



# Notes to *Murphy* by Samuel Beckett

Annotations by Nicholas Johnson and Elizabeth Mannion

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<b>Notes to <i>Murphy</i> by Samuel Beckett</b>
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These introductory endnotes are intended to assist those students encountering *Murphy* for the first time. We borrow from three sources: C.J. Ackerley's *Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Ackerley and S.E. Gontarski's (eds.) *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett* (Grove Press, 2004) (also published, with identical content, as the *Faber Companion* in the UK and Europe); and Robert Harrison's *Samuel Beckett's Murphy: A Critical Excursion* (University of Georgia Press, 1968). Students are encouraged to seek out these sources (as well as those compiled by Ackerley—see his “Critical Studies Relevant to *Murphy*” on pp. 218-224 of *Demented Particulars*) for more comprehensive notes. Many thanks to our students for their generous suggestions.—Nicholas Johnson and Elizabeth Mannion, Summer 2012.

### Publication History

*Murphy* is Beckett's first published novel (he had published only critical articles, poetry, and short stories before it, and had failed to complete to his satisfaction an earlier attempted novel called *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*). It was written by hand in English in six notebooks over ten months, begun in London in August 1935 and completed in Dublin in June 1936. After numerous rejections by publishers on both sides of the Atlantic, Routledge (London) published the novel in 1938. The novel did not find a major audience until the first Grove edition in 1957, by which time Beckett was relatively well known as the author of *Waiting for Godot*. Though Beckett began translating *Murphy* into French shortly after publication with the help of Alfred Péron, the French edition was not published until 1947. A German edition, the translation of which also involved substantial contributions from Beckett, followed in 1959. The most authoritative non-annotated text available today, both incorporating changes and emendations made by Beckett across the languages and correcting various publication errors across the many English editions, is the 2009 Faber & Faber version, edited by C.J.J. Mays.

### Structure and Genesis

The *Companion* opens its description with the line that the novel “is a gigantic joke made up of infinite tiny ones,” and the novel continues to offer happy hunting for paranoid (and fantastically erudite) readers. For example: *Murphy* is the first of Beckett's long series of character names (and novel names) that begin with the letter “M,” the thirteenth letter of the alphabet; *Murphy* contains 13 chapters; Beckett was born on 13 April. Though suspicions of a master plan are not integral to understanding the meaning of the novel as one reads it, such details contribute to a sense of both a “dense fabric” and a “strong intentionality” in the novel's composition. It may be of interest, for example, that he decided early on in the writing that the kite-flying episode would conclude the book. On the surface, *Murphy* is much more readable than Beckett's first attempted novel, and it was written in a period when Beckett began to move away from Joyce's densely allusive writing style. At the same time, when one probes the text and Beckett's notebooks for evidence of literary and philosophical cross-reference, these depths do indeed open up. It would be fair to call *Murphy* (as Ackerley and Gontarski do) a “philosophical novel,” albeit a highly comedic one. References to philosophers/philosophies that informed Beckett's composition should help readers to understand the arguments in the novel. These guiding references are



incorporated in the notes below as “bold-faced names,” but as always, a deeper understanding of both the novel and the philosophy can be achieved by reading further in the original texts.

### Characters

- **Murphy:** Cartesian (see **René Descartes**) torn between *pensum* (mind) and *punctum* (body). A “strict non-reader” who simply wants to be; and to sit bound, naked in his rocking chair, but who suffers from desire (for food, for Celia). Dubliner now living in London.
- **Celia:** Murphy’s girl; a prostitute in London since her parents died on the *Morro Castle*. Her measurements are given in “demented particularity” at the start of Chapter 2 (Cf. the measurements of the Venus de Milo in Beckett’s Whoroscope Notebook). Celia is body to Murphy as mind (Harrison 39).
- **Mr. Kelly:** Celia’s kite-flying grandfather who, as Harrison notes, exists only in relation to Celia.
- **Neary:** Murphy’s former teacher at the Pythagorean Academy in Cork (See **Pythagoras of Samos**). A Corkman who has money; “Neary’s movement... may be seen as an inverted parody of Murphy’s, for it consists of a perpetual endeavor to make the mind a willing servant of the body” (Harrison 51). ♥ Miss Counihan
- **Wylie:** A tall, thin Newtonian (see **Isaac Newton**) who is in a “pseudocouple” straight man/comic man relationship with Neary; ♥ Miss Counihan
- **Miss Counihan:** ♥ Murphy; “the name intimates the cornice of desire, Cathleen ni Houlihan, Nancy Cunard, and Voltaire’s COUNÉgonde. The subplot finds her launched in picaresque pursuit of Murphy. Her humiliation is complete when Celia, her rival, identifies Murphy’s charred remnants by the nevus on the buttock” (*Grove*, p. 112).
- **Cooper:** Alcoholic (“cooper” is a barrel-maker associated in old Dublin with drink) who does Neary’s bidding. Suffers from an inability to sit, possibly prefiguring Clov in *Endgame*; makes up for having only one eye by possessing three testicles.
- **Mr. Endon:** A chess-playing patient at the MMM. His name is the Greek preposition for “within,” and he represents the “little world” or “microcosmopolitan” in the novel. According to the *Companion* he is based on Beckett’s great friend Thomas MacGreevy. Murphy envies his ability to escape Will through aesthetic contemplation (Cf. Arthur Schopenhauer).
- **The Clinch brothers:** Twins who work at the MMM. Formal name of Tom Clinch seems direct from Swift’s “Clever Tom Clinch, Going to Be Hanged” (1727). Bim is head nurse and has a crush on Ticklepenny. The nicknames “Bim” and “Bom” are more sinister and important in Beckett, coming from well-known Russian clowns in the 1920s-30s, and emblems for him of state-authorized comedy concealing cruelty. The names appear in drafts of both *Godot* and *Endgame*, and feature in published versions of *How It Is*, *Ping*, and *What Where*.
- **Rosie Dew:** Spiritualist owner of the dachshund Nelly; Murphy meets her in Hyde Park. According to Knowlson (in *Damned to Fame*, p. 201), based on MacGreevy’s landlady in London, Hester Dowden.
- **Miss Carridge:** Landlady to Murphy and Celia.
- **Austin Ticklepenny:** Nurse at the MMM; writer of bad verse and object of Bim’s affections. Clearly a satire of Austin Clarke, a poet and contemporary of Beckett who was institutionalized and force-fed in the same manner that distresses Ticklepenny. Beckett had

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pilloried Clarke's verse in his review of "Recent Irish Poetry"; Clarke returned the favor when *Murphy* was published, but did not take Oliver St. John Gogarty's advice to sue for libel (Beckett had appeared as a witness against Gogarty in a libel trial in 1937).

**Note: The endnotes are in sequence, numbered here by their Grove edition page numbers, followed by Faber edition page numbers in parentheses**

## Chapter 1

### London, where we meet Murphy in his favored position

Grove 1 (Faber 3)-*Quid pro quo*: Latin; this for that/what for what/give and take.

2 (4)-*section six*: meta-fictional gesture; refers to Chapter 6, in which we get inside Murphy's mind. First "Cartesian" joke of the novel, in that it takes his mind-body duality as a given.

**René Descartes (1596-1650)**: Founding figure of Western rationalist philosophy, figure of lasting interest in Beckett's writing, and a key for much of the plot and many of the jokes in *Murphy*. Most famous for the statement "cogito, ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am), his philosophy posited a strict mind-body dualism (the mind as a thinking thing, *res cogitans*, and the body as a physical thing, *res extensa*, two incommensurable elements that can interact, according to Descartes, at the pineal gland). His contributions in mathematics include the invention of algebra and the Cartesian coordinate plane; the geometric figures that appear frequently in the novel are references to this expression in "two dimensions." Beckett studied Descartes in Paris from 1928-30, and his notes fed both his first published poem *Whoroscope* (1930) and this novel. It is important to note that in spite of early works tracing the strong Cartesian connections in this novel (see Samuel Mintz, *Samuel Beckett's Murphy: A Cartesian Novel*, 1959, and Hugh Kenner, *Samuel Beckett: A Critical Study*, 1961), the approach here is ironic, showing the absurd results of perfectly applying the ideas of Descartes.

2 (4)-*Nerbudda*: a sacred river in central India now known as the Narmada River in the state of Madhya Pradesh, traditional boundary between North and South India; Beckett is using the name as written during British rule. Associated with yogic/Hindu practices.

2 (4)-*Pythagorean*: adjective form for follower of Pythagoras.

**Pythagoras of Samos (c. 570-c. 495 BCE)** Philosopher, founder of a mystical school that believed in the significance of mathematics in understanding nature, cosmology, and music. Held that the universe expressed regularity, correspondence, and harmony (see *Apmonia* note below) and thus gives rise to a rational tradition that holds that objects of thought are *more real* than those of sense perception, a legacy against which Beckett goes on to define his life's work. Pythagoras is also a figure obliquely relevant to the Nationalist critique in the novel, since W.B. Yeats was interested in the occult dimensions of neo-Pythagorean theories of "harmony of the spheres," and astrology/cosmology is the target of frequent satire here.

2 (4)-*Apmonia*: idiosyncratic coinage by Beckett derived from the Greek word for "harmony" (*ἁρμονία*), which in upper case reads like *APMONIA* in the Latin alphabet. Jest on Neary's Pythagorean pretensions. "Pre-established harmony" is also central to the doctrine of Leibniz, one of the descendants/critics of Descartes (see full note in Chapter Six).

2 (4)-*auscultated*: examined via stethoscope.



2 (4)-*Petrouchka*: title character of 1910-11 opera by Igor Stravinsky, about a puppet with human feelings; apt metaphor both for Neary's heart (as here) and for wider tension with the novel between the "little world" (*res cogitans*) and "big world" (*res extensa*), human thoughts contained in enclosed/defined spaces.

3 (5)-*sublation*: traditional English translation for G.F.W. Hegel's term *Aufhebung*, a word central in his philosophy that refers to dialectic contradiction/negation as well as preservation/elevation. Beckett's use of the word is a tip-off that one of the sources for Neary is Professor Henry S. Macran, Trinity College Hegelian who used to "hold court" in Neary's Pub off Dawson Street.

3 (5)-*Teneriffe*: part of the Canary Islands (Spain), idiosyncratically spelled here with a double "f."

3 (5)-*tetrakyt*: type of equilateral  $\Delta$ , intentional misspelling of "tetraktys," a mystical figure of perfection in Pythagorean geometry. The misspelling with "kyl" invokes the kite-flying episode that will end the novel. Beckett's source was Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy (Companion)*.

3 (5)-*Ringsakiddy and Ballinclashet*: both towns located in Co. Cork (Ireland)

3 (5)-*Blotch*: a skin eruption (likely a boil); possibly venereal disease, given the context.

4 (6)-*conarium*: pineal gland of the brain, which as Descartes points out is the one organ that has no correlative (i.e. is single rather than paired). Compare Monsieur Conaire in *Mercier and Camier*, who Camier can never seem to meet.

## Chapter 2

### London, Celia explains to grandfather Kelly that Murphy is Murphy

8 (9)-*off the zinc*: indicating that she sat at the bar, rather than a table; zinc was a favorite countertop in European licensed premises, since it is naturally anti-bacterial.

8 (10)-*the ill-fated Morro Castle*: A passenger liner (something of a party boat) of the Ward Line that made regular cruises between New York City and Havana. An on-board fire led to its sinking off the coast of Monmouth County, New Jersey on September 8, 1934. Over 100 died.

