

Research Article

Clausewitz's Conceptual Relationship Among Tactics, Strategy, and the Conduct of War (*Kriegführung*)

Ami-Jacques Rapin¹¹. University of Lausanne, Switzerland

In accordance with the findings of other recent research, this article also posits the hypothesis that a broader conceptualisation of strategy, one which extends beyond the “narrow” definition of the term, is an underlying theme in Clausewitz’s work. The present analysis aims to investigate the interpretive nuances of the term *Strategie* within the German military lexicon, as it is employed in a fluid and context-specific manner. The investigation will then proceed to present the argument that, in contrast to the Clausewitzian understanding of tactics, his concept of strategy can be considered to be open-ended. The concept oscillates between the poles of tactics and the broader category of conduct of war (*Kriegführung*), with its connotations and scope changing in accordance with these oscillations.

Introduction

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the concepts of tactics and strategy have been regarded as an essential pair in military thinking, both in terms of practical application and theoretical analysis. In Clausewitz’s theory of war, this pair represents the third conceptual “pillar”, alongside the war/policy and ends/means pairs.¹ Christian Müller asserts that the principal advantage of Clausewitz’s approach resides in the remarkable lucidity of his definition of strategy, a clarity that has since diminished. It could be added that the respective definitions of strategy and tactics remain stable from the first strategic writings of 1804 up to the main treatise of the author.

Clausewitz’s “narrow” definition of strategy does not fit contemporary uses.² It is widely accepted that what Clausewitz defined as strategy is the operational art of contemporary military terminology.³ However, Andreas Herberg-Rothe has put forth the proposition that Clausewitz’s work evinces a less

parochial conceptualisation of strategy within the context of a dynamic relationship between purpose, aims, and means. The author employs Clausewitz's methodological approach of the marvellous trinity to redefine the Clausewitzian approach to strategy as the "maintenance of a floating balance of purpose, aims, and means in warfare".⁴ In shorter terms, Donald Stocker also insisted that the Clausewitzian concept of strategy "encompassed" both the operational and strategic realms in the contemporary sense of the two terms.⁵

This article also suggests that a broader conceptualisation of strategy, beyond the "narrow" definition of the term, is an underlying theme in Clausewitz's work. However, compared to Herberg-Rothe's argument, the approach is based on a different foundation. The preliminary phase will comprise an investigation into the fluid and context-specific interpretation of the term *Strategie* as it was utilised within the German military lexicon. The argument will then be presented that, in contrast to the Clausewitzian understanding of tactics, his concept of strategy can be considered to be open-ended. In this context, it is crucial to recognize that his applications of the concept exhibit a tendency to oscillate between the poles of tactics and the broader category of conduct of war (*Kriegführung*).

An ambiguously concept

The process by which the concept of *Strategie* became a central category of military thought in German-speaking countries remains relatively obscure and under-researched. While this article does not seek to elaborate on this topic, it is nevertheless crucial to highlight an intriguing paradox: the conceptualisation of strategy has not been synchronised with its institutionalisation as a teaching module in military academies.

As early as 1783, the curricula of the *Hohe Karlsschule* in Stuttgart and the Kassel Military School included the study of strategy.⁶ It is notable that this occurred only a mere few years subsequent to Johann von Bourscheid's introduction of the neologism *Strategie* into the German language in 1777 and subsequent popularisation by Ferdinand Friedrich von Nicolai in the context of military circles during the early 1780s. Subsequently, courses in strategy were also provided at the *Académie des Nobles* in Berlin and at the *Institut für die jungen Offiziere*, which Clausewitz attended from 1801 to 1803.⁷ Simultaneously, the same curriculum was taught at the *Kurfürstlichen Kadetten-Korps* in Munich and at the *Militär Akademie* in Vienna.

The assertion by Lawrence Freedman that this interest in strategy was driven by the desire to “give a name to the higher parts of war” is accurate.⁸ However, his understanding of the chaotic nature of this endeavour and the prevailing state of confusion within the German-speaking military lexicon at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is incomplete. As Jeremy Black has proposed, the concept of strategy was characterised by a high degree of semantic flexibility and volatility during this period.⁹ The ambiguity surrounding this concept persisted throughout the initial three decades of the nineteenth century, pervading the entirety of military terminology.

Gerhard von Scharnhorst, who had previously delivered a course on strategy in 1803 in collaboration with Karl von Phull,¹⁰ was fully aware of the difficulties inherent in the teaching of a topic that was the subject of considerable debate, with a multitude of disparate perspectives coexisting. In 1804, he wrote to Levin von Geusau, director of the *Institut für die jungen Offiziere*, that there was a wide divergence of opinion on strategy and applied tactics (*angewandte Taktik*), a subject on which no clearly agreed principles had yet been established. Consequently, Scharnhorst argued that the topic should not be taught by a single professor – apparently to preserve differences of opinion – using a turn of phrase that implied that *Strategie* and *angewandte Taktik* were one and the same subject.¹¹

The difficulty in conceptualising strategy did not solely derive from the challenge of defining the term itself; rather, it stemmed from the inherent complexity surrounding the relationship between strategy and tactics. To address the issue, August Wagner employed an organised methodology, aligning tactics and strategy in accordance with a taxonomic symmetry. In Wagner’s analysis, Heinrich Dietrich von Bülow’s concepts are integrated into a comprehensive framework that combines the concepts of pure tactics (*reine Taktik*) and pure strategy (*reine Strategie*), applied tactics (*angewandte Taktik*) and applied strategy (*angewandte Strategie*), and field tactics (*taktische Terrainlehre*) and field strategy (*strategische Terrainlehre*). In this context, the author put forth a distinction between tactics and strategy in terms of scale, postulating that tactics may be conceived of as operating on the micro level, whereas strategy can be regarded as operating on a more macro level (*Uebrigens ist die Taktik im Kleinen, was die Strategie im Großen ist*).¹²

This approach failed to persuade August Rühle von Lilienstern, who identified a concealed motive (*versteckte Unterscheidungsmotiv*) within Wagner’s taxonomic system. The former identifies a dichotomy between the physical and the intellectual (*physische und intellektuelle Wechselwirkung*) at the core of the latter’s reasoning, which not only underpins the pure/applied conceptual pair but also the tactical/strategic pair. However, this distinction was insufficiently practical, and the application of the

terms “strategy” and “tactics” was only partially aligned with the phenomena under discussion.¹³ In addition, Rühle von Lilienstern’s *Handbuch für den Offizier* [Officer’s Manual] – the author’s most important text, according to Jacek Jędrysiak – offered more general observations that shed light on the ambiguous nature of the concepts of strategy and tactics in the late 1810s.¹⁴

The author began by pointing out that the use of these terms was not an explicit inheritance from their Greek etymology, but an invention (*Erfindung*) of his own time. He then noted that military writers had used these words in a variety of ways, and that none of them had sufficient authority to impose their own usage on others. In the end, he was of the opinion that it was quite possible to do without them, and that it would probably be no loss either to practice or to science if they were completely absent from military terminology.¹⁵

In the preceding years, Karl Christian Müller, a member of the *Tugendbund*, had also developed the final of these ideas in a publication on the Germanisation of military terminology. His aspiration to supersede the conceptual dyad “tactics/strategy” with the pair “Harsch/Hilde” was somewhat extravagant; however, it offers a more comprehensive understanding of the connotations associated with the two aforementioned terms. The *Hilde* was associated with a fine and calculated direction of war (*feine berechnende Kriegleitung*), whereas the *Harsche* was linked to a brave and effective conduct of war (*brave thatkraftige Kriegführung*). The initial term was intended to signify the objective (*Zweck*), the essence (*Was*), and the spiritual refinement (*Geistig-Feine*); the subsequent term was to represent the means (*Mittel*), the method (*Wie*), and the physical strength (*Körperlich-Kraftige*).¹⁶

Müller’s approach to the *Zweck/Mittel* relationship and the *Was/Wie* relationship was of interest, despite its allusive nature. Conversely, his physical/intellectual opposition was of a similar nature to that which Rühle von Lilienstern would later criticise. Fundamentally, his endeavour at terminological substitution, characterised by its strange neologisms, reflected the pervasive uncertainty that prevailed in the conceptualisation of strategy and tactics during that period.

Clausewitz never intended to abandon the conceptual pairing of tactics and strategy, but he was well aware from his earliest writings that the two terms were used in very fluctuating ways (*sehr schwankend*).¹⁷ The issue was not merely a matter of semantics; rather, it pertained to the fundamental discordance in the interpretations of the phenomenon in question. In Clausewitz’s own words, it was “the nature of the object” (*die Natur des Gegenstandes*) that was at the heart of this

discord.¹⁸ The divergence in understanding the nature of the phenomenon also gave rise to a similar discordance in the relationship between the concepts.

The formative years

It is no longer necessary to provide evidence that Clausewitz regarded Scharnhorst as the “father and friend of [his] mind”.¹⁹ During his student’s formative years, Clausewitz’s mentor developed his own views on the relationship between tactics and strategy in an 1802 article on the Battle of Marengo. This article is derived from one of three lectures delivered on Bülow’s book on the 1800 campaign. In accordance with the analysis provided by Arthur Kuhle, this article represents the zenith of Bülow’s reception in Prussia.²⁰ This inquiry does not seek to evaluate the extent to which Scharnhorst has reappropriated Bülow’s ideas; consequently, it will not be undertaken to ascertain whether the passage from Bülow cited by Kuhle in support of his analysis truly pertains to the same principle of Scharnhorst cited below. Nevertheless, Kuhle’s assertion that Bülow’s work and Scharnhorst’s review provided a pivotal theoretical stimulus (*Entscheidenden theoretischen Anstoß*) for the Prussian war theory is indeed accurate.²¹

Scharnhorst’s approach distinguished between strategy and tactics by examining the circumstances under which a military engagement could be considered a victory. He begins by stating that the analysis of a battle must be carried out from two distinct perspectives: firstly, the strategic conditions (*strategischen Verhältnisse*) under which it was fought; and secondly, the tactical routs (*taktischen Unordnungen*) that occurred there.

This dual perspective implies a difference in scale between the two spheres of action and a subordination of the latter to the former. This is made clear when the author states that a minor alteration to the strategic conditions of the moment – in this case, the crossing of the Po by the Austrian army – could have resulted in a favourable situation for the French being transformed into a disadvantageous one. Skilful strategic manoeuvring can place the enemy at a tactical disadvantage. Without undertaking a detailed analysis of the battle, it is possible to identify a strategic principle that was enunciated by Scharnhorst: never stand (*stehen*) concentrated, but always fight (*schlagen*) in a concentrated manner.²² Whatever the inspiration behind Scharnhorst’s concept that could be attributed to Bülow, Kuhle accurately observes its presence in the well-known German adage: *Getrennt marschieren, vereint schlagen!* which translates to “march separately, strike together!”²³

Scharnhorst's article contains a second well-known expression that exerts an influence on the development of German military thought.²⁴ This expression is articulated in the preceding paragraphs of the aforementioned citation: "all strategy ceases" (*alle Strategie aufhört*) with the Austrians' decision to engage in the Battle of Marengo.²⁵ The statement implicitly suggested that the implementation of tactics occurred concomitantly with the cessation of strategic activity. The argument remained undeveloped, and the author did not provide any specific insights into the potential implications of this perspective on the relationship between strategy and tactics. However, it appears that Scharnhorst did not concur with Bülow's assertion that tactics would progressively diminish in significance within the art of war (*also wird die Taktik [...] immer mehr aus des kriegskunst verschwinden*), with strategy becoming the predominant factor (*die Strategie allein wird alles ausrichten*).²⁶

Scharnhorst's article was published in the *Denkwürdigkeiten der militärischen Gesellschaft* (Memoirs of the Military Society), the Berlin-based association within which Clausewitz initially began to develop his opinions and refine his judgment. Did it establish the conceptual basis for Clausewitz's understanding of the relationship between strategy and tactics? It is likely that it did, but Scharnhorst's article did not mean that the question of the relationship between the two concepts had been settled for the members of the *Militärische Gesellschaft*. At a meeting of the Association in May 1804, Lieutenant Biderstein presented an essay on the classification of the sciences of war, in which he attempted to establish a distinction between tactics and strategy. The minutes of the meeting do not provide the definitions that were discussed; instead, they indicate that none of the proposed definitions included any essential and decisive (*wesentlichen und bestimmten*) characteristics.²⁷

The subsequent account of the discussion, which was too brief to ascertain whether Clausewitz, who had become one of the three editors of the *Denkwürdigkeiten* a month earlier, participated actively, is similarly lacking in detail. It is conceivable that he was the author of the somewhat enigmatic observation that, in order to define the difference between tactics and strategy, it is necessary to avoid defining the limit (*Gränze*).²⁸ It can be surmised that this was an allusion to Bülow's terminology, which emphasised the necessity of determining the dividing line (*Grenzlinie*) between strategy and tactics.²⁹ Should the wording in the *Denkwürdigkeiten* be interpreted as an attempt to avoid the compartmentalisation of the two concepts, it would appear to be in phase with the first definition of *Strategie* published by Clausewitz in his eponymous manuscript, written in 1804.

Clausewitz's definition

The double definition in the manuscript is virtually identical to that found in *On War*: tactics is the theory (*Lehre*) of the use of armed forces in the engagement (*Gefecht*), strategy is the theory of the use of each engagement for the aim (*Zweck*) of the war. It is the “elegant expression” of an idea that Clausewitz expressed by insisting on the combination or linking of individual engagements (*durch Verbindung einzelner Gefechte*).³⁰

This focus on engagements can be attributed to a disagreement with a prominent military theorist of the period. While Bülow is not explicitly referenced in this particular section of the manuscript, Clausewitz's critique of the notion that strategy is the sole determining factor in military success and that tactics are inconsequential is clearly directed at Bülow and his ideas.³¹ In contrast, the critique was notably direct and more penetrating in a review of a work by Bülow that was published anonymously by Clausewitz the following year in the *Neue Bellona*.

This review is notable for two aspects. Firstly, Clausewitz criticises Bülow's definition of strategy, yet does not propose an alternative definition of his own. However, it is established that he had formulated this alternative definition, which was incorporated into his 1804 manuscript. Secondly, the discussion of Bülow's definition represents the sole instance of Clausewitz's explicit and developed criticism of the definitions of strategy formulated by military writers of the time.

The definition of which Clausewitz took issue had already been formulated by Bülow in 1799, in his *Geist des neuern Kriegssystems* (The Spirit of the Modern System of War). It states that any movement conducted within the enemy's visual field – and therefore within the range of his cannon – is tactical; any movement conducted outside his visual field – and therefore outside the range of his cannon – is strategic.³² Clausewitz demonstrated with ease the shortcomings of such a definition. Nonetheless, his approach evinces an inspiration drawn from the author under criticism, though this inspiration is not made explicit.

Clausewitz's critique of Bülow's nominalism was based on the perception that Bülow had not comprehended the object (*Gegenstand*) that must be distinguished according to his classification principle (*Eintheilungsprinzip*); more explicitly: the utilisation of given means (*vorhandenen Mittel*) to attain a higher aim (*vorgesetzten Zweck*).³³ In point of fact, Bülow had made a twofold distinction: firstly, between the aim (*Zweck*) of military operations and their objective (*Gegenstand*, here in a different sense from Clausewitz's previous use of the concept); and secondly, between the general aim

(in diesem allgemeinen Zwecke) – peace – and the specific aims of operations (die Zwecke der besonders Operationen) – harming the enemy, the latter being so many means (Mittel) of achieving the former.³⁴ Nevertheless, it is accurate to assert that the analysis was not articulated explicitly with his definition of strategy and tactics.

Yet, Bülow had thoroughly contemplated the significance of such an articulation in 1799, formulating the subsequent definition: all operations that have the enemy as their object (Gegenstand) are deemed tactical, while all operations that have the enemy as their aim (Zweck), but not their object, are classified as strategic. Nevertheless, he was not inclined to accept it at that time, on the grounds that the definition was overly extensive (umfasst also zuviel).³⁵ Bülow reconsidered this position in 1805, when he appended a significant annotation to the new edition of his *Geist des neuern Kriegssystem*. Consequently, he disavowed (widerrufen) his prior definition based on the visual field, opting instead for the definition he had previously dismissed in 1799: tactical is any movement that has the enemy as its object (Gegenstand), strategic is any movement that has the enemy as its aim (Zweck) and not as its object.³⁶

As Jean-Jacques Langendorf has observed, this turnaround brought Bülow closer to Clausewitz's position.³⁷ It is challenging to ascertain whether this novel perspective was shaped by the review published in *Neue Bellona*. Bülow meticulously examined the critical reviews of his works; however, the sole indication he provides of his shift in stance is that it occurred subsequent to meticulous reflection (nach reiflicher Überlegung).³⁸

It could be argued that Bülow furnished his critics with two elements. Firstly, he provided a rough initial definition of strategy. Secondly, he provided the conceptual means to critique that definition. In the author's "boiling of ideas," as termed by Langendorf,³⁹ elements were brought to the surface that were capable of providing perspicuity to even the most intransigent critics. In this particular instance, Clausewitz's reinterpretation of the issue enabled him to demonstrate that entering the opponent's field of vision neither modifies the intrinsic nature of the aim nor that of the means employed in military operations (weder die Natur des Zwecks noch der Mittel).⁴⁰ In essence, Clausewitz employed an analytical framework inspired by Bülow to argue that Bülow had merely inadequately utilised it.

It is demonstrated by Kuhle that the significance attributed to the dialectic of ends and means was not exclusive to what he terms the "Scharnhorst Circle"; nevertheless, this dialectic functioned as a pivotal conception of said circle.⁴¹ Furthermore, Kuhle's contributions included the identification of a

lacuna in the existing historiography, emphasising the significance of an author who had been overlooked by commentators on Clausewitz. The dearth of interest in the work published anonymously by Friedrich von Gaugreben in 1805 under the title *Versuch einer gründlichen Beleuchtung der Lehrsätze des neuern Krieges* (An Attempt at a thorough Examination of the Doctrines of Modern War) warrants an explanation.

On account of the ambiguity in the subtitle of the book, its attribution to Bülow has become customary in library catalogues. A cursory examination of the book is sufficient to reveal its true nature. It is, in fact, a lengthy review of a work by Bülow; indeed, the same work was reviewed anonymously by Clausewitz in the same year in *Neue Bellona*. The process of ascertaining the genuine authorship of the work presented more of a challenge. Kuhle's research led to the identification of the attribution of the work to Gaugreben, as stated in the *Anleitung zum zweckmäßigen Studium der Kriegswissenschaft* (Guidance for the Rational Study of Military Science), which was published in 1828 by Ludwig Friedrich Erck. This assertion is corroborated by the ancient *Katalog der Bibliothek-Abtheilung des K. und K. Kriegs-Archivs* (Catalogue of the Library Section of the Imperial and Royal War Archives), even if the title of the work is slightly different.⁴² As Gaugreben was also a member of the *Militärische Gesellschaft* and had published a critical review of Bülow's work, albeit more in-depth than that by Clausewitz, the findings by Kuhle opened up an interesting comparative perspective.

Kuhle persuasively demonstrates the convergence of views between Gaugreben and Clausewitz, and the influence that the former's criticism of Bülow may have had on the development of the latter's ideas. However, the present discussion does not concern itself with the assertion that the corpus of Clausewitz's work represents a late culmination of Bülow's reception (*ein später Höhepunkt der Bülow-Rezeption*), fueled by Gaugreben's criticism, nor with the interpretation proffered by Kuhle in relation to what he designates as Bülow's "theory of subsistence".⁴³ It is essential that both questions are incorporated into the research agenda.

At this present juncture, the focus shall be constrained to two specific points. Firstly, as Kuhle points out, Gaugreben systematically applied the dialectic of means and ends promoted in the Scharnhorst Circle.⁴⁴ Moreover, Gaugreben introduced a distinction between the objective (*Ziel*) of operations – the assembly of enemy armed forces – and the aim (*Zweck*) of operations – the destruction of these forces.⁴⁵ Secondly, it is evident that Gaugreben's 1805 book could not have influenced the definition of strategy and tactics that Clausewitz had already formulated in his manuscript of the previous year. Furthermore, it is implausible that Gaugreben exerted any influence through discussions within the

Militärische Gesellschaft for a very simple reason: the respective approaches of Clausewitz and Gaugreben to the relationship between strategy and tactics are very different (further discussion to follow).

Clausewitz's approach

It is worthy of note to observe the rationale behind Clausewitz's decision to abstain from offering his personal definition, however already formulated as we know, in his review published in *Neue Bellona*. The intention was to anchor the definition of strategy in a rationale based on reflections of the art of war in general.⁴⁶ This necessitated the development and anchoring of his conceptualisation of war prior to the presentation of his own definition of strategy.

