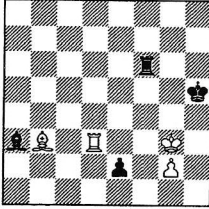


## Accommodating reality to the eye

by Harrie Grondijs

*More words about Antiform.*

*For SN I was given another (last?) chance for a short article about a thematic issue. The subject: the compound move. The compound move is a container of two effects one of which is bound to materialize. The most common implementation attaches one of the effects, usually stalemate, to the capturing of the piece. The article ended with a cross-over to the never-to-appear article about 'Anti-form':*



J. Timman, Endspielstudien, 1994, =, 440.11

1. Bd1 Rf3† - compound move as antidote - 2. Kh2 (get a move like 2. Bc2 permissible and well motivated and you have achieved Antiform) 2. ... e1Q 3. Bxf3† 3. Kh4 4. Rxa3 Qe5† 5. Kh1 draw. The nicest form of rebuttal of a compound move is to force Antiform: withdrawal of the fiendish compound move on the enemy's own initiative.

Chapter 19 of NEVERENDING is devoted to Antiform. Recently, I have revisited the concept of Antiform. I realized that it is a template that accommodates a large part of the existing body of studies to an unmovable eye and - what is more - that it holds many possibilities for future endgame composition.

I had written the chapter without studying two of the key books on the subject, for the simple and unforgivable reason that they were not in my library.

The first book is ANTIFORM by Franz Palatz and A.W. Mongrédién. Once I browsed it cursorily and borrowed the concepts of *Ad-decoy* (forcing a piece to a certain square) and *Ex-decoy* (forcing a piece away from a certain square) because they were needed for my logical excursion. The other book André - 'trois fois champion de France' - Chéron's LES ECHECS ARTISTIQUES I did not consult at all (unknowing of the little treatise called 'A new theory of Antiform' that is inside).

### Concerning Palatz and Mongrédién's Antiform

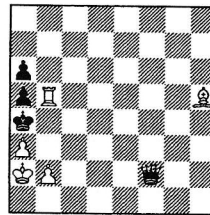
Looking back I regret the lacunae caused by not studying my references.

ANTIFORM reprints the classical definition for the concept:

*'The Antiform of any Chess-Motion consists in its Retraction (Un-doing or Reversal), the aim of the side 'willing' the Retraction being directly opposed to that of the side willing the Motion (Franz Palatz, DEUTSCHE SCHACHZEITUNG, August 1927): An extremely flexible definition for those days: its very impreciseness and its keeping quiet about critical and anti-critical moves, makes it well-suited for endgame compositions! 'The whole subject, so slow in its evolution and so intricate in its details, was at length reduced to a single Formula (ANTIFORM, page 13).'*

The question can be asked whether one can recognize Antiform per se, without context? Probably not, Antiform is pure denial, is not a combination that exists by itself: it is a combination that demolishes a combination.

From Palatz and Mongrédién's ground-breaking book we learn that switchback is not Antiform when the side that performs the switchback is acting on its own initiative for both 'Motions'. For that it will be necessary that the combined manoeuvres express the opposed egos of White and Black. Normally such a strategic switchback will be shown by the black pieces. Black manoeuvres to a certain 'more favourable' position, but White forces him back, or White forces the black piece to a certain square and Black reverses the manoeuvre. Thus the following switchback by Wotawa is *not* Antiform.



A. Wotawa, +, 3110.22

1. Be8 axb5 2. Bh5 Qd2 3. Bf7 Qc2 3. Be6 Qc4†

5. h3† Qxb3† 6. Bxb3 mate.

White, for whatever reason, *wants* to play to e8, and, again for whatever reason, *wants* to return to h5. The study only shows an optical and not a strategic effect.

