

Nov. 17, 1989

Dear Mr. Winter,

Re the commentary of Mr. Louis Blair (CN----) on Ken Whyld's treatment of the triad of Morphy, Edge, & Staunton: I agree almost 100% with his perceptive analysis but would like to add a few comments of my own, including some on KW's letter of March 16 (For ease of reference to readers, past CN items on the triad, covering four years (1985-1989), are 840, 943, 957, 1012, 1030-32, 1124, 1149, 1172, 1228, 1269-71, 1292, 1305, 1358, 1416-17, 1439-40, 1499, 1569-70, 1633, 1642-43, 1669, 1700, 1722, 1757-58 & 1818.):

In general the difficulties in debating topics with KW are too often such that little or no progress can be made since he sees research as a combative endeavor, not a cooperative one. The flaws in his thinking procedures fall into certain types, to which I will often refer the reader by their underlined letters in my analysis below: (a) He makes statements without proof (conjectures, often abetted by pejorative verbiage) and then wants me to refute them, ignoring that the burden of proof is on him; often he does not realize that the mighty mumblings of his conjectural mind lack lucidity as well as proof (I can only conclude that he is incorrigibly lazy as a researcher because he did not persevere in his determination to fashion a fully-researched bio, missing much data and thus evincing a deplorable weakness of character); (b) After some research, a number of bits of evidence are usually garnered about each important topic, but he will often select only one (perhaps two) and ignore the existence of those which would contradict or modify his stance (Again, more of his laziness etc. as before); (c) On occasion he ignores giving answers to my questions, giving me the feeling he has no counter-evidence and hopes no one will notice his omission; (d) He thinks calling people names (including myself) somehow is proof by itself; though asked many times the past four years to furnish the proof against Edge, he indignantly continues the name-calling.

"E." The so-called "weakness of character" (an old British expression) was never defined by KW when requested to do so. First defined by Dale Brandreth, it means "drive" or "determination" and, unlike its U.S. meaning, does not refer to any ethical traits. It is also difficult to measure precisely so that it can be readily used against anyone not completing some task or ambition, as readers of this essay have no doubt already noticed.

Though it is not man's greatest quality, KW apparently values it highly. The word "weakness" makes it sound demeaning and damaging, hence KW's usage? (What reason is there for selecting such an old-fashioned phrase whose import is not the same outside of England?) The Rev. G. A. MacDonnell, who met and observed Morphy in England, described him in an 1880 column (also in Sergeant) as having "considerable strength of character"; but Whyld ignores that witness completely. Nonetheless Morphy did go to Europe with the "determination" or "drive" to test his powers against the best players of the day, but KW ignores that in his usual fashion as it would force him to modify his myopic notions. [b]

Blair's quote re Morphy in his preliminary Para 3 is not as extreme as it first appears; it only means that since M.'s games had revealed for the first time the strategy of playing open positions, "chess as we know it [today] would be unthinkable." The quote could also be said of Steinitz as well as others.

The origins of the "anti-Morphy sentiment" lie in the recent emergence of a new pro-Staunton party, based upon B. Goulding Brown's grossly erroneous analysis of 1916 and led by KW, who blames Edge (without proof) for all the troubles of the Staunton-Morphy negotiations, as though he were responsible for the Anti-Book statement errors, the literary contract, Staunton's excision of an important paragraph in a Morphy letter, the 90-day delay in the aborted match etc. It is not surprising therefor that KW's evaluation of M. in chess history, though not 100% bad, is mean-spirited or biased, vague or shallow, and not quite accurate or complete:

Since the science of chess was generally developed through one generation building on the results of the preceding one(s), the great masters of the past should be judged by what they accomplished during their lifetime and not detrimentally contrasted with their successors in any particular phase of the game. Naturally the successors to Morphy, standing on his shoulders, could and should create opening novelties, midgame combinations, or endgame subtleties he had not uncovered. Steinitz understood this when he wrote that "Morphy's genius... is no more affected by acknowledging the progress since his time than it would diminish the glory of Columbus to state that millions of people know more about America nowadays than its first discoverer" (ICM 1885 p 99); and again, in 1886: "It is not the least reproach to Morphy and

Anderssen that they did not know what was discovered after their time, no more than to assert that Sir Isaac Newton, if he became alive now, would not be fit for a Professor of mathematics at a high class school without some further study" (CN 1113). Nor, I might add, is the luster of Archimedes' genius dimmed by that of Newton, nor Newton's by that of Bohr and Einstein; nor would one criticize Archimedes or Newton for not discovering the theory of relativity, nor Morphy for not discovering the King's Indian.

The COMPANION: [I] "Morphy came to Europe well versed in openings knowledge, to which he added no significant innovations; when outside the bounds of his knowledge he played the opening no better than others. [II] In both tactical skill and technique, however, he outdistanced all rivals". [I] implies M. was just a "book" player, finding his moves by plodding laboriously through his arduously-compiled arsenal of memorized debuts; but it fails to explain why the plodder (M.), meeting another plodder with a good memory, usually won. Re II: The source or basis of such "skill and technique" is not given, but it would have to be strategical to account for M.'s feats (plus his genius of course). Omitting strategy, however, it follows logically enough that since practically all master games are ultimately decided by such "skill and technique", [II] becomes redundant and hence superficial, saying in effect that by playing better chess, M. "outdistanced all rivals". KW is unaware of the strategy underlying such superiority, as explicated in varying degrees by Steinitz, Lasker, Capa, Alekhine, Reti, Fischer etc. Furthermore, he omits mentioning that M. achieved his European feats at the age of 21, a mark of his "youthful genius" (Steinitz). Yet it is to KW's credit that he manages to see three Harrwitz games as "foreshadowing the Position Play of a later age." [b]

Re [I]: Steinitz (probably KW's source), in stressing the higher importance of openings in his time, agreed that M. did not introduce "a single novelty" but added that "Morphy possessed the most profound book knowledge of any master of his time" (CN 1113 p 17), a strong contrast to KW's belittling words, damning with faint praise. Since the few books & magazines in M.'s time did not always agree on the best opening lines, selecting them was not the simple process of going through one's memory index. Finally, what about any strategy, especially in open games then in favor? (By the way, M. is not mentioned under "Schools of Chess" in the COMPANION.) Assessments by some world champions (and others) offer much more illumination than KW did, particularly on the points made previously in my analysis:

Steinitz in his ICM 1885: "...we can only express our profound admiration for the youthful genius, who, in important trials, with a fortitude and self-control much beyond his years, could thus hold the reins tightly over his proclivities for dashing combinations and brilliant sacrifices, which are so strongly manifested in his lighter sort of games. But moreover, there are clear indications in his match style of that steady pressure and studious regard for the balance of position, which requires an almost instinctive judgment in its application, and which has been cultivated and treated to a much higher degree since the Morphy period. There is strong evidence in his play of that strategical generalship and circumspection, which has been developed in the modern system, and his formation of wings, as well as his maneuvering, foreshadows more than that of any master of his day, the improvements of our time. It appears therefore that Morphy, as far as his match play is concerned, has received credit and praise for faults which he never possessed, while his really admirable qualities have been almost ignored" (p 7-8).

Steinitz on Morphy, from an interview (BCM 1894 pp 365-6 via ST. LOUIS GLOBE, undated):

"Beyond question Morphy was a wonderful man. The source of his strength lay, I think, in his memory and imagination. His memory was prodigious. It seems as though he knew and could recall every game of note that had ever been played. With this he united singular imaginative powers and here lay the secret of his then extraordinary feats. You remember he dazzled Europe by playing, blindfold, as many as eight games simultaneously. At the time such a thing had never been heard of, and Morphy was regarded as a wizard. ...

"But Morphy was unquestionably a great chess player, one of the greatest that ever lived. A very foolish controversy has arisen as to whether or not he was the greatest. That no one can tell. What he could do now, were he living, no one can say. There is only this to be said: that in the past twenty-five years chess has undergone a wonderful development, and the feats with which Morphy astounded the world are simply impossible now. I mean that to such an almost mathematical exactness has the game been reduced in late years that to yield a Pawn is to lose the game. So that were Morphy to come back and give away Pawns, Knights, Bishops, and all sorts of things, as he once did, any well-trained player could defeat him."

