

The 4 Types of Combatants of Joachim Meyer

How to Identify them, Be them, and Hold Against them

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In Meyer's 1570 treatise, we are given a particularly valuable entry from his **Rappier** section.

"Therefore, it is also important to consider the characteristics of the person, who can be divided into four parts in this art of fencing, and following diligent consideration, one can [likewise] find four types of fencers... the First are those who impetuously cut and thrust as soon as they can reach the opponent in the Onset.

The Second are somewhat more diffident and don't attack so uncouthly; instead, when [their opponent] cuts and misses, drops too far, or otherwise fails to execute a change, they pursue and rapidly follow them to the closest exposed opening.

The Third don't cut at an opening if they are not assured of it; instead, they pay more attention as to whether they can recover from the extension into the cut and safely back into a counter-posture or to Defensive Strikes. (I mostly hold myself with these [fencers], but it depends on my counterfencer.)

The Fourth position themselves in one guard and wait for the opponent's sequence. They are either fools or indeed quite sharp, because whoever wants to wait for another's sequence must be skilled and experienced and well-practiced, otherwise they won't achieve much." – **Translation from Rebecca L. R. Garber**

Though Meyer presented this in his **Rappier** section, we cannot forget that his text is an entire system. What applies in one section applies to the rest. This is re-enforced by the numerous examples when he himself refers to previous sections of his book between different weapons and the fact that the basic elements of his manuscript remain the same between sections (like footwork). For the purpose of this article, I will use the Longsword as the weapon of choice (especially since I am most comfortable with it compared to the other weapons).

The next question is how we can understand and apply this in combat. Meyer gives us a fairly good explanation of these four kinds of fencers and how to fight them. However, there are elements of this that are missing, but that we can discern from the rest of his text (and a bit of experience). The main missing element that comes to mind is that there are different skill levels of each, ie. The

trained and untrained versions of the 1 through 4 type fencers, and the details of identifying them.

To start, I will name each type (with my own terms), label them with the words Meÿer uses, break them down, explain the difference between a trained and untrained version of that fencer, the tools and **Handworks** that one can use to become a stronger version of that fencer type, and how one may counteract them. Since Meyer only gives a specific example for each, I have also written my own **Precepts/Rules** for each and provided my own examples in hopes to provide a fuller understanding of what Meyer was trying to teach.

It is also important to note that upon diligent study and practice, we can see Meÿer lays out a pattern for us. This pattern shows a circle where each type of fighter is defeated by the next in numerical order (a Type II beating a Type I, a Type I beating the Type IV, hence a circle). This can be looked at as a game of rock, paper, scissors with the caveat of there being a fourth option in the mix and some combos that have no advantage over the other.

Before we jump into the Types, I'd like to give a brief description of a few key words and concepts here (as I interpret their meaning from the text and my experience).

Before (Vor): An initiative placement one holds when they have been the first to create an active threat of bodily harm (ie. Thrust, Cut, etc...) against their opponent, so that the opponent must respond with parrying or else be struck upon.

The exception to this rule is when you are forced to bind on the weapon first because it is tip forward and out in front of the Fencer (like in Longpoint). To attack the body in this case would leave you very open to **Setting Off**.

After (Nach): The counterpart initiative placement to the **Before**. Anyone who has an active threat of bodily harm upon them is automatically in the **After**, which means they must first and foremost parry so as not to be struck upon. To consciously strike at the opponent instead of parrying when you are already threatened is simply suicidal and shows a lack of self-preservation and **Indes**.

****Note**** There are techniques, specifically the master cuts, that will both parry and strike simultaneously (and thus take back the **Before**), with the exception of the **Krump/Crooked Cut**, which virtually parries all cuts, gives a superior Winding

position, and breaks certain postures. This does not break our initiative order, but simply gives precedence to naming them the '**Master Cuts**', and why they are only masterful in the **After**, but simple cuts in the **Before** (All examples of how to perform the '**Master Cuts**' happen from the **After**). Again, this does not mean that they are not used in the **Before**. While the **Master Cuts** can be the basis for an entire article, I'll leave it here for now.

Indes: This is the German word for what I like to describe as fighting with open eyes, being in the moment, perceiving, reacting in real time, or as Dr. Forngeng translated it, using the Instantaneous. Dr. Rebecca L. R. Garber made the decision to simply use the word **Indes**, as no English word really gives justice to the entire meaning of the word **Indes**.

The **Indes** can be thought about in this way. Both fighters can and should use **Indes** always, but it takes training to both first gain awareness of and develop it, before then implementing it. **Indes** is what both fencers use to either keep the **Before** or take the **Before** from the other person.

Simultaneous: This describes when both fighters act at the same time (that is 'on the same tempo' for any Italians), but more specifically when neither person has yet to take the **Before** and they both attempt to do so at the same time. This is very common in fencing, and why having good **Indes** is so important.

