



Napoleon's Glance: The Secret of Strategy (Nation Books)

By William Duggan

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When Napoleon's Glance was first published last spring, former NATO secretary general and now putative presidential candidate Wesley Clark declared, "This is a very important book." In Napoleon's Glance strategist William Duggan shows how Clark, along with ten other important figures in the fields of politics, war and culture, owed their success to coup d'oeil. But what is coup d'oeil? Carl von Clausewitz spent twenty years struggling to pin down the genius of Napoleon. In chapter six of what would become "On War" he discovered the secret of Napoleon's strategy: Napoleon's glance. Clausewitz calls it "coup d'oeil" meaning a stroke of the eye, or "glance." A sudden insight that shows you what course of action to take, it comes from knowledge of the past, drawing on what worked in other situations in a new combination that fits the problem at hand. In Napoleon's Glance, Duggan expertly weaves intellectual history and biography in showing how important and decisive coup d'oeil is in determining victory in war, art, the civil rights movement, third world development, and the battle for women's suffrage in America.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The title may draw in people with a weakness for military models for civilian planning issues, but, unlike Duggan's *The Art of What Works*, the book is not really a planner's how-to, nor is it conventional military historiography. Instead, Duggan offers clear perspectives on how various traits-e.g. mental flexibility in reading the past and present, talent for envisioning the efforts of tens to millions, minute adjustment of tactical details-have been put to careful use by particular figures. Beyond that, it is a mixed bag. Duggan oversimplifies the military strategists he covers (Napoleon and Patton) with a dichotomy between the approaches of Clausewitz (flexible) and Jomini (rigid), leaving out, for example, the crucial role of staffs. On Sundiata (it is a nice surprise to find him here), the founder of the Mali Empire in Africa, the author lists only a single source. Also here are Alice Paul, the American suffragist, and Ella Baker, one of the founders of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Joan of Arc was herself only a very short-lived strategist, drawing her insights from the legend of the Quest for the Grail-but watching her in action inspired the French statesmen and soldiers who won the Hundred Years' War. The best essay in the book, the study of Mohammed Yunus's Grameen Bank making micro-loans in Bangladesh, reflects the author's background in international development with the Ford Foundation.

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Review

"The book's own stroke of genius is Duggan's coherent reporting of coup d'oeil as it occurs throughout the centuries, while at the same time relating it in a way sure to inspire readers to discover their own formulas for success."

About the Author

William Duggan is the author of two acclaimed novels of Africa, *The Great Thirst* and *Lovers of the African Night*; a historical study of economic development in Africa; and a forthcoming scholarly study of strategy, *The Art of What Works*. He has a Ph.D. from Columbia University and teaches strategy there. He is co-founder of Creative Strategy Group, which helps organizations and individuals apply the lessons of Napoleon's Glance to whatever they do.

Users Review

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