Introduction

Watching War

At the opening of Michelangelo Antonioni's 1975 *The Passenger*, journalist David Locke is pursuing fieldwork in the deserts of Chad for a documentary about a guerrilla war. Locke follows combat as a professional observer, someone paid to convey news from the Third World to the First. Speaking for a moment as a viewer of the film rather than an actor in it, Jack Nicholson, who plays Locke, describes the scene succinctly: "This is the place where a war is taking place. This is a reporter trying to find it."[1] If human history is any guide, Locke should have no concerns about job security; there will always be a wealth of conflicts to cover. In this case, however, the desert is vast, his tips from local informants prove unreliable, and when his vehicle becomes stuck in the sand, he gives up. He has failed, in Nicholson's words, "to find the war upon which he is reporting—this is kind of Antonioni's sense of humor, you know, kind of a very dry joke."[2] The thesis of this book is that since the turn of the nineteenth century, we have all been in the same boat as Locke, trying—and failing—to find the war. The "dry joke" that has been played out time and again is that as armed conflicts have assumed unimaginable proportions and we have all become potential spectators to the destruction, the greatest show on earth of modern militarism has failed to meet its audiences' expectations by consistently underperforming as entertainment or shock or even as a forum that can reveal something essential about the human condition.

The spectatorial dynamic that has organized the experience of warfare over the past two centuries took shape in Napoleonic Europe, as military conflict acquired its unique status as a performance that everyone needed to follow. As early as 1789, Edmund Burke, a harsh critic of efforts to

overthrow the House of Bourbon, offered his famous account of what it meant for the rest of Europe to be observing a civil war unfolding in a neighboring land: "As to us here our thoughts of everything at home are suspended, by our astonishment at the wonderful Spectacle which is exhibited in a Neighboring and rival Country—what Spectators, and what Actors! England gazing with astonishment at a French struggle for Liberty and not knowing whether to blame or to applaud!"[3] In Burke's view, even if we do not know whether to celebrate or disparage the "French struggle for liberty," we can still rejoice in the sight of it. The audience in this theater of world history was as aware of its own importance as a collective viewing entity as it was respectful of the significance of the show it was watching—a show, Burke stressed, in comparison to which one's own life would necessarily appear unