, looking for an

instructive video.

We are being watched everywhere we go. A very popular video on YouTube, called *Dutch Sunbather*, shows a naked woman at a roof terrace in The Hague. The pictures were taken by a satellite, available to all and sundry by means of the free program *Google Earth*. Someone had been looking for his own house and his local bar, and by coincidence he found a naked neighbour and he put her on the web.

When the resolution of the satellite images will be even higher than now, we won't be able to analyse an opening variation on a balcony or in a garden without running the risk that the world will be looking over our shoulders. It's a bit creepy, but hiding oneself in a blind bunker is no solution for most of us.

Here is the first part of the Breyer debate.

Shirov – Mamedyarov
Tal Memorial Moscow, 1st round

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Nb8 10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2 Bb7 12.Bc2 Re8 13.Nf1 Bf8 14.Ng3 g6 15.b3 d5 16.Bg5 h6 17.Bh4 g5 18.Nxg5 hxg5 19.Bxg5 This sacrifice had already been indicated by Paul van der Sterren in 2003 in an article called *In Memoriam The Breyer* in *New in Chess Yearbook 66*. From black's point of view this would only be attractive for people who wanted to analyse themselves to death, he wrote then.

19...exd4 20.e5 Rxe5 21.Rxe5 Nxe5 22.cxd4 Nc6



23.Nh5 Here Judit Polgar had played 23. Nf5 and after 23...Bc8 24. Tc1 Bxf5 24. Bxf5 Qd6 Mamedyarov repulsed the attack and went on to win.

23...Be7 24.Bxf6 Bxf6 25.Qd3 Kf8 26.Qh7 Bxd4 27.Qh6+ Ke8 28.Re1+



28...Ne5 Mamedyarov's novelty. 28...Ne7 had been played with some success, but I think it loses.

29.Bf5 Qd6 30.Qg5 c5 Watching the video I could make out all the moves up till now and I mentioned them in a Dutch newspaper article well before Shirov-Mamedyarov had been played. White has to give a perpetual now.

31.Nf6+ Kd8 32.Nxd5+ Ke8 33.Nf6+ Kd8 34.Nd5+ Draw.

So it seemed at that stage that Van der Sterren's *in memoriam* had been premature. But after the second part of the Breyer debate things look different again. It started when a few days later Alexander Grischuk joined in.

Grischuk – Mamedyarov **Tal Memorial 5th round**

In the position of the first diagram Grischuk did not play Polgar's 23. Nf5 nor Shirov's 23. Nh5, but **23.Qd3**.

Then after **23...Nb4 24.Qf3 Be7 25.Bb1 Bc8 26.Qf4 Ne4 27.Bxe7 Qxe7 28.a3 Nc6 29.Bxe4 dxe4 30.Nh5 Qd6 31.Nf6+ Kf8 32.Qh6+ Ke7 33.Ng8+ Ke8 34.Nf6+ Ke7** this game ended in a draw also, but it had been scary for black and improvements for white have been suggested.

Last week the white side of the debate was further strengthened by Lubosh Kavalek in his column in *The Washington Post*. He wrote that already before all these games by Mamedyarov had been played, the top Czech player David Navara had analysed this line extensively.

In the first place, in the position where Shirov had played 29. Bf5, according to Navara's analysis white could have created serious problems for his opponent with 29. Ng7+ Kd7 30. Bf5+ Ke7 31. Qf4.

But the main line of Navara's analysis follows (or rather anticipated) Grischuk's game up till the position after black's 24th move.



Here Grischuk played 25. Bb1, but Kavalek, basing himself on Navara's analysis and elaborating a bit on it, gave some lines to prove that white would have gotten the advantage after 25. Bf5.

If Kavalek, an excellent analyst, is right, this would indicate that Van der Sterren's dismissal of the line in 2003 had been correct. Anyway, Mamedyarov seems to have come to the conclusion that the line needs some reworking, as he faced the Ruy Lopez with black twice more during the Tal Memorial and refrained from repeating it.

The three games in this column are available in PGN format. Click [here](#) to download the PGN file.

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