"But when Dr. Tarrasch denies the genius of Morphy on the ground that the great master did not create anything new in the opening or in the general conduct of the game I must, in common justice, strongly

express my dissent from such a conclusion. In my opinion any player of the first rank must possess a certain amount of genius at least, including that of some originality, for no learning will be sufficient for mastering the complications of the middle game. Any extraordinary performance, whether it be the result of the excess of one excellent quality or of a rare combination of fine qualities, may be taken as an absolute sign of genius, and in the case of Morphy his youth cannot be ignored in estimating his standard of eminence" (Steinitz, ICM 1891 p 82).

Steinitz on Morphy and the "modern school" (1888, cited in CN 1113):

"We all may learn from Morphy and Anderssen how to conduct a King's side attack and perhaps I myself may have not learnt enough. But if you want to learn how to avoid such an attack, how to keep the balance of the position on the whole board, or how to expose the King apparently and invite a complicated attack which can not be sustained in the long run, you must go to the modern school for information".

Steinitz says the Morphy of 1863 could have given the Steinitz of 1863 Pawn and move:

"For actually in the first match in which I came across one of Morphy's opponents, I beat his (Morphy's) record, in winning a straight love match [7-0-0 in 1863] against Mongredien, who drew his first game against Morphy [who won 7-0-1 in 1859]. But in order to console the NEW YORK TIMES critic, I beg to assure him that I do not attach the least importance to such cross-scores for myself, and with all due deference to his superior authority on such subjects, I freely own that in spite of my better cross-score on that occasion, Morphy, in my opinion, could at that time have given me the odds of Pawn and move. Moreover, I have frequently expressed my doubts whether I was really stronger than Anderssen (the only other player with whom both Morphy and I crossed swords in a match) when I defeated him, it is true, by the small majority of two games only, and I have often thought and still think that probably the German professor who stood no chance against Morphy, could at the time have beaten me in a longer match" (ICM 1888 p 207).

J. Mieses on the origin of the Morphy myth (D. SCHACHZEITUNG 1920 p 143):

"In the history of the great players Morphy takes a wholly unique place. The elegiac line, 'What should immortally live in song, must be lost in life,' is in him confirmed. His meteoric rise, his sudden emergence as a blinding, radiant star and his disappearance shortly thereafter, called forth and left behind a very fascinating impression. With other chess greats, like Steinitz, Lasker, or reaching farther back, Philidor, one rightly marvels at their having remained a whole generation undefeated. They obtained their position in the chess world with audacity and defiance and held it fast with iron persistence. Morphy's chess life actually encompassed only the years 1857-1859. Is not standing for three decades at the peak, undefeated, a much more significant achievement than only three years? Certainly, and in every other case this would be true, but not with Morphy. He accomplished in the short space of a few years a piece of magic that forced upon his world and posterity the conviction: 'This man will never be beaten.'" (A 1988 translation by James A. Rowe.)

Capa, in his article "The Ideal Style of the Masters" (CN 1053): "In the opening he [M.] aimed to develop all his pieces rapidly. Developing them and quickly bringing them into action was his idea. In this sense, from the point of view of style, he was completely correct. In his time the question of Position was not properly understood, except by himself. This brought him enormous advantages, and he deserves nothing but praise. It could be said of him that he was the forerunner of developments in this extremely important part of the game. He made a special study of the openings, with such success that in many games his opponents had an inferior position after six moves. This is also praiseworthy since in those days he had little to guide him. Players of the time thought that violent attacks against the King and other combinations of this kind were the only things worthy of consideration. It may be said that they began by making combinations from the first move, without paying sufficient attention to the question of development, about which Morphy was extremely careful. His games show that he had an outstanding playing style. It was simple and direct, without affectation; he did not seek complications but nor did he avoid them, which is the real way to play. ...

"But Morphy was not only doubtless the strongest player of his period; he was also a creator in chess and the prototype of what could be called the perfect style.... Contrary to the general belief, which is the result of ignorance, Morphy's main strength was not his combinative power but his positional play and his general style. The truth is that combinations can be made only when the position permits it. The majority of the games in these two matches [Anderssen, Harrwitz] were won by Morphy in direct and simple fashion and it is this simple and logical procedure which is the basis of true beauty in chess,

from the point of view of the great masters.

"Concerning an oft-repeated declaration by a large number of admirers, who believe that Morphy would beat all today's players, as we have already said, this has no foundation. On the other hand, if Morphy were resurrected and were to play immediately with the knowledge of his time, he would most certainly be defeated by many present day masters. Nevertheless, it is logical to suppose that he would soon be at the necessary level to compete against the best, and there is no way of knowing exactly how successful he would be."

Euwe: Alekhine "is the greatest attacking player of all time. Morphy has usually been given this title, but his task was much easier; in his time, about eighty years ago, people had naive ideas about opening strategy. Morphy was the first great positional player; none of his opponents could approach him in this respect" (MEET THE MASTERS, 1940, p 2). [M. beat the best of his day; more than that is impossible: FS.]

William Lewis in a Dec. 31, 1859 letter to George Allen (from the S. D. Ennis collection):

"I much regret that Mr. Morphy did not offer the Pawn and move to some of our best players, I urged him to do it and would myself have gone to London purposely to see him play. I would have ventured a few pounds in backing him, I am tolerably certain that I should have won. He is in my judgment far superior to any player in England".

William Lewis in a July 2, 1863 letter to D. W. Fiske (from the same collection as before):

"When Mr. Morphy was in England I saw him play several games, he is certainly an extraordinary player of his age and certainly the best I have met with since La Bourdonnais was in his prime".

Staunton "pronounced Labourdonnais, Morphy, and Anderssen to be the greatest players that ever lived" (Rev. G. A. MacDonnell's 1879 June 21 column; also echoed in his 1879 Aug. 23 column).

Those farthest away in time have the best chance at analyzing accurately the contributions of the great 19th century masters. Perhaps that is why Reinfeld & Soltis' MORPHY CHESS MASTERPIECES (1974) present the most lucid picture, especially regarding the major points in my preceding analysis:

"Morphy was the first scientific player, wrote Richard Reti, a half-century away in time and a light-year away in chess from Morphy. Morphy appreciated that chess had an underlying logic, that it was not a series of random moves made up of threats and responses that often magically allowed brilliant decisions. There was a reason why a chess game was won. Morphy saw the games of the European masters and concluded that certain qualities made brilliancy possible. Inside the chaos of chess there was a hidden order, and Morphy was the first to discover a part of it.

"Morphy's expertise was clearest in open positions. Clear a few pairs of Pawns away from the center of the board and Morphy was unbeatable in his day. He was the first to understand the relative nature of the balance between time and material. The more time advantage you have, the less important material is. Given equal time components, superior material should win. Translated into games this meant that in an open position, the key to the success of one player was development. If White could use his time advantage of the first move to bring his pieces out faster and create threats to the opposing side, it didn't matter whether he had sacrificed a Pawn or two to get to that position. We see this over and over in Morphy's games. It is the underlying principle of the Evans Gambit, the King's Gambit, and indeed all gambits. ...

"In subsequent years other masters learned the openings and the fruits of development. Wilhelm Steinitz succeeded in outperforming his rivals because he carried Morphy's scientific approach a step further. Steinitz did for closed games what Morphy did for open games. Morphy avoided closed positions like the plague, while Steinitz revelled in them. He loved to play the Ruy Lopez with P-Q3 while Morphy always strove for P-Q4" (pp 15-17).

The "subtle strategic concept" of exploiting the K-side pawn majority in the Ruy Lopez, used almost 50 years before Emanuel Lasker did (p 24).

"...distinguished end-game play--very much in the twentieth-century manner" (p 35).

M.'s "ability to maneuver against static weaknesses" (p 46).

"What confused many of Morphy's contemporaries is that when they sacrificed gambit Pawns the way Morphy did, they lost the initiative before long and lost the game in the long run. What they didn't understand is that aggressive gambits require aggressive moves... [they seemed] oblivious to the principles of development..." (p 46).

"To the student, Morphy's merciless play against the weak color complex is more impressive than many

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of his most brilliant combinations" (p 61).

"They [M.'s contemporaries] admired such games as the following one, but how many of them understood that play on the weak white squares was the key to victory?" (p 213).

"The best part of this game is Morphy's 23 NxB!!, a move which sacrifices several positional advantages to set up the winning breakthrough 24 P-K5! Some of Morphy's contemporaries and successors would never consider such a sequence because it runs against so many of the prevailing positional ideas--correcting Black's Pawn structure, giving up a good piece for a bad one, etc."(p 109).