9 (11)-*Stadium Street*: Geometric jokes on the linkage between various types of triangles and cosmology abound in the London geographies in question in this chapter. For a street-view of the mouth of Stadium Street, use this link:

<http://maps.google.ie/maps?q=edith+grove+london&ll=51.480199,-0.179319&spn=0.001054,0.002661&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-a&hnear=Edith+Grove,+London,+United+Kingdom&gl=ie&t=m&z=19&layer=c&cbll=51.480199,-0.179319&panoid=N1D-TVxDKOJlQT2wDyHZaQ&cbp=12,179.98,,0,0>

9 (11)-*hypogastrium*: lowest region of the abdomen

10 (13)-*Barbara, Baccardi and Baroko...Bramantip*: the last is one of Aristotle's syllogisms; the others (except Baccardi, which is a brand of rum) are medieval terms that refer to different types of syllogisms. Syllogism: an argument expressed in the form of two propositions: common, middle, conclusion (conclusion is the result of the first two).

11 (13)-*Campanella's City of the Sun*: a philosophical work by Tommaso Campanella originally published in Italian in 1602. Of the Utopian school, inspired by Plato's *Republic*.

12 (14)-*caecum*: part of the large intestine.

13 (16)-*Ixion...Tantalus*: denizens of the gloom, as described by Beckett in the *Whoroscope* Notebook (December 1935), the almost-illegible notes deriving (in part) from Lempriere: Ixion: King of Thessaly. Married Dia daughter of Eioneus. Father by her of Pirithous. Murdered

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treacherously at a banquet, precipitating him into a fiery pit. Zeus created a phantom resembling her, by which Ixion begot a centaur. Chained by Hermes to a wheel which he rolled perpetually in lower world, scourged & ejaculating “Benefactors should be honoured.” Tantalus: Son of Zeus & Pluto, Father of Pelops & Niobe. King of Lydia or Corinth. Having divulged confidences of Zeus, made to him at table of the God, he was punished in lower world by being afflicted with a raging thirst & placed in a lake whose waters receded as soon as he made to drink. Above his head branches of fruit likewise receded. And a boulder ever threatened to crush him. According to other traditions, this punishment was for having served his son Pelops to Gods as a repast, in order to test them. Or that he stole nectar and ambrosia from table of Gods & gave them to his friends, or finally that he tricked Paleus & received golden dog of Zeus. Beckett commented in *Proust* [13]: “So that we are rather in the position of Tantalus, with this difference, that we allow ourselves to be tantalized.” He would return to the theme himself in his *Act without Words I* (1957/1963), the mute character reaching for the receding fruit with all the simian vulgarity of Kohler’s anthropoid apes [see #5.1]. (Ackerley, *DP*, 54-55).

14 (17)-*vagitus*: newborn’s first cry; compare stage directions for 1969 play *Breath*, which mentions this as a key sound in the text.

15 (17)-*pronate*: bent forward and down; prone position.

### Chapter 3 London, the Swami’s reading

17 (19)-*perigee*: point when moon is nearest to the earth.

17 (19)-*bumbailiff*: a particularly mean sort of bailiff (officer beneath sheriff)

18 (20)-*devil’s finger*: the middle finger, or *digitus infamis*, as flourished in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes [651-52], and glossed in the Dream Notebook [#478]: “digitus tertius, digitus diaboli” [L. “third finger, devil’s finger”]. The source is unknown. Beckett had used it in “Walking Out” [*MPTK*, 115], where Belacqua draws designs on the jennet’s coat; he would do so again in “First Love” [34], where the narrator recalls tracing the letters of “Lulu” with his devil’s finger into an old cowclap. This supports Harvey’s gloss [152] of the phrase “His finger” in “Serena III” as the finger of Christ that “wrote love in the dust.” (Ackerley, *DP*, 58).

18 (20)-*naevus*: skin lesion; physical placement here again suggests venereal disease, which is referred to obliquely (probably due to censorship issues) in the first lines of the phone conversation with Celia

21 (23)-*sesquiquadrate*: astrological term for planets 135° from one another

21 (23)-*malefic*: magical arts/magical (in adjective usage)

22 (24)-*Is it even so*. Murphy’s response is the line from Shakespeare preceding “Then I defy you, stars”, the epigram of the Swami’s horoscope. See *Romeo and Juliet*, V.i.24.

24 (26)-*Bollitoes*: more accurately, “Ballitoes,” as in the corrected Calder text; silk stockings secured with suspenders to corset or belt. The brand was widely advertised for some years thereafter [Vada Hart to CA]. (Ackerley, *DP*, 66).

25 (27)-*gehenna*: hell

### Chapter 4 Dublin, where we meet Neary



27 (29)-*General Post Office*: the GPO served as HQ and was the last building to surrender during the Easter Rising (1916). Neary's 'bar[ing] his head, as though the holy ground meant something to him" indicates his contempt for the Free State; specifically, the political nationalists; compare small joke at beginning of Swami's horoscope, "Famous throughout the Civilized World and the Irish Free State."

27 (29)-*John o'God's*: system of Irish state institutions for mentally ill; in Dublin argot of the period, a common euphemism for the insane. Stillorgan was (and still is) an outpatient specialist clinic, marked as middle-class and non-violent; Dundrum was (and still is) a mental hospital for the criminal and insane, more akin to a prison.

28 (30)-*a theme very near to his heart*: Ackerley reads this as an allusion to Yeats's "Easter, 1916;" specifically, the poem's reference to John MacBride and Maud Gonne (*DP*, 69).

29 (31)-*the Pillar railings*: Nelson's Pillar; stood on Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street) until being blown up by the IRA in 1966.

29 (31)-*in a bold flash-back—the night in which he was conceived*: allusion to Sterne (*Tristram Shandy*) perhaps; also connects to a theme throughout Beckett's work concerned with birth trauma and rejection of procreation in a world that is radically evil.

29 (31)-*Miss Cathleen na Hennessey*: allusion to the trope popularized in the Yeats/Gregory play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902); another shot at the Free State, but here, perhaps, more targeted at the cultural nationalists.

29 (32)-*Red Branch*: The Knights of the Red Branch was an order of warriors in Ireland during the first century CE. The hero of the Red Branch force was Cuchulain, whose statue (still in the present-day GPO) Neary has just assaulted. Neary's historical reference is either a joke on the "bum" of Cuchulain against which he was banging his head, or he is associating the Civic Guard as a fellow "Red Branch" man and thus a natural enemy of a Corkman like himself.

30 (32)-*pudenda*: external genitals; the shameful parts of something

30 (32)-*Hippasos*. Expelled from the order of the Pythagoreans for betraying its mystical secrets, c. 500 BCE. One of the Akousmatics or "listeners," those who took a vow of silence of five years when entering the sect of the Pythagoreans, as opposed to the more rigorous Mathematics.

30 (32)- *Kurt Koffka* (1886-1941), founder of the Gestalt school of psychology, a comprehensive theory of behaviour. Discusses the interaction between environment and innate capacity, hence the joke about Miss Dwyer's oneness with the ground.

30 (33)-*plaisir de rompre*: French; pleasure of breaking

31 (34)-*Maundy Thursday*: Holy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter)

34 (36)-*âme damnée*: French; damned soul. Used to refer to somebody devoted to another, who uses this person for his dirty work; compare modern Irish usage of "devilling" for an apprenticeship year under a working barrister for young graduates called to the bar.

36 (38)-*quantum of wantum*: This section in which Wylie tries to comfort Neary with a vision of a closed system is a satire of Newton.

**Isaac Newton (1642-1727)** Scientist, mathematician, natural philosopher, with an interest in both astronomy and the occult (and in many of these more arcane functions here). In his *Principia* (1687) describes fundamentals of motion and the constancy of natural laws in the movement of planets and objects on Earth. Goes on to found the basics of differential and integral calculus (in a disputed origin with Gottfried Leibniz, around the same time).

36 (39)-*Deus det*: Latin; God allow it. Parallel to the Irish Godwilling or God grant, as an interjection.



## Chapter 5

### London; Celia finds lodging for herself and Murphy

39 (42)-*Bracque*: “Georges Braque (1882-1963), friend and contemporary of Picasso, with whom he conspired and competed to establish a new mode of expression called Cubism” (*DP*, 83).

39 (42)-*hegira*: Historically, the date in 622 CE when the prophet Muhammad left Mecca for Medina, and thus founded the “Muslim era;” the Muslim lunar calendar starts from this date. More generally, as is probably the usage here, it is used to denote exodus or departure.

40 (42)-*PGs*: “Paying Guests, a landlady’s prerogative” (*DP*, 84).

40 (43)-*Joe Miller*: “a stale jest, taking in vain the name of Joe Miller (1684-1738), an actor of farce and ‘facetious memory’ from the age of Congreve” (*DP*, 84).

43 (46)-*Bildad the Shahite*: “with Eliphaz the Temanite and Zophar the Naamanthite, one of the three friends who offer false comfort (as God is just, so must Job have sinned)” (*DP*, 87).

43 (46)-*qui vive*: French expression adapted in English usage to mean “on the lookout” or “on the alert;” comes from sentry calls: “who goes there?” but literally means “who lives?”

43 (46)-*maieutic*: In simple terms, Socratic questioning. OED cites *Murphy* as one of the sources for this definition: “Relating to or designating the Socratic process, or other similar method, of assisting a person to become fully conscious of ideas previously latent in the mind.” Probably a subtle jab by Murphy at Neary’s Pythagorean/generally Ancient Greek methods of education.

44 (48)-*caul*: as a reason for not wearing a hat, clearly a pun as part of the anti-birth rhetoric in this section; OED 1a has the definition “a kind of close-fitting cap worn by women,” obsolete and exclusively historical in use, but also 5b, “the amnion or inner membrane enclosing the foetus before birth, esp. this or a portion of it sometimes enveloping the child at birth, superstitiously regarded as of good omen, and supposed to be a preservative against drowning.”

45 (48)-*multis latebra opportune*: Slightly questionable Latin, differing across editions between “opportune” and “opportuna”: means here “many useful hiding places.”

46 (50)-*synecdoche*: the part of the whole

47 (51)-*the lee of Belacqua’s rock*: “Belacqua of Florience, a maker of lutes...for his indolence in putting off his repentance he is to be detained [in Limbo] for a time equal to that of his life on earth” (*DP*, 94). Belacqua is the main protagonist of all Beckett’s earlier fiction, namely *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *More Pricks Than Kicks*, and is a more credible analogue for Beckett himself than Murphy.

49 (52)-*the Külpe school*: “a school of *Denkpsychologie* [thought-psychology], prominent before WWI first in Würzburg and later in Bonn under the leadership of Oswald Külpe (1862-1915), a pupil of Wundt who broke from his master’s teachings by making systematic use of the combined introspective and objective methods in studying thought processes” (*DP*, 98).

49 (52)-*Marbe and Bühler*: Karl Marbe (1869-1953) and Karl Bühler (1879-1963), successors of Külpe, whose experiments established the utility of hesitancy and doubt in describing experience.

49 (52)-*Watt*: “Henry J. Watt (1879-1925), a Scottish student in Külpe’s laboratory and later professor at Glasgow, who studied a more complex form of response called the associative response” (*DP*, 99). His discovery meant essentially that more experience is reported from the period of preparation than reaction. No clear connection to Beckett’s Watt figure in the novel of that name nor in *Mercier and Camier*.



49 (52)-*Ach*: Narziss Kaspar Ach (1871-1946), worked with Watt on reaction time using introspection.

52 (55)-*nulla linea sine die*: “a perversion of *nulla dies sine linea* [L. “not a day without a line’], as recorded in Pliny the Elder [*Natural History*, xxxv.36]. This the sentiment of Apelles the artist, who claimed never to have passed a day without doing at least one line, to which steady industry he owed his great success [Bartlett]” (*DP*, 102).

52 (56)-*quantum mutates...Ab illa*: “L. ‘how much changed from that’; from Virgil’s *Aeneid* [II.274], the appearance to Aeneas of Hector in a dream. The tag is applied to any change of felicity, but particularly to unregenerate man, his happiness obscured by the Fall: it is used in this sense by Burton (*Anatomy*, I.1.1.i, 81], Beckett’s likely source” (*DP*, 103).

52 (56)-*tundish*: A tip of the hat to Joyce, perhaps. In Chapter 5 of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen gets into a bit of wordplay with the dean and bests him without the dean’s awareness; not unlike SB’s usage where Ticklepenny uses the term but is bested by Murphy. In each instance, the exchange indicates how little language the character who behaves with superiority (dean, Ticklepenny) actually has at his disposal.