The aspiration to deliver a completed work to the public and to posterity is explicitly articulated in the "first note" that Marie von Clausewitz incorporated in her preface to the *Hinterlassene Werke* (Posthumous Works). In this note, Clausewitz asserts his ambition (*Ehrgeiz*) to produce a work that would not be consigned to oblivion after a brief period of two or three years, but rather one that the reader could revisit on multiple occasions.⁴⁷ Contrary to the tendency exhibited by the majority of his contemporaries in military literature, who were expeditious in the publication of their ideas in a state of incompleteness under the banner of originality, Clausewitz demonstrated a meticulous approach in the development of his theoretical framework. As evidenced by a letter to Marie from 1807, in which he metaphorically likened his own life to a work very imperfect (*ein sehr unvollkommenes Werk*), comprised of fragments and patchworks (*Stück- und Flickwerk*), this comparison aptly encapsulates his intellectual oeuvre, which was in that period undergoing development and refinement.⁴⁸ This patchwork was the result of a composite of the author's own conceptualisations and those of other military writers, including Bülow and Gaugreben, among others. These disparate ideas were assimilated, modified, and integrated within Clausewitz's conceptual framework, thereby forming a hybrid that was both unique and coherent.

A number of the earlier definitions of the concept of strategy were of some relevance to the progression of Clausewitz's approach. Bourscheid had established a hierarchy between the concepts of tactics and strategy, while Nicolai had introduced the idea of linking operations according to the aim of war.⁴⁹ An author such as Georg Venturini – whom Clausewitz described as an ordinary mind⁵⁰ – had conceived strategy as a combination of the events of war (*Kombination der Kriegsvorfälle*) in order

to achieve the aim of war (*Hauptkriegszwecks*) as quickly as possible.⁵¹ In relation to Bülow, in addition to his conception of a hierarchy of aims and means, he also proposed that strategy should be considered as the “ultimatum” of tactics. In this context, “ultimatum” should be understood as the final proposal. This suggests that tactics fulfil the objectives set out in strategy (*sie vollendet was diese vorbereitet*).⁵²

The conceptual framework put forth by Clausewitz reflected certain ideas previously articulated by earlier military writers engaged in the study of strategy. However, two elements are distinctive to Clausewitz’s approach.

Firstly, the analyses presented by these authors were often confused or partial and lacked conceptual mastery. To illustrate, Clausewitz considered Bülow to have approached the truth (*nahe an der Wahrheit herumstreicht*) but to have lacked philosophical depth.⁵³ He had himself succeeded in organising his analyses in accordance with a rational structure which enabled him to envisage war as a “structured entity structured by the hierarchy of means and ends”.⁵⁴ As demonstrated by Raymond Aron, the means-end’ “formal pair” serves as the fundamental basis of the Clausewitzian conceptual edifice. In addition to the tactics/strategy pair, this dyad should also be related to the war/policy pair.⁵⁵ This dual relationship is foundational in ensuring a high level of coherence within the conceptual framework.

However, a complete comprehension of Clausewitz’s methodology necessitates an additional element in each of these pairs, a point that the author himself elucidates in a text dated to 1807 or 1808: “As long as there is an aim (*Zweck*) and means (*Mittel*), there is a rational connection between the two (*vernunftmässig Verbindung beyder*), and the art of war is nothing more.”⁵⁶ As was stated in the preceding discussion, the concept of *Gefecht* is being examined as a mediator in the relationship between tactics and strategy. The subsequent analysis will examine the hypothesis that this concept is *Kriegsführung* in the relationship between strategy and policy.

Secondly, these earlier military writers reasoned about an object whose specificity had not yet been fully revealed. In other words, Clausewitz was fully aware of the changes in military operations at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that is to say, of what Stéphane Béraud has called the Napoleonic military revolution⁵⁷. As demonstrated by his *Portrait of Scharnhorst*, composed in 1814, two specific passages are particularly relevant to this argument. Firstly, Clausewitz’s observations indicate that Bonaparte’s significant historical actions shaped the gradual evolution of warfare on the battlefield (*während der Krieg selbst in Bonapartes Hand sich nach und nach in die neuen Formen*

umbildete). Secondly, he regarded that war itself, at the time, stood “at the lectern” and every day offered practical instruction to its students (*während der Krieg selbst gewissermaßen auf dem Katheder stand und täglich praktischen Unterricht gab*).⁵⁸ Furthermore, the evolving context of the Napoleonic wars provided the milieu for Clausewitz to transition his theoretical paradigm, as Herberg-Rothe’s research has elucidated, thereby giving birth to a political theory of war⁵⁹.

The wording of the definition of strategy in the 1804 manuscript and in *On War* could lead to the assumption that the problem was resolved at an early stage and that Clausewitz did not have to address it subsequently. This was not the case due to a terminological difficulty pertaining to the concept of higher tactics. As the concept is absent from *On War*, this issue will not be apparent to the reader of the latest version of the book.

Strategy and higher tactics

In the 1804 manuscript, there is an oblique reference to the concept of higher tactics; however, no definition is provided. An additional dated 1809 offers a potential definition. The term “elementary tactics” is defined as the theory of the arrangement and deployment of fundamental military units and forces. In contrast, higher tactics (*höhere Taktik*) correspond to the theory of the disposition and movements of the larger components of the army, namely the army corps and armies.⁶⁰ This leads to the question of whether the dispositions and movements of army corps and armies are included within the broader concept of a combination of engagement, that is to say, strategy.

Clausewitz’s approach underwent a notable transformation in the manuscripts that Werner Hahlweg dates to the period between 1808 and 1812 and considers to be the initial drafts of *On War*. In attempting to establish an exact and comprehensive classification of the various elements that make up the science of war, the author displays a certain degree of indecision with regard to the position to be assigned to higher tactics. Primarily, Clausewitz revised his conceptualisation of the two forms of tactics. Elementary or minor (*nieder*) tactics were reinterpreted as the theory of training troops (*Ausbildung der Truppen*), whereas higher tactics were defined as the theory of utilising troops in engagement (*Gebrauch derselben im Gefecht*).⁶¹ The title of a chapter in the manuscript indicates that the author’s intention was also to clarify the distinction between higher tactics and strategy.⁶² While the chapter does not present an explicit definition, it does include elements that would eventually lead Clausewitz to abandon the distinction between elementary and higher tactics.

The centrality of the notion of engagement (*Gefecht*) in Clausewitz's approach to the relationship between tactics and strategy is the most important of these elements. And yet, it was precisely the new definition he gave to higher tactics that made this concept virtually synonymous with that of engagement. Although the conceptual triad of tactics/ engagement/strategy made the concept of higher tactics redundant, Clausewitz was reluctant to give it up for a reason that illuminates the logic of his conceptual construct.

Clausewitz's premise is that the entire scope of the art of war itself (*das ganze Gebiet der eigentlichen Kriegskunst*) can be defined by the concepts of strategy and tactics.⁶³ In his *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg* (Lectures on the Small War), written in the early 1810s, Clausewitz contemplated the applicability of the tactical/strategic dichotomy to this particular form of war. He arrives at the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that in the context of small war, the strategic dimension can be considered to fall within the realm of tactics.⁶⁴ In order to reconcile this apparent contradiction, Clausewitz categorises small war as a subset of higher tactics (*einen Theil der höheren Taktik*).

The reasoning here is that engagements in small-scale warfare almost always pursue tactical aims (*taktische Zwecke*) and thus cannot directly achieve the aim of war (*Zweck des Krieges*) – the realm of strategy – and are therefore a means to achieve subordinate ends (*untergeordnete Zwecke*).⁶⁵ In other words, the means-ends dialectic at the heart of the relationship between tactics and strategy applies equally to large-scale war and small war, but since the latter cannot be covered by the concept of strategy, it is the concept of higher tactics that takes its place. Furthermore, Clausewitz's analysis demonstrates the challenge of interpreting the meaning of *Zweck* consistently within the context of the varying linguistic nuances present in each phrase. The issue will be partially addressed by the well-known distinction between *Ziel* and *Zweck* presented at the outset of section I.1 of *On War*. However, as Herberg-Rothe has demonstrated, the challenge persists contingent on the selected translations proposed for these concepts⁶⁶.

Was Clausewitz, from the very beginning, fully aware of the scope of his definition of 1804 and of the analytical potential of the dialectic between the ends and the means? There is every reason to believe that his ideas matured gradually, and that it was not until the early 1810s that the full potential of the 1804 definition became clear to him. This is illustrated by his use of an economic metaphor that illuminates both his concept of engagement and the relationship between strategy and tactics. Readers of *On War* will be familiar with this metaphor from its appearance in Chapter 2 of Book I, which deals precisely with the ends and means of warfare: "The decision by arms

[*Waffenentscheidung*] is for all major and minor operations in war what cash payment [*bare Zahlung*] is in commerce [*Wechselhandel*]].⁶⁷ In this regard, Aron's assertion that Clausewitz had already employed the "same formula" in his 1804 manuscript is somewhat imprecise⁶⁸.

Originally, the metaphor concerned the concept of *Gefecht* and was expressed in a slightly different way: engagement (*Gefecht*) is to strategy (*Strategie*) what cash money (*bare Geld*) is to commerce.⁶⁹ A slightly different formulation is given in an advanced version of chapter two of *On War*: engagement is to war (*Krieg*) what cash money is to commerce (*Handel*).⁷⁰ In a letter to Gneisenau in 1811, he illustrated his approach by saying that "engagement is money and goods, and strategy is trade in bills of exchange [*Wechselhandel*]]."⁷¹ The idea is that the value of the one depends on the other, and so those who do not know how to fight will not be able to achieve anything at the strategic level (in the metaphor, will go bankrupt in the exchange business). Finally, in an earlier version of the first two books of *On War* from the early 1820s, Clausewitz uses a metaphor that does not appear in the published version of 1832: "Strategy relates to tactics as commerce relates to the production of goods".⁷²

Each of these metaphors was intended to illustrate the idea that strategy and tactics are two activities that are at once distinct and yet interpenetrating (*sich einander durchdringende*), to use the phrase from *On War*.⁷³ A full understanding of their interrelationship (*Verhältnis zueinander*) required a conceptual effort which, according to Clausewitz, had long been overlooked (*Dies hat man lange Zeit übersehen*), and which he himself had achieved through the development of his 1804 definition. This notion of a neglected conceptual effort is only present in the *Aphorismen*; Clausewitz makes mention of it in a sentence that follows the aforementioned passage, which is identical in *On War* and in Aphorism 60.⁷⁴

It can be surmised from these *Aphorismen* that the author was receptive to the efforts made after 1804 to clarify terminology; however, he was not persuaded of their efficacy. It is unfortunate that there is no text that can be used to shed light on Clausewitz's perspective on these endeavours in a way that is comparable to the review of the Bülow work. Furthermore, as Hew Strachan notes, Clausewitz was inclined to refrain from referencing authors whose perspectives he aligned with⁷⁵. It would be unwise, therefore, to attempt to examine the precise points of disagreement between Clausewitz and the military writers of the period, or indeed any possible influences on the latter's conception of strategy. It is thus suggested that a more nuanced approach be adopted, entailing an examination of the degree

of compatibility between Clausewitz's conceptions and the definitions of strategy proposed by military writers subsequent to 1804. This will facilitate an understanding of the specificity of his conceptual framework.