"A Morphy game which looks like a Steinitz game is a rarity! Significantly enough, this is one of Morphy's best games, and suggests that if he had continued active play, Morphy's style would have evolved into one approximating that of the moderns. He starts out on the defensive, carefully wards off the hostile one-move threats, maneuvers deftly and patiently in a cramped position, and posts his pieces on their best squares" (p 171). "The natural response of the old masters was that Morphy had just out-brillianted his opponent again. But this fails to appreciate how Black nurtured a complex, cramped position into a virulent attacking one. Few people in 1863 appreciated the origin of a Morphy attack" (p 175-6).

"During the first decade of this century the Steinitz Defense to the Ruy Lopez was much in evidence in the big tournaments and matches. This popularity reached its height in the St. Petersburg tournament of 1909. Picture the astonishment of modern players on being informed that this relatively modern line had occurred in several Morphy games" (p 177, M.-Riviere 1863 is given).

"Reti, among others, thought there was no finer example of masterly play in open positions" (p 193).

"The reader who is familiar with modern chess cannot fail to note that many of Morphy's combinations are of the most rudimentary character. The fault was not Morphy's, but that of his opponents. Of the final combination, Steinitz remarked that it was one of the finest in chess history. But history did not stop in 1858. Among the moderns, such elementary combinations would never attain the dignity of more than a footnote" (p 205). [The progress of chess always goes on: FS.]

"Morphy has never received enough credit for his achievements as a blindfold player. ... But Morphy's skill was in this field was qualitative as well as quantitative. The vigor and accuracy of his moves under such difficult circumstances are among the most convincing proofs of his genius" (p 209).

"In Morphy's day, however, the strategic value of the center was the exclusive property of a chosen few" (p 222).

"While the modern is thoroughly at home in closed positions, he generally feels uneasy in the open game" (p 42).

"It is always interesting to see how Morphy revamped openings that were thought inferior by his colleagues. All he had to do was add the missing element--usually development--and a dead old variation suddenly bloomed with life. In a way, by using development to refute unsound attacks and strengthening the defense, Morphy was a forerunner of Steinitz. Yet we consider Morphy and Steinitz as the opposite poles of the development of chess science of the nineteenth century" (p 73).

Fine in his article on Morphy in the 1937 CHESS REVIEW (pp 380-2) evaluates from both perspectives: M. during his own lifetime and in comparison with modern players:

"He beat his major rivals because he had a clearer grasp of the essentials of position play. In fact, Morphy is the first who really appreciated the logical basis of chess. He could combine as well as anybody, but he also knew under what circumstances combinations were possible--and in that respect he was twenty years ahead of his time.

"Anderssen could attack brilliantly, but had an inadequate understanding of its positional basis. Morphy knew not only how to attack, but also when--and that is why he won."

"It is frankly hard to find good Morphy games, comparable to those of, say Alekhine, or Lasker. The difficulty, as we have indicated, is that his opponents made such bad blunders [usually positional: FS]. The following game, one of his most famous, is typical." [Now followed the famous Paulsen-Morphy NY 1857 game].

At Move 8 in that game Morphy could have won by attacking before full development: "The move is a natural for an Anderssen, or any other master whose main concern is the attack. But Morphy rarely begins an offensive until he has completed his development, a sufficient indication of the fact that he was a generation ahead of his contemporaries.

"But the present situation is peculiar because it is an exception to the general rule:...."

"How does it happen that Morphy overlooks a forced win at such an early stage? The principle of development was such an enormous advantage on the prevailing theory or, more correctly, lack of theory, that

its mechanical application was enough to give him a significant advantage."

From a Lasker lecture reported in the 1898 Nov 26 column of the ILLUSTRATED SPORTING & DRAMATIC NEWS of London: "He recognizes in Morphy the greatest chess genius that ever lived..." [Lasker must have evaluated in terms of what M. did during his lifetime, as he also did in his MANUAL OF CHESS about 30 years later.]

"Lasker attributes Morphy's success to the scientific application of logical principles and his victories not to subtle combinations or natural intuition, but to a gradual development of forces which crushed his opponent with cumulative effect. 'This rather controverts the popular belief that Morphy was a genius and owed his success solely to superior natural gifts and powers of intuition.' To Lasker Morphy is 'the rational player'" (As quoted in Sergeant, p 36).

Lasker again: "Paul Morphy fought; on good days and on bad days, he loved the contest, the hard, sharp, just struggle, which despises petted favourites and breeds heroes.

"But then the Civil War broke out in the United States and broke the heart and mind of Morphy" (LASKER'S MANUAL OF CHESS, 1947 p 186).

Fischer's high opinion of Staunton's play is quoted by KW but not his praise of Morphy, so here it is: "A popularly held theory about Paul Morphy is that if he returned to the chess world today and played our best contemporary players, he would come out the loser. Nothing further is from the truth. In a set match, Morphy would beat anybody alive today.

"He was the best-read player of his time, and is known to have been familiar with such books as Bilguer's HANDBOOK...and Staunton's THE CHESS HAND-BOOK, among others. These books are better than modern ones; there has been no significant improvement since then in King Pawn openings, and Morphy's natural talents would be more than sufficient for him to vanquish the best twentieth century players.

"Morphy was perhaps the most accurate chess player who ever lived" (CHESSWORLD Jan-Fb 1964).

Steinitz's view has some similarity to Fischer's (Compare that of Capa above):

"Morphy's career marks a grand epoch in the history of our pastime, and a careful study of his games will always be essential for the purpose of acquiring a complete knowledge of the direct attack against the King, which forms a most important element in mastering our science. ...If Morphy were alive and were to be the leading spirit of our days, as he was the superior of his own, he would of necessity cultivate and extend the system which has been developed since his time. He would probably have been the very first to make improvements or to perceive and acknowledge them in the practice of others, instead of reverting to the methods of the old school, as maintained by some critics." (Quoted in Sergeant, p 35.)

On the same page Sergeant has a footnote on the passage above:

"It is interesting to note, in this connexion, the verdict of the Regence players, as reported by Edge, that Morphy was not brilliant like La Bourdonnais, but 'solide, close, and analytical.'"

The contributions of Morphy are platitudes today, but because of them his record during his brief career revealed an enormous superiority over his fellow masters, as well as the lesser lights, a superiority larger than that achieved by any of his successors among the world champions. The impact of his continuous triumphs on the general public and on his fellow masters was therefore tremendous. Consequently it is at least understandable that the mythic mantle of invincibility should be placed on his shoulders not only by that public but also by his fellow masters. What is surprising is that even nowadays (See the quotes above) writers, perhaps still under the influence of the M. myth, find it necessary to show that his invincibility did not extend much beyond his own era. Had he stayed in the arena, he eventually would have been beaten, as all champions eventually are, by some new star (Steinitz, Lasker).

However, the modern era, with all its science and technology, still has its myth-makers, for now I am told--not by the general public--but by some of the chess intelligentsia that Kasparov is "the strongest chessplayer of all time" (WARRIORS OF THE MIND, quoted in CN 1853 p 38). That startling statement is not backed up by any claim of K.'s large superiority over his fellow GMs (as Morphy's was), nor would they believe it if it were made. The statistical myth regarding K. may only exemplify the hidden need for mythology in any group, though here it most likely stems from the workings of a public relations staff (rudimentary 150 years ago but nowadays a professional specialty).

"R." KW's letter asks irrelevantly if I dispute that the quote in question "reveals Edge's feelings about his relationship with Morphy" (already handled in my CN 1499 p 128). As the accuracy of the tiny

quote was never disputed, I can only conclude that KW is trying to show he has been speaking the truth, but unfortunately the literal "accuracy" of the quote is only a minor bit of it, showing quite clearly why courts insist on having the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I can create an example similar to that quote, crude though it be: "Mr. Jones was sober today." That sentence is true but it is not the whole truth because the insinuation implied by it is untrue and would provoke immediate reaction from Jones. Here's another example: "Why'd did not rob a bank last week". Thus contrary to KW's assumption, it is often possible not only to quote accurately but also present a fact and still create an untruth via insinuation.