In problem literature the rules that the composer must obey are much more strict and precise than is the case for the endgame study. Achieving set tasks in clever ways is the paradigm of today's problem. This aim results in formal beauty but also in rigidity that is the natural enemy of the endgame study as it wants to evoke a real battle. Its characteristic defiance of hair-splitting, coupled to a manifest craving for echoing geometric motifs, make it very hard to devise and impose rules on an endgame study anyway: it would be a different game. Thus the aesthetic rules for endgame composing, are more relaxed, 'easy-going', than those for problem composing: no one claims to have it perfectly right, it is all phantasy and goodwill.

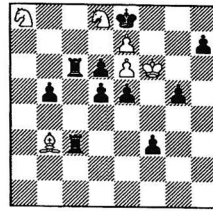
The conclusion is justified that endgame studies are 'soft edge' and problems are 'hard edge' and therefore study literature is much more given to images and impressions (Majestic, wonderful, deeply hidden etc.).

The dark side of this phenomenon is a very wide discrepancy of the appreciation of an endgame study by different experts. But there is always a bright side as well: the 'soft edges' allow us to take a problem concept and play with it: the overall impression will outdo the purity of thematic representation.

### Concerning Chéron's Les Echecs Artistiques

LES ECHECS ARTISTIQUES was written 7 years after ANTIFORM and Chéron's opinion can be regarded as a critical appraisal of that book's theory.

So far, Chéron tells us, Antiform has been said to be a voluntary Black manoeuvre. But in many examples what is called Antiform is not a voluntary but a forced manoeuvre as it causes some weakening from which White benefits. A 'real' Black would never dream of voluntarily undertaking an action that could damage his cause. And, Chéron adds, it is not fair to argue that the Antiform can be called a voluntary manoeuvre when it delays the mate by one or more moves. If that were so, then all black moves that delay the mate one move (compared to the threat) would have to be deemed voluntary, and that, obviously, defeats the object.



F. Palatz, Basler Nachrichten, 1927, 5m, 612.27

1. Nb7! (threatens 2. Nc7† Rxc7 3. Nxd6 #) Ra6  
2. Bxd5 (threatening a Plachutta with 3. Bc6!) Rc8  
(parries the threat, for if now 3. Bc6† Raxc6!! and no mate) 3. Bxf3 g4 4. Bg4 and 5. Bh5 #.

Imagine yourself in the role of a writer of drama criticisms, who has been invited to the theatre for the general repetition of a new play, says Chéron, and suppose nothing interesting at all would happen on stage until finally the author of the play steps forward to inform you that the play has ended! The real plot [eg. the Plachutta that fails to turn up in the solution of the above problem. HHG] had been conducted behind the scenes and thus the author had realized his revolutionary artistic intention. The same happens with Antiform when the intended combination (that is much more impressive than its elimination) never appears. The visitor to such a 'spectacle' says Chéron has every right to call it no more than a 'mystifying Monster'. In the case of the Palatz problem 1. ... Rc8 is played against Black's wish, it is beneficial to White alone.

(Always according to Chéron) there exists just one way to prove Antiform as a voluntary reversal of a prior (imagined) critical action, and that is *when in the remainder of the solution Black is forced to reverse his Antiform manoeuvre.*

Before we proceed with Chéron's view let us agree upon the following notation in our analytical remarks:

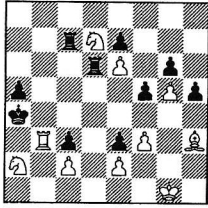
PROFORM1: the positive form of a combination that the Antiform is supposed to reverse;

ANTIFORM: reversal of a prior, sometimes imaginary, manoeuvre;

PROFORM2: reversal of the Antiform

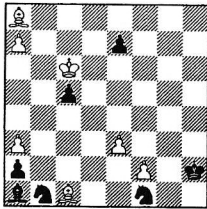
Thus, by Chéron's book we get for a true Antiform: ANTIFORM followed by PROFORM2.

This 'complete' Plachutta . by André Chéron himself passes through the gate (but magnanimously Chéron also endorses a later problem by Palatz):



A. Chéron, *Le Temps*,  
1933, 7m, 712.57

1. f4! Ra6 ANTIFORM-A 2. Bg2 Rc4 ANTIFORM-B  
3. Bd5!! Rc7 PROFORM2-A 4. Bb7!! Rd6 - or Rxe6  
- PROFORM-B 5. Bc6† followed by mate in two.  
In NEVERENDING I demanded that Antiform  
must be preceded by a Proform in the same  
(main) line, obviously the Proform1. My reasoning  
went that only in that manner can one distinguish  
it from 'plain' anti-critical.