The specific nature of the Clausewitzian approach

In a manner akin to Clausewitz, Gaugreben repudiated Bülow's definition, as it failed to meet his standards of satisfaction.⁷⁶ However, his approach to the issue was divergent and culminated in the formulation of a conception of the relationship between strategy and tactics that was incongruent with that of his fellow at the *Militärische Gesellschaft*. Gaugreben's approach involves first determining the characteristics (*Merkmals*) of strategy. The key notion here is that of project or conception (*Entwurf*). The strategy encompasses the following elements: the conception of the operational plan of a war; the draft operational plans of the various campaigns; the draft operational plans of a specific campaign; the projects considered as parts of the operational plan of a campaign; the battle projects; and even the projects of specific operations, such as the destruction of an enemy convoy. The author concludes that strategy is the part of the art of war that is devoted to conception (*Entwurf*), while tactics is the domain of execution (*Ausführung*).⁷⁷

This standpoint was predominant among German-language military writers during the period spanning from the 1810s to the 1820s. Six years prior to Rühle von Lilienstern's formulation of the aforementioned critique of Wagner's theses, he had published an article that was likely to have served as a catalyst for the development of such a perspective. Published anonymously in the *Neue militärische Zeitschrift* in 1811, this article constituted the inaugural systematic endeavour to conceptualise the interrelationship between strategy and tactics on what we would currently designate as a methodological and epistemological level. It is reasonable to hypothesise that this article may have had an impact on the development of the views of subsequent authors on strategy and tactics, despite the absence of citations. Indeed, certain ideas and wordings of Karl Müller, Carl von Decker, and Josef von Xylander are not dissimilar to those of Rühle von Lilienstern.

The argument put forth by the latter is not without ambiguity. He posits that strategy is purely intellectual (*rein intellektuell*), whereas pure tactics (*reine Taktik*), by contrast, concerns itself exclusively with the physical realm, with the machine (*mit dem Physischen, der Maschine beschäftigt*). Rühle von Lilienstern's objective is to differentiate between the intention (*Absicht*) and the manner (*Art*) of its realisation, between the what (*Was*) and the how (*Wie*).⁷⁸

In proposing that the science of the general (*Feldherrnwissenschaft*) should align with the doctrine (*Lehre*) of the actions required to achieve the objective of war (*Kriegszweckes*), Rühle von Lilienstern does not present a fundamentally novel perspective. This is because the approach had already been outlined by Bourscheid, subsequently adopted by Nicolai, and developed by Bülow. The additional step, therefore, consists in explicitly introducing the theme of intentionality and, just as explicitly, combining it with an analysis expressed in terms of ends and means. The author's subsequent assertion that the terms "strategy" and "tactics" could be set aside should be interpreted in light of this viewpoint, namely that it is not the terms themselves that are of consequence, but rather the relationships they represent.

As perceived by Rühle von Lilienstern, this relationship is only partially congruent with Clausewitz's approach. This is not in regard to the analysis of the relationship between ends and means or the close interconnection (*Verbindung*) between tactics and strategy. Rather, the incompatibility lies in the fact that strategy and tactics are confined to two distinct spheres. On the one hand, the sphere of the intellect for strategy, and on the other, the physical sphere for tactics. The interconnection between these two realms is exemplified by the metaphor of the soul (*Seele*) and the body (*Körper*), as elucidated in the concluding section of the article.⁷⁹

As Jędrysiak has previously indicated, this metaphor served as a means of circumventing the issue of the divergent definitions of strategy and tactics by accentuating the inherent interconnectedness between the two elements, which could not be disassociated⁸⁰. Nevertheless, the ambiguity of this approach stemmed from the utilisation of a dichotomy that also conveyed the notion of a compartmentalisation between the mental and the physical realms. The hidden motive that Rühle von Lilienstern would discern in Wagner a few years later was, in fact, quite explicit in his own work. However, he was unable to provide a satisfactory solution to the issue in his *Handbuch für den Offiziere*.

In one respect, the author replaced the strategy/tactics pairing with the strategist/tactician pairing, which merely shifted the issue. In another respect, Rühle von Lilienstern accentuated it by introducing the idea of anteriority and posteriority in the contribution of the two actors in military activity. The strategist is the individual who directs (*des Dirigenten*) and outlines the general contours (*allgemeinen Umrisse*) within which the "great whole" – that is, war – is to be situated and moved (*bewegen*). The tactician is the individual responsible for execution (*des Executors*), and it is this individual who gives rhythm and direction inside these general contours.⁸¹ Despite the author's proposition that the roles of strategist and tactician, conceptualised as ideal types (*ideale Personen*), could be amalgamated into

a single entity, the resulting theoretical construct maintains a temporal breakdown in the established sequence of planning (*Anordnung*) and execution (*Ausführung*).⁸²

To summarise, Rühle von Lilienstern was confronted with two challenges. Firstly, he found himself unable to disown the concepts of *Strategie* and *Taktik*, which he persisted in utilising to advance his argument. Secondly, he was incapable of resolving the dichotomy between conceiving and execution with the concept that nothing is ever purely tactical or strategic in isolation, but rather always in relation to one another (*es ist im Grunde nichts taktisch oder strategisch an sich, sondern immer eins nur in Beziehung auf das andere*).⁸³ The fundamental challenge was to conceptualise a reciprocal relationship that was not confined to a rigid dichotomy between intellect and action.

Archduke Carl's definitions, as adopted by Friedrich Wilhelm von Bismarck, imply a similar dichotomy. In the view of the Archduke, the term "tactics" is employed to signify the art of war (*Kriegskunst*), whereas "strategy" is taken to be the science of war (*Kriegswissenschaft*)⁸⁴. From this perspective, strategy is limited to the conception of operations and tactics are confined to their execution (*die Art nach welcher strategische Entwürfe ausgeführt werden soll*)⁸⁵. As Antoine Henri Jomini implied in a critical note to the French translation of the work, such a distinction would result in the two concepts being confined to different spheres of the art of war. This would effectively entail the abandonment of the idea of the respective but cumulative contributions of strategy and tactics to the implementation of conduct of warfare.⁸⁶

While we cannot ascertain whether Constantin von Lossau had perused Rühle von Lilienstern's article, it is evident that his approach evinced a discernible correlation with the dualistic tenet of the soul and the body. The concept of tactics, as defined by the author as the art of positioning and moving troops, is not inherently incompatible with that of Clausewitz. In contrast, Lossau's conceptualisation of strategy does not incorporate combinations of fights or higher-scale engagements. Conversely, he postulates that the determining factor in strategy is the personal character of the general. The leadership of an army is primarily dependent on talent and genius, which cannot be acquired through study or theoretical knowledge alone. As Lossau observes, the adage "all art lies in the artist" (*die ganze Kunst in der Künstler liegt*) is particularly applicable in this context. Consequently, he concludes that it is an accurate interpretation of strategy to understand it as the personal qualities that a general-in-chief must possess.⁸⁷

It is probable that Victor Emmanuel Thellung Courtelary's conception of strategy was influenced by Lossau's viewpoint, whereby strategy was regarded as a synthesis of the attributes necessary for commanding an army.⁸⁸ This psychological perspective was not embraced by Joseph von Theobald, Xylander, and Decker, who instead situated strategy firmly within the domain of operational art. Nevertheless, the approach adopted is still influenced by the dichotomy between conception and execution, or planning and action.

In Theobald's view, strategy is the art of conducting warfare in a planned manner; "tactics" is employed to denote the art of interaction (*beziehen*) with an opposing army.⁸⁹ Xylander's perspective asserts that strategy delineates the geographical disposition of military movements and engagements, while tactics determines the *modus operandi* of the military.⁹⁰ As for Decker, he advanced a more comprehensive framework, aiming to elucidate the distinct realms (*Gebiet*) of strategy and tactics. In a work published in 1817, he advanced the proposition that strategy is a matter for the project (*Entwurf*) and the planning of operations, whereas tactics represent the execution.⁹¹ A decade later, in 1828, he posited that tactics should be regarded as a means (*Mittel*), whereas strategy should be considered as an aim (*Zweck*).⁹²

While the approach was not entirely new, it encountered a difficulty. Decker's dichotomy of project/execution may be a valid conceptual framework not only at the level of the army's supreme command but also at every level of the military hierarchy. In order to address the issue, the author introduces the concept of the "strategic element" (*strategisches Element*). The strategic element is present at all levels of the armed forces and must even "inhabit" (*wohnen*) the skirmisher.⁹³ In a sense, Decker is anticipating Charles Krulak's concept of the "strategic corporal"⁹⁴. Despite Decker's insistence on the conceptual distinction between strategy and the "strategic element", his approach ultimately resulted in a dilution of the meaning of the former concept. Furthermore, it led to a dissociation between strategy and the implementation of operations, which in turn diminished the distinction between ends and means.

In reaction to Decker's initial publication, August Heinrich von Brandt articulated his skepticism concerning the futile (*fruchtlos*) endeavours undertaken to delineate strategy and tactics.⁹⁵ As Jędrysiak correctly asserts, Brandt was not exempt from the "strategic jargon" he condemned in other military authors⁹⁶. Additionally, he appeared to lack an understanding that the issue did not reside in the formal definitions of strategy and tactics, but rather in the interrelationship between the two

dimensions of warfare that these concepts represented. In this regard, it is evident that the scepticism demonstrated was incompatible with Clausewitz's approach, in which the relationship between the pair of concepts was established as a structuring component of the conceptual framework.

