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Foreword – From Static to Dynamic Chess



'Don't trust the classics' – Luis Comas Fabrego in his book 'True Lies in Chess.'

Thanks to decades of research and the development of computer programs, chess theory is quite well developed as far as the opening and the endgame are concerned. Still, once they have reached a certain level most players fail to make real progress. They focus their study on openings, a limited amount of static strategic themes and classical tactics in the middlegame, and a collection of standard endgame themes. Which means that they do not understand much of what they are doing when they are sitting behind the board themselves, facing real chess problems.

How can this be? The answer is quite simple: **the general rules of the game have not been discovered yet**. Famous chess researchers have developed various systems which have been universally accepted in the chess world. But these systems are highly theoretical and often not very realistic. We need a modern, dynamic system. And I intend to offer you one in the present book.

A chess player's abilities can be divided into three main categories:

- 1) His knowledge of chess and his personal abilities and character traits
- 2) The ability to make an *integral* assessment of any position – which involves more than only strategy or tactics
- 3) A good understanding of the properties of pieces and pawns and of the squares.

If you want to be a complete chess player you cannot do without any of these three. These categories should lie at the foundation of any chess system, and indeed, they lie at the foundation of this book.



Wilhelm Steinitz (1836-1900), the father of the orthodox positional school.

The first chess player who started to think in terms of chess laws determining all positional plans was Wilhelm Steinitz (1836-1900). The first World Champion caused the first chess revolution and is therefore rightly considered the father of modern chess.

‘In the beginning of my chess career I used to attack mindlessly, playing magnificent games that I lost quite often. Later, I modified my style into a more defensive one. Then my games became more difficult and less enjoyable to play, but I won more and more games and I became the world champion’, Steinitz wrote himself.

For some reason – perhaps because theoretical knowledge was still in its infancy in those days – the first World Champion did not complete a comprehensive study of these chess laws. But in his writings he did mention a number of small advantages that had to be accumulated before the opponent’s fortress could be conquered. In his book *Play like a grandmaster*, Soviet grandmaster Alexander Kotov later gave a very similar list, claiming that this was his own. Much is still uncertain about the origin of this theory.

Elements of Steinitz

1. Permanent Advantages

- material advantage
- bad king position (of opponent)
- passed pawns
- weak pawns (of opponent)
- weak squares or colour complexes (of opponent)
- pawn groups (fewer pawn islands)
- strong pawn centre
- bishop pair in open position
- control of a file
- control of a diagonal
- control of a rank

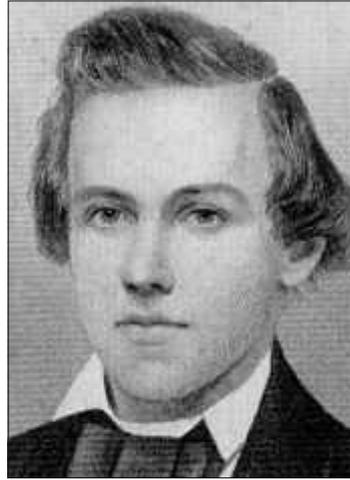
2. Temporary Advantages

- bad piece position (of opponent)
- lack of harmony in opponent’s piece handling
- advantage in development
- concentration of pieces (resulting in pressure) in the centre
- space advantage

These elements are in general quite useful in practical play, and the list has not changed much in chess literature until today. However, I think that the main problem of Steinitz's theory is that there is not much of a mention of **dynamic chess**, where the key rule is: to give checkmate!

In fact, in a dynamic chess game, **many permanent advantages become temporary, and temporary advantages may become permanent at any time**. Steinitz may not have been aware of this. But he must have known the games of Paul Morphy.

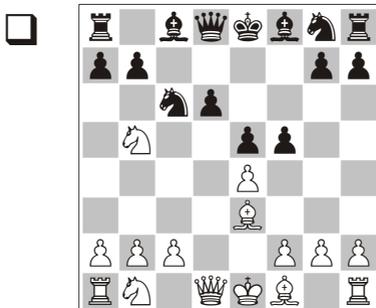
This legendary romantic master from America, the descendant of a Creole family in New Orleans, had proved to be the strongest player in the world during his visit to Europe in 1858, before Steinitz rose to the highest ranks. Morphy was the first who actually understood the importance of harmony between the pieces. He surprised the world with his dynamic chess and became an immortal player.