58 (62)-*Non me rebus sed mihi res*: Inversion of Horace’s axiom “et mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor,” generally translated as “I try to subject (or submit) circumstances to myself, not myself to circumstances” or more succinctly “I submit life to myself, not myself to life.” Murphy’s new axiom translates directly to “not me, but I have to do things.” More loosely, it can be seen as a philosophy of submitting to circumstances (oneself to life) rather than Horace’s dictum that suggests personal agency.

59 (63)-*au-delà*: (French) beyond the

61 (65)-*en-deçà*: (French) below

61 (65)-*Iipse dixit*: Latin for “the master said so,” associated with Pythagoras, who did not write things down for his disciples, but whose spoken edicts carried force of law in the community.

## Chapter 6 London; Murphy’s mind

65 (69)-*Amor intellectualis quo Murphy se ipsum amat*: (Latin) the intellectual love with which Murphy loves himself

67 (71)-*tic douloureux*: common name, from the French, of trigeminal neuralgia, in other words a sharp pain which occurs in part of the face, often causing a grimace or sudden muscular tic.

It is helpful to read up on the following philosophers if you are interested in understanding all the jokes in this chapter: René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Leibniz, Arthur Schopenhauer. The psychoanalytic theorists Sigmund Freud, Karl Jung, and Wilfred Bion (Beckett’s own psychoanalyst) also hold keys for the oddly personal paradigm of mind that Beckett lays out in this chapter. The *Companion* has a useful entry called “Murphy’s Mind” that lays out a quick guide, and individual entries under those names would be a good place to start to understand their significance in the novel.

## Chapter 7 Wylie and Miss Counihan to London



70 (73)-*Celia, s'il y a, Celia, s'il y a*: Pronounced the same as Celia's name, the French phrase "s'il y a" is a conditional beginning to an "if" proposition, and therefore indicates uncertainty. It corresponds to the English fragment "if there is..." or the subjunctive "if there were..." In a full sentence a noun would be required following "s'il y a" for this to make sense, but here the meaning is clear: There is a risk that Celia is not quite there.

70 (74)-*a low battuta*: "as used in the phrase 'a battuta' [Italian 'at the beat'], meaning in music the marking of time by beating, or, more strictly, a resumption of strict time after a passage has departed from it prescribed tempo" (*DP*, 132).

## Chapter 8

### Miss Carriage's 'old boy' takes a razor

94 (98)-*The Candle of Vision* by George Russell (*AE*): "an inspirational prose text by George Russell ("A.E."), in which he peers through the windows of his soul (as Miss Carriage through keyholes) to see images created by the divine imagination and relate his vision of the far-off Many Coloured Land to that of seers and writers of the sacred books" (*DP*, 145).

## Chapter 9

### London (the MMM), meet the Clinch twins

95 (99)-*Il est difficile à celui qui vit hors du monde de ne pas rechercher les siens* (*Malraux*): According to *DP*, this is from Part 4 of Malraux's *La Condition humaine* (1933), a novel set in the troubled Shanghai of 1927. These are the words of Tchen, a kamikaze terrorist about to blow up the automobile of Chan Kai-Shek" (*DP*, 145). A possible translation: It is difficult for those who live outside the world not to seek that which is theirs.

110 (115)-*Quod erat extorquendum*: that which was to be wrenched out

## Chapter 10

### Miss Counihan leads search for Murphy

120 (125)-*voltefesses*: According to *DP*, from the French *fesses*, meaning buttocks; "a twirl on *volteface*, a metaphorical turning of the other cheeks" (*DP*, 169).

120 (125)-*Le pou est mort, vive le pou!*: A joke that translates basically to "the flea is dead, long live the flea!" in place of the word "roi" in the expression "the king is dead, long live the king." Links to the later business with the flea in *Endgame*, in which Clov must kill the flea in his trousers, in case "humanity might start from there all over again."

## Chapter 11

### London; Murphy and Endon play chess

Beckett hoped that the cover of *Murphy* would be an image of two apes playing chess, signaling the central significance of this episode to the novel as a whole. For those who don't play chess or read this notation visually, the images of the game (included following these endnotes) should reveal the main contrast between Murphy's game and Endon's game. Essentially, Endon manages to make a series of *legal* moves that achieve *as little as possible*, his "perfect"

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conclusion being a rearrangement of his own pieces on his own back row with minimal shifting of his pieces required to get there. His is the model of indolence and inaction, of the closed system, of the “little world” or “microcosmopolitan” that Murphy envies. He has achieved a unity of mind that Murphy cannot find (see Chapter Six). Murphy, who is condemned from birth already (recall from Chapter Five that his was the one vagitus that was out of tune), is also condemned from birth in this game; the note at his opening move notes correctly that this is the start of all subsequent difficulties (he can never match Endon’s exquisite lack of progress, since he makes a rational opening move). Murphy’s attempts to mirror each move of Endon quickly founder on his original pawn which is in the way, and each attempt to get around this problem results in compromise, delay, and ultimately disarray in mirroring his opponent’s perfect absence from the competition. This game is a purely philosophical expression written by Beckett within the rules of chess, but it does not engage at all in the spirit of conventional, competitive chess. The one illegal move that Endon makes in some editions was an error introduced in the notation by Calder; the only action that falls outside of the constraints of chess rules on Endon’s part is his inversion of his own rooks, a frankly absurd action that has no meaning within the realm of chess. Even Murphy’s attempt to lose a queen is met with inaction, or steady continuation of a perfect internal plan, on the part of Endon. As Murphy comes to the essentially tragic realization that he can never match the perfect self-enclosure of Endon without going mad, he discovers in this episode a kind of fundamental impossibility of escaping from his own disorder of mind and body. The recognition of this in Murphy prefigures his end.

## Chapter 12

### The nancy coroner strikes a long putt

155 (161)-*devout Mottist*: “a follower of F.W. Mott (1853-1926), who was instrumental in building up the Maudsley and a pioneer in the study of GPI [Phil Baker to CA]. The word is misleading, suggesting either a trace of the infamous poisoner, Madame de la Motte (Jeanne de Sait-Rémy de Valois, comtess, 1756-91), mentioned with a shiver in ‘Sanies II’; or the tower near the Portrane Asylum in which Dean Swift ‘kept his motte’ [Fingal, *MPTK*, 34]” (DP, 204).  
 160 (167)-*Clonmachnois*: Early Christian monastic foundation, located on the Shannon near Athlone. Established mid 6<sup>th</sup> century. *Book of the Dun Cow* said to have originated here.  
 164 (171)-*a slow cascando*: Italian term in music for decreasing volume and decelerating tempo. “Decreasing volume” in this context is a pun on Cooper’s drinking of the whiskey in the glass tanks; “Diminishing in volume and decreasing in tempo, the pun on the first part of that definition. Beckett had recently published a poem by that title in the *Dublin Magazine* (1936); in a manner suggestive of Cooper’s new life, it invokes the quietism of acceptance as one mode of being moves into another: ‘the past is dead beyond recall’ [Harvey, 174]” (DP, 211).

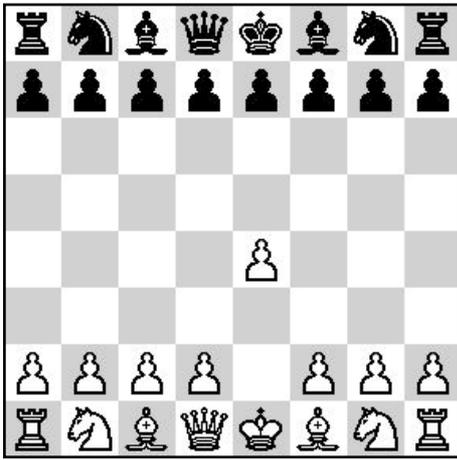
## Chapter 13

### All out

169 (174)-*hypermetropic*: far-sighted



MURPHY (white)

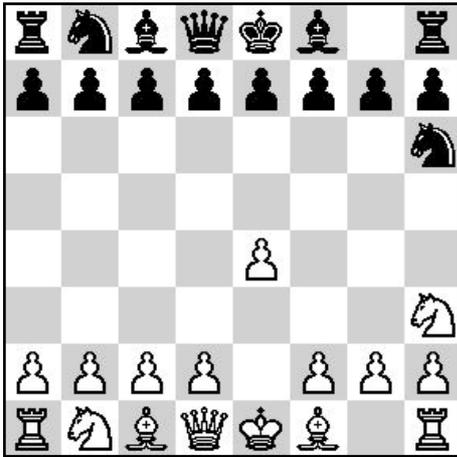
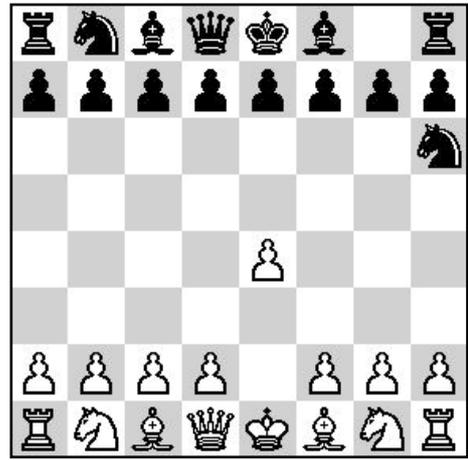


“(a) Mr Endon always played Black. If presented with White he would fade, without the least trace of annoyance, into a light stupor.

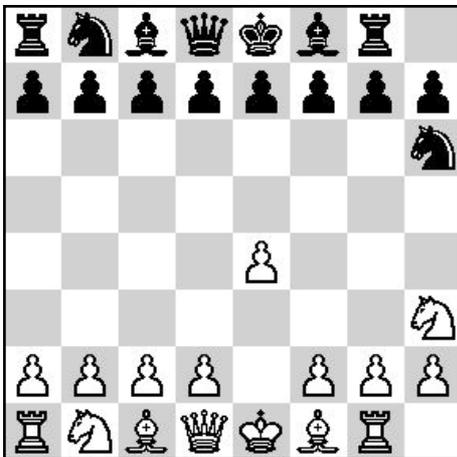
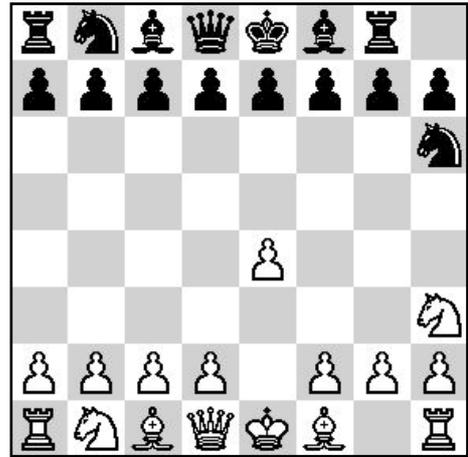
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(b) The primary cause of all White’s subsequent difficulties.