The respective approaches adopted by Johan Peter Lefrén and Jomini were more compatible with Clausewitz's views. The former posited that the same principle governs tactics and strategy, with the objective being to break through (*durchbrochen*) the enemy's battle line in the first instance, and, in the second instance, to break through a theatre of operations (*Kriegsschauplatz*).⁹⁷ With regard to Jomini, his conceptualisation evolved in two distinct phases. Firstly, an alternative definition is proposed in opposition to that put forth by Archduke Carl: "strategy is the art of directing the masses to the decisive point, and tactics the art of engaging them there".⁹⁸ Secondly, all operations conducted in the theatre of war (*qui embrassent le théâtre de guerre*) are classified as strategy, whereas the fighting and manoeuvres on the day of battle are designated as tactics. Additionally, Jomini asserted that the discussions surrounding the absolute demarcation between tactics and strategy were "futile", thereby indicating the interpenetration of the two domains in operational conduct.⁹⁹

There are two reasons why Lefrén and Jomini's perspectives were more compatible with Clausewitz's. First, because it kept strategy within the realm of the conduct of war operations. Second, because it avoided a rigid dichotomy between intellect and action, projected onto the strategy/tactics dyad. However, in contrast to Clausewitz, Lefrén and Jomini do not include in their respective definitions an opening towards the function that is fulfilled by strategy.

Strategy as an open concept and the conduct of warfare

The designation of strategy as an "open concept" does not represent an extension of contemporary art theory into the domain of Clausewitz's work.¹⁰⁰ It was the latter author who explicitly introduced this concept in section II.2 of *On War*. He highlights that the theory of tactics is more straightforward in that its "field of objects" is "almost closed" (*fast ein geschlossenes Feld der Gegenstände*). In contrast, the theory of strategy is a more intricate and sophisticated field of study. As it concerns "purposes" (*Zwecke*) that ultimately result in a state of peace, the theory of strategy "opens" (*öffnet*) itself to a vast range of potential outcomes.¹⁰¹

This openness of strategy is undoubtedly incorporated into the definition, which makes reference to the *Zweck*, which corresponds to the political purpose of war. It is at the very least true in the context

of *On War*, since the meaning of *Zweck* in the definition in the 1804 manuscript could correspond to what Clausewitz called *Ziel* in section I.1 of his magnum opus. The term *Ziel* is not present in the 1804 manuscript. Nevertheless, the author has already made this distinction in his thinking and communicates it using a single term, *Zweck*, with an added nuance: the purpose of war, and the aim in war (*Zweck des Krieges*, *Zweck im Kriege*).¹⁰² It is the establishment of a clear demarcation between *Ziel* and *Zweck* in *On War* that has resulted in the definition being given new scope.

This definition does not explicitly indicate that strategic activity (*strategische Tätigkeit*) has the potential to deviate (*entfernt*) from the domain of tactics and border (*grenzt*) on the realm of policy.¹⁰³ This point is made in Chapter 13 of Book III on the strategic reserve. More specifically, it aims to demonstrate that strategic uncertainty tends to diminish when strategy moves away from tactics. Nonetheless, Clausewitz does not explicitly derive an implication from this consideration, and indeed, new relationships are expected to replace the fading tactical and strategic relationships based on engagement.

What Clausewitz calls the higher relations of the state (*höheren Staatsverhältnisse*) correspond to these relations, which characterise the relationship between strategy and policy. However, one example of this concept poses a problem insofar as it is not related to strategy but to the conduct of war. The issue is not apparent to the English-language reader of *On War*, as Michael Howard and Peter Paret have made a terminological substitution: “On that level strategy [*Kriegführung*] and policy coalesce: the commander-in-chief is simultaneously a statesman”.¹⁰⁴ The supposition that the terms *Strategie* and *Kriegführung* are sometimes used interchangeably is a proposition that requires further examination. In particular, the objective is to examine the relationship that Clausewitz establishes between the two terms and to determine the conditions that enable strategy to deviate from its intrinsic conceptual connection with tactics. In this sense, the concept of strategy does not, strictly speaking, “combine” the realms of the operational and the strategic, to use Stocker’s expression¹⁰⁵. Rather, its connotation changes according to whether it approaches or deviates from the realm of tactics.

The concept of *Kriegführung* is pervasive in Clausewitz’s work, particularly given its appearance in the titles of the volumes of his posthumous edition. However, it has elicited less interest among commentators than strategy and tactics, likely because it has not been regarded as a genuinely analytical concept. The noun and its verb form (*Krieg führen*) appear to be self-evident, serving merely to attest to the fact that warlike activity (*kriegerische Tätigkeit*) is taking place. In other words, waging war would be nothing more than the general activity of belligerents (*Kriegführenden*). This is the

meaning given to the word in the title of the *Hinterlassene Werke*; it is also the meaning given to it by Clausewitz when he states in Section II.1 that the art of war proper (*die Kriegskunst im eigentlichen Sinn*) can only be designated by the name of *Kriegführung*.¹⁰⁶

But when the notion is directly linked to other terms in Clausewitz's system of concepts, it takes on a more specific meaning. It constitutes the overarching category of tactics and strategy, which are two distinct fields (*Feldern*) within it; that category to which strategy opens up.¹⁰⁷ Concurrently, it can be regarded as one of the fundamental elements of the higher relations of the state. More specifically, it is the element that corresponds conceptually to the relationship synthesising policy and war. The celebrated passage in Section I.1, which addresses serious means (*ernsthafte Mittel*) employed to attain serious end (*ernsthafte Zweck*), is an illustrative example of this perspective. The concept of war as a political act (*politischer Akt*) implies an inherent harmony (*Harmonie*) between the political sphere (*Politik*) and the conduct of warfare (*Kriegführung*). However, according to Clausewitz, the absence of this harmony has led to the emergence of erroneous theoretical conceptions that dissociate these two elements.¹⁰⁸

Although the political purpose "traverse" (*durchziehen*) the entire military action (*den ganzen kriegerischen Akt*), it is not a "tyrannical legislator" (*despotischer Gesetzgeber*) in the sense that it is required to modify its approach in line with the nature of the means it deploys. This nuance leads to the transition to another famous passage in Section I.1, in which Clausewitz defines war as a political instrument (*politisches Instrument*). This is to say that war is the means (*Mittel*) which cannot be conceived independently of the political intention (*politische Absicht*) which constitutes the purpose (*Zweck*).¹⁰⁹

The phrase has become a part of the historical record, but its interpretation has sometimes failed to take account of the nuances that preceded its formulation in *On War*. The primacy of political intention over the conduct of war is undoubtedly posited; however, this does not signify the absence of interactions between means and purpose. In other words, the conduct of war, as a higher relation of the State, is a place of synthesis, to varying degrees of harmony, and not of strict subordination. This is where strategic choices are made; it is the nexus of political and military considerations, to use Aron's terminology.¹¹⁰

This argument is exemplified by a passage from Clausewitz's historical study of the 1799 campaigns. It should be noted that this was Clausewitz's final work, written contemporaneously with the revision

of Section I.1. of *On War*. The author's intention was "to elucidate the ambiguous concepts inherent to the conduct of war".¹¹¹ The passage is found in the conclusion, where the author questions the effects of Austria's political intentions. After noting that the Austrians' selfish political views had prevented them from exploiting the successes they had achieved in Italy and had led to the unnecessary expenditure of forces on the Rhine, Clausewitz goes on to describe the errors in judgment and misperceptions that had been superimposed upon these initial missteps.

The source of these errors can be attributed to the difficulty of ministers and cabinet advisers in envisaging the consequences of their intentions in the context of warfare and in comprehending the interrelationship between means and purpose. However, as Clausewitz observed, there is no area of human activity (*nirgend so sehr*) where this reciprocal action (*Wechselwirkung*) between means (*Mittel*) and purpose (*Zweck*) is more constant (*beständiger*) than in the conduct of war (*Kriegführung*). He reiterates the aforementioned passage from *On War*, yet with a heightened level of explicitness, emphasising that the means must never be regarded as an inactive instrument (*totdes Instrument*). Those versed only in Clausewitz's magnum opus may be surprised by what is to follow. Indeed, the author highlights that a multitude of factors may be implicated in the conduct of war, which may prove to be more pivotal and more substantial than the initial political factors (*wichtiger und gebieterischer werden können als alle ursprünglichen politischen es waren*).¹¹²

The proposition is not that the primacy of politics should be reversed; rather, it is about affirming the necessity of developing an understanding of the concepts of the conduct of war (*klare Vorstellungen bis jetzt über die grosse Kriegführung*) – and thus of the reciprocal relationship between means and purpose – among those who seek to exert regulatory influence (*regelmäßigen Einfluß*) on military operations, but who are not directly present in the theatre of war.¹¹³ From a terminological standpoint, *Kriegführung* can be understood as the concept that denotes the synthesis of policy and war. It represents the pole towards which strategy swings when it moves away from tactics, as it is the pole where the *Zweck* assumes a military form. The greater the influence of this pole upon strategy, the more the latter concept is deprived of its operational connotation. This point is particularly evident when the concept is expressed in adjectival forms.

A case in point is the conjunction of the notions of uncertainty, which justifies the formation of a reserve, and strategic activity: as strategic activity (*strategische Tätigkeit*) becomes more distant from the tactical level, uncertainty will diminish until it is almost non-existent at the point where strategy and policy converge (*diese Ungewißheit nimmt ab, je weiter sich die strategische Tätigkeit von der*

taktischen entfernt und hört fast ganz auf in jenen Regionen derselben, wo sie an die Politik grenzt).¹¹⁴ In a similar vein, the notions of strategic judgement (*strategische Urteil*), strategic value (*strategischer Werth*), strategic issue (*strategische Frage*), and strategic relationship (*strategische Verhältnis*) do not systematically evince a robust operational connotation.

The principal act (*Haupttakt*) of strategic judgement is to identify the centres of gravity (*centra gravitatis*) of enemy forces.¹¹⁵ Although Clausewitz does not explicitly address this point, the other three concepts can also be considered an integral part of the strategic judgement process. During the 1799 campaign, Lombardy was of “strategic value” due to its significant political importance, as the region provided an opportunity for political compensation.¹¹⁶ Similarly, the evacuation of the State of Genoa represented a significant “strategic issue” for General Moreau, insofar as he was compelled to consider that the course of action he deemed necessary might not align with the intentions of the Directoire.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, the “strategic relationship” between the Swiss and Italian theatres of war was shaped by the Austrian government’s political decision to view Italy as the primary theatre of conflict.¹¹⁸ In all four cases, strategy and policy interact in a close and intricate manner. The use of the adjectival form is entirely consistent with the incorporation of *Zweck* in the definition of strategy. This concept, originally theorised by Clausewitz to denote the aim of military action, underwent a semantic shift to accommodate the novel perspectives articulated by the author.