Our first priority is to not be injured, so when you both happen to strike to the body, you should always defer to the parry (acting in the **After**) and continue your fight from there.

It is important that this term is kept to this context. As it is, during combat one combatant is acting in the **Before** and the other in the **After** (and this changes back and forth during the exchange), but both people are conducting themselves simultaneously. This is not the same meaning as the above described **Simultaneous**.

Developing **Indes** and understanding the existing initiative of combat is so important for ones' own survival. A large amount of Double hits come from when the person who is acting in the **After** suddenly attacks the opponent without having taken the **Before** back first. This means the opponent's attack will be coming in full force and there is no time for them to safely react because the person in the **After** has essentially chosen to sacrifice their life, the exact opposite of what your intentions should be.

This is completely the person acting in the **After's** fault. It almost always ends up deadly for them and often their miss-timed strike would not be a deadly blow to the person in the **Before**. Since new and untrained fighters do not have a developed **Indes**, they are prone to this mistake, and it is the reason why fighting them can be so much more dangerous and unpredictable for the experienced fighter.

Strong in the Bind: You are strong in the bind when you are actively trying to gain the overbind or push through/control your opponent's blade.

Weak in the Bind: You are weak in the bind when you are simply in the bind and not attempting to gain an overbind or push through your opponent's blade. This does not mean however, that you are leaving or falling away from the bind (a detrimental mistake to make). In fact, someone with developed core strength and experience can feel strong against your blade but are indeed considered to be weak in the bind, as they are not attempting to push through or control your weapon.

A Note about Translated Terms: When any Cuts, Postures, Handworks, or other relevant terms are mentioned, I will give both the Forging translation and the Rebecca Garber translation together (in that order) for ease of use by people with one or the other. In the case they are the same word for both, there will only be one word (as in **Slicing**).

Type I: The Prey a.k.a. The Bull/Buffalo

Meÿer describes these fencers as impetuous, [perhaps] foolhardy, and unreasonable. They attempt to overwhelm their opponents in the **Onset** with many cuts and thrusts, much like a bull charging down its opponent. The bull represents strength and aggression, and as such these fencers naturally use both to bully their opponent until they strike them down (I myself mostly hold with this Type of Fencer).

Now the untrained Type I fencer really lives up to this imagery of a bull, or similarly any large prey animal (like an Elk, Moose, or Wildebeest). Being a prey animal does not by any means imply weakness. When one of these animals

charges you headlong, most people would turn and run (or hide) and to stand against it would mean being trampled (severe injury or death).

In my experience, if you were to take a group of new fencers and have them spar, you would see that the natural **Type I Fencers** would more or less come out on top overall (not to say cleanly without doubles and after-blows). This is simply for the fact that they take the **Before** (Vor) in every exchange (hence creating the threat) and forcing the other fencer to parry (or strike out without concern as an untrained **Type 2** is inclined to).

In plain terms, The **Bull** is dangerous to anyone inclined to sit and wait, because once the attacks start, it is hard to take the **Before** back. The **Type I** will be the stress tester for any and all your fundamental skills and techniques, forcing their opponent to only parry while simultaneously stopping them from their devices and threatening them harm.

The main identifiers for an untrained '**Buffalo**' are as follows:

- They are only ever hard in the bind (and often avoid it as to not have their cuts held up).
- They will cut to the bind and immediately then cut away from it (without creating the opportunity to do so), thus leaving themselves open.
- They strike with excess force and without **Indes**, meaning they will often strike without any consideration of their opponent's actions.
- They chain many basic cuts and thrusts together without much thought and in a generally clunky way.

When we look at a trained '**Buffalo**', we see:

- They are proficient in chaining their cuts and thrust together against the opponent's openings, using more than the basic strikes to do this.
- Having developed some use of **Indes**, they are good at avoiding the bind, using proper techniques (namely the use of **Failing/Missing, Flitting/Flying Away, Wrenching/Ripping Out, and Changing Through/Changing**).
- In addition to the previous **Handworks**, they are also learned in **Deceiving/Misleading**, which has less to do with the sword and more to do with body language. While this "**Handwork**" isn't unique to any type of fighter but rather something all 4 types should do, it does grant more success with certain techniques.

- Have developed good bind work such that even after being parried, they may keep up their offence without stalling or attacking the openings recklessly and create proper opportunity to leave the bind.

So how can we transform from an undeveloped **Type I** to a competent **Type I**? By comparing the two and their differences, we can deduce the weaknesses and short-comings that need to be overcome as well as the strengths that need to be honed.

How we develop skills is again a topic worthy of its own article. I will only be explaining the 'what' in this article, and just touching on the 'how'.