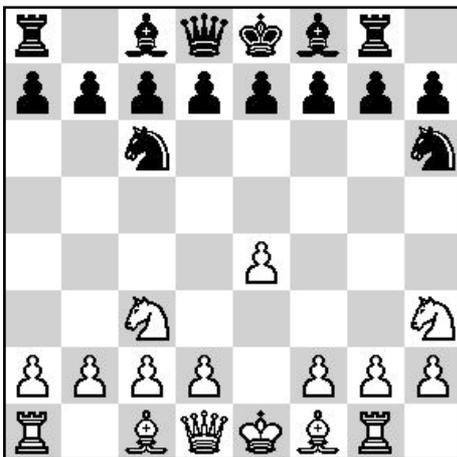
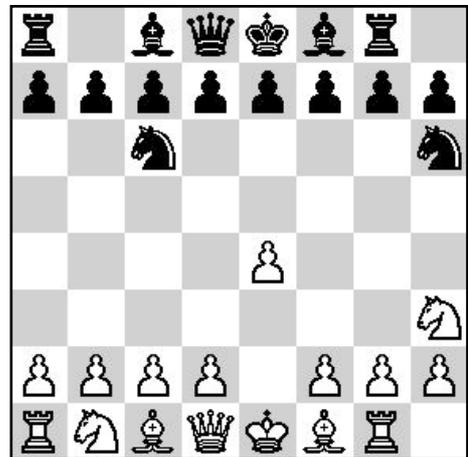
MR ENDON (black)



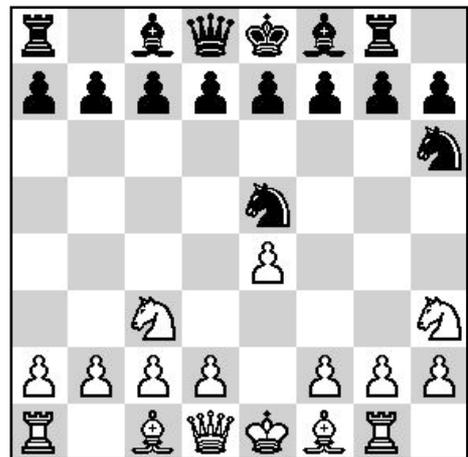
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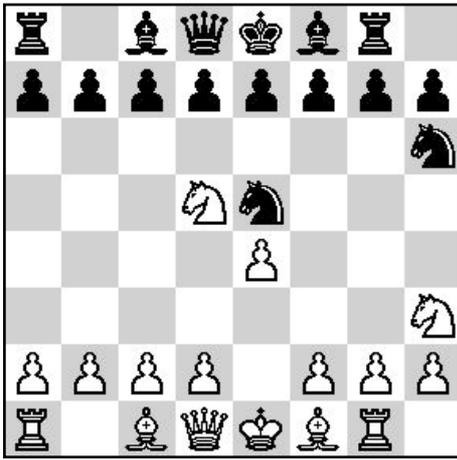


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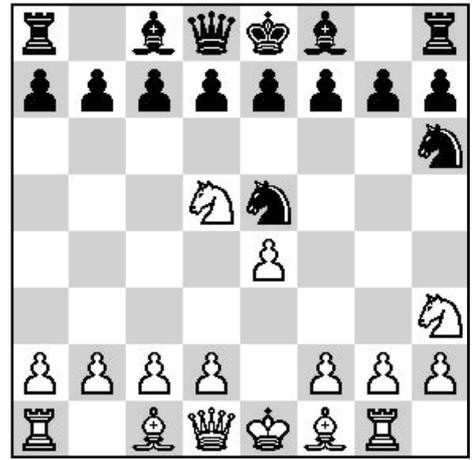


MURPHY (white)

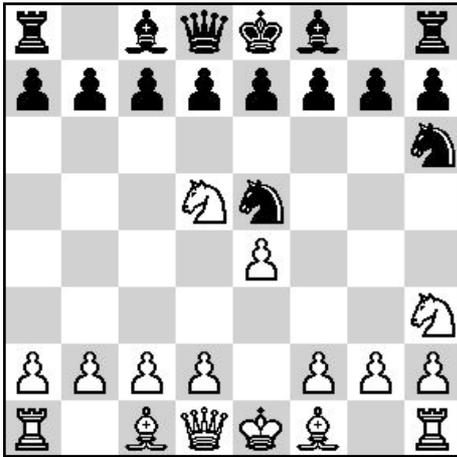
MR ENDON (black)



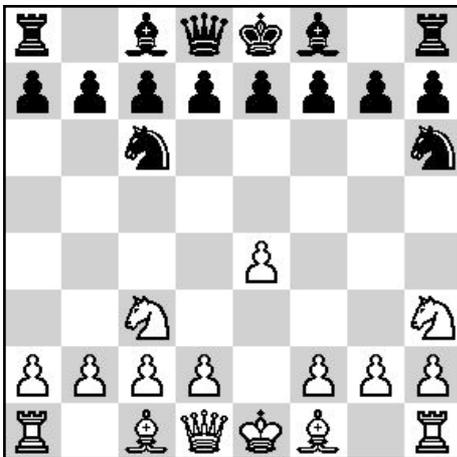
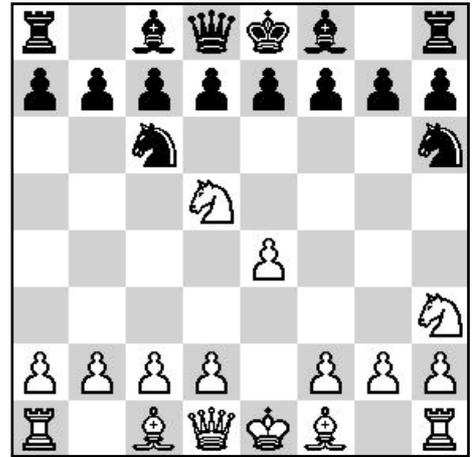
(c) Apparently nothing better, bad as this is.



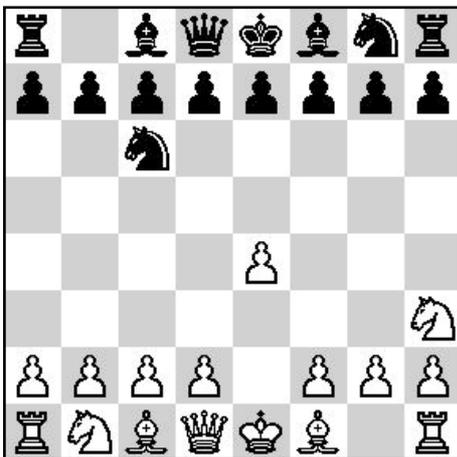
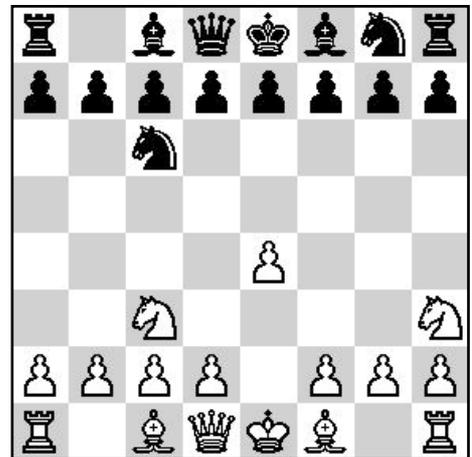
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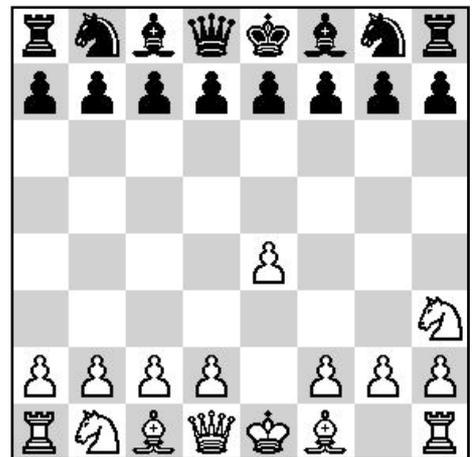


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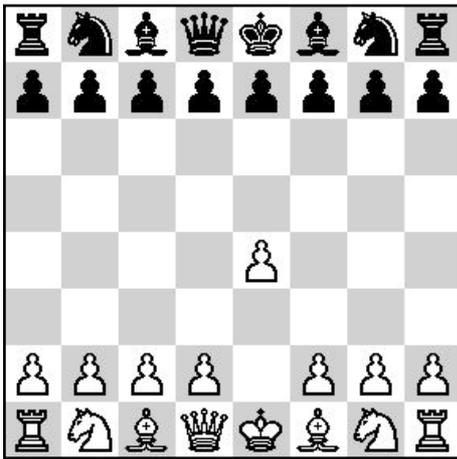


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(d) An ingenious and beautiful début, sometimes called the Pipe-opener.

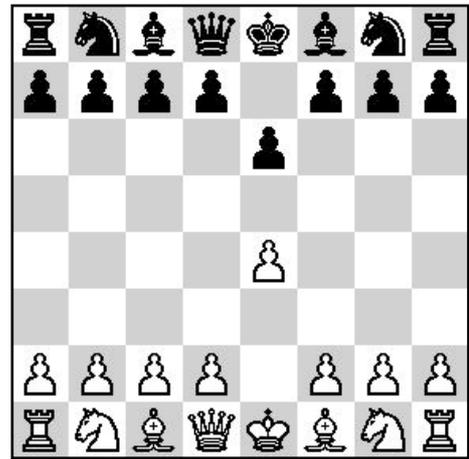


MURPHY (white)



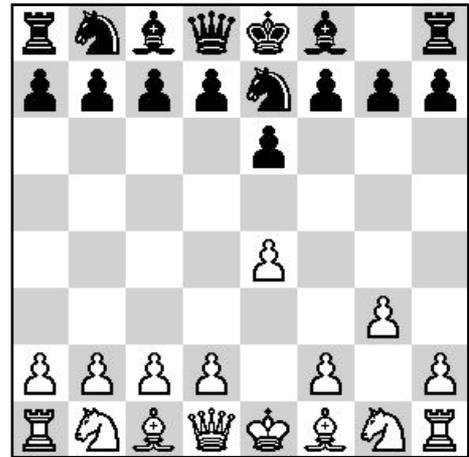
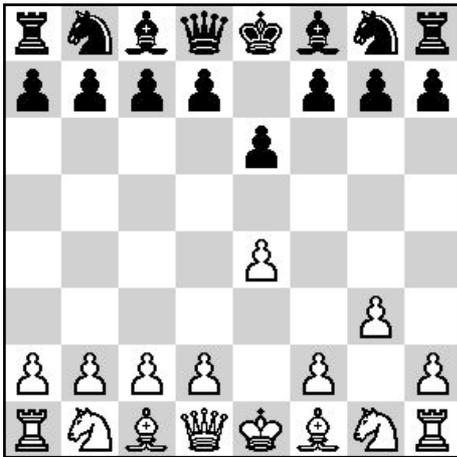
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MR ENDON (black)

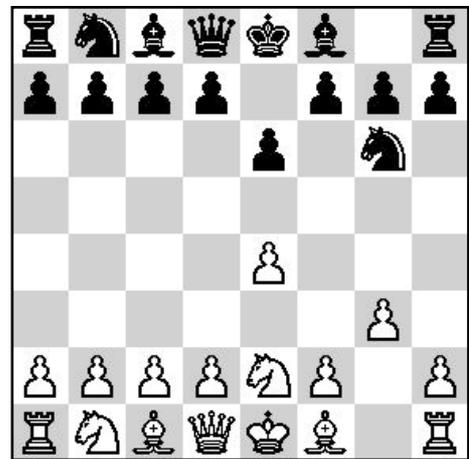
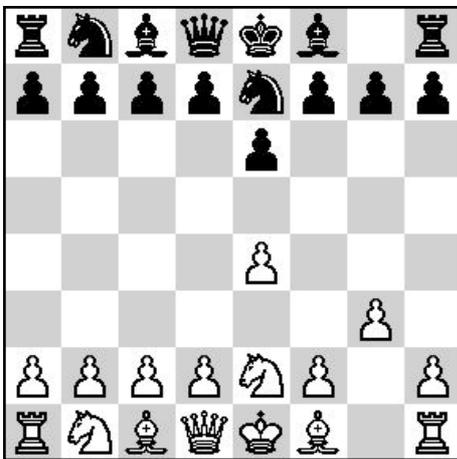


(e) Ill-judged.