The limitations of this article preclude a comprehensive examination of the concept of policy as articulated by Clausewitz. However, one observation is germane to the subject matter. The argument proposed by David Zabecki, namely that Clausewitz’s notion of policy is equivalent to the modern concept of strategy and that his concept of strategy corresponds to what is currently designated as operations, represents an inaccurate interpretation of the subject matter¹¹⁹.

This argument is deficient in its failure to take into account the openness of Clausewitz’s concept of strategy. Furthermore, it does not acknowledge the contemporary relevance of Clausewitz’s terms in the conception of policy, a point that is exemplified by Tobias Wille¹²⁰. The complexity of Clausewitz’s concept of *Politik* is also ignored in this argument.

In a pinch, and if we extend the contemporary meaning of the concept of strategy, we could imagine correspondences between this concept and what Aron and Herberg-Rothe call the “subjective” dimension of policy in Clausewitz: the intelligence of the personified State (*die Intelligenz des personifizierten Staates*).¹²¹ On the other hand, it is more difficult to see these correspondences in the

“objective” dimension: the representatives of all interests of the whole society (*Repräsentanten aller Interessen der ganzen Gesellschaft*).¹²² This last quotation, taken from Section VIII.8, supports the very broad interpretation of the term by Panajotis Kondylis, who considers that in some of its uses *Politik* denotes the organisation of society (*gesellschaftliche Verband*).¹²³ In summary, as Aron proposed, strategy represents a component of a partial totality, that is to say, war, which in turn constitutes a subset of a broader totality, namely policy.¹²⁴

Kuhle has argued that, in formulating his well-known maxim on war as the continuation of policy by other means, Clausewitz merely required to extract (*hervorgeholt*) one of Bülow’s concepts.¹²⁵ The citation provided for substantiation of the argument is drawn from a late work by Bülow entitled *Friedrich und Napoleon*, which was published in 1806. This quotation contains elements that attest to Bülow’s early thematic discussion of the relationship between policy, strategy, and tactics, and to the primacy of policy (diplomacy for the author) over war, which is regarded as a mere means (*Mittel*) of achieving diplomatic purposes (*diplomatischer Zwecke*). This quotation also encapsulates the notion that strategy is subject to a constant oscillation between the tactical and the political: the strategy is categorised as “high” when it is employed for the attainment of political purposes (*politische Zwecke*), and as “low” when its intention is to achieve tactical aims (*taktische Zwecke*).¹²⁶

Although the present example does not necessarily demonstrate Bülow’s direct influence upon the evolution of Clausewitzian thought (in order to prove this, it would be necessary to explain why Clausewitz did not adopt Bülow’s ideas on policy more quickly), it does demonstrate the value of adopting a more systematic, comparative approach to the two works. Furthermore, it demonstrates that Bülow did not remain a prisoner of his initial definition of strategy. Indeed, he went even further than Clausewitz in explicitly taking strategy out of its military denotation by putting forward the concept of political strategy (*im System jener höchsten politischen Strategie*).¹²⁷ As with Bülow, the definitions of Clausewitz that are often quoted in a narrow sense are insufficient – in isolation – to capture the full complexity of the oeuvre.

Conclusion

When viewed in the context of the initial discussions concerning the precise definitions of strategy and tactics at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the perspective put forth by Clausewitz is notable for its originality and insight. In contrast to the approach typically taken by military writers of

the time, who tend to view strategy as a matter of intellectual conception of military action and tactics as a question of implementation, the author adopts a combinatorial perspective that considers the two components of the conduct of war in terms of their execution and the realisation of their intended outcome.

His dual definition is a more effective and far-reaching approach because it implies two different yet complementary relationships. In the first relationship, it is the concept of *Gefecht* that links tactics to strategy, the former being the means by which the latter achieves its aims. In the second relationship, it is the concept of *Zweck* that links strategy to political intention, which remains implicit in the definition, making the former the instrument by which the latter is achieved. The existence of an intermediate term that performs a mediating function can also be observed in the other two “pillars” of Clausewitzian thought. The conceptual means/ends pair in fact comprises the three elements retained by Herberg-Rothe in his analysis: the political purpose (*Zweck*) being mediated by the achievement of the aim in war (*Ziel*) obtained by military means (*Mittel*). With regard to the war/policy pair, it is also mediated by a third concept: the conduct of war, understood as the specific domain in which military and political concerns converge.

The interplay of interconnections between these notions is fundamental to the coherence and analytical power of Clausewitz’s conceptual system. Clausewitz’s concept of strategy should not be regarded solely in a narrow relationship to the specific domain of tactics, but instead understood as an open concept. The 1804 definition incorporates an opening element that alludes to the aim of war (*Zweck*), yet while the definition appears permanent, it has undergone semantic evolution. The *Zweck* of 1804 shares the same meaning as the *Ziel* of section I.1 of *On War* – a concept that was not included in the 1804 manuscript. This observation suggests that the initial definition of strategy has followed the development of Clausewitz’s thought while undergoing semantic change and expansion in scope.

The *Zweck* of the definition in *On War* must be understood in the context of this opening up of Clausewitz’s thought to policy. Strategy, as the application of violence in the theatre of operations, is no longer simply the means to achieve a military objective. As a component of the conduct of war, it is the instrument that enables political intentions to be put into practice in the field. The notion exhibits a robust operational connotation when subjected to the attraction of tactics; however, as it “deviates” from tactical considerations towards political ones – to employ Clausewitz’s metaphor – it acquires novel connotations that underpin its adjectival uses and resonate with contemporary strategic interpretations.

Footnotes

¹ Christian Th. Müller, *Clausewitz verstehen*^[1], 144.

² Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*^[2], 6; Hew Strachan, “The Lost Meaning of Strategy”^[3], 34.

³ Lukas Milevski, “Strategy and the Intervening Concept of Operational Art”^[4], 19.

⁴ Andreas Herberg-Rothe, “Clausewitz’s Concept of Strategy – Balancing Purpose, Aims and Means”^[5], 923.

⁵ Donald Stocker, “What’s in a Name? Clausewitz’s Search to Define Strategy”^[6], 15.

⁶ *Militair-Bibliothek*, IV, 1784, 120. *Description de l’Académie-Caroline de Stouttgard* (Stouttgard: Imprimerie de l’Académie-Caroline, 1784), 104, 316.

⁷ Bernhard von Poten, *Geschichte des Militär-erziehungs- und Bildungswesens in Preussen*^[7], 36, 114.

⁸ Lawrence Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy”^[8], 99.

⁹ Jeremy Black, *Plotting Power. Strategy in the Eighteenth Century*^[9], 136.

¹⁰ Bruno Colson, *Clausewitz*^[10], 45.

¹¹ “Da aber die angewandte Taktik und Strategie noch gar nicht auf reine übereinstimmende Grundsätze gebracht sind, da die Ansichten hier sehr voneinander abweichen, so wär es nicht zu wünschen, dass dieser Gegenstand auf immer einem Lehrer übertragen würde.” Scharnhorst to Geusau, 28 July 1804, in *Private und dienstliche Schriften*^[11], IV: 41. Scharnhorst writes *dieser Gegenstand*, not *diese Gegenstände*.

¹² August Wagner, *Grundzüge der reinen Strategie*^[12], XIV, 4.

¹³ August Rühle von Lilienstern, *Handbuch für den Offizier*^[13], II: 100–101. Wagner posited that tactics comprised troop movements with the objective of engaging in combat, whereas strategy involved the orchestration of movements that could be described as *Marsche*.

¹⁴ Jacek Jędrzyński, *Prussian Strategic Thought 1815–1830. Beyond Clausewitz*^[14], 317.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁶ Karl Müller, *Allgemeines Verteutschungswörterbuch der Kriegssprache*^[15], 274–275. The term *harsch* in German signifies “hard”, yet in this context, it is employed by the author to denote the trumpets and war horns (*Harschhorn*) of the Swiss, thereby imparting a connotation of belligerent violence to the

neologism. The etymology of *Hilde* can be traced back to Old High German, and by the time Müller was writing, it was only found in first names and surnames. Nevertheless, his assertion that the term connotes active skill is erroneous. In point of fact, the term *Hild* denotes “battle” in the Proto-Germanic language.

¹⁷ [Clausewitz], “Bemerkungen über die reine und angewandte Strategie des Herrn von Bülow,”^[16], 255.

¹⁸ Ibid., 285.

¹⁹ Carl to Marie, 28 January 1807, in *Carl und Marie von Clausewitz*^[17], 66. In the phrase *der Vater und der Freund meines Geistes*, *Geist* seems to refer to intellect (mind) rather than emotion (spirit).

²⁰ Arthur Kuhle, *Die preußische Kriegstheorie um 1800 und ihre Suche nach dynamischen Gleichgewichten*^[18], 197.

²¹ Ibid., 183.

²² Gerhard von Scharnhorst, “Über die Schlacht bei Marengo,”^[19].

²³ Kuhle, *Die preußische Kriegstheorie*, 238.

²⁴ In addition to the elements of the discussion proposed by Kuhle, the famous formula of Helmuth von Moltke must also be considered: “No operational plan extends with any degree of certainty beyond the initial encounter with the enemy’s main force” (*Kein Operationsplan reicht mit einiger Sicherheit über das erste Zusammentreffen mit der feindlichen Hauptmacht hinaus*). Further on, Moltke adds: “In the face of a tactical victory, strategic demands are muted; they adapt to the newly created situation” (*Vor dem tactischen Siege schweigt die Forderung der Strategie, sie fügt sich der neu geschaffnen Sachlage an*). Helmuth von Moltke, “Ueber Strategie,”^[20].

²⁵ Scharnhorst, “Über die Schlacht bei Marengo,” 54.

²⁶ Heinrich von Bülow, *Der Feldzug von 1800* [The 1800 Campaign]^[21], 227.

²⁷ *Denkwürdigkeiten der militärischen Gesellschaft* 4, no. 2, (1804): 515.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Heinrich von Bülow, *Geist des neuern Kriegssystems* [The Spirit of the Modern System of War]^[22], 83.

³⁰ Carl von Clausewitz, *Strategie aus dem Jahr 1804 mit Zusätzen von 1808 und 1809* [Strategy from 1804 with Additions from 1808 and 1809]^[23], 62. For a discussion of the terms “aims” and “purpose” in the

context of the German word *Zweck*, see Herberg-Rothe, “Clausewitz’s concept”^[5].

³¹ Clausewitz, *Strategie*, 47–48. A subsequent epistle to Gneisenau leaves no room for doubt regarding the allusion to Bülow. Clausewitz to Gneisenau, 17 June 1811, in *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe* [Writings, Essays, Studies, Letters]^[24], I: 647.