Now stands the question. What weaknesses do we need to overcome as a **Prey** type fighter? What strengths do we need to develop? The answers are:

- Fluidity of Cuts and Thrusts to the different openings.
- Becoming skilled at using **Failing/Missing, Flitting/Flying Away, Wrenching/Ripping Out, and Changing Through/Changing**.
- Familiarity and competence in the bind. No matter how good you get at avoiding the bind, you will always find yourself in it numerous times throughout your exchanges.
- Cutting both through the target as well as to **Longpoint** and knowing when to do either one.

Now that we have explored the **Type I Prey** or **Bull/Buffalo** Combatant, we will finish with how we must conduct ourselves when we encounter this fighter.

There is a well-known saying that goes, "Grab the bull by its horns." This idiom means: To deal with a difficult situation in a very direct or confident way.

You can see this in action by simply searching videos of Country Men and Women doing exactly this, wrestling young bulls to hog tie them. Even the controversial Matadors who stand against fully grown bulls gives us good and clear imagery of this. So what does Meyer suggest we do? To put it simply, exactly this.

"When you observe that an opponent is inclined [to] rush and crowd upon you in the Onset with hard cuts or thrusts, then parry [their] cut or thrust with extended arm on your long edge, near your hilt in the forte, and thus turn your hilt against all his incoming cuts and thrusts, yet such that in this parrying you do not go too far out to the side from the Longpoint away from your face, since the closer

you keep your hilt in front of your face in turning him away, the better it is. And always withdraw your head and face away from [their] blade behind yours. And as you thus hold off his cuts and thrusts, then note diligently if you can pull the parrying from [them] in the second, third, or fourth cut, with a back-step away, so that [they] miss with [their] cut or thrust; then swiftly counterthrust or cut, while [they] are still falling, or before [they] recover.” – Translation from Jeffrey L. Forgeng

Meÿer then goes on to say you must essentially give way and yield while parrying away their cuts, waiting for them to become tired, careless, overconfident, or you otherwise perceive an opening before pursuing them quickly and judiciously. In other words, you want to use **Chasing/Pursuit** to strike close behind your Opponent’s **Vor**, taking advantage of their mistakes and openings.

The **Precept/Rule** I offer for fighting the **Prey Type Fighter** is as follows:

Take advantage of the **Bull’s** impatient and aggressive nature. Since they are inclined to **Strike Around, Fail/Miss, Change Through,** and **Bind** hard, they often leave openings for the **Slice/Slicing** and **Pressing/Crushing Hands**. Also, because they throw so many strikes, it becomes easier to seek these openings after the 2nd or 3rd cut where their planned intentions usually end. This relies on the ability to quickly and effectively give ground (fight from the **After**) and parry without being overwhelmed.

A general guide and an example of fighting the **Prey** from the **Bind**.

*When entering any **Bind**, be inclined to linger (**Remaining**). If your opponent **Winds** and works in the **Bind**, do so as well. However, whether they immediately attempt to leave the **Bind** without having found the opportunity to do so or after performing a series of **Handworks**, be ready to **Slice**, use **Pressing Hands**, or strike them in a way you are also parried from them when you do.*

*When the opponent strikes towards your right upper opening, step away and use a **Suppressing Cut**. Before you counter-**Wind**, **Remain** to see if the opponent leaves the **Bind**.*

*If they pull their sword around their head (that is over the left shoulder to cut from their right), close the distance and catch them with **Pressing/Crushing Hands** (you can have crossed or uncrossed hands). Use the blade or quillons to hook and push their wrists and thus turn their body before then striking them.*

*If instead the opponent **Changes Through** and thrusts on the inside and off of your blade towards your left opening, cross your hands from the **Suppressing** into a **Hanging** and follow his blade, pushing it past your body to your left and stepping to your right.*

If you are close enough, grab their blade or hilt with your left hand then strike them with your sword in your right. Alternatively, from the crossed-hand parry, pull your sword over your left shoulder and strike to their face or arms while continuing to step towards their left side.

An example of fighting the **Prey** in the **After** during the **Onset**.

Since the **Bull** is also inclined to chase you with their attacks, keep your distance until they are fully committed and then suddenly spring out towards and under their downward strikes or in the direction of and under their rising cuts, making good use of **Chasing/Pursuit** to their openings and/or striking their hands.

*From whichever side your opponent strikes at you with a **Scalp** or **Wrath Cut** while he gives chase, spring forward and underneath it with a **Low Cut**. You should both catch them on the under flat of their blade with your long edge in the **Ox** position while also threatening a thrust, unless you were able to hit them with the cut as part of your parry.*

*If they instead made a **Low Cut towards** your opening, again spring out with a **Low cut** but this time in the direction their cut is going. With high hands, you should parry their cut and end with your tip online in the **Hanging Point** so that you can immediately thrust them.*

In doing this, turn your body well towards the incoming cut.

How to fight a **Bull** when you cannot outrun them.

Meeting your opponent in this way requires practice and diligent observation in the **Indes**, as a poor execution of techniques in this will lead to messy doubles and after blows.