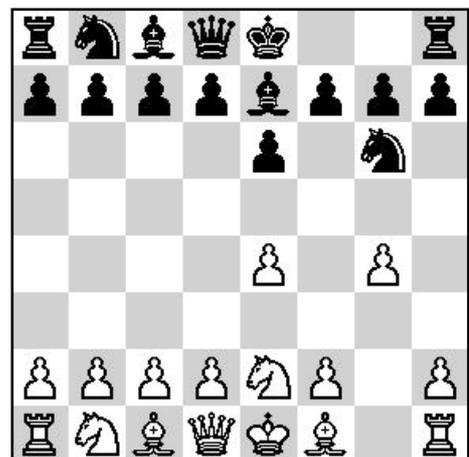
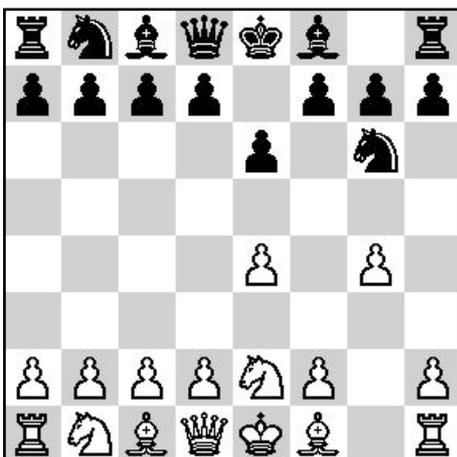
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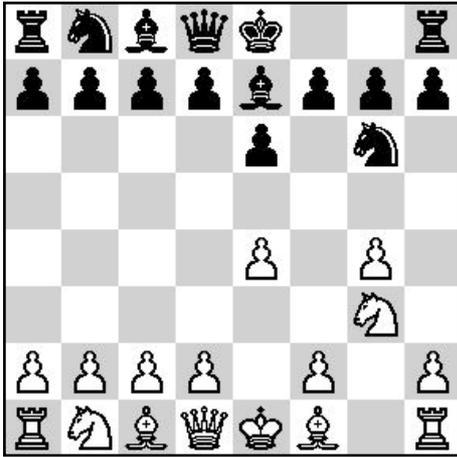


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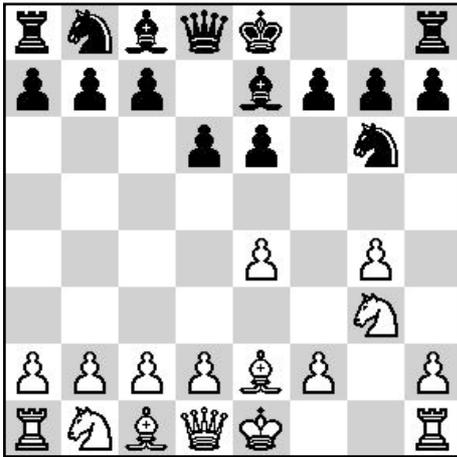
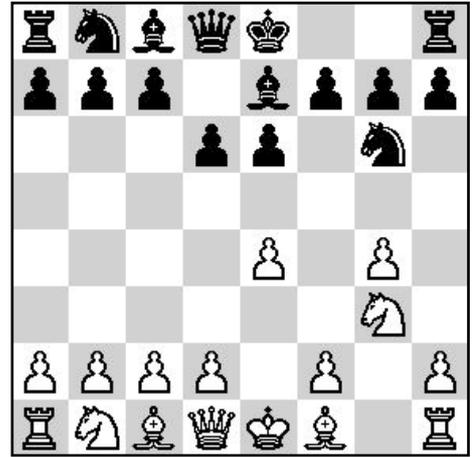


MURPHY (white)

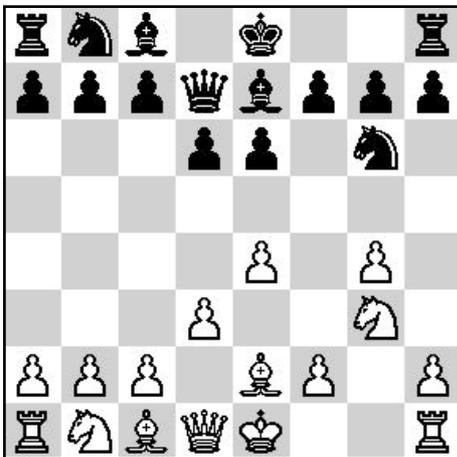
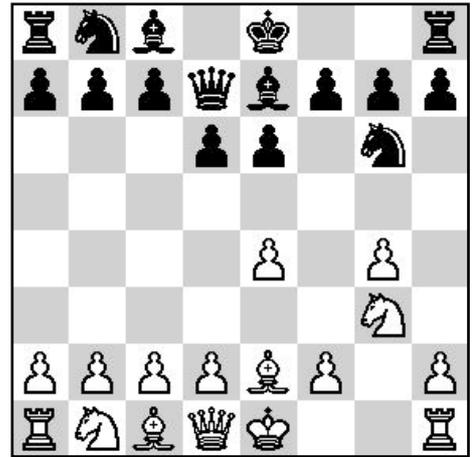
MR ENDON (black)



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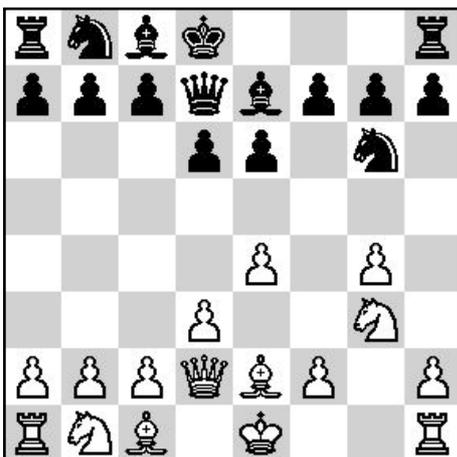
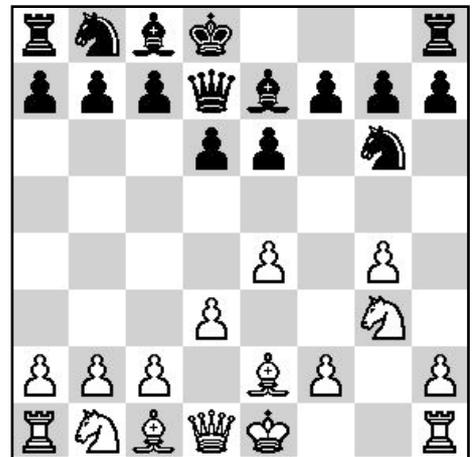


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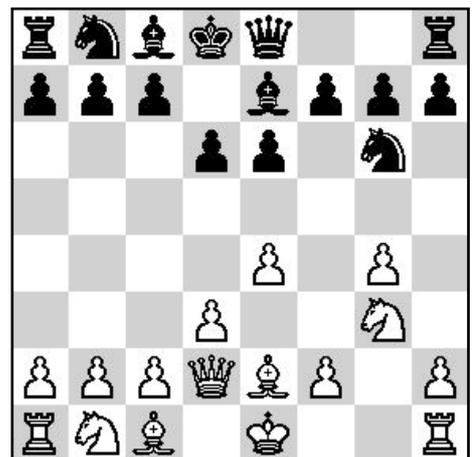


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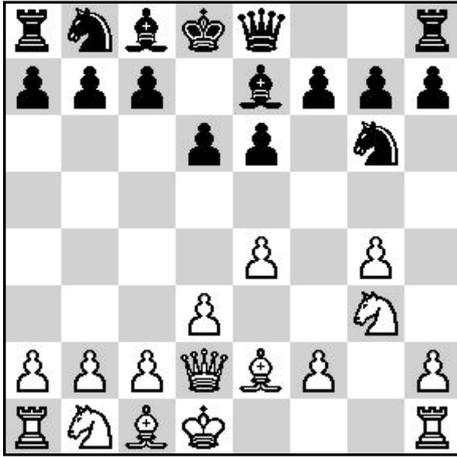
(f) Never seen in the Café de la Régence, seldom in Simpson's Divan.



16

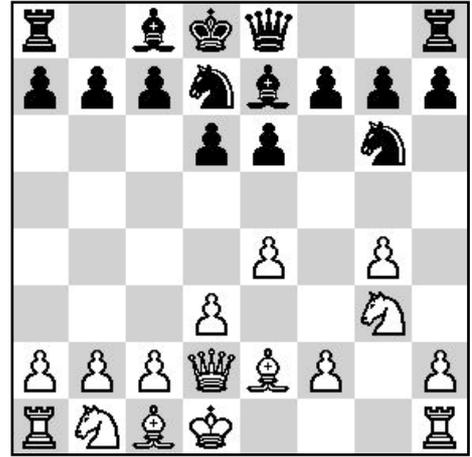


MURPHY (white)

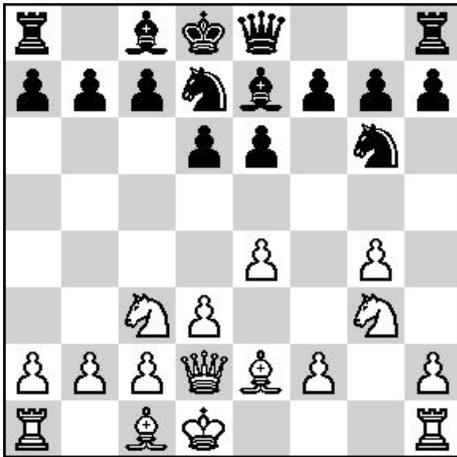


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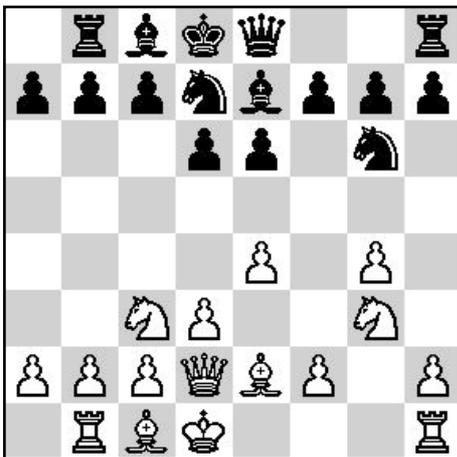
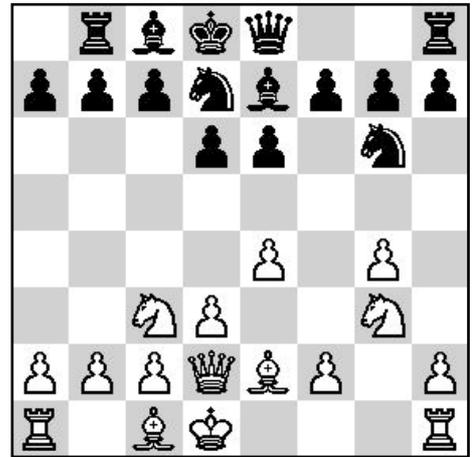
MR ENDON (black)



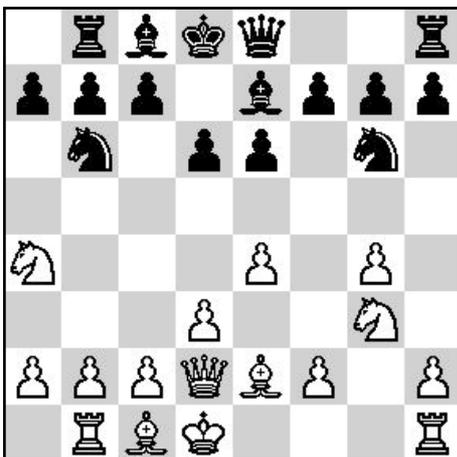
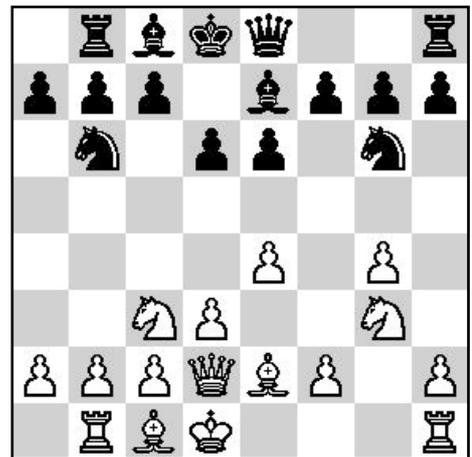
(g) The flag of distress.