L.B. Salkind, *Shakhmaty*,  
1927, 4th Prize, +, 56.43

1. Kd7 Bh8 VOLUNTARY PROFORM1 - anti-  
metocritical, ie. playing across the target square  
g7 - 2. Bb2 Bxb2 FORCED ANTIFORM -  
metocritical - 3. Bh1 a1Q 4. a8Q Kh3 5. Qf3†  
Kh4 6. Qf4† Kh5 7. Bf3† Kg6 8. Be4† and soon  
Black will be mated.

Furthermore, following NeverEnding, because the  
similarity with problems is only an as-if, a mask,  
it doesn't really matter much whether the reversal  
is forced or not. Therefore also the result of  
indirect (forced) manoeuvres can well deserve the  
label Antiform.

For want of good examples I concentrated on the  
distinction between Antiform and Anticritical.  
Antiform I thought required showing both the  
Proform1 and the Antiform. In case the Proform  
is the preparation of a combination by forcing the  
black pieces to a critical square (eg. drawing  
rooks to certain squares in preparation of the  
Plachutta interference) then the Antiform would

undo the Proform by playing the moves in the  
other direction as in Chéron's problem: 'Moves  
that restore the effects of a prior weakening - []  
are anti-form.'

A logical consequence from Chéron's viewpoint  
(and one that I would certainly have  
acknowledged) is that the sequence PROFORM1  
ANTIFORM is a thematical demonstration of a  
'manoeuvres order' defect. The defect being that  
the required Proform comes too soon. A  
correction (an implicit weakening in the Antiform  
that allows for the win) must puts things right  
again for White.

Both Chéron's book and the co-production of  
Palatz and Mongrédién are books that build from  
the notion that Antiform must be a voluntary  
black action. White has no way to debunk the  
black manoeuvre and is forced to draw the pieces  
back to their original slots. For the study think it  
is just as well to admit the label Antiform for a  
forced reversal of a prior voluntary black action.  
Combining Chéron's insights with the viewpoint  
developed in NEVERENDING we can compose a  
kind of scheme, inspired by the grids which were  
so typically used by the New-German experts. I  
have tried not to push the formalism any further  
than is strictly needed for a composer to go to  
work.

I have chosen the term 3-tier to indicate the  
presence of both Proforms and Antiform  
(otherwise it is 2-tier, for which Chéron's  
compositions set an example).

**Type W Perfect 3-tier black Antiform:**

Forced Proform1 - voluntary Antiform -  
Forced Proform2

**Type X Imperfect 3-tier black Antiform:**

Forced Proform1 - voluntary Antiform -  
new solution

**Type Y Perfect 3-tier white Antiform:**

Voluntary Proform1-forced Antiform -  
Voluntary Proform2

**Z Imperfect 3-tier white Antiform:**

Voluntary Proform1-forced Antiform-new  
solution

For fear of ending up as a language philosopher  
I would rather not have a discussion on exactly  
what in last resort is 'voluntary' and what is  
'forced'. Let's just say that these notions refer to  
the intention of the virtual players. Ie. if White  
threatens a Plachutta, then Black although forced  
to take action, does so voluntarily if other moves  
lose faster. What is important is that the  
manoeuvres are in opposition at first sight (as in

Wotawa's study in the beginning of this article). On the other hand I am charmed by Chéron's theory that implies that Black needs White's assistance to prove his 'freedom'.

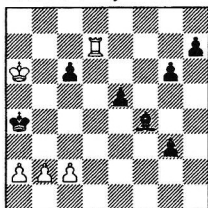
### What's the use?

If we extend Antiform outside of the realms of New German architecture we might take almost any established manoeuvre in an endgame study and enquire after its Antiform.