*If you are not inclined to run away or cannot do so against the opponent, shut down their advance with sudden and calculated Counter-Cutting in their first or second strike. Doing so makes it more difficult and longer for them to cut around, so you can execute the **Slice** or **Pressing Hands** that more easily. Alternatively, use **Thwart/Crosswise** and **Squinter Cuts** to both parry and hit simultaneously, which at the very least forces them to parry if they have good **Indes**, thus you steal the **Before** from them.*

*If they **Wind** on the outside of your blade **ie. Doubling** in order to maintain the before, use the **Squinter** to protect against it and either counter thrust or cut them. If they instead **Change Through** against the first Counter-Cut, either use **Hanging Point** if they thrust or the **Squinter** if they cut and against the side of which they cut from.*

Conducting yourself in this way will often bring you into grappling and wrestling distance, so be quick (and the first) to do so.

In other words, Meÿer is saying to be a **Type II fighter**, someone who uses the opportunities before them to win against their opponent which leads us to...

Type II: The Predator a.k.a. The Opportunist

Meÿer describes these fencers as artful and sharp, more diffident and do not attack so uncouthly (that is to say more modestly and not so aggressively), and take advantage of the opponent's mistakes. They act behind the opponent's movements, often just after or into their **Before**, you could even say they attack in the **Simultaneous**. For these reasons, I have named them the **Predator** or **Opportunist**. As such, these fighters act much like predatory animals.

For example, when a wolf or lion is standing off against a large prey such as an elk or wildebeest, they know they cannot take it head on (at risk of being trampled). Instead they wait for that animal to let its guard down, make a mistake, or become distracted before moving in for a strike. They often use the tactic of drawing their prey to attack (using up their precious energy) while retreating out of harm's way. In this way they can wear their opponent down and tire them out.

Like their predatory animal counterpart, without practice this way of acting can have deadly consequences for a **Type II fighter**. Untrained, these swordsmen often double out, meaning they attack a target they see either at the wrong time and/or in the wrong way, lacking the trained **Indes** to see what their opponent is doing. In my experience, students with hand-to-hand martial arts training often behave as a **Type II**, wanting to strike into the opponents attack (a very prominent idea seen in unarmed martial arts). While there are ways to do this with weapons, you need to learn them first, especially as you can't often recover from a direct weapon strike to your head as you might a fist.

So in summary, the **Opportunist** can pick apart the aggression that the **Bull** presents, especially since so many openings are presented when attacking (the hands especially). In this way, attacking in a straightforward and obvious way becomes very dangerous against the **Type II fighter**, who is naturally able to see the weaknesses in those movements and work around them (much like a Matador).

The main identifiers for an untrained **Predator/Opportunist** are as follows:

- They avoid binding, always cutting through and often relying on both speed and ducking out of the way of a strike while making their own. To my students I like to say, **“With good footwork you can step around your opponent’s attack, but to do so without using your weapon as coverage is like driving without insurance, just plain stupid.”**
- They Double often, achieving a weak or mediocre strike against their opponent and taking a deadly one themselves. This is due to the fact they do not take the **Before** from their opponent first, attacking as if they did when they should be parrying in the **After** still.
- They avoid prolonged exchanges, meaning they go for a hit on the opponent’s or their own first strike before immediately disengaging.
- They are very reactive, often having the habit of striking at the opponent regardless of what the opponent does, making any movement a trigger.
- They don’t attempt to parry and if they do, it is not done well.

Looking at a trained **Predator/Opportunist**, we see:

- They are less reactive and more calculated. This often looks like the combatant first reading the opponent’s attack and either letting it pass before striking or striking into it at the same time in a way that will also achieve an immediate parry while hitting.
- They identify holes and weaknesses in their opponent’s movements and take those opportunities to both take the **Before** from their opponent and hit them.
- They are good at avoiding binds that are not in their favour.
- They stop Doubling so frequently.

So what do we need to develop to become a good **‘Opportunist’**? The answers are:

- Learn well the following **Handworks: Chasing/Pursuit, Slicing, Slicing Off, Changing, Changing Through, Setting Off, Slinging/Catapult, Pressing Hands/Crushing Hands, Blocking/Restriction, Suppressing, and Going Through/Moving Through.**
- Practice Countercutting (**Suppressing** is a good start) and become comfortable in the bind, then the **Indes** to see when the opponent leaves the bind without making opportunity to and leaving an opening.
- Gain a proper understanding of the initiative order to avoid self-sacrificing to land a hit, instead finding the opportunity your opponent is making for you in his movements.
- See the above description of how to deal with a **Type I 'Prey'** fighter for an example of a good **Type II 'Predator'** one.

Having now explored the **Type II fighter**, we must now understand how to work against one. The answer is to be the **Type III fighter**, which is to say someone who lures, baits, and traps their opponent. You do this in the following way.