In a similar manner--but much more subtly and cunningly--KW wove bits of truth (but not the whole truth) into his words and sentences around the quote so as to create an insinuation for which he had no truth (evidence); if he had had the evidence, he would not have manufactured the insinuation. Of equal importance is the fact that KW himself chose the quote, not anyone else; he was not restricted to it alone by the letter-owner, as he maintains. He could have quoted more, given the recipient's name, and indicated the general nature of the letter so as to avoid misunderstanding; but if he had, the insinuation would have vanished. By acting otherwise, he secured the maximum plausibility for it. Truly KW is an IM (Insinuation Master or Manufacturer). [c]

I must point out too if he had been honest and given the recipient's name (Fiske), which the letter owner would have permitted, the insinuation would then have been transferred to him (F.) but would have made no sense in the context of the insinuation paragraph; besides that, F. was not his target. Thus by not giving the whole truth (See CN 1417) and by placing only M.'s name before the quote, KW slyly and cunningly--KW wove bits of truth (but not the whole truth) into his words and sentences around the quote so as to create an insinuation for which he had no truth (evidence); if he had had the evidence, he would not have manufactured the insinuation. Of equal importance is the fact that KW himself chose the quote, not anyone else; he was not restricted to it alone by the letter-owner, as he maintains. He could have quoted more, given the recipient's name, and indicated the general nature of the letter so as to avoid misunderstanding; but if he had, the insinuation would have vanished. By acting otherwise, he secured the maximum plausibility for it. Truly KW is an IM (Insinuation Master or Manufacturer). [c]

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Before KW says anything more, contrary to his desperate supposition, researchers are trained to quote letters with the recipient's name and full date, if available, so as to assist the reader into a proper comprehension of it, the whole truth (context).

Though he says he answered all my questions (CNs 1757 & 1818), KW has still not answered my request in CN 1499 for the genesis of the paragraph containing the insinuation. He must have constructed it sometime in the few years before its appearance in the 1984 COMPANION and no doubt he discussed it with others. Consequently why didn't he expunge it before going to press? If he claims he never noticed it until afterwards, then he should have publicly retracted his error, but now that is too late. Now let's hear the whole truth and nothing but the truth. [c]

"M." Obviously some young men of 21 or less can have a feminine appearance, as a glance at some of the pictures of young masters given in major chess publications the last decade or so will attest; but KW does not seize his chance to publish a similar comment about them because he might have a lawsuit on his hands. If the parties are dead, however, he can insinuate to his heart's content.

However, saying M. "could have passed for a woman" is inaccurate if not worse; "woman" to my knowledge was never used. As usual KW cites no sources of evidence. However, the exact quote from Edge (p 68) does not back up KW: "This boy of twenty-one, five feet four inches in height, of slim figure, and face like a young girl in her teens, positively appalled the chess warriors of the old world--Narcissus defying the Titans." To KW (who once said his insinuation quote was "metaphorical") now takes the simile, the "girl" comparison, and turns it into truth and reality, altering it unjustifiably to "woman" in the process, no doubt on the assumption that she had aged during the century. (Narcissus, by the way, was a handsome

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youth, not a female). To KW the sentence "Jones fought like a lion" means Jones was actually a lion from the jungle.

KW in CN 1569: "From Edge onwards, writers have noted Morphy's effeminate appearance and manner, and obviously the possibility of homosexuality must have been pondered for more than a century. Our quotation may have caused some readers to ask this question. That is nothing new." Nearly the whole quote is untrue (again KW gives no evidence). Notice how he blandly stretches "appearance" by adding "manner" to it, a totally unethical act. Secondly, pointing to "possibilities" is not evidence; one could just as easily apply that possibility to KW or to anyone else. Finally, having said the quote was metaphorical, KW now contradicts himself and asserts it is not! Throw this into the garbage can. [a]

Note too how KW tries to stretch the reference from Edge into a "century" of data when in truth it is only a single comment of 1859; and people did not "ponder" over it "more than a century" since they had more important things to do except perhaps for KW, who just loves to ponder such matters to the point of insinuating and call the result definitive biography. Just how does a lone comment about M.'s "appearance" suddenly become reality and truth? No similar comment by anyone else who knew M. is cited; none exist to my knowledge. Finally, why didn't KW give us a list of all references by those who knew M. and counted how many of them followed his conjecture and how many did not, although that would prove nothing anyway. [a]

Falkbeer, who met M. in London in 1858, contradicts KW by describing M. thus in part: "...with fresh and youthful features delicately shaded by the first dawn of an incipient moustache One would certainly have taken him for a schoolboy on his vacation than for a chess adept..." (Sergeant, p 33). Of course KW never bothers with evidence which contradicts his conjectural imagination.

The above analysis merely reveals another example of KW's building his case on one item and that just a flimsy simile, with some improper alteration, and failing to do a complete job of research on the matter (Such laziness only increases his weakness of character). [a, b]

As I said a few paragraphs ago, KW often changes his mind on the insinuating quote, pointed out in CN 1669 pp 83-4; added comments of mine are in brackets: "Para 3: K.W.'s 'quotation' without context did cause 'readers to ask this question. That is nothing new.' Yet in his letter of 3rd March 1987 (CN 1499 p 127) K.W. stated I appeared 'to be the only one who has read a suggestion of homosexuality in the quote' [an absolute untruth! See CNs 840 p 111, 957 & 1270: FS]; in CN 1440 (p 87) it is 'very clearly metaphorical, but possibly it might put the thought into the reader's mind for the first time'; and now [bringing in the "feminine appearance" ploy: FS] he says it is 'nothing new' and that the 'possibility...must have been pondered for more than a century'. (Why 'must'? Because K.W. has no evidence.)" [a]

Why does he keep changing his "truth" on his insinuating? Which one is he asserting now? Why doesn't he cite his "evidence"?

Besides evidence (which he does not always use in his bios), KW mistakenly believes that possibilities or conjectures are one of the essentials of biography (CN 1818). Of course if KW had real evidence, he would not be forced to use conjectures. No one will seriously object if the matter is trivial, such as speculating on the color of someone's eyes, but there can be no conjectures on important matters such as sexuality, religion, politics, character, reputation and the like. For these matters, the courts do not allow the libel laws to be flouted by conjectures about any living person. Now I could follow the KW credo & style and, after observing his picture in his RECORDS book, conjecture, in a simile, that his "appearance" was like that of an old, depraved woman of highly scarlet reputation. After the passage of enough time, someone could write that my conjecture "must have been pondered for more than a century", and my simile would now be reality. According to KW's credo that simile/conjecture would be perfectly true and proper, which is utter nonsense.

"A." The use of "indulged" is typical of KW's rhetorical, pejorative style. Selecting words with pejorative associations (without proof) runs through all of the triad of biographies noted here. Similar examples are given in Blair's "H.", "L.", "O.", "Q.", "R.", "U.", "V." and "X.". [a, d]

"X." Staunton's reputation was blackened not so much by Edge as by Staunton's own conduct during the Morphy match negotiations and by the numerous disputes he had with many players over the years, long before he had ever met Edge. No British chess club or chess column exonerated Staunton re the M. match after it was declined, a clear enough indication of the opinion of the British chess world at the time. Edge, a witness to much of the match negotiations, merely held up a mirror to Staunton's activities, and I know of no untrue "insinuations" (he was usually blunt, not insinuating) by him, though his language, in the heat generated by the negotiations (a common phenomenon in such doings), may therefore have been as scorch-

ing on occasion as Staunton's was. KW has never documented all the high crimes and other evil acts he says or implies about Edge and shown specifically how they affected the major topics we have been debating. I have waited four years for evidence on this without success (CN 1818 is inaccurate on this); all I get is repeated conjectures (the Mar. 16 letter is full of them), pejorative rhetoric, and personal attacks on myself. [a, d]

"G." One might add that the Civil War (1861-1865) and its aftermath did not make a legal career easy for Morphy, or for anyone else. Under such circumstances there was hardly any civilized law in existence, hardly any civilized society, and so hardly anything favorable for any aspiring lawyer. Nor did the signs of his "breakdown" (call it what you will) make entrance to the law easier. But, as KW evidently believes, if you possess strength of character, you brush aside a mere war in which many thousands are being killed and go blithely onwards to higher achievement; and if you have a breakdown, it just proves you had no strength of character in the first place.

"K." Since it is a truism that anything a person does of his own free will was obviously done to fill a "need", why did KW find it necessary to cite Anderssen, who was an authority on chess and mathematics, not psychology? He did so to favor his unsubstantiated notion that M. was a mere chessplayer and nothing else. One could just as easily speak of Morphy's "need" to learn and practice law, or KW's "need" to smear him and Edge without the necessary proof.