Every practical chess player loves the effect of, say, compound moves or split moves, but only few will have realized the technical nature of the combination that thrilled them so. It seems that except for Zugzwang it is indecent to seek names for what gives us pleasure. One undesirable side effect of this chastity is that Zugzwang is considered to be the only identifiably retrievable 'beauty spot'. Today we know how many mutual Zugzwang positions exist in the ending Rook and pawn versus Rook, but who can tell us how many cases are won with a split move manoeuvre or Antiform? Admittedly: to summon forward all suitable cases of Antiform from a Database is a much more difficult request than finding instances of, say, split moves. The way to go about it is to find all the switchbacks (but not necessarily *precise* switchbacks) and then intellectually judge the character of the manoeuvring.

### Do Antiform studies exist?

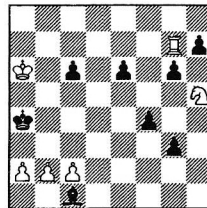
Most 'Antiforms' I have come across are rather embryonal, but a modern composer can round some of them up and do some work on them. In the absence of a program (and Thomson's Database) I decided to browse through all the endgame studies published in 1960 in my DB (numbering 208) and look out for Antiform or Antiform-suitable manoeuvres. Much to my surprise I found a number of candidates, about 7 in all, where I suspect the presence of Antiform. I here reprint some of my finds.



A. Wotawa, Deutsche Schachzeitung, 1960, +, 130.35

1. c3 (but not 1. Rb7 Bc1 2. c3 Bxb2) Bc1 VOLUNTARY PROFORM1 2. Ra7 Be3 FORCED ANTIFORM 3. Rb7 Bc5 4. Rb3 g2 5. Ra3† Bxa3 6. h3 mate.

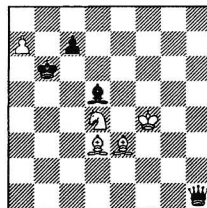
In the Wotawa we witness an embryonal Antiform that I tried to bend into a complete Antiform (Type W).



H. Grondijs, version, original, +, 131.36

1. Rd7 e5 2. Nxf4 (2. Ng?? h5!) Bxf4 FORCED PROFORM1 3. c3 Bc1 VOLUNTARY ANTIFORM 4. Ra7 Be3 FORCED PROFORM2 5. Rb7 Bc5 6. Rb3 g2 7. Ra3† Bxa3 8. h3 mate.

Note the changing role of the separate manoeuvres. Wotawa would have easily found this setting, or another - better - one, if only he had been challenged to it!



G. Kasparyan, CeskoslovenskySach, 1960, 1st Hon. Mention, =, 3051.11

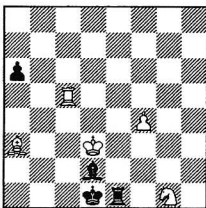
1. a8Q (1. Ne6† Kb7 2. Ba6† Ka8) Bxa8 2. Ne6† Kb7 3. Bc4 Qh3 4. Bd4 Ka6 5. Bd3† Kb7 6. Be4 Qh4† 7. Kf3 (7. Ke3? Qg3† 8. Ke2 Qf4 9. Kd3 Kc8 -+) Kc8 8. Bf5† Kb7 9. Be4 Qg5 10. Be3 Qh4 11. Bd4 = (not: 11. Bf2? Qh3† 12. Kf4 Qf1† 13. ke3 Kb6 14. Kf3† Ka6 -+).

Kasparyan's study made me wonder what it would take to create a forelife in which the black bishop would move from a8 or b7 to d5. That move then would be the Antiform and 1. ... Ba8 would be

Proform2.

The most perfect example of type W I came across is the one by Tjavlovski.

1. **Bc1** (1. **Ne2?** **Rxe2** 2. **Bc1** **Re3†** 3. **Kd4** **Re8 =**)  
 1. ... **Bxc1** FORCED PROFORM1 2. **Ne2** **Bxf4**  
 VOLUNTARY ANTIFORM 3. **Rc1** **Bxc1** FORCED  
 PROFORM2 4. **Nc3** mate.