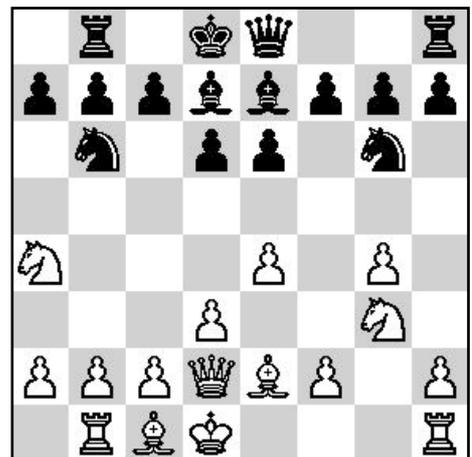
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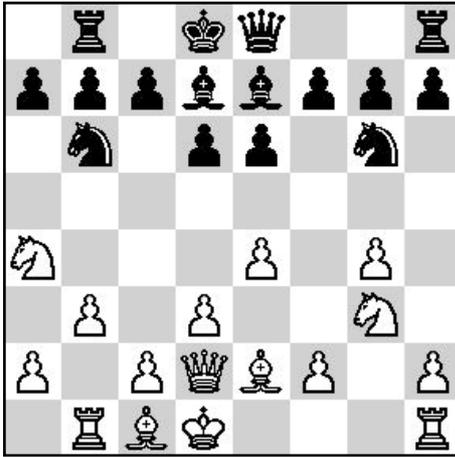


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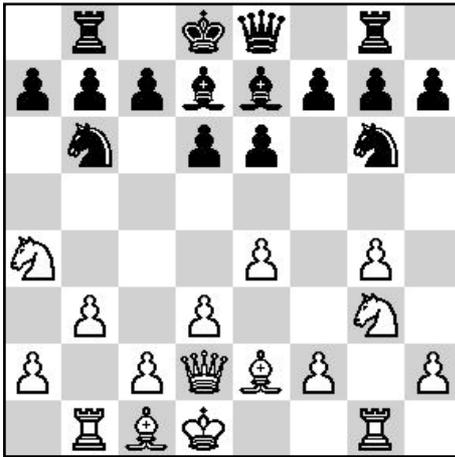
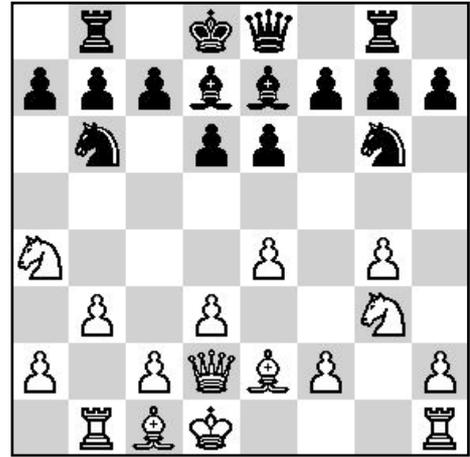


MURPHY (white)

MR ENDON (black)

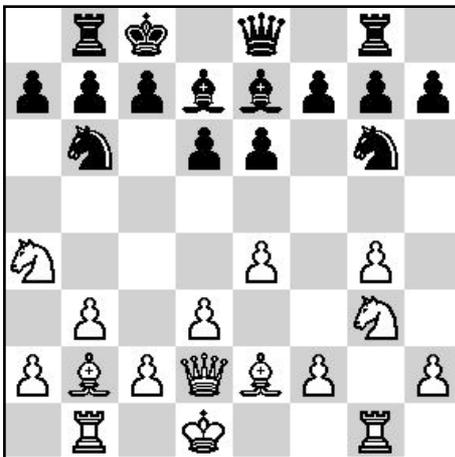
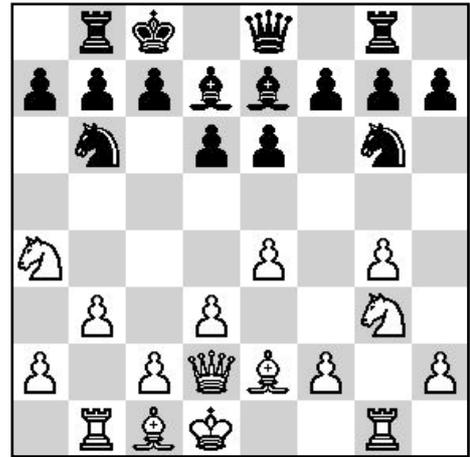


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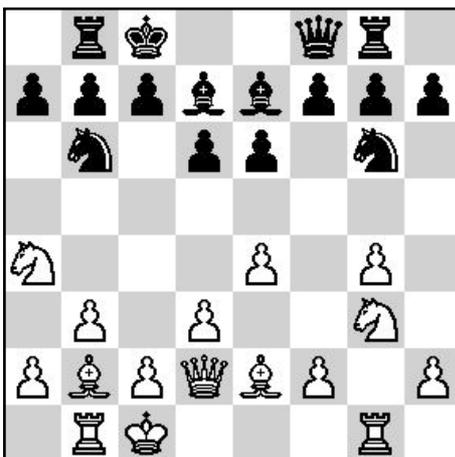
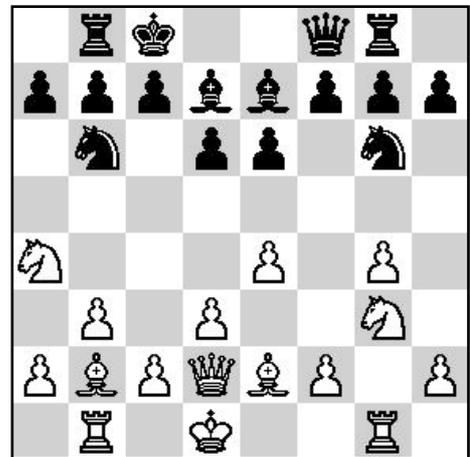


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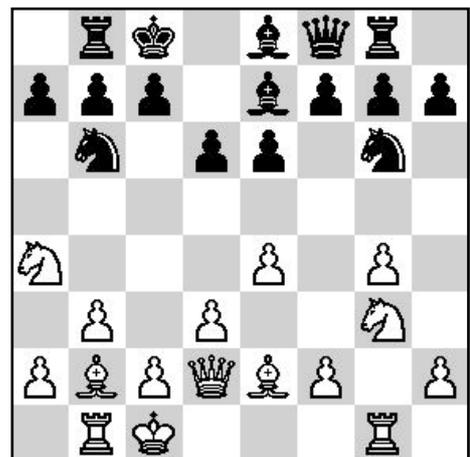
(h) Exquisitely played.



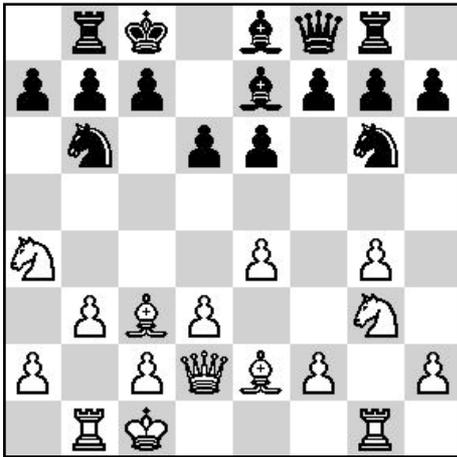
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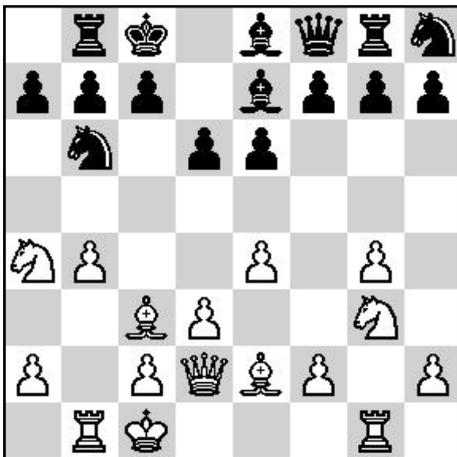
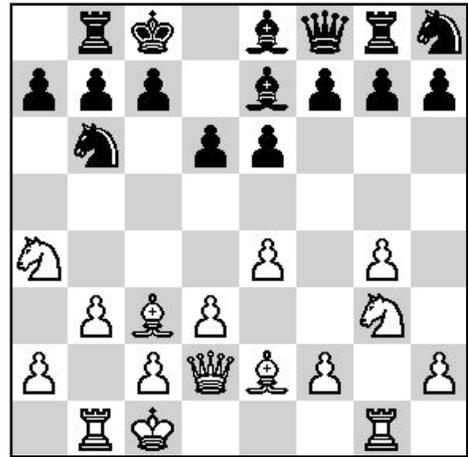
MURPHY (white)



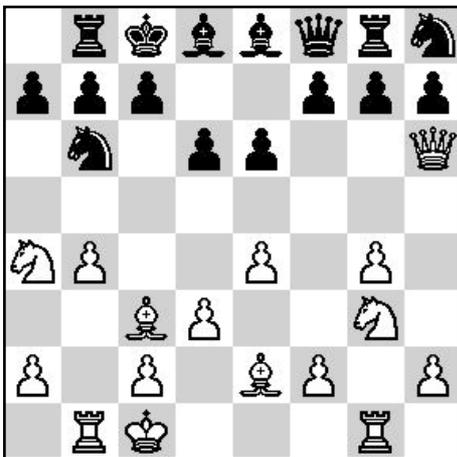
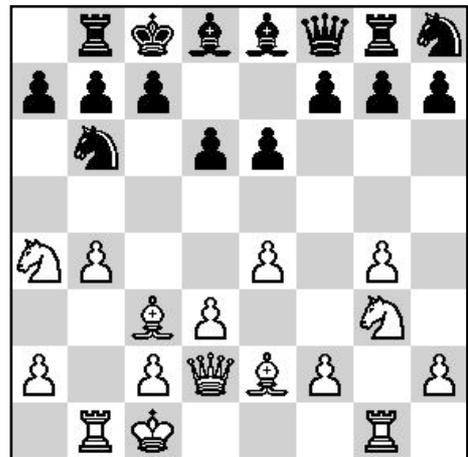
(i) It is difficult to imagine a more deplorable situation than poor White's at this point.

25

MR ENDON (black)

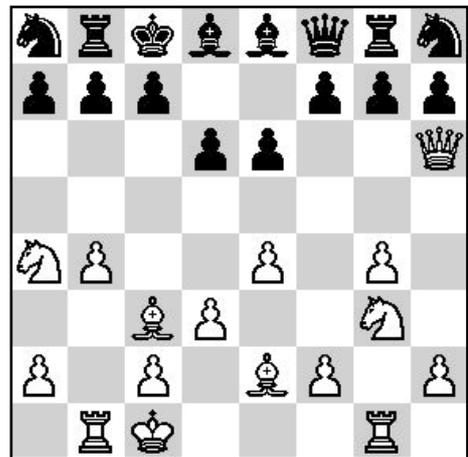


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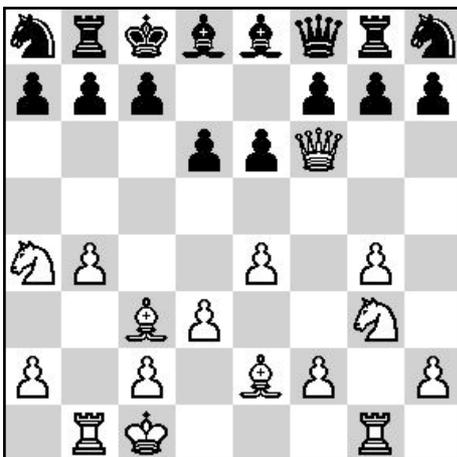


(j) The ingenuity of despair.