*“Now against those who will not attack so violently in the **Before**, but will take heed to attack close behind the opponent’s **Before**, position yourself in the **Onset** in one of the guards; then change before him judiciously from one guard into another, and offer him one opening after the other, yet such that your point always remains before him, as I have said concerning changing off. Then as soon as he cuts or thrusts at you during this, fall upon it with **Setting Off** or **Suppressing**, and rush at once to the opening he has presented.” – Translation from Jeffrey L. Forgeng*

I would also personally offer this **Precept/Rule**:

When fighting the **Opportunist**, you must always make good use of the **Provoker**, whether it be in the cut or with the use of the body under **Deceiving/Misleading**. Since the **Opportunist** is both inclined to strike into your attacks and see the openings you create by doing so, you must always make your intended strike look to be a different one, so that in the attack you leave the **Opportunist** no time to seek the opening while also drawing them from their advantage/posture.

Example for Provoking with the Cut in the **Before**.

In the **Onset** when your opponent has made an upper opening available (in this case their upper left), send a right **Wrath Cut** to their head. When they respond to your attack, turn the Wrath into either a **Thwart/Crosswise Cut** or **Crooked Cut** by pushing the pommel under your right hand and transitioning into a thumb grip. Which one you choose will depend on their response. This will all be done in one passing step.

If the opponent uses the common parry (by which I mean they parry with a vertical sword) **Suppressing**, or **Wrath Cut**, turn your **Wrath** into the **Thwart/Crosswise Cut** and strike them in their upper right opening on their head.

If instead the opponent uses your attack as an opportunity to strike upwards at your hands against the perceived **Wrath Cut** (as a Type II often does) or they come into an **Ox** posture via **Setting Off** to counterthrust you, instead make your attack into a **Crooked Cut**. This cut should continue through until you are in the **Hanging Point** posture.

This will both protect your hands and catch your opponent's blade if done properly, creating an inside bind with the immediate threat of a thrust to their lower opening. In all this, your hands must remain high around your head level.

An example of the **Provoker** with the body in the **After**.

When you wish to instead lure your opponent into attacking in the **Before**, you must first give them an opening for which to seek. Begin **Driving** over your right leg from the left **Wrath Guard** to the right **Change** with **Wrath Cuts**. If your opponent is not inclined to come to you, use **Gathering Steps** to advance towards the opponent slowly.

With use of good **Indes**, watch for the moment the opponent attacks. This may happen when they attack over your cut as you come to the **Change** or under your cut as you come to your **Wrath** posture.

If they strike (this can be a cut or thrust) as you come to the **Change**, note from which side. Use **Hanging** (the **Handwork**) with a **Gathering** step forwards or backwards depending on the distance and timing at hand. If they strike to your left opening, your pommel in the **Hanging** should point to the right with crossed hands or point to the left with uncrossed hands if they strike to your right.

When you catch their cut or thrust, **Wind/Twist Through** their blade. If done at the right distance, you should be able to catch and hold their blade between your arms and torso by pulling your elbows to your torso while simultaneously hitting them on the head.

*If instead your opponent strikes under your rising cut (whether you use the short or long edge) in the **Driving** and underneath as you come towards the **Wrath** posture, transition into a **Low** cut that ends in the **Hanging Point** posture and gather your front foot backwards. If the opponent strikes towards your left opening you should have uncrossed hands, and if he attacks your right openings, crossed hands.*

*Thrust their lower opening from this **Bind**. If they parry this thrust, **Strike Around**. Then if they parry and **Strike Around** before you, use the **Slice** and **Pressing Hands** to control and strike them.*

In short, what Meÿer is telling us to do is to be the **Type III Fighter** (can you see a pattern yet?) against the **Predator**. That is to say you must be a...

Type III: The Hunter a.k.a. The Deviser

Meÿer describes these fencers as cautious, deceitful, and judicious. They attempt to lure their opponent in with their comportment, that is with their movements and more specifically, the openings of which they choose to present. For this reason, I also call this combatant '**The Deviser**'. Deviser is defined as: **to plan or invent (a complex procedure, system, or mechanism) by careful thought**. Their approach to every exchange is exactly this, a devised plan of action with much consideration.

We can relate this way of fighting to a hunter, especially considering the tools they use, namely a trap with bait. This could be a mechanical trap but also a scenario, like when a hunter hides in a blind with his gun or bow, waiting for their desired target to enter into their site and pre-determined area, and this reflects exactly how Meÿer describes this **Type III fighter**.

The **Deviser** is often someone who acts from the **After**, but can lead in with the **Before** on occasion while giving the illusion of losing it to the opponent (in reality this is part of the plan). Meÿer says they do not strike unless they know they can get it for certain, but have also determined that by making the attack they can also recover after extending out for the strike into a secure parrying or the Defensive Strokes.