Furthermore, many of M.'s contemporaries wrote of him, but only Anderssen is cited, while the others who did not mention the "need" were ignored; thus the weight of opinion is against Anderssen & KW, not that this particular truism is of any real significance. [b]

"S.": Morphy did not disown (Diggle in CN 1642) nor discredit (KW) the Edge book but disclaimed "any connection" with it (meaning he had no hand in its composition), adding "there are many passages which might well have been omitted; there are many more which might well have been rewritten" (Lawson p 189). Not much help here because he says nothing specific. However, M. did not say anything in it was false and could not have completely disapproved because he presented a copy of it as a gift, inscribing it as follows: "Presented to J. L. Graham Jr by Paul Morphy" [undated]. (I thank its owner, Samuel D. Ennis of Wisconsin, for bringing it to my attention.) Graham, whose book bears his personal bookplate, was a member of the welcoming committee of the NY CC which greeted M. when he arrived there on May 11, 1859 and afterwards accompanied him on his trip to Boston (See Lawson p 202 etc.). [b]

As to Edge's charge that Staunton used illness as an excuse to avoid matches, Mr. Blair has conceded too quickly, before the evidence is in: This matter needs investigation to see if and when such instances occurred (I believe I discussed this with Mr. Diggle sometime ago). No one has yet done the boring research to find out, that burden being on the asserter, no one else, who must garner the instances, which may turn up some complexity: The French did not believe Staunton's illness (which had happened) was true when he went to France to arrange another match with St. Amant. If Edge picks up this item, is he therefore lying? The only other instance I can recall is the Brien match of 1854, mentioned below. Furthermore, this aspect of Edge is irrelevant to the topics we have been discussing for four years. So far as I can tell from KW's unclear charges, he is trying to say that a man who picks up questionable gossip therefore lies about everything else, a nonsensical conclusion. [a]

Edge was a partisan of Morphy as Whyld is of Staunton, a fact which does not of itself necessarily make any of the parties mentioned a "liar" or a "villain".

In his Mar. 16 letter KW utters a falsehood: "It is the opposite of the truth to insist, as you have done, that Morphy's status depends upon Edge's integrity." I never "insisted" or claimed such an absurdity, nor does KW cite any evidence. M.'s integrity depends on his own actions, not on anyone else's.

"T." In his column of Aug. 21, 1858 Staunton told a reader: "The match is to be altogether independent of the Birmingham meeting", an item which escaped the attention of every major Morphy biographer. The "match" can only refer to that with Morphy. Note that Staunton sets no conditions, as he did before. If the match were impossible because of his literary contract, then why did he want to play Morphy a match by cable a few months earlier, circa June 1858? And why, if the contract were the cause, didn't he call off the match immediately instead of giving the impression that it was not an unsurmountable obstacle? A few months later he suddenly found the same contract made it impossible. None of this appears in KW's Staunton bio. Perhaps more research will unearth the contract itself. [b]

"Z.": Mr. Blair is right. In 1861 Morphy was willing to play a match as "a special exception" (M.'s

underlining) to his rule of no future matches, but his equally adamant insistence on no stakes would have made it difficult for Kolisch and his backers. At any rate nothing was heard from the challenger, and so the matter ended until it was revived in 1863 when M., now in Paris, declined for various reasons. Lawson covers the affair thoroughly, with full citations from primary sources, a procedure repugnant to KW's conjectural approach to biography; besides he doesn't use Lawson for research. The Civil War was now going on in full strength (New Orleans had fallen in April 1862), but to KW a mere war is no reason for not playing a match; besides, KW wants to depict M. as a breaker of solemn promises despite any evidence to the contrary, so he rewrites history as he did elsewhere.

Here's another example, from 1859: Under the Anderssen bio appears: "Morphy broke his promise to play a return match in which, under less adverse circumstances, Anderssen might well have given a better account of himself". The fact that M. had so long overstayed his leave in Europe that a relative had to go to Paris to bring him back, that his aversion to professional chess was becoming more pronounced, and that the ominous shadows of the coming Civil War were darkening the Southern sky, made no difference to KW.

Anderssen's "adverse circumstances", from Lange's account as summed up by Staunton in his CHESS PRAXIS (1860 p 502), were these: "...unaccustomed noises in the hotel where he resided, occasioned him sleepless nights, which by no means contributed to strengthen him for the exhausting labours of the match. As to the lookers-on, those nearest the table, as the proper witnesses and honorary seconds, behaved irreproachably; amongst the other spectators, however, there were unmistakable, and sometimes very annoying exhibitions of sympathy for his opponent; signs of impatience were chiefly shown when the German took time for reflection, especially conspicuous in this respect was a certain bald-headed Italian, who usually contrived to place himself close to the American. To such influences may be attributed the turn in the sixth game of the match at move twenty-eight."

On the other hand, Anderssen himself contradicts this in his letter of Dec. 31, 1859 to von der Lasa: "The onlookers were forced to abstain even from the slightest whispering--something unusual which was to me all the stranger as I am not aware of having been ever disturbed, during a game, by those surrounding me by any act of conversation (except barking of dogs and crying of children)" [Lawson p 179]. KW was aware of this letter because he quoted part of it in his bio of M., another example of his ignoring relevant evidence.

Whatever the truth may be, M.'s "circumstances" were surely worse as he had to get off his sickbed to play Anderssen (thereby displaying considerable strength of character!).

From the same bio: As to defeating Morphy in a return match, neither Steinitz, Zukertort, nor Alekhine believed it possible. As to Anderssen's being rusty and unprepared for the match, Lawson has disposed of that error easily in his book (p 177+).

Finally, KW reveal his bias by spending so much space on excusing Anderssen and demeaning Morphy, a contrast to his bios of Tarrasch, Lasker, Capa, & Steinitz, which mention nothing of their excuses in losing their title matches; only M. is singled out for the Whyld treatment. Losers of matches often do make excuses, which do not count in the score and whose validity is practically impossible to validate or assess, thus ending up as idle chatter, inappropriate for a work which aims to be factually solid and hence authoritative. [a, b]

For more examples of bias, inadequacy, inaccuracy, or distortion, see below.

Besides his love of conjecture, a certain obstinacy too often appears in KW's writings, a refusal to face facts or to garner them or to modify facts he has garnered when differing evidence appears, along with his usual anti-M. bias, not to overlook his weakness of character in not carrying his research to a sound conclusion:

(1) He refuses to call Lawson's monumental work on Morphy a biography, describing it instead as "an extensive collection of biographical data [about whom?] from 19th-century sources," as though it were merely an anthology. It is absolutely astounding to note that KW made no use whatsoever of the tremendous amount of first-hand data in Lawson (as shown by the indexes to the sources of THE COMPANION, published separately). Lawson's work would have been helpful, but not when you prefer conjecture to reason and evidence. Sergeant was also treated in the same fashion, as were Lowenthal, Lange, Falkbeer, Maroczy or any other individual who wrote a book on Morphy, all of them valuable. KW's failure to use them is just another instance of his weakness of character in failing to do thorough research.

(2) Consider too the unsubstantiated Cambridge-Bedlam game to which KW had been seeking an answer for some years (See his BCM 1985 column, p 173). Since he had no evidence for or against its existence, he should have simply stated "I don't know the answer". Instead, he dogmatically described it as "an amusing

and obviously spurious story". He also could not help conjecturing and made a "guess": A game between "Cambridge-Town (?)" and "Bedford (?)". Now Jack O'Keefe in CN 1891 located the hitherto unsubstantiated game in THE FIELD of May 10, 1884, proving again it doesn't pay to waste space on dogmatism and conjecture.

(3) On no evidence other than his own dogmatic assertion, KW declared Staunton retired from chess in 1853, despite the many facts contradicting it (given in my review of THE COMPANION in 1985): Staunton afterwards tried unsuccessfully to get a match with Anderssen; in May 1853 he issued an open challenge to the world for a match! In August 1853 he played von der Lasa a match; in October 1854 he played at Caistor, Lincolnshire; and at the end of that year he played Brien a match at P and two, given up by Staunton (he was losing 3-1-1) because of illness (Levy p 101); and in mid-1858 he suggested a match with Morphy by cable.

(4) In his column in BCM 1985 p 560: R. D. Yates, the checker genius, "had parallels with Morphy (but he said 'Checkers is for tramps')." The complete quote from Call's bio of Yates, p 14, casts a different light on this apparent discourtesy by Morphy: "On another occasion, half in jest, half in earnest, the great chess master said to a New York player, 'Checkers is for tramps.'" KW's deliberate omission of the two "half" phrases makes a world of difference, but he sees no humor at all, especially when by doing so he can belittle Morphy a bit. Also the anecdote is second-hand, not a primary source, thus hardly definitive but it so delights KW's heart, he just can't resist misusing it. (I have been unable to trace the anecdote to its origin; Morphy is not associated with checkers in any of the biographies by Lawson, Sergeant, Lange, etc. Perhaps others may be able to cast some light on this matter.)