Paul Morphy (1837-1884) – child and symbol of dynamic chess: 'Help your pieces and they will help you.'

Here is a great example of Morphy's dynamic chess.

□ **Paul Morphy**
 ■ **Adolf Anderssen**
 Paris, 2nd match, 1858 (9)



8.♘1c3!

'Morphy feels that chess logic is on his side and goes for an immediate refutation of Black's premature activity', writes Garry Kasparov in *My Great Predecessors I*. Morphy's style was actually

quite similar to that of the modern grandmasters.

8...f4

The attack on the knight 8...a6 is met by 9.♘d5! axb5 10.♙b6! and knight and bishop work in perfect harmony!

9.♘d5! fxe3

There is no way back.

10.♘bc7+ ♔f7 11.♙f3+!



Of course, Morphy doesn't want to lose the black king as a target. 11. ♖xa8 was less strong.

11... ♖f6 12. ♖c4 ♖d4!?

In a difficult position, Anderssen looks for tactical counterchances.

12... ♖g6 13. ♖g3+→.

13. ♖xf6+ d5!

The only move. After 13... ♖g6 14. ♖h5+ ♖xf6 15. ♖e8+ (15.f4!→) 15... ♖xe8 16. ♖xe8, Black is defenceless against the new wave of attack.

14. ♖xd5+

The key moment of this historic battle.



14... ♖g6?

This ambitious move by Anderssen loses immediately. 14... ♖xd5 was the safest option, although White has an advantage in the endgame: 15. ♖fxd5+ ♖xf3+ 16. gxf3 exf2+ 17. ♖xf2±.

After the best defence 14... ♖e7!? 15. ♖h5! gxf6 16. ♖f7+ ♖d6 17. ♖xa8, the complications should still turn out in White's favour.

15. ♖h5+ ♖xf6 16. fx6!

The open f-file ends the life of the black king.

16... ♖xc2+

Or 16... ♖xc7 17.0-0.

17. ♖e2

1-0

'An impressive demolition of the strongest player of the Old World (Europe)! Alas, Morphy did not bother to explain the superiority of his method. Only the powerful mind of another chess giant, Wilhelm Steinitz, could systematize the profound positional rules that created a new outlook in chess progress' (Kasparov).

Second World Champion **Emanuel Lasker** (1868-1941) was the one who systematized these rules in his book *Lasker's Manual of Chess*, attaching Steinitz's name to the system:

1. In chess only the attacker wins.
2. The right to attack is enjoyed by the player who has the better position.
3. The side with the advantage has not only the right but also the duty to attack; otherwise he runs the risk of losing his advantage.
4. The defender must be prepared to defend and to make concessions.
5. The means of attack in chess are twofold: combinative and strategic.
6. The attack must be directed against the opponent's weakest spot.

My problem here is that what Lasker explains are philosophical concepts. What can you do with these ideas concretely, when you're sitting at the board?

Still in Lasker's days, grandmaster Aaron Nimzowitsch (1886-1935) published his book *My System*, which became very popular and was also considered something of a revolution. Nimzowitsch probed for the secrets of the pieces, the pawns and the squares on the board, but he made many significant errors. For example, he labelled motifs like double or discovered checks as strategic, whereas they are tactical tricks! The games analysed in *My System* are quite static, without too many tactical possibilities, and in every chapter we find highly simplified positions.

The elements of chess strategy according to **Aaron Nimzowitsch** are:

1. The centre
2. Play on open files
3. Play on the 7th and 8th ranks
4. The passed pawn
5. The pin
6. Discovered check
7. Exchanging
8. The pawn chain

There is almost nothing about piece placement here, but there are many explanations in the game comments. Nimzowitsch did investigate the theoretical and practical possibilities of dynamic chess. In Part 2, for example, the chapter ‘Isolated queen’s pawn’ is about ‘the dynamic strength of the ISOLANI’.

So, Nimzowitsch’s 1925 book, almost one hundred years old, was a first attempt, interesting but flawed. Now we are playing in the 21st century – surely these classic concepts can be updated? Let’s take a look at a few tries.

