

# Review of: "Clausewitzian Coup d'Oeil: The Extraordinary Intuition of the War Genius"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The article titled "Clausewitzian Coup d'Oeil: The Extraordinary Intuition of the War Genius," by Ami-Jacques Rapin, published in March 2024, presents an in-depth exploration of Carl von Clausewitz's concept of "coup d'oeil" within the broader context of military strategy and genius. The author, affiliated with the University of Lausanne, provides a comprehensive examination without any specified funding or competing interests declared.

Rapin's article embarks on a historical and conceptual journey, tracing the evolution of the term "coup d'oeil" from its origins in 18th-century military theory to its nuanced interpretation by Clausewitz. The analysis reveals that Clausewitz's use of "coup d'oeil" diverges significantly from its traditional tactical associations, embedding it within a complex strategic framework that intertwines with notions of genius, intuition, and the fog of war.

The author argues that for Clausewitz, "coup d'oeil" transcends mere tactical acumen, encapsulating an almost instantaneous strategic intuition that enables a war genius to pierce through the uncertainties of the battlefield and grasp the essence of a situation. This intuition, while related to the "tact of judgment," is elevated to a level of strategic insight, aligning with the broader themes of uncertainty, probability, and the interplay between military and political considerations in Clausewitz's thought.

Rapin meticulously dissects the cognitive and conceptual underpinnings of "coup d'oeil," drawing parallels with contemporary notions of strategic intuition while maintaining a clear distinction from more tactical or operational perspectives. The analysis is enriched by references to historical figures like Frederick II and Napoleon, whose command styles exemplify the Clausewitzian genius, further illustrating the intricate balance between innate talent and the acquired skill that constitutes "coup d'oeil."

The article concludes by reflecting on the enduring relevance of Clausewitz's ideas in the face of technological advancements and the evolving nature of warfare. Rapin suggests that despite the allure of achieving omniscience on the battlefield through technology, the complex human intuition captured by "coup d'oeil" remains a critical component of strategic decision-making.

Overall, "Clausewitzian Coup d'Oeil: The Extraordinary Intuition of the War Genius" offers a rich and thought-provoking examination of a key Clausewitzian concept, providing valuable insights for both military theorists and practitioners. Rapin's work underscores the timeless nature of Clausewitz's theories, highlighting the intricate interplay between human intuition and strategic thinking in the art of war.