Meÿer mentions that he himself holds with this kind of fencer but it really depends on what type his counterfencer is. A **Predator** type fighter struggles against the **Hunter**, because since they are prone to **Chase/Pursue** into the

perceived openings, they spring the trap on themselves (since the **Deviser** controls the available openings) by taking the bait. Once they are caught, they struggle to escape the trap, particularly because they do not like to fight with lots of back and forth exchange and find themselves at a disadvantage when forced to fight this way.

So let's take a look at what the untrained **Hunter/Deviser** looks like:

- They are hesitant to commit their strikes and spring their traps.
- When they attempt to draw their opponent out, they can often leave openings they are unprepared for.
- When in the **Before**, they will often abandon their cut towards the opening of the opponent to instead parry the opponent's parry (a result of their sense of self-preservation and lack of **Indes**).
- Building on the above note, they are prone to chase their opponent's sword, which leaves them open to **Deceiving/Misleading**. It can also mean they have trouble ever hitting their opponent and if they do, without proper structure and intention behind it.
- They lack the skill to complete their intended course of action cleanly, that is without doubles or after-blows.

Now looking at the trained **Hunter/Deviser**, we see the following:

- They have developed their own **Devices/Sequences** and/or the ability to chain techniques together quickly for any situation.
- They have built the confidence and skills to **Deceive/Mislead** their opponents and execute their traps consistently and cleanly.
- They seem to control their opponent's actions, mainly because they fight on their own terms and only engage when the exchange is the one they want. This means that they force the opponent to attack them where they want them to attack and when they don't, they do not engage.

So what do we need to develop to become a good '**Hunter/Deviser**'? The answers are:

- Learn well **Binding/Remaining/Feeling, Striking Around, Running Off/Dropping Down, Deceiving/Misleading, Setting Off, Slinging/Catapult, Pulling, Snapping Around, Circle, Changing, Slicing Off, Sliding/Shifting Forward, Hanging, Wrenching/Ripping Out, and Barring/Blocking**.

- Learn well how to **Provoke** your opponent. This can be with the weapon or the body, and should be practiced from the **Before** and **After**.
- Be patient and give purposeful but subtle openings to the opponent. The more experienced the opponent, the more subtle the openings need to be.
- Never be obvious in your actions. This means to hide your real intention with another (ie. Hide the **Hitter** with a **Provoker**).

With an understanding of the **Type III fighter** (and examples from **The Predator** section for how to behave like one), we can now address our method of fighting them. The answer is to deny them their trap, which can be done by ignoring it or sneaking past it. This is simply to be the **Type IV fighter**. Here is Meÿer's example.

*“Against the **Third fencer**, exercise this skill: when you take note that your counterfencer doesn't cut first, nor do they rush to the openings unless they are certain of them: position yourself in the **Side Guard** in the **Onset** or remain a short time in the **Change [Guard]** (as if you wanted to wait for their **Device/Sequence**). Rise **Indesly** back upward out of the **Low Guard** and position yourself as if you wanted to change into the **High Guard**. When you have barely arrived in the **High Guard**, turn your weapon rapidly to strike. Before they observe this, cut rapidly at the closest opening with an extended arm. In this way, you expose yourself and they will undoubtedly cut rapidly at this opening (which you have offered to them through your unexpected strike). If they execute this [cut], set it off and continue to work at their opening. If they don't cut, thrust strongly after you have completed your cut. This is a fierce deceit which you present with your body language (as if you wanted to move from one stance long in front of them – which you do want to partially carry out). However, when you have barely arrived with your weapon in the intended **High Guard**, and you have **Indesly** observed your opportunity, turn your weapon to strike before you have completely arrived into the stance.” – **Translation from Rebecca L. R. Garber***

The **Precept/Rule I** have made for fighting the **Hunter** is as follows:

As the **Hunter/Deviser** relies mostly on fighting from the **After**, and as such will do everything to draw you to them, you must simply out wait them. This will force them to come to you. Since their attack on you will be intended to **Provoke** you into attacking their openings, you must defeat their **Provocation** with use of the **Master Cuts** (that is to parry in a way that is both simultaneously a **Taker** and

Hitter), or else another parry that achieves the same thing. In this way you steal the **Before** from them safely and disrupt their intended **Device/Sequence**.

If they refuse to strike first, then you must bait them with sudden and quick comportment (as in Meÿer's example above). This is done by **Changing** from one guard into another, suddenly turning that movement into a cut or thrust without warning, so they may not devise a plan against you and must simply strike in to defend. Use a **Taker** against this strike and proceed to the **War**.

An example from the **After** of which you can control where your opponent attacks.

Choose a cutting posture (ie. that does not threaten a thrust with the tip forward) of which to wait in. As each posture by nature covers 1 of the 4 open quadrants, use this to determine where your opponent will most likely attack (usually the opposite quadrant).