(5) From KW's CHESS THE RECORDS: "Taking bad advice Morphy dodged playing in a tournament at Birmingham where Staunton had gone specifically to meet him, and in turn Staunton dodged Morphy for ever" (p 36). Morphy avoided rather than "dodged" playing in the event for reasons given in Lawson; with the second "dodged" I do not disagree. The whole truth is more complex than KW's simple sentences. KW does not attempt to summarize the evidence pro and con in some manner to give a truer, balanced picture; instead he presents only his biased conjecture as to what happened. The "bad advice" (he means Edge) is just KW's opinion without any substantiation; the evidence (covered in previous CNs of mine) shows that the M.-Staunton situation had long deteriorated and M., upset at the Briton's depreciating annotations to his games, was too suspicious of Staunton's motives, especially when the latter, instead of following protocol and writing Morphy privately re the Anti-Book statement, went public and used his column for his unjustified criticisms; finally, M. had come to play Staunton a match, not a few tourney games whose results might be employed as an excuse to avoid the match (Lawson covers the matter).

From KW's letter: "I find it irritating to be pressed for conjectures (not given in THE COMPANION) by someone incapable of forming his own, and then being attacked for offering them." Hogwash! I never asked him for any conjectures; on the contrary, for four years I have asked him to present the evidence which would justify his innumerable, unsubstantiated statements (also called conjectures, judgements, opinions, interpretations) about Edge, Morphy, etc., evident even in the samples in Mr. Blair's commentary. Why didn't he indicate in the COMPANION that his bios were conjectural (theoretical), not to be taken as fact? [a]

If, as it appears, KW claims conjectures (theories) are the soul of biography and justify his assertions without evidence, then the conjectures of other persons are equally valid, which causes one to ask the question: Why are only KW's allowed to be authoritative conjectures (theories) for the COMPANION? [a]

KW must stop the same repetitive, conjectural twaddle that has been his trademark. In the future any attempted answer by him to anything in this essay must follow this pattern: Such and such a statement is true because of such and such evidence (both pro and con), with their sources cited; and the preponderance of evidence must prove the statement. The whole truth and nothing but the truth. Nothing else is acceptable or relevant. I also hope he will answer my questions re the insinuation. He is honor-bound to give full answers. [a]

POSTSCRIPT: I received a copy from Mr. Blair of KW's Sept. 21 reply to him, after I composed the above material except for some minor revisions. I now quote from Point S. in that letter (I have divided it into parts, indicated by the bracketed letters, for ease of reference and discussion): [A] "Edge makes no bones about having taken letters from Morphy's pocket [only one?] and dealing with them as he saw fit, or [B] waiting until Morphy was out of the way and then writing a letter that Morphy had expressly forbidden him to write. [C] Now we know that Edge was activated not by a desire to serve Morphy, but by the urge to promote him, his book has to be seen as a piece of special pleading. [D] Did any contemporary master

(including Morphy) have a kind word to say for Edge or his book?"

Item [A]: Why is KW so murky and obscure? Why does he fail to give the circumstances surrounding the letters (context), as he failed to do with his Morphy insinuation? (Because another insinuation is in the making.) Is he claiming Edge was a pickpocket? Does "taken" mean "stolen"? Does "dealing with them as he saw fit" mean he sold them for money or gave them away or had no authority to act as he did, or acted improperly in some other way, or what? KW doesn't give the context of his assertion so that the reader is misled into thinking E. was really acting criminally or very improperly. For the first time in four years KW attempts to give evidence against E. but does so without indicating the crime allegedly committed, though as usual his words carry with them the pejorative overtones of something evil, whatever it was. Nonetheless if you read these two passages from Edge-to-Fiske letters (especially the first, KW's source), you realize, as Mr. Blair has indicated, E. was merely performing his duties:

"I shall watch over Morphy until he leaves Europe, and when he leaves I can say--'What you are outside of chess, I have made you. Your tremendous laziness, but for me, would have obliterated all your acts. I have taken your hundreds of letters out of your pockets even, and answered them, because you would have made every man your enemy by not replying.'" (Mar. 25 1859 in CN 1358.)

"Do you remember giving Paul Morphy a note for me when he was leaving New York, together with documents for Preti and others? Well, when we were both in Paris in the month of October last, he asked me to look in his portmanteau for some thick underlinen, as the weather was becoming cool. I searched as directed, and what should I find but these identical notes; and had it not been for my discovery, they would not now have been delivered." (Ap 3, 1859 in CN 840.)

If M. was wearing the clothes containing the letters, then he would have been aware E. removed them; if the clothing had been worn and was now soiled and needed cleaning, you could not expect the aristocratic M. to handle that chore himself. Edge would have to get it done by making arrangements with the hotel staff. Where is the criminality or impropriety and why would he confess it to Fiske, who was then in constant contact with Morphy? [a, b]

Item [B]: To say that E. wrote "a letter that Morphy had expressly forbidden him to write" is an alteration of the evidence (from publicizing a letter to writing it) per Edge's letter (in CN 840):

"Ah, I have had a bitter, hard battle to fight with him all through. He objected for a long, long time to having the letter sent to Staunton which commenced the public correspondence between them. When S. sought to entrap him by sending his private reply, Morphy preferred listening to anybody but me, and was about answering him also privately. But, singly and alone, I managed to carry the day at last, by dint of argument, entreaty and almost tears. And when Staunton published M's letter, suppressing that important paragraph, I said that the letter must now address the British Chess Association and claim justice. Morphy laughed in my face, and replied 'the matter need go no further'. What would you have thought of him and me if the affair had so rested? I immediately sat down, boiling with rage, and penned the letter to Lord Lyttelton. I took it right away and submitted it to Mr. Bryan (Staunton's old Second) who returned to the hotel with me and induced Morphy to sign it. Nor is this all. When Lord L. sent his capital reply, P.M. declared that it should not be published. - Seeing that it was vain to hope for his consent, I waited until he was out of the way and then sent it to the London papers. Ask Morphy if all this is not true..."

By signing the letter, M. approved publication (Bryan evidently also felt the same way). The quote shows M. objecting to the publication of the letter, not to its accuracy. The second letter (from Lord L.) was published without M.'s approval. Can KW explain how this act altered the truths in it? Why does he want them suppressed? [a, b]

Item [C]: A vague conjecture unwarranted, especially when accompanied by no evidence. Since [B] was untrue, then any inference drawn from it is also flawed, and it is therefore untrue to say "we know that Edge was activated not by a desire to serve Morphy" etc. Even if we assume KW is correct re Edge's motives, how does this change the facts E. presents? The issue is not what motives someone may have had in performing an action since it is practically impossible to prove such motivation from a single instance; the issue is what events or actions actually occurred. There is also no reason why "'promoting" M. is opposed to "serving" him (Again, KW merely asserts it without proof). In addition, there is nothing wrong with "special pleading" (undefined by him) in the customary sense of that phrase, since KW himself has been

doing the same for four years at least. Is he trying to say that such "pleading" is all lies? (He tries to imply that without saying it.) If so, then his own writings are also condemned. And how does KW know that it was such "pleading"? Again, he asserts without proof. (More of KW's weakness of character in not getting all the facts?) Finally, once Staunton had gone public with the match negotiations, M. had to do the same, reluctant as he was regarding publicity. Thus Edge performed a valuable service for him; otherwise, the truth would have been hidden from the public. [a, c]

It is at last becoming clear that KW and I disagree as to what constitutes a fact (evidence). Since 1985 I have tried to suggest criteria to him: The rules of civilized court procedure, those of the scientific community, or those of university research, but he would accept none of them. KW, knowing that certain facts will prove difficult to overcome, hit upon a most lazy device, the conjectural procedure of blackening the motives of individuals, thereby destroying those facts (so KW thinks) and saving himself the hard labor of seeking evidence to overcome them. All that is required in KW's world is to question the motives of people presenting any facts, then imply these are faulted by impure motives and thus must be thrown aside as completely refuted (The underlying assumption that people with pure motives, whatever that means, are never inaccurate is clearly false). The "purity" of such motives can only be judged with a high degree of subjectivity because they are not easily visible or apprehendable by the senses, unless KW claims he possesses extra-sensory perception and can read people's minds. And who does the judging? KW of course. [d]

If a murder had been committed in which three persons were known to have possible motives to commit the act, neither the courts, the scientific community, nor university researchers would accept any such possibility as proof of guilt; witnesses to the act itself would usually be required. In KW's world, however, all three would be condemned only on the basis of their possible motives. Or would Judge Whyld, the zealous watchdog of purity and creator of false insinuation, decide the case by his conjecture as to who had the least impure motives? Or would he condemn all three so that people with possibly impure motives in the future would learn a lesson? Sheer madness. (Also, judging from all my previous analysis here, KW's motives are not entirely "pure".)