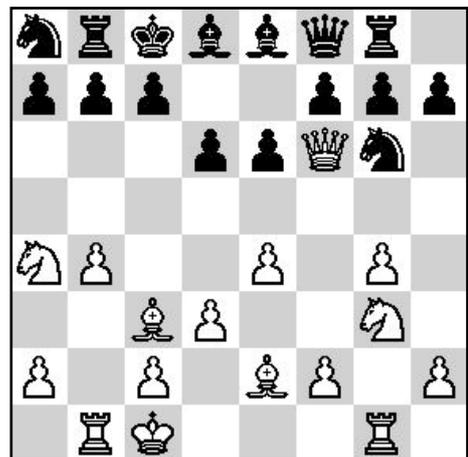
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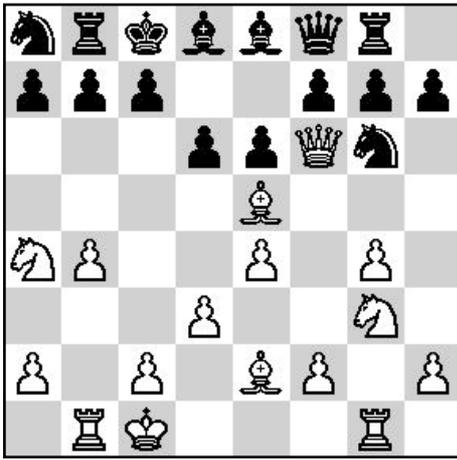
(k) Black now has an irresistible game.



28

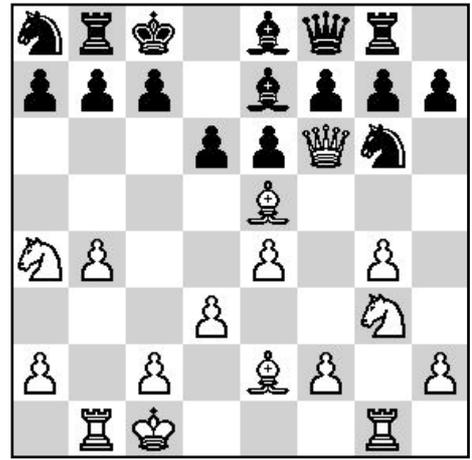


MURPHY (white)



29

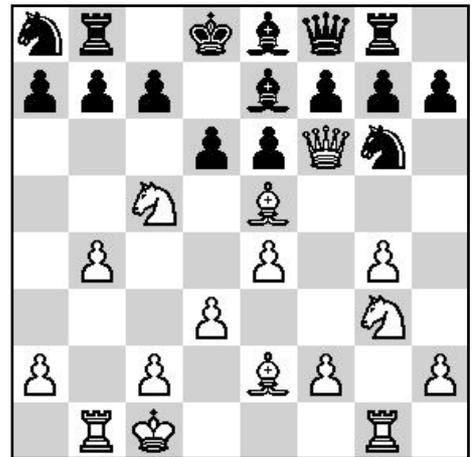
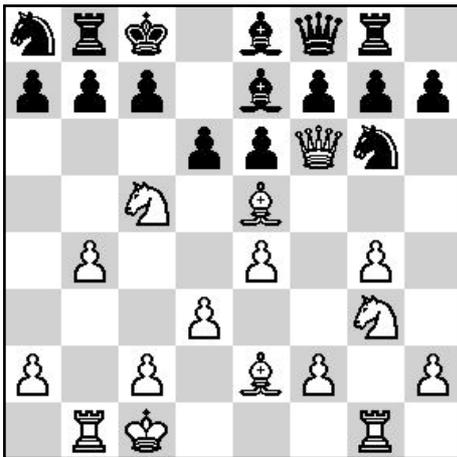
MR ENDON (black)



(l) High praise is due to White for the pertinacity with which he struggles to lose a piece.

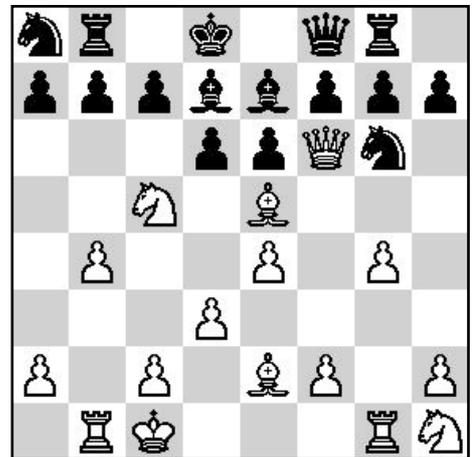
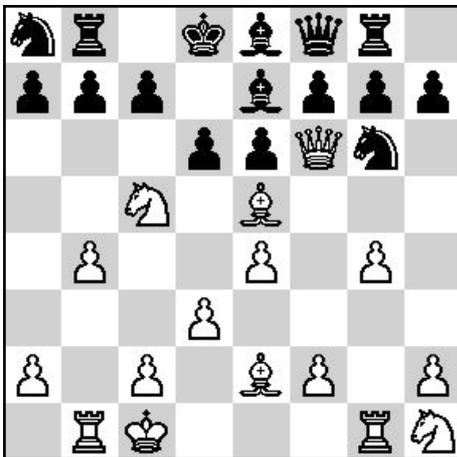
30

(m) At this point Mr. Endon, without as much as 'j'adoube', turned his King and Queen's Rook upside down, in which position they remained for the rest of the game.

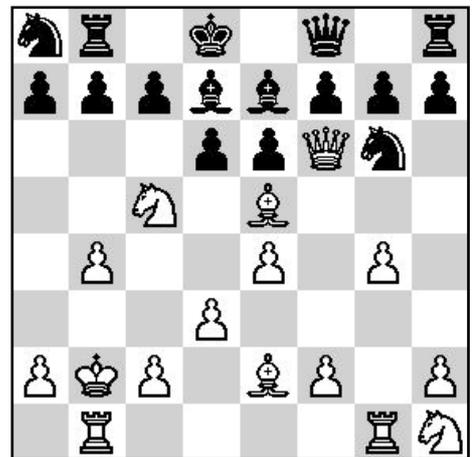
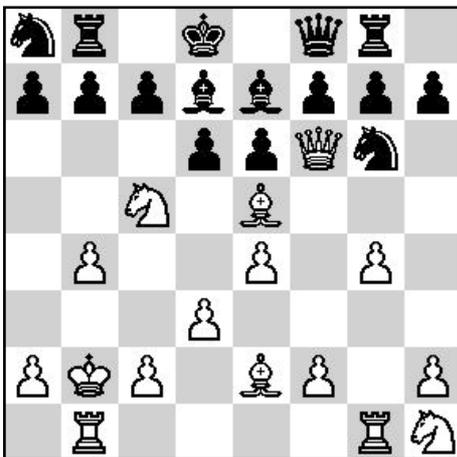


(n) A *coup de repos* long overdue.

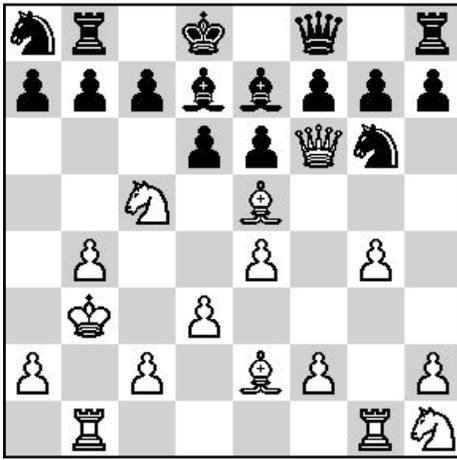
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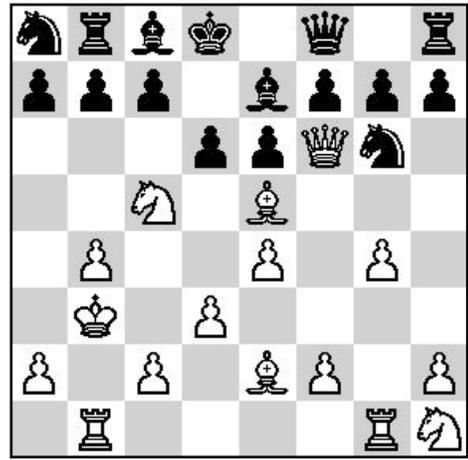


MURPHY (white)



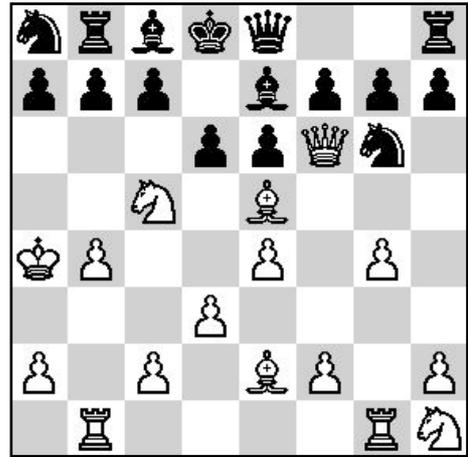
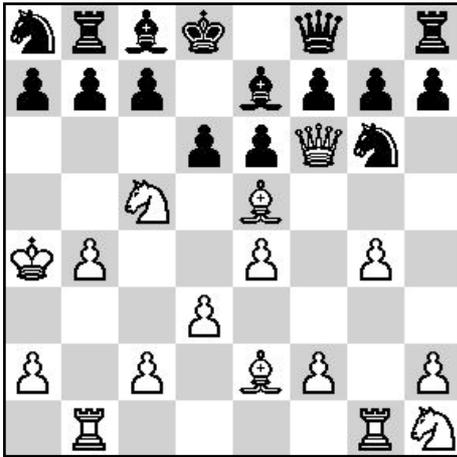
33

MR ENDON (black)

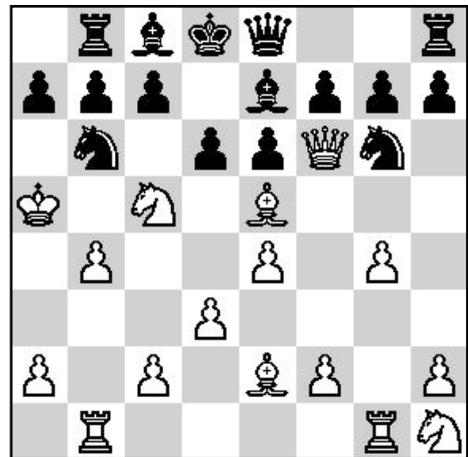
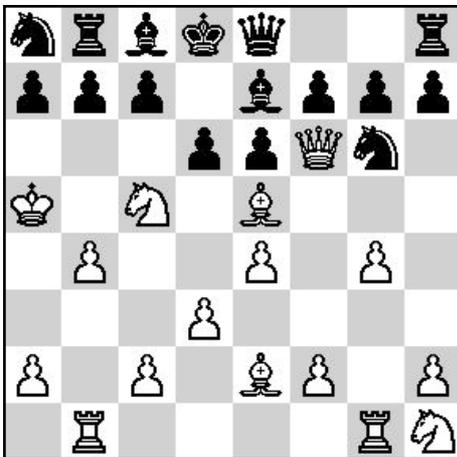


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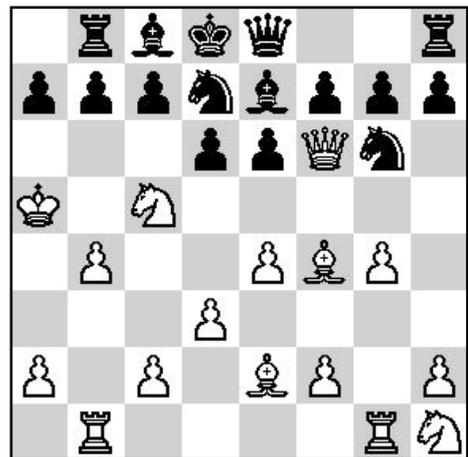
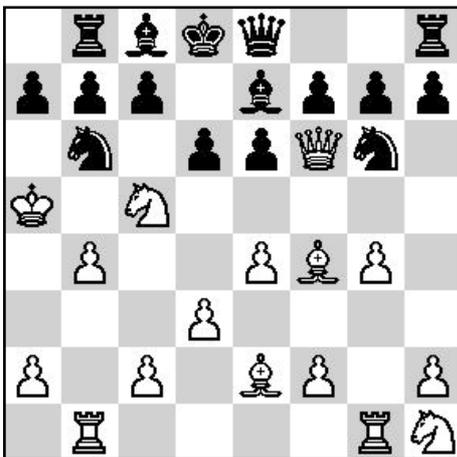
(o) Mr. Endon not crying 'Check!', nor otherwise giving the slightest indication that he was alive to having attacked the King of his opponent, or rather vis-à-vis, Murphy was absolved, in accordance with Law 18, from attending to it. But this would have been to admit that the salute was adventitious.