There are two more or less recent books that touch upon the subject of dynamics. In *Dynamic Chess Strategy* (1991), Mihai Suba writes chapters on ‘rethinking chess strategy’ and ‘dynamic strategy in defence’. In Valery Beim’s *How to Play Dynamic Chess* (2004), the main themes are: ‘Dynamics, Development, King moves for attacking purposes, Breakthrough and Initiative’. Important factors are the ‘quality of development’ and the ‘coordination of the pieces’. But Beim also writes that sometimes a player must forget about the static elements and favour dynamics. Both books are a great mix of annotated games and open discussions about chess and they contain many well-analysed examples. But no theoretical framework.

There have been more didactic attempts, for instance by the famous trainer Mark Dvoretzky and the popular ‘modernist’ John Watson. But there has been no mention of any **principles of dynamic chess**. Neither is there in the most recent attempt, Herman Grooten’s *Chess Strategy for the Club Player* (2009). On the other hand, this book is quite useful for determining which positions are bad and which are good

In the present book, we will make an attempt to systematize this dynamic approach to our game. In Chapter 1, I will explain the concept of a chess player’s skills and how we can recognize and improve them. In Chapter 2 I will introduce my 21st Century Elements: Moskalenko’s Five Touchstones, which help a player to make a reliable assessment of any position. In Chapter 3 we will discuss the properties of pieces, pawns and squares in the endgame, where they are especially well visible (see also under Chess Skill no. 3 in Chapter 1). Starting from Chapter 4, we will apply this comprehensive new system to practical examples in every stage of the game.

Revolutionize your chess, and become a better player!

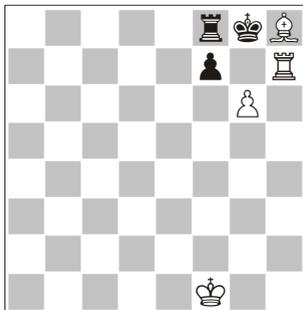
Viktor Moskalenko,
Barcelona 2009

T1 – MATERIAL

The material on the board consists of the pieces of our army (16, facing 16 opponents). If we have more material in general, or even only on a certain area of the board, we have a good chance of forcing our will upon our opponent. We can:

- * win material
- * defend material (for instance, defend a material advantage)
- * sacrifice material
- * exploit a material advantage.

Sacrificing material is the hardest to learn, since this concept is alien to our mind.



This is a good example of the mental ‘trap’ we fall into if we fail to consider sacrifices. Most players don’t find the easy solution to this problem quickly.

1. ♖g7+!

The bishop must be sacrificed to vacate the h8-square. After 1.g7?! the game might be drawn, since the only plan for white is to advance his king, but he will not be able to trade rooks on the eighth rank because of the reply ...f7-f5!.

1... ♜xh8 2. ♖h7+ ♜g8

Now the solution is simple.

3.g7!

Winning the rook.

3... ♜e8

3... ♜xh7 4.gxf8♖.

4. ♖h8+

1-0

We can create a **practical material advantage** by putting more pieces on the part of the board where we want to attack. Thus we combine strategy (putting the pieces in the right positions) with tactics (the actual attack). A successful attack requires a force that doubles or triples the defensive forces. In this book, especially in the Middlegame section (Chapters 4-7), we will see various examples of this.

If we have no practical material advantage on the part of the board where we attack, the defence has a good chance of success:



15... ♞d8!

After this retreat White’s attack fails: sorry, but there are no new attacking resources! Although his pieces are aggressively positioned, White does not have a practical material advantage here.

See Game 2.4.

18. ♖xe4

A very risky trade from a strategic point of view, which weakens the light squares on the kingside (-T4). However, White decided not to lose tempi for his own attack (+T5 and +T1).

If 18. ♖e3 ♖h5 19. ♖ae1 ♔a5 or 19... ♖hg8, with satisfactory counterplay.

18... dxe4 19. fxe5 ♘e5!↑



An unexpected and remarkable manoeuvre that suddenly changes the course of the game (+T3: another knight in action).

20. ♘f4 ♔c6!↑

First improving the queen's position (+T3).

21. g6

If 21. gxf6 ♖xh6, with attack.

21... ♘f3+ 22. ♖xf3 exf3 23. ♖e1



Let's analyse this position according to the Five Touchstones.

T1: unbalanced but equal;

T2: balanced;

T3: quite balanced;

T4: balanced.