Such absurdity is not all. KW discourses foolishly in CN 1818: "He [Skoff] continually drags in pseudo-legal jargon, seemingly under the impression that someone is being accused of a crime. This Perry Mason-like procedure is quite unsuited to the historical process" [Flat nonsense, though uttered with an authoritative air, as I know from a lifetime of literary research, including history]. "The job of historian is to build up as good a picture as possible from the evidence available" [Not if the "evidence available" is insufficient to justify the "picture"! And certainly not if one depends on "appearances", similes, metaphors, or insinuations, which are not evidence at all.]

Now comes the howler, the elimination of the need for sufficient evidence: "Inevitably this demands conjecture where there are gaps, and of course rival theories are made. These in turn generate the arguments that are the very stuff of history, and are often resolved only when new evidence emerges or a primary source is discredited (as in the case of Edge's writing)". [A flat untruth re Edge! I have already shown KW's research as lazy and inadequate in the Morphy/Edge/Staunton bios as well as elsewhere. Furthermore, KW's "conjectures" unwarrantably switch to "theories", but the words are not identical in meaning, and theories are not founded on conjectures. Finally and most damaging, the conjectures or theories are not identified as such in the COMPANION, and so are presented to the reader as if they were true, not theoretical or conjectural. By presenting such items, which include the "appearance" via simile, the metaphor, the insinuation etc. as true, KW creates false pictures and so stands condemned.]

Item [D]: It is KW's job to do the needed research to answer this question, not to cleverly throw the burden of proof on Mr. Blair, another instance of KW's laziness. I have seen two reviews, not unfavorable, of the Edge book, neither of which denied or criticized its materials. But KW must do his own research, not try to force others to do it for him.

Why must only such a master comment on the Edge book? (Does he want to resuscitate Brown's untrue thesis?)

Morphy himself never said anything in it was false. Also once Staunton violated protocol by changing negotiations from private letters to public announcements with his fallacious Aug. 28 Anti-Book attack, Edge appraised the situation accurately and argued with M. to do the same since otherwise the public would never know the whole truth. KW takes the contradictory position that it is proper for Staunton to go public, but not Edge (and M.) If Edge's actions weren't "service," then the word is meaningless. Finally, as I noted in previous CNs, if the M. letters had not been made public but had survived for future biographers, the evidence still would have been the same. Thus Edge, by going public with the letter against

the wish of his employer (M. was not his friend), did not alter the truth though his action must have upset M. It is astonishing how little value KW places on truth: He prefers its suppression at any cost. Why?

Sumup: If KW means that if someone handles letters as Edge did or who published a letter his employer wanted to remain private, then whatever book he writes is completely false and unreliable, he should say so--but he doesn't, probably for the simple reason it would make him sound idiotic and foolish and unconsciously humorous. Yet that is what he is trying to do, and though I have been trying hard to save him from that fate, I am sure he will not be grateful for my efforts on his behalf. [a], [b]

KW's T: Perhaps he can explain why in midsummer Staunton wanted a cable match with M. with no conditions (See my "T" above).

KW's L: He gives no evidence for accurately using the word "pined", one of those emotional words difficult to substantiate; also no evidence is cited for how long M. played chess. Like so many of his dogmatic and unsubstantiated utterances, it should be thrown into the waste basket until he can come up with the required proof.

KW's M: Again more dogmatic twaddle without evidence. The "many authors" he writes of are never identified, so again we have more material that belongs in the waste basket. I have covered this in my comment on Blair's corresponding item, which KW should read.

KW's N: More twaddle without proof. KW's first sentence, a question, is pointless because no one made assertions in that regard. Edge himself relates how he became employed by M. "Fell into the hands of Edge" is just more of KW's pejorative twaddle about which he conjectures without evidence, hence not proven, hence another case for the garbage can.

KW's O: The same is true of the quote from him given by Blair, with whom I agree: No evidence cited, hence not proven, hence another case for the waste basket.

As to the Birmingham question, KW asks: "Does that sound like Morphy's way?" I found it perfectly rational under the circumstances. "Sound" is one of those impossible words to define precisely (and KW doesn't define it), which could mean just about anything one could wish it to. Also why must M. act according to some preconceived notions (not given and not proven) of KW? KW is supposed to supply authoritative evidence and information, not to ask a question to which he gives no answer and at the same time throws the burden on the Blair to supply? No evidence, more conjectural stuff for the garbage can again.

KW's Q & Blair's: Morphy and Edge were not friends but master & servant, employer & employee (See CN 1756). KW's untruthfully calls their relationship "friendship", merely a part of his concocted insinuation (See CN 1757). Again, no evidence, no proof, another case for the waste basket. I might add that Blair is right about M.'s chess playing: He continued to play chess for many years afterwards, but now KW modifies his original idea to matches with top masters after Anderssen--why didn't he say that originally?

KW's S: "As for Staunton's annotations of Morphy's games, no good chess player would find them unfair. That makes Edge's opinions useless on the subject." Absolute nonsense, as I showed in many past CNS (including those to Mr. Diggle) on the matter; neither he nor KW accepted my challenge to refute my analysis. Again, more statements by KW with no evidence, no proof, so throw them in the garbage can as they are therefore absolutely "useless on the subject".

KW now disagrees that "the case against Edge rests primarily on his interpretation of Staunton's annotations": Yet that is what both Brown and Diggle, the Edge critics admired by KW, had censured Edge for. Also why didn't KW relate what his case dealt with "primarily"? Why so secretive?

He continues: "This is a travesty. We did not mention them at all. They were dragged in by Skoff in an ill-judged attempt to make a case against Edge's critics": Absolutely untrue, and the last sentence is a damnable lie and an unwarranted attack upon my integrity since it implies I analyzed the notes so as to create falsity. That "ill-judged" phrase is KW's lazy, non-documented, non-researched, grossly deceitful way of avoiding going over my lengthy analysis and showing precisely where I went wrong. Again, no evidence, no proof, throw this into the garbage can too:

Nor did I "drag in" the Staunton annotations irrelevantly (See CN 1172, 1228, 1439, 1499, 1632, 1722, 1757-8). In CN 942 KW declares Diggle's 1964 BCM article (wherein Goulding Brown calls Edge's account

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of the annotations an "impudent invention") "first alerted me to Edge's duplicity". Then in 943 KW quotes the paragraph of conclusion by Brown (which I have shown is absolute garbage) containing the aforesaid "invention" and the charge that E. is "a liar". Here are some obvious sources of charging Edge with all sorts of pejorative remarks, none proven, more nonsense for the garbage can.

Furthermore, in CN 957 I mentioned my detailed analysis of every Staunton annotation (from my lengthy review in the APCT NB, received by KW) showed clearly that, considering the tensions engendered by the long match negotiations, Edge's claim that Staunton's annotations (the words, not the moves) were pejorative, offensive, depreciatory etc. (I debated this matter in other CNs, mostly with Mr. Diggle, and my analysis was not refuted; KW also commented in CN 1228, refuting my findings by ignoring them.) Months before Edge's book was printed, the newspapers of the day also referred to Staunton's "contemptuous criticism", evident in this excerpt from the CHICAGO PRESS AND TRIBUNE of Nov. 1, 1858 via the EVENING POST (probably of NY), which partly quotes the Oct. 6, 1858 letter by M. from the London ERA and then comments:

"The letter referred to above is not printed in the latest NEWS, Mr. Staunton excusing its absence on account of a want of room. It is to be feared that Mr. Staunton will avoid the match. If the so-called King of Chess does meet the American boy, we shall see chess played as well as it can be. It will then be for Mr. Staunton to justify his contemptuous criticism of Mr. Morphy's games, and Mr. Morphy will, for the first time, have an inducement to play as well as he knows how."

Finally in two letters Edge forwarded M.'s instructions that none of his games from Staunton's column be printed by Fiske in his CHESS MONTHLY, and the instructions were followed (See CN's 1633, 1722 & Edge p 138). Q.E.D.

KW's U: More conjectural garbage (no proof), so it goes into the garbage can also.

For most of his life KW has been, like Edge, "a journalist seeking copy" (Already covered in my 1985 review in the APCT NB), who therefore must be equally guilty of all the censure heaped on Edge.