*If you assume the right **High Guard** with left leg forward, they will most likely attack your lower left opening with a **Low cut**. When they do so, step back with your left leg and counter with your own right **Low cut** into theirs. You should end with your tip online and ready to thrust to their lower opening on the side of which they cut from.*

*However, should they maintain the **Before** and make a low outside **Wind/Twist**, you will counter this by **Winding/Twisting** to your left **Plow** and thrust again to the lower opening.*

An example from the **After** of which you fight from **Longpoint**.

*If you approach your opponent in the **Longpoint**, then wait for him to strike or bind upon your sword. As he attempts to bind your sword, in order to deny him blade contact, **Change Through** and thrust to the side from which he attempted to bind from with a step. In doing so, turn your long edge towards his sword.*

*If you do not manage to hit them in this action but they manage to offset your thrust with their tip on or off line, then **Wrench/Rip Out** their blade and make a **Thwart/Crosswise cut** from the same side of which you **Wrenched/Ripped Out** from with further stepping and **Withdraw**.*

An example from the **Before** by which you pretend to give it up.

*Conduct a **Scalp** or **Wrath cut** that ends in **Longpoint** either before them (and out of range) or onto their sword if they linger in a tip forward posture like **Ox** or **Longpoint**.*

*See if they will cut into your upper opening because you have either left it open by cutting out of range and into theirs or because they have taken the force of your cut and then cut around from the **Longpoint**.*

*Transition to a **Pommel Grip** and through the **Rose** come under their counter cut with a step towards and under their sword, catching them in an **Underbind**. Thrust towards their chest or face. If they manage to parry this thrust, step out to the other side, unwinding through the **Rose** and making a **Squinter cut**.*

With this he describes that you should be the Type IV Fencer, which I call the...

Type IV: Gaia a.k.a. The Flower and The Storm

Meÿer describes these fencers as either foolish or especially sharp, as they will not accomplish much waiting for their opponent unless they are well-versed and trained in the art. In essence, this means they are either a Fool or a Master. Since waiting for the opponent is always giving them the **Before** (meaning they are always being given the chance to attack your body) the chances of getting hit are high, unless you have an answer for everything they could possibly do against you. This means that **Gaia** always fights from the **After**, even if they seemingly attempt to take the **Before**.

In this way, I also believe it goes hand in hand with the **Master Cuts**. This is because the **Master Cuts** are only such when done from the **After**. Doing a **Master cut** in the **Before** is no different than making any other cut, since you aren't simultaneously parrying and striking, just striking since you already have the **Before**.

You could use these terms (The Fool and the Master), but to stay in theme with the rest of the types (as well as homage to the Germans love of the Romans who took from the Greeks), I have chosen **Gaia**. **Gaia** or **Gaea** is the personification of the earth and all its elements.

The untrained version of **Gaia** (the Fool) is the **Flower**. Since the **Hunter** must leave their camp to find them and cannot lure them in, the **Flower** has the advantage of drawing them into the wild. However, the **Flower** also has no means to defend itself unless it has thorns or is poisonous, so once the **Hunter** arrives, they are either picked or trampled on. This also means that if the **Hunter** does not wear gloves or accidentally eats the poisonous **Flower**, they risk harm or death (a

perfect metaphor of the risk a trained fighter takes by not being careful against an untrained one).

The trained version of **Gaia** (the Master) is what I call the **Storm**. The **Storm** is dangerous for the **Hunter**, because it drives them to seek shelter or to otherwise brave the inclement weather. Since humans are not made to endure such extreme weather even after careful planning and preparation, they often succumb to it given time. The **Storm** is unmerciful in this way, because they can shut down the **Hunter's** attempts to enter or escape.

So let's take a look at what the untrained **Gaia (Flower)** looks like:

- They are generally unprepared and never take the **Before**, always waiting for the opponent to attack.
- They rely on parrying, using only the common parry.
- They chase the sword (which leaves them vulnerable to **Deceiving/Misleading**).
- They often exclusively rely on a posture of their choice (usually **Longpoint, Straight Parrying/Simple Brace, Fool, or High Guard**).
- Are easily overwhelmed with consecutive cuts and thrusts.

Now looking at the trained **Gaia (Storm)**, we see the following:

- They have developed all their skills, becoming an efficient and well-rounded combatant. This means they are ready for any and all attacks with good counter cutting/thrusting, often using **Master Cuts**.
- They have developed patience in their fighting as well as the ability to control where the opponent attacks.
- They don't rely on pre-planned exchanges but rather on good **Indes**, answering their opponent with the correct comportment.
- They change their posture based on the opponent's, making them work for the opening
- Despite fighting from the **After**, they seem unapproachable.