³² Heinrich von Bülow, *Lehrsätze des neuern Krieges, oder, Reine und angewandte Strategie aus dem Geist des neuern Kriegssystems* [Doctrines of the Modern Warfare, or, Pure and Applied Strategy from the Spirit of the Modern System of War] ^[25], 1.

³³ Clausewitz, “Bemerkungen”^[16], 257.

³⁴ Bülow, *Lehrsätze*, 10.

³⁵ Bülow, *Geist*^[22], 86.

³⁶ Heinrich von Bülow, *Geist des neuern Kriegssystems* ^[26], 110.

³⁷ Jean-Jacques Langendorf, *La pensée militaire prussienne* [Prussian Military Thought]^[27], 209.

³⁸ Bülow, *Geist* ^[26], 110.

³⁹ Langendorf, *La pensée*, 218.

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, “Bemerkungen”^[16], 259. The term *Zweck* appears to have a different meaning here, as it seems to correspond to the concept of *Ziel* as discussed in *On War*.

⁴¹ Kuhle, *Die preußische Kriegstheorie*^[18], 260.

⁴² *Katalog der Bibliothek-Abtheilung des K. und K. Kriegs-Archivs* (Wien: K. u. K. Reichs-Kriegs-Ministerium, 1896), 472. The adjective *gründlich* is absent from the title in the catalogue.

⁴³ Kuhle, *Die preußische Kriegstheorie*^[18], 282.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁴⁵ [Friedrich von Gaugreben], *Versuch einer gründlichen Beleuchtung der Lehrsätze des neuern Krieges* [An Attempt at a Thorough Examination of the Doctrines of Modern War]^[28], 8.

⁴⁶ Clausewitz, “Bemerkungen”^[16], 260.

⁴⁷ Marie von Clausewitz, “Vorrede,” in *Hinterlassene Werke des Generals Carl von Clausewitz über Krieg und Kriegsführung* [The Posthumous Works of General Carl von Clausewitz on War and Conduct of War] ^[29], I: X.

- ⁴⁸ Carl to Marie, 3 July 1807, in *Carl und Marie von Clausewitz*, ^[17], 97.
- ⁴⁹ Johann von Bourscheid, *Kaisers Leo des Philosophen Strategie und Taktik*^[30], V: 219–220. Ferdinand Friedrich von Nicolai, *Die Anordnung einer gemeinsamen Kriegsschule für alle Waffen* [The Establishment of a Joint Military Academy for all Branches of the Armed Forces]^[31], 2.
- ⁵⁰ Clausewitz, *Strategie*, 71.
- ⁵¹ Georg Venturini, *Mathematisches System der angewandten Taktik oder eigentlichen Kriegswissenschaft* [Mathematical System of Applied Tactics or Actual Science of War]^[32], 84.
- ⁵² Bülow, *Geist* ^[22], 89.
- ⁵³ Clausewitz, “Bemerkungen”^[16], 258. Kuhle proposes the theory that Clausewitz and Gaugreben failed to comprehend the model proposed by Bülow.
- ⁵⁴ Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz, Philosopher of War*^[33], 97
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.
- ⁵⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, “Ueber die künftigen Kriegs-Operationen Preußens gegen Frankreich” [On the Future War Operations of Prussia against France], in *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe*, I: 80.
- ⁵⁷ Stéphane Béraud, *La révolution militaire napoléonienne*^[34].
- ⁵⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, “Charakteristik Scharnhorst,” in *Politische Schriften und Briefe* [Political Writings and Letters]^[35], 130–131.
- ⁵⁹ Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz’s Puzzle*^[36], 15.
- ⁶⁰ Clausewitz, *Strategie*, 78–79.
- ⁶¹ Clausewitz, “Erstes Capitel. Von der Kriegskunst überhaupt und ihrer Eintheilung,” [Chapter One. Of the Art of War in General and its Classification] in *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe*, II: 55–56.
- ⁶² Clausewitz, “2tes Kapitel. Strategie und höhere Taktik. Grenzen zwischen beyden. Definition und weitere Eintheilung,” [Chapter 2. Strategy and Higher Tactics. Boundaries between the Two. Definition and Further Classification] *Ibid.*, 62.
- ⁶³ Clausewitz, “3tes Kapitel. Die Kriegskunst im engern Sinn. Ihre weitere Eintheilung,” [Chapter 3: The Art of War in the Narrower Sense. Its Further Division] *Ibid.*, 97.

⁶⁴ “Man kann also sagen die Strategie des kleinen Krieges ist ein Gegenstand der Taktik, und da nun die Taktik des kleinen ganz gewiss ein Theil der Taktik überhaupt sein muss, so fällt der ganze kleine Krieg in die Taktik, d.h. er wird ein besonderes Kapitel derselben ausmachen”. Clausewitz, “Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg, gehalten auf der Kriegs-Schule 1810 und 1811,” [Lectures on the Small War, Given at the Military Academy in 1810 and 1811] in *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe*, I: 237.

⁶⁵ Clausewitz, “3tes Kapitel,” 98.

⁶⁶ Herberg-Rothe, “Clausewitz’s concept”^[5].

⁶⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. M. Howard, P. Paret^[37], 97. *Wechselhandel* should be understood as financial transactions or trade in bills of exchange.

⁶⁸ Aron, *Clausewitz*^[33], 106.

⁶⁹ Clausewitz, *Strategie*, 62–63.

⁷⁰ Clausewitz, “2tes Kapitel,” 65, n. 11.

⁷¹ Clausewitz to Gneisenau, 17 June 1811, in *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe*, I: 647. This is the same letter as the one quoted by Stocker, in which Clausewitz insists on the need to *define* strategy. Stocker, “What’s in a Name?”^[6] 12.

⁷² Carl von Clausewitz, “Niederschriften des Werkes, Vom Kriege,” [Transcripts of the Work *On War*] in *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe*, III: 672.

⁷³ Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*^[38], 54. <https://www.clausewitz-gesellschaft.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/VomKriege-a4.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, “Aphorismen über dem Krieg und die Kriegführung,” [Aphorisms about War and the Conduct of War]^[39] 277.

⁷⁵ Hew Strachan, *Clausewitz’s On War: A Biography*^[40], 36, 83.

⁷⁶ Gaugreben, *Versuch*, 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1–4.

⁷⁸ [August Rühle von Lilienstern], “Taktik, Strategie, Kriegswissenschaft, Kriegskunst,” [Tactics, Strategy, Science of War, Art of War]^[41] 60.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

- ⁸⁰ Jędrysiak, *Prussian Strategic Thought*^[14], 326.
- ⁸¹ Rühle von Lilienstern, *Handbuch*, 108.
- ⁸² Ibid., 108–111.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 108.
- ⁸⁴ [Archduke Carl], *Grundsätze der Strategie*^[42]. Friedrich W. von Bismark, *Vorlesungen über die Taktik der Reuterey* [Lectures on the Tactics of the Cavalry]^[43], 5.
- ⁸⁵ Carl, *Grundsätze*, I: 3.
- ⁸⁶ Archiduc Charles, *Principes de la stratégie*^[44], I: 2.
- ⁸⁷ Constantin von Lossau, *Der Krieg. Für wahre Krieger* [War: For True Warriors]^[45], 2, 111, 156–157, 243, 287.
- ⁸⁸ Victor Emmanuel Thellung von Courtelary, *Versuch über die Taktik und Strategie* [Essay on Tactics and Strategy]^[46], 6.
- ⁸⁹ Joseph von Theobald, *Strategische Studien*^[47], 210.
- ⁹⁰ Joseph von Xylander, *Die Strategie und ihre Anwendung auf die europäischen und teutschen Staaten im allgemeinen und die südwestteutschen Staaten insbesondere* [The Strategy and its Application to the European and German States in General and the Southwestern German States in Particular]^[48], 19.
- ⁹¹ Carl von Decker, *Ansichten über die Kriegführung im Geiste der Zeit* [Views on the Conduct of War in the Spirit of the Age]^[49], 62.
- ⁹² Carl von Decker, *Grundzüge der praktischen Strategie* [Main Elements of the Practical Strategy]^[50], 179.
- ⁹³ Ibid., 5–6.
- ⁹⁴ Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three-block War”^[51].
- ⁹⁵ Heinrich von Brandt, *Ansichten über die Kriegführung im Geiste der Zeit* [Views on the Conduct of War in the Spirit of the Age]^[52], 78.
- ⁹⁶ Jędrysiak, *Prussian Strategic Thought*^[14], 434.
- ⁹⁷ Johan Peter Lefrén, *Über Kriegsentwürfe, mit Rückblicken auf ältere und neuere Kriege* [On Conceptions of Warfare with Retrospectives of Older and Recent Wars], trans. J. von Xylander^[53], 121–122.

⁹⁸ Charles, *Principes*, I: 2.

⁹⁹ Antoine Henri Jomini, *Tableau analytique des principales combinaisons de la guerre* [Analytical Compend of the Principal Combinations of War]^[54], 60.

¹⁰⁰ In a neo-Wittgensteinian approach, Morris Weitz proposed in the 1950s that art was an open concept, that is to say, a concept whose conditions of application could be modified and corrected. Morris Weitz, “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics”^[55].

¹⁰¹ Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 68. The translation by Howard and Paret makes partial reference to the denotation of closure and openness, which is particularly evident in the German text. Clausewitz, *On War*^[37], 147.

¹⁰² Clausewitz, *Strategie*, 50.

¹⁰³ Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 124.

¹⁰⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*^[37], 111. Furthermore, the translation eliminates the relational connotation of *höheren Staatsverhältnisse* by translating it as “national policy”.

¹⁰⁵ Stocker, “What’s in a Name?”^[6].

¹⁰⁶ Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 50.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 68. Aron reverses this relationship when he posits that “strategy embraces the conduct of the war”. Aron, *Clausewitz*^[33], 107.

¹⁰⁸ Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 15–16.

¹¹⁰ Aron, *Clausewitz*^[33], 108.

¹¹¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *Die Feldzüge von 1799 in Italien und der Schweiz* [The Campaigns of 1799 in Italy and Switzerland]^[56], I: 147.

¹¹² Clausewitz^[56], II: 382.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Clausewitz^[38], 124.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 364.

¹¹⁶ Clausewitz^[56], I: 377.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 540.

¹¹⁸ Clausewitz^[56], II: 4.

¹¹⁹ David T. Zabecki^[57], 16.

¹²⁰ Tobias Wille^[58], 59–60.