KW's V: The Anti-Book statement was "true at the time it was written": 1) My first reaction is why should it be true only at that time? Did it fade into untruth as more time passed? 2) No evidence is cited by KW as proof. 3) Does KW really think Staunton was right in saying M. should have brought his seconds with him when he left the US? No such mention occurs prior to the statement. 4) Staunton had full charge of any question of stakes or seconds. If he had any difficulties, protocol demanded he should write M. a private letter about them; by going public instead, Staunton was likely to stir up a quarrel; but KW blames Edge for it! All of this is amazing nonsense, which I have also handled elsewhere. Without proof it too belongs in the garbage can. (See also Lawson p 121-7.)

KW's Z: I have already answered this above, KW is in error.

I have found Edge more reliable than Staunton: Edge did not cut out any crucial paragraph in any letter, as Staunton did, nor explode inaccurately in an Anti-Book statement, nor unfairly abuse his opponents etc. KW's attempt to insist on corroboration of Edge's writing elsewhere is nonsense. Edge was a witness and had no need to fabricate matters, especially regarding Staunton, who was a bull in a china shop throughout his career and would have given, by his own actions, any note-taker plenty of ammunition. KW wants to eliminate him as a witness (first-hand information); and since there were no other witnesses as close to Morphy, then KW does not have to seek evidence to refute him (Edge), another instance of laziness by KW, with disastrous results on his writings and character.

As given in this essay, I have found KW unreliable on certain points, but the only valid conclusion that can be drawn from that is that he was unreliable on those points, not on practically everything he wrote. However, KW sees "errors" in Edge and therefore concludes illogically that he is totally unreliable, a sophistry whose reasoning could be used to eliminate KW's work also! Here's more stuff for the garbage can.

Morphy and Fiske did not find him "dishonorable"--this is only KW's conjecture, with no proof whatsoever. Again into the garbage can it goes (It is also irrelevant to the topics of our debate).

KW's Sept. 21 letter, p. 1, para 5: Contrary to KW's undocumented assertion, "the mid-twentieth meaning of the word" is not essentially different from "that of the mid-nineteenth". (I find it ironically amusing that KW should write about "the sentence being read in full" when the "sentence" he cited was only a small part of a much larger one, which he never cited or summarized! Not to overlook the fact that readers were misled into thinking Edge was writing to M., not Fiske!) Also it is his job to eliminate any unintended meaning, which he failed to do (My detailed analysis in CN 1417 was never refuted by him).

KW (para 6) "most likely Morphy had never been Edge's friend..."; then why did KW use "friendship"

to describe their relationship? (To back up his insinuation of course).

KW, same para: I see nothing wrong in Edge being a "promoter" of Morphy, and KW gives no reason why this should be an evil word; after all, he himself is a promoter of his own journalistic efforts. This has nothing to do with the topics under discussion.

KW, same para: KW believes "the quotation demands a reappraisal of the Morphy-Edge relationship, and that in its turn leads to a new view of the Morphy-Staunton relationship": What KW, or anyone else, "believes" is irrelevant; what is relevant is the proof needed to substantiate such beliefs, which otherwise become meaningless hot air, written under the illusion perhaps that truths are created by prefacing them with the word "believes". Without proof no connection exists between his "belief" and the quote. Into the garbage can it goes.

KW here is simply glossing over what he had written in the insinuation paragraph: The only reply he could make would be to explicate his own paragraph and show, beyond a reasonable doubt, that there was no insinuation (as I did on the opposite side of the matter in CN 1417). This he never did--because he would have failed in the attempt.

KW (para 7): Flatly untrue and refuted since CN 1417. KW insists that his deliberate omission of the recipient's name was normal research procedure, which is flatly untrue; and he forgets that if he inserts Fiske's name in his insinuation paragraph, the result is a meaningless hodge-podge. With his left hand KW says he favors openness and truth, with his right hand he suppresses crucial evidence (Analyzed before in this essay, under "R."; also in CN 1417 but ignored there as usual by KW).

KW's W: A half-truth he knew was such since my CN 1172 (p 76) to Diggle revealed it: Staunton excised the Anti-Book statement quoted in a M. letter before printing it in his column; and in another letter said he had written to an anonymous friend of M. in Paris, explaining the excision. "...when Morphy denied knowing such a person, Staunton had his chance to crush Morphy completely by identifying the party, which he was certainly obligated to do. Instead, he remained silent. ... In practically all his other disputes in his lifetime, Staunton replied; this is the only one in which he was at a loss for words in defending himself." I would also add that it is hardly proper or sensible to negotiate a match through conversation (instead of writing), especially when it involves making some remark about it to a presumed and unidentified third party who would relay the words to M.

My apologies for being so late with this essay.

Cordially,



Frank Skoff

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Dear Mr. Winter,

Through the courtesy of Mr. Blair I have received the page containing your startling information on Item 6 of his contribution to CN, dealing with the 1982 claim by Whyld that Edge was "Morphy's lover". Aided by this new information, a bird's-eye view of the elements will provide CN readers with sufficient perspective of the matter:

1) It is the expository writer's job to write clear and lucid prose, including clarification of words with multiple meanings and the removal of any ambiguities caused by the emotional use of metaphors, similes, or other figurative language; he must also cite evidence to justify such meanings.

2) A reading of the entire Edge-Fiske letter does not justify KW's "lover" claim, or insinuation: He had a copy of the letter and knew it did not; nor did his paragraph in the COMPANION. However, his eye was caught by these words: "I have been a lover, a brother, a mother to you; I have made you an idol, a god..." Nothing much in these emotional metaphors except for "lover", whose multiple meanings and consequent ambiguity afford the opportunity for obfuscation and insinuation should a writer wish to act under the cover of darkness, not in the light of needed evidence.

3) Edge in his letter, upset over his lack of recognition by the chess world, naturally used emotional language, often metaphorical, which in his quote KW treats as though it were literal and matter-of-fact prose by deliberately not making his exposition lucid; even metaphors may need explication, especially ambiguous ones, but KW was careful not to give any; also no evidence was ever set forth as justification.

4) After the word "lover" in his quote, KW could have inserted a short explanation in brackets (e.g., "friend" or "companion" etc.) and made things clear, but he deliberately avoided clarity of any sort.

He also stated the opinion that M. "could have passed for a woman", a neat way of backing up his insinuation. In our debate KW never cited proof for it--because there is none. Merely because someone may have thought so does not make it true, particularly when the overwhelming majority of the opinions on M. disagree with KW. To sum up, by purely verbal trickery KW achieved his insinuation or smear.

5) Mr. Winter's data completely contradicts KW's public pose that the quote was metaphorical.

5a) Furthermore, the same data enables one to deduce, in general terms, what must have gone through KW's mind prior to publication. Having said in 1982 that Edge was Morphy's lover, KW found himself lacking proof (otherwise he would have bluntly stated his smear as a fact). Under the circumstances, the only avenue available to him was to exploit the multiple meanings of "lover", feeling sure the reader would not interpret it metaphorically; and his feeling turned out to be accurate, as attested by the reaction of many CN readers. Thus the word turned out to be ideal for creating the insinuation maliciously and cunningly concocted for the COMPANION. (I say "maliciously" because he always publicly insisted the sentence was only metaphorical, though numerous readers read it as literal; and he himself, we now know, privately held the same literal view.)

5b) One more obfuscation was needed, the impression that Edge was writing to Morphy, not to Fiske, which he achieved by simply omitting Fiske's name. Again, clarity was necessary but not provided.

5c) Morphy and Edge were NOT "friends", so there was no "'friendship'", the word used by KW and also helpful for creating the insinuation.

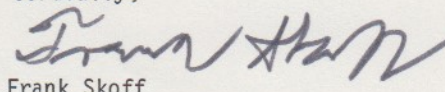
5d) KW had a perfect defense, so he thought: Readers would interpret "lover" sexually, KW would maintain it was metaphorical and that he was not responsible for misinterpretations. However, he was responsible for clarity as well as proof, neither of which he provided.

5e) KW was not restricted, as he has maintained, to the tiny quote etc. as given in my detailed analysis of Nov. 17; he also could have given Fiske's name (Evidence: Contact with the anonymous letter-owner).

6) Despite his lack of evidence and clarity, KW still remains the winner: He has had four years of public discussion of his smear of Morphy and Edge; and no matter how things turn out now, there will always be those who will remember only the smear; others will say "Where there's smoke, there's fire". That is the great advantage of putting forth smears and discussing them under the guise of a debate presumably aiming at the truth.

In his contribution Diggle merely parrots KW and therefore needs no reply from me.

Cordially,



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