What makes a good **Type IV Gaia** Combatant? The answer is to:

- Develop a strong **Indes** and confidence in their actions.
- Attain a thorough understanding of all the elements of their system and basic fundamentals of sword combat (ie. Handworks, Cuts, Thrusts, etc.)
- Become well-versed in using the Master Cuts (**Scalp/Hairline, Wrath, Squinter, Crooked, Thwart/Crosswise**)

I think it is important to note for the reasons stated above, there is the biggest difference between the untrained and trained version of the **Type IV Gaia**. It is the only type of fighter that Meÿer points out, *“They must be either fools or especially sharp, for whoever will wait for another person’s device must be very adept and also trained and experienced, or else he will not accomplish much.”* – **Translation from Jeffrey L. Forgeng**

This suggests two things; always giving up the **Before** is not best practice and that to fight in this way requires someone to truly be masterful.

This is something that is worth exploring more, but for another article. How then can we defeat the **Gaia** combatant? Meÿer does not give a specific example at this point in his book, but rather states we can find examples throughout the previous devices.

In short, he is saying to be the **Type I Prey fighter**. In this way his system completes a circle where each type of combatant is defeated by the next in the circle. This also works in our theme in that the **Prey** eats the **Flower**, thorns and all (as the deer eats the rose bush) and also has the thick winter coat to brave the **Storm**.

For now, I offer these **Precepts/Rules** for fighting the **Gaia type** fighter, one for the **Flower** and one for the **Storm**.

Against the **Flower**:

During the **Onset**, if the **Flower** keeps their sword out in **Longpoint**, **Bind** on it and make a controlled thrust. If they manage to put this off, close in in order to grapple and wrestle them (**Running In**) or else use the **Circle** or **Wrist cuts** from **Break-Window/Breaking Window**.

If in the **Onset** the **Flower** instead takes a cutting posture, overwhelm them delivering cuts and thrust to their openings making use of **Failing/Missing** and **Flitting/Flying Away**. Since they are prone to chasing your blade, it will be easy to **Deceive/Mislead** them.

Against the **Storm**:

Conduct yourself much like you do against the **Flower** but note these additions.

When you **Bind**, do not leave it until you have made a safe opportunity to do so, which only happens through good bind work or your opponent’s mistakes.

In the case that the **Storm** uses the **Master Cuts** or good counter-cutting against you, **Deceive/Mislead** them by shortening and lengthening your steps and denying them a **Bind** (unless you **Bind** to your advantage) with the appropriate **Handworks**.

An example from the Wrath Posture (**Pg. 79 1.35r.2 Forgeng, Pg. 80 Garber**).

“Now if [they] will not cut, then position yourself in the right Wrath, and drive over your forward thigh thus: keep your left foot in place, and cut from your right diagonally over your left leg into the left Change; from there slash with the short edge back up through the Stroke Line through which you have cut in from above, so that your sword comes back on your right shoulder. Do this one to three times, and at last when you see your opportunity, go up above in the air with the short edge, slashing from your left, and let it thus snap around in the air over your head for a Low Cut toward his lower right opening with a double step forward. And just as it connects, then strike back with the short edge deep in at his left ear, palm away from him; in this, let your pommel snap well upward; thus it goes that much deeper. Then pull back around, and threaten a cut at his right; but at once deliver a Thwart opposite it with a back-step to his left, and then withdraw.” –
Translation from Jeffrey L. Forgeng

An example on how to overwhelm them with strong **Deceiving/Misleading**.

*When the opponent has settled in a posture, then begin by attacking the opposite opening of which their sword is. If they present a tip forward posture, then **Bind** on it in such a way that you can threaten a thrust to an opening.*

*Once they have begun parrying, use **Failing/Missing** to pressure them. Once they have been forced into parrying, switch to **Flitting/Flying Away** to further gain the advantage over them.*

*When you perceive the opening, strike in. If this does not hit, then their parry is surely hard in the bind (out of desperation to not be hit). Be ready with any **Handwork** done from a strong **Bind** like **Striking Around, Pulling, or Doubling**.*

*If correctly timed and executed, this will surely hit your opponent. Immediately grapple them or **Withdraw** to prevent them from striking you (if they are not completely incapacitated).*

Conclusion

We can now see and understand a little more clearly what Meÿer intended and meant when he was speaking about each kind of fighter. Being able to identify not just how our opponents behave, but also how we ourselves behave in combat is an important step in understanding how we can improve ourselves and the path of which to overcome anyone we face.

We can also see how being the correct type of fighter against your opponent doesn't dictate you will automatically win, but it really does set you up to do so. There is also exploring to be done on someone who gets so good at their natural type that it can carry them against most combatants, regardless of their type.

Another comparison would be to see how the **Type I Prey** vs. **Type III Hunter** as well as the **Type II Predator** vs. **Type IV Gaia** match ups may not hold any particular advantage over one another.

This also solidifies the need to learn all these different **Precepts/Rules** and other skills from the ground up so that we can conduct ourselves the proper way in any situation and not be prisoner to our instincts.