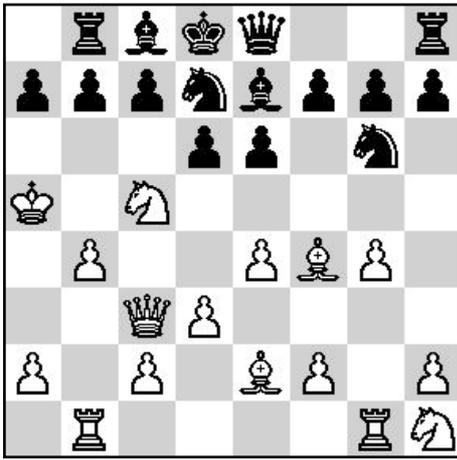
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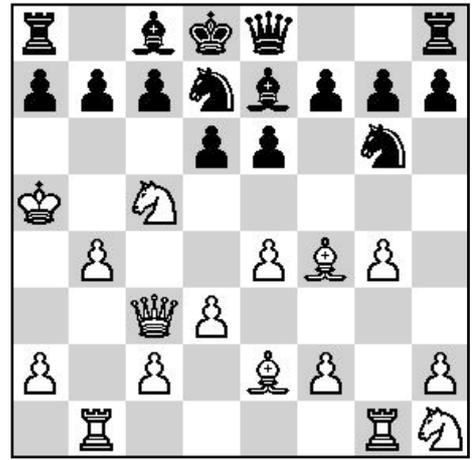


MURPHY (white)



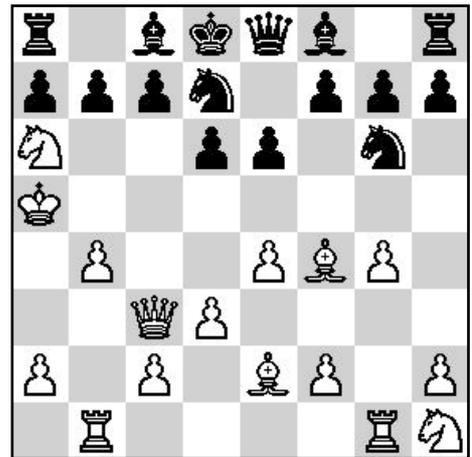
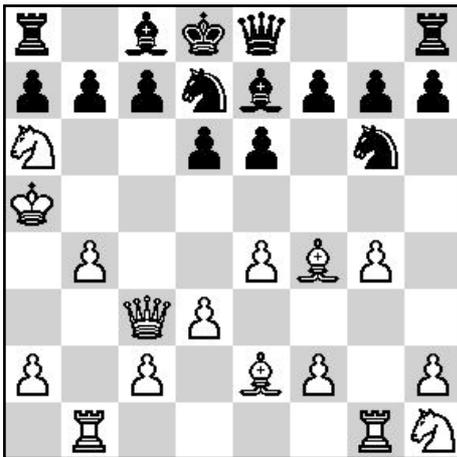
37

MR ENDON (black)

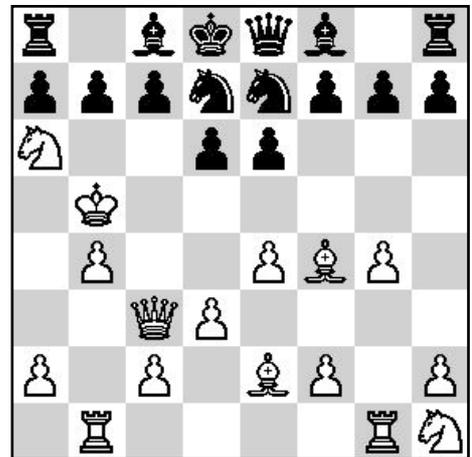
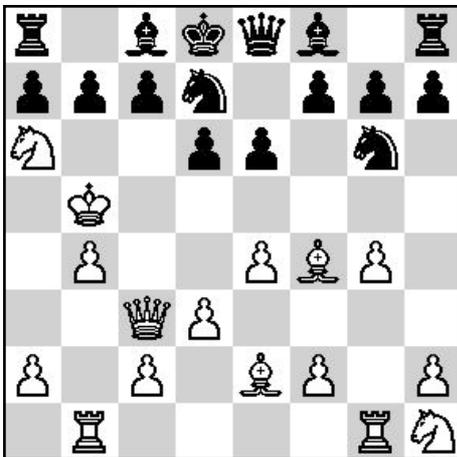


(p) No words can express the torment of mind that goaded White to this abject offensive.

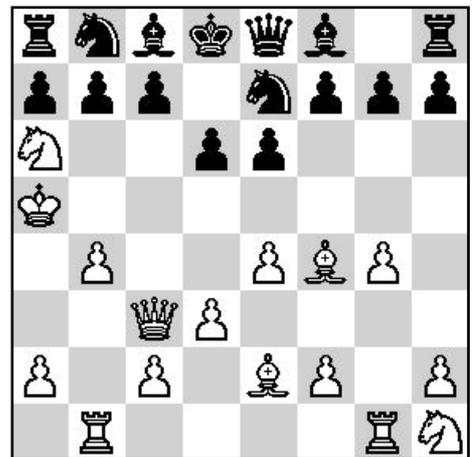
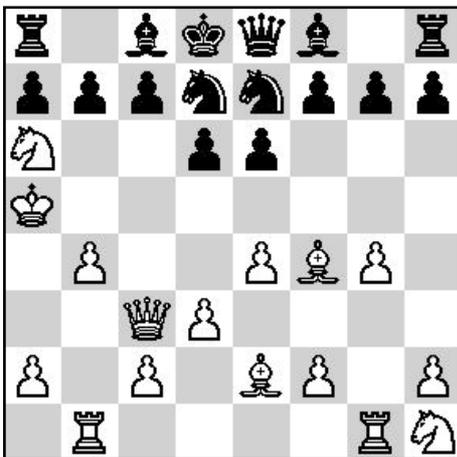
38



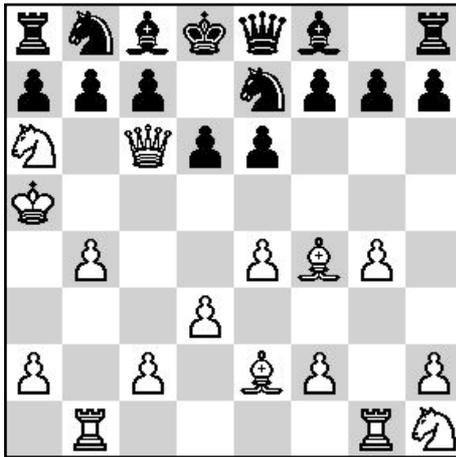
39



40

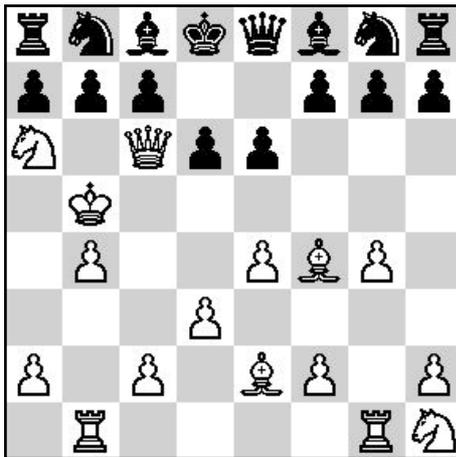
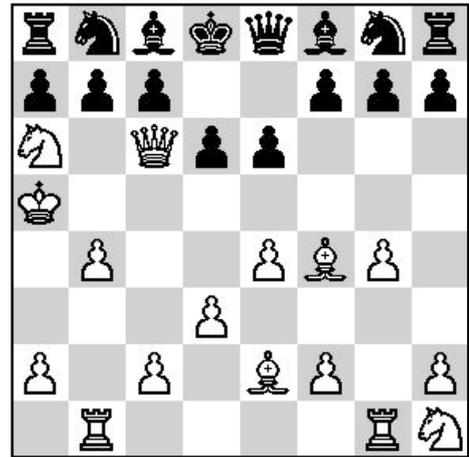


MURPHY (white)



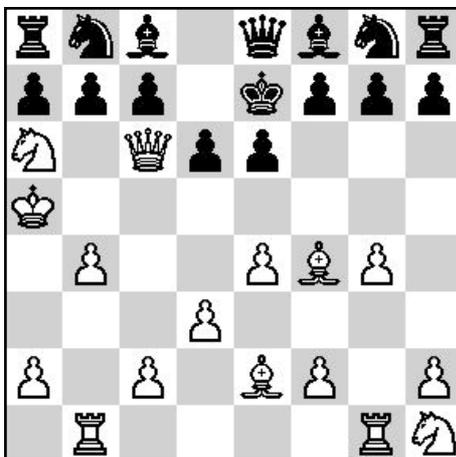
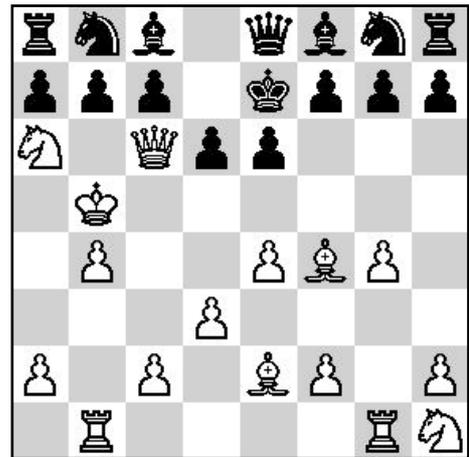
41

MR ENDON (black)



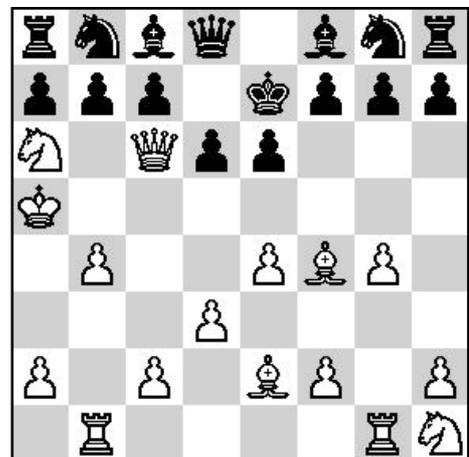
42

(q) The termination of this solitaire is very beautifully played by Mr. Endon.



43

(r) Further solicitation would be frivolous and vexatious, and Murphy, with fool's mate in his soul, retires."



Editorial note: There is an inconsistency in the notation in the text, which uses K-R5 in both move 35 and 43 for White. As the only accessible R space to the king, this is unambiguous. But then Beckett uses K-QR5 in Move 40 for white, adding the Q unnecessarily. This appears to be a proofing/editing oversight in the original manuscript, and appears in both Grove and Faber editions.

There is also an error introduced in the Calder editions that appears to leave Endon making an illegal move at 42, to Q2 instead of K2 (though this is confusing due to the positions of King and Queen having been transposed). This error was not replicated in Grove nor in the most recent Faber editions, which have been used as the authoritative texts in these images. The chess game with all cited "notes" — (a) through (r) — can be found in Chapter 11 of *Murphy* (146–147 Grove, 152–153 Faber).

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