¹²¹ Clausewitz^[38], 16.

¹²² Ibid., 469.

¹²³ Panajotis Kondylis^[59], 19.

¹²⁴ Aron^[33], 112.

¹²⁵ Kuhle^[18], 171.

¹²⁶ Heinrich von Bülow^[60], 105.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 105–106.

References

- ¹ Müller Christian Th., *Clausewitz verstehen [Understanding Clausewitz]* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).
- ² Heuser Beatrice, *The Evolution of Strategy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- ³ Strachan Hew. "The Lost Meaning of Strategy." *Survival*. 47, no. 3 (2005): 33–54.
- ⁴ Lukas Milevski. "Strategy and the Intervening Concept of Operational Art." *Military Strategy Magazine*. 4, no. 3 (2015): 17–22.
- ⁵ ^a, ^b, ^cHerberg–Rothe Andreas. "Clausewitz's Concept of Strategy – Balancing Purpose, Aims and Means." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. 2014;37(6–7):903–925.
- ⁶ ^a, ^b, ^cStocker Donald. "What's in a Name? Clausewitz's Search to Define Strategy." *Military Strategy Magazine*. 5, no. 2 (2016): 11–15.
- ⁷ Poten Bernhard von, *Geschichte des Militär–erziehungs– und Bildungswesens in Preussen [History of Military Education and Training in Prussia]* (Berlin: Hofmann, 1896).
- ⁸ Freedman Lawrence. "The Meaning of Strategy." *Texas National Security Review*. 2018;1(2):34–56.

9. [^]Black Jeremy. *Plotting Power. Strategy in the Eighteenth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 2017.
10. [^]Colson Bruno. *Clausewitz*. Paris: Perrin; 2023.
11. [^]Scharnhorst Gerhard von, *Private und dienstliche Schriften [Private and Official Correspondence]*, ed. Johannes Kunisch, vol. 4 (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2007).
12. [^]Wagner August, *Grundzüge der reinen Strategie [The Fundamentals of Pure Strategy]* (Amsterdam: Kunst und Industrie Comptoir, 1809).
13. [^]Rühle von Lilienstern August, *Handbuch für den Offizier [Officer's Manual]* (Berlin: Reimer, 1817).
14. ^{a, b, c}Jędrysiak Jacek, *Prussian Strategic Thought 1815–1830. Beyond Clausewitz* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).
15. [^]Müller Karl, *Allgemeines Verteutschungswörterbuch der Kriegssprache [General Dictionary of Military Terminology]* (Leipzig: Bruder und Hofmann, 1814).
16. ^{a, b, c, d, e}[Clausewitz Carl von]. "Bemerkungen über die reine und angewandte Strategie des Herrn von Bülow" [Remarks on the Pure and Applied Strategy of Mr von Bülow]. *Neue Bellona*. 1805;9(3):252–287.
17. ^{a, b}Heuschele Otto (ed.), *Carl und Marie von Clausewitz* (Leipzig: Schaufuß, 1935).
18. ^{a, b, c, d}Kuhle Arthur, *Die preußische Kriegstheorie um 1800 und ihre Suche nach dynamischen Gleichgewichten [Prussian Military Theory around 1800 and the Search for Dynamic Equilibrium]* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2018).
19. [^]Scharnhorst Gerhard von. "Über die Schlacht bei Marengo." [On the battle of Marengo] *Denkwürdigkeiten der militärischen Gesellschaft*. 1 (1802): 52–59.
20. [^]Moltke Helmuth von. "Ueber Strategie." *Kriegsgeschichtliche Einzelschriften*, ed. Grosser Generalstab (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1890), XIII: 1–4.
21. [^]Bülow Heinrich von. *Der Feldzug von 1800 [The 1800 Campaign]*. Berlin: Frölich; 1801.
22. ^{a, b, c}Bülow Heinrich von. *Geist des neuern Kriegssystems [The Spirit of the Modern System of War]*. Hamburg: Hofmann; 1799.
23. [^]Clausewitz Carl von. *Strategie aus dem Jahr 1804 mit Zusätzen von 1808 und 1809 [Strategy from 1804 with Additions from 1808 and 1809]*. Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt; 1937.
24. [^]Clausewitz Carl von. *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe [Writings, Essays, Studies, Letters]*. Ed. Werner Hahlweg. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; 1966–1990.

25. [^]Bülow Heinrich von. *Lehrsätze des neuern Krieges, oder, Reine und angewandte Strategie aus dem Geist des neuern Kriegssystems [Doctrines of the Modern Warfare, or, Pure and Applied Strategy from the Spirit of the Modern System of War]*. Berlin: Fröhlich; 1805.
26. ^{a, b}Bülow Heinrich von. *Geist des neuern Kriegssystems*. Hamburg: Hofmann; 1805.
27. [^]Langendorf Jean-Jacques, *La pensée militaire prussienne [Prussian Military Thought]* (Paris: Economica, 2012).
28. [^][Gaugreben Friedrich von]. *Versuch einer gründlichen Beleuchtung der Lehrsätze des neuern Krieges [An Attempt at a Thorough Examination of the Doctrines of Modern War]*. Berlin: Himburg; 1805.
29. [^]Clausewitz Marie von. "Vorrede." In: *Hinterlassene Werke des Generals Carl von Clausewitz über Krieg und Kriegsführung [The Posthumous Works of General Carl von Clausewitz on War and Conduct of War]*. Berlin: Dümmler; 1832. I: I–XIV.
30. [^]Bourscheid Johann von. *Kaisers Leo des Philosophen Strategie und Taktik*. Wien: Kurzböck; 1777–1781.
31. [^]Nicolai Ferdinand Friedrich von, *Die Anordnung einer gemeinsamen Kriegsschule für alle Waffen [The Establishment of a Joint Military Academy for all Branches of the Armed Forces]* (Stuttgart: Mezler 1781).
32. [^]Venturini Georg, *Mathematisches System der angewandten Taktik oder eigentlichen Kriegswissenschaft [Mathematical System of Applied Tactics or Actual Science of War]* (Schlewig: Röhss, 1800).
33. ^{a, b, c, d, e}Aron Raymond. *Clausewitz, Philosopher of War*. New York: Simon & Schuster; 1986.
34. [^]Béraud Stéphane. *La révolution militaire napoléonienne*. Paris: Perrin; 2021.
35. [^]Clausewitz Carl von. *Politische Schriften und Briefe [Political Writings and Letters]*. Ed. Hans Rothfels. München: DMV; 1922.
36. [^]Herberg-Rothe Andreas. *Clausewitz's Puzzle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2007.
37. ^{a, b, c}Clausewitz Carl von. *On War*. Trans. M. Howard, P. Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1984.
38. ^{a, b, c}Clausewitz Carl von. *Vom Kriege*. <https://www.clausewitz-gesellschaft.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/VomKriege-a4.pdf>.
39. [^]Clausewitz Carl von. "Aphorismen über dem Krieg und die Kriegsführung" [Aphorisms about War and the Conduct of War]. *Zeitschrift für Kunst, Wissenschaft und Geschichte des Krieges*. 1833;29:276–278.
40. [^]Strachan Hew, *Clausewitz's On War: A Biography* (New York: Grove Press, 2007).

41. [△][Rühle von Lilienstern August], "Taktik, Strategie, Kriegswissenschaft, Kriegskunst," [Tactics, Strategy, Science of War, Art of War] *Neue Militärische Zeitschrift*. 3 (1811): 52–71.
42. [△][Carl Archduke of Austria]. *Grundsätze der Strategie* [Principles of the Strategy]. Wien: Degen; 1813.
43. [△]Bismark Friedrich W. von. *Vorlesungen über die Taktik der Reuterey* [Lectures on the Tactics of the Cavalry]. Karlsruhe: Müller; 1818.
44. [△]Charles Archiduc d'Autriche. *Principes de la stratégie*. Trans. A. H. Jomini. Paris: Magimel; 1818.
45. [△]Lossau Constantin von, *Der Krieg. Für wahre Krieger* [War: For True Warriors] (Leipzig: Engelman, 1815).
46. [△]Courtelary Victor Emmanuel Thellung von. *Versuch über die Taktik und Strategie* [Essay on Tactics and Strategy]. Leipzig: Vogel; 1819.
47. [△]Theobald Joseph von, *Strategische Studien* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1817).
48. [△]Xylander Joseph von, *Die Strategie und ihre Anwendung auf die europäischen und teutschen Staaten in m allgemeinen und die südwestteutschen Staaten insbesondere* [The Strategy and its Application to the European and German States in General and the Southwestern German States in Particular] (München: Lindauer, 1818).
49. [△]Decker Carl von. *Ansichten über die Kriegführung im Geiste der Zeit* [Views on the Conduct of War in the Spirit of the Age]. Berlin: Mittler; 1817.
50. [△]Decker Carl von. *Grundzüge der praktischen Strategie* [Main Elements of the Practical Strategy]. Berlin: Herbig; 1828.
51. [△]Krulak Charles C. "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three-block War." *Leatherneck*. 82 (1999): 14–17.
52. [△]Brandt Heinrich von. *Ansichten über die Kriegführung im Geiste der Zeit* [Views on the Conduct of War in the Spirit of the Age]. Berlin: Schüppel; 1824.
53. [△]Lefrén Johan Peter, *Über Kriegsentwürfe, mit Rückblicken auf ältere und neuere Kriege* [On Conceptions of Warfare with Retrospectives of Older and Recent Wars], trans. J. von Xylander (Augsburg: Wolffsch en, 1824).
54. [△]Jomini Antoine Henri, *Tableau analytique des principales combinaisons de la guerre* [Analytical Compend of the Principal Combinations of War] (Paris: Anselin, 1830).
55. [△]Weitz Morris. "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. 15, no. 1 (1956): 27–35.

56. ^{a, b, c, d}Clausewitz Carl von. *Die Feldzüge von 1799 in Italien und der Schweiz [The Campaigns of 1799 in Italy and Switzerland]*. Berlin: Dümmler; 1833.
57. [^]Zabecki David T., *The German 1918 Offensive* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
58. [^]Wille Tobias. "Politik und ihre Grenzen in Clausewitz' Denken über den Krieg." [Policy and its Limits in Clausewitz's Thinking about War] *Politische Vierteljahrsschrift*. 62 (2021): 45–67.
59. [^]Kondylis Panajotis, *Theorie des Krieges [Theory of War]* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988).
60. [^]Bülow Heinrich von. "Friedrich und Napoleon." *Annalen des Krieges und der Staatskunde*. 1806;2:27–116.

Declarations

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.