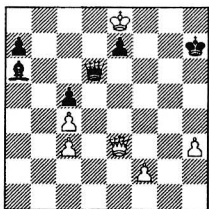
V. Tjavlovski, L'Italia  
 Scacchistica, 1960, 1st  
 Commended, +, 441.11

### Progression d'Effets

Even though Nico Cortlever always denied that his studies were more than just puzzles, I suggest that most of his studies have something to say beyond a mere clashing of sword upon shield...

Cortlever is the master of *progressions d'effets*.

The starting point: a simple (if brilliant) manoeuvre [as here the Duras invention]. The goal: to ascend one spiral turn of the Tower of Babel. The means: ushering the donkey pieces forward with gentle Zugzwang. The limit: the sky ...



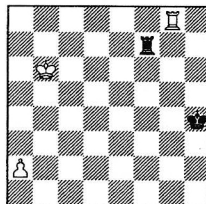
N. Cortlever, Schakend  
 Nederland, 1991, Special  
 Prize, =, 4030.43

1. **Qe4†** **Qg6** 2. **Qxg6** **Kxg6** 3. **Kxe7** **Bb7** 4. **Kd6** **a5**  
 5. **Kxc5** **Bc6** 6. **f3** **Bd7** FORCED PROFORM1 7. **f4**  
**Bc6** VOLUNTARY ANTIFORM 8. **h4** **Bd7** FORCED  
 PROFORM2 the trick is that 8. ... **Kg7** allows the  
 h-pawn passage to h5: 9. **h5** **Kh6** 10. **f5** **Kxf5** 11. **f6**

= 9. **f5†** **Kf6** - with the bishop on c6 the pawn might have been captured - 10. **h5** **Kg5** 11. **h6**  
**Kxb6** 12. **f6** **Kg6** 13. **Kd6** =.

Accommodating reality to the eye (a suggestion) Chéron was unwilling to watch a show that would have to be 'imagined' by the spectator. Personally, extending Nunn's precedence, I think it might be worth considering composing as 'seeing things': drawing from the reality of existing positions (in principle all positions) the strings of pearls that tickle our imagination.

In this context consider the following position:



A. Chéron, Traité, 1952,  
 +, 400.10 (minor  
 alteration)

The position after White's first move arises in an analysis by Chéron of 1952, that John Nunn repeats in his infallible SECRETS OF ROOK ENDINGS (see page 99). 1. **a4** **Rf6†** 2. **Kb5** **Rf5†** 3. **Kb4** **Rf4†** 4. **Kb3** **Rf3†** 5. **Kc2** **Ra3** 6. **Ra8** **Kg5** 7. **a5** **Kg6** 8. **a6** **Kg7** ('Black to move would draw, but the extra tempo is decisive' says Nunn) 8. **Kb2** **Rf3** 9. **Rb8** wins. If Black had held the move after 8. ... **Kg7** he would have drawn by 8". ... **Rh3** 9. **Ra7†** (if 9. **Rb8** **Ra3!**) **Kf6** (that is why 8". ... **Rf3** would be an awkward mistake: 9. **Ra7†** **Kg6** tempo loss 19. **Rb7** wins) 10. **Kb2** **Rh8** 4. **Kb3** **Ke6** 5. **Kb4** **Kd6** 6. **Kb5** **Rb8†** 7. **Rb7** **Rxb7** 8. **axb7** **Kc7** = (difficult but true, see also Nunn's diagram 44).

Sometimes I wonder. Am I reading chess books properly? I have great difficulties grasping the winning procedure but the repetition of the famous Fenton-Potter manoeuvre **Kb5/Kb4/Kb3/Kc2**: it caught my browsing eye the moment I turned the page.

### Literature

ANTIFORM, F: Palatz and F. Mongrédién, 1927  
 LES ECHECS ARTISTIQUES, André Chéron, 1934  
 SECRETS OF ROOK ENDINGS, John Nunn, 1992  
 NEVERENDING, H. Grondijs, 1994