The only Touchstone where Black has an advantage is (T5); this allows him to unbalance the game and reach the desired position first. So I played:

23... e5!

A new resource in my counterattack, with the idea to divert the white rook and to sacrifice two pawns (-T1, but +T3 and +T4).

I did not like 23... ♖d6∞ because it loses speed in the attack.

24. ♖xe5 f2+!

He who says 'A' must also say 'B'.

25. ♗xf2 ♔h1



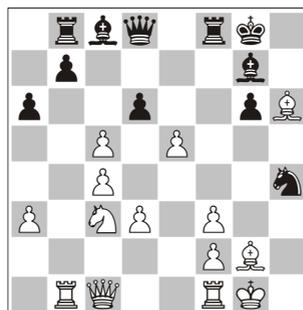
This does not look like 'Queen Blues', but more like 'Queen Rock'! Remarkably enough, quite recently the queen was still inactive on a4. Now, T3 has greatly improved: the queen's position on h1 ensures the success of Black's *petite combinaison*. The white king is defenceless (-T4).

26. ♖e1 ♖c6 27. ♗b4 ♖he8!→

Mobilizing all the pieces (huge ++T3). 27... ♗f3+!? 28. ♗g1 ♖hf8! 29. d5 (only move) 29... ♖xf4 30. gxf4 ♖xd5 31. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 32. ♗f8+ ♗d7!→+ is the solution of the engine.

28. ♗xc4 ♖xe5 29. dxe5 ♗f3+ 30. ♗g1

their concepts do not help us much to understand the modern, dynamic chess game, and possibly these authors have even spoiled the development of the game in this sense. So the main defect of Steinitz's Elements and Nimzowitsch's System lies in a correct assessment of positions like the two below from games given earlier in the book, since they do not include all resources and possibilities:



There are certain key positions in each game where a check on all Five Touchstones together (!!) is needed before we choose a move, a line or an entire plan.

Now, as an experiment, let's give the comments to a game played by Nimzowitsch almost 100 years ago, a 'Five Touchstones check'. The comments indicated by 'AN' are by Aaron Nimzowitsch; those with 'VM' are by me.

□ Efim Bogoljubow
 ■ Aaron Nimzowitsch

St Petersburg 1913

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7

5.♖g4 c5 6.♗f3 a6

AN: This cleverly avoids the variation 6...cxd4 7.♗xd4 ♗xe5 8.♖g3 with which I was not acquainted.

VM: Nimzowitsch preferred a closed game.

7.dxc5 ♖c7



8.♖g3

VM: ?! a dubious move, neglecting T2 and T5. 8.♗f4! (+T2 and +T5) was more logical.

8...♗xc5 9.♗d3 g6 10.♗f4

AN: Without realizing it (this rule had not yet been discovered) he adopts my stratagem of overprotection!

VM: Another waste of time: surprisingly for a crack attacker like Bogoljubow, he did not find the simple idea 10.h4!?. Nowadays, this move is used by 9 out of 10 players from any level.

10...♗c6 11.0-0 ♗e7

AN: He is manoeuvring. After 11... ♗g7 and then ...0-0 the overprotecting pieces would have gained in effectiveness as attacking pieces, e.g. by ♗fe1, ♖h4, ♗h6 etc.

VM: A suspicious manoeuvre (-T2 and -T5). Actually I think Nimzowitsch was

afraid of the tactical idea ♞xd5 . So, $11...♙g7$ was a more natural and better move.



12.♖ac1!

AN: An inventive preventive measure against the planned $...♞xd3$ and then $...♞f5$.

12...♙g7 13.b4!

AN: To secure the bishop once and for all. Of course it does somewhat weaken the queenside.

VM: $13.♖fe1!$? was more in the spirit of 'overprotection': $13...0-0$ $14.♞h4!$ ↑.

13...♞d7

VM: $\geq 13...♞xd3!$? $14.cxd3 ♞b6=$.

14.♞e2 0-0 15.♞ed4

VM: $15.c4!$ ↑ was more dynamic (+T5).

15...♞c6 16.♞xc6 bxc6 17.c4

AN: Bogoljubow makes the correct decision not to continue with a carefree attack on the king.

VM: He should have done that earlier on!

17...dxc4!!

AN: An heroic method, which peaks in a pawn sacrifice. What now follows is a mighty duel between... the two players? No – between centralization and overprotection. On this occasion overprotection is the losing side.

18.♙xc4 ♞b8 19.♖b1 ♞b6 20.♞d2

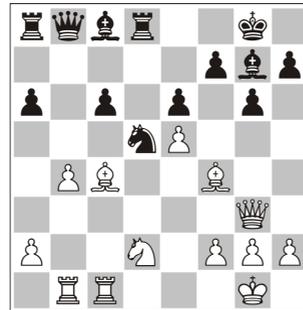
AN: An anti-overprotection move!

20...♖d8 21.♖fc1 ♞d5!



Aaron Nimzowitsch: a world-class player in his time, he devised a system which did consider dynamics, but was flawed in its descriptions of concepts.

AN: Centralization! After $22.♙xd5$ the $♖d8$ should recapture: $23.♖xc6 ♙b7$ $24.♖d6 ♞c7$ (threatening $25...♞c2$); the game would then be approximately level.



22.♖e1?

AN: The correct move was $22.♙xd5$. After the text move things go downhill fast.

VM: Despite this tactical slip things are still unclear. The correct move was $22.♞f3$ with a balanced position.

22...♞xf4 23.♞xf4 ♙xe5! 24.♖xe5 ♖xd2

14. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♔e4 g6 16. ♗xc6 ♖d6 17. ♖f3! ♖g7 18. ♖e4, winning;
 A2) Or 13... ♗xe5 14. ♖xf6 ♗xd3 15. ♖xe7± (+T1);
 A3) 13...g6.



analysis diagram

EXERCISE: Can you find the thematic blow for White?

14. ♖a6!!+-
 The well-known motif (12 games in MegaBase): a brutal blow that forces your opponent to resign soon. For instance:
 A31) 14... ♖xa6 15. ♗xc6 ♖d7 16. ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 17. ♖xf6+-;
 A32) After 14... ♖xd4 15. ♗xc6 ♖xh4 16. ♗xe7+ ♖g7 17. ♖xh4 ♖xa6+- Black is still a piece down;
 A33) 14... ♗xe5 15.dxe5+- is also hardly comfortable for Black;
 A34) 14...h6 15. ♖xh6 ♗d5 (there are other moves, but it's all the same story: 15... ♗h5 16. ♖e4+-; 15... ♗xe5 16. ♖xb7+-; 15... ♖xa6 16. ♗xc6+-) 16. ♖h3+-, winning lots of material, Yusupov-D.Gurevich, Minneapolis 2005.

 *TRICK: B) The continuation 12... ♗bd7!? might be more solid, but after 13. ♖d1!? White has enough resources (T1) to keep the initiative: 13... ♗e4 14. ♖h3 ♗df6 15.d5!?.*



analysis diagram

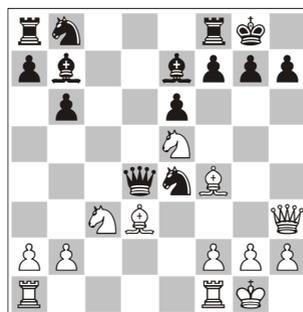
The IP attack. 15... ♗xc3 16.bxc3 ♖xd5 (16...exd5 17. ♗d7!) 17. ♖g5! h6? (17...g6□ 18.c4!) 18. ♖xh6!→ gxh6 19. ♖xh6 ♖c7 20. ♖g5+ ♖h8 21. ♖h4+, winning the queen after the tricky checks ♖g3+ and ♗g6+, Yusupov-Beliavsky, Austria tt 1998/99.

13. ♖h3! ♖xd4

Where is my isolated pawn?! If now 13... ♗f6?!, White would have gained a tempo compared to theory. For instance: 14. ♖g5! h6 (14...g6 15. ♖ad1±) 15. ♖xh6! gxh6 16. ♖xh6 ♖xd4 17. ♖ae1 with an unstoppable attack.

14. ♖f4!

The key move of the sacrifice, threatening with some tactical tricks and preparing the manoeuvre 15. ♗e2. 14. ♗xf7 would not be enough: 14... ♖xf7 15. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 16. ♖g4 ♗c6 with approximately balanced play.



14...g6?

knight has not been brought to the centre (+T2 and T3 for Black).

A) 3.♘c3!? would lead to a sharp ‘Sicilian’ hybrid: 3...cxd4 (3...♖b6!? 4.d5 transposes to the game) 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗h4 and now 5...e6 6.e4 ♙e7 7.f4 d6 8.0-0-0 ♗a5 9.♘f3 h6 10.e5!? with sharp play. According to Alexander Finkel in *Secrets of Opening Surprises 11* Black is not without counterchances here;

B) The main Trompowsky idea is 3.♙xf6!? gxf6 4.d5! ♗b6!? 5.♗c1 f5.



analysis diagram

A very important Trompowsky position. I think White’s plans are clearer and he controls the situation. 6.c4!? and now:

B1) With the provocative pseudo-attack 6...♙h6?! Black wants to win time (T5), but he doesn’t respect T2-T4. This is typical for aggressive players like Shirov – or doesn’t he respect his opponents...? 7.e3 f4 8.exf4 ♙xf4 9.♗xf4 ♗xb2 10.♘e2 ♗xa1 11.♘c3



analysis diagram



GM Peter Wells caused a sensation against Alexey Shirov in the Trompowsky Opening.

B11) 11...♗b2? 12.d6 ♗c2? (however, after 12...♘c6 13.♙d3→ White has also won almost all games. The most popular one was 13...exd6 14.0-0 ♘e5 15.♗f6 0-0 16.♘d5 ♗e8 17.♗g5+ ♘g6 18.♘f6+ ♙f8 19.♗h6+ ♙e7 20.♘d5+ ♙d8 21.♙xg6 hxg6 22.♘bc3 1-0, Hodgson-Van der Wiel, Amsterdam 1994) 13.♗e3!. Black has wasted a couple of tempi compared to the game won by Hodgson, which makes his position even more miserable – 1-0 Wells-Shirov, Gibraltar 2006.

B12) Better is 11...d6 12.♗d2 ♗g8 13.♙e2! as analysed in Peter Wells’s excellent book on the Trompowsky (page 130-131). Wells claims that White is better here, but as Yelena Dembo in her book *Fighting the Anti-King’s Indians* and Richard Palliser in *Yearbook 92* have pointed out, things are not so clear after Black’s best reply 13...a6! (13...♗xc2? 14.♙f3 ♗g6 15.♙e2! is good for White, Weil-Diez, Bad Homburg 2007) with the idea 14.g3 b5 or 14.0-0 ♙h3! and according to Dembo, Black is better after 15.♗e1 ♗g2+ 16.♙h1 ♗g6 17.♘a3

My way of writing this book – an Epilogue

For this book I have opted for a format quite similar to the books of Mark Dvoretsky's famous series. This format allows an author great scope to improvise. Also, in Dvoretsky's books almost all aspects of the game are investigated deeply, including both strategy and tactics, and they have a strong personal touch. All quite dynamic and never boring!

For *Revolutionize your Chess*, I have attempted to present the same wide range of material, but concentrated it in one single book. The majority of examples are from my personal experience, and the rest is also of a quite recent date, which, hopefully, makes the book well-suited for modern times. But I have also applied the revolutionary dynamic outlook of the Five Touchstones to a number of older games, by, for example, Botvinnik, Smyslov, and even Nimzowitsch himself.

I hope that the examples, the exercises and my explanations in this book clarify my view on how a game of chess should be played today. We have to consider certain 'eternal laws', laid down in the Properties of Pieces, Pawns and Squares, as well as our Personal Skills; then, when looking at a critical position in the game, we should assess the situation as regards material, development, and the placement of pieces and pawns and the king. But we must make these assessments in a dynamic way. Like life, a game of chess keeps changing all the time. Therefore, we can hardly speak of 'permanent' advantages or disadvantages: with Time (T5), anything can change!

As we have also seen in my earlier books *The Fabulous Budapest Gambit* (New In Chess, 2007) and *The Flexible French* (New In Chess, 2008), such a flexible approach to our game is necessary in 21st Century chess. Steinitz's Elements and Nimzowitsch's System, two milestones in chess history, have meant a lot for the understanding of thousands of players, but only by a good understanding of the Time factor will we be able to take chess to a new dimension.



Viktor Moskalenko,
Barcelona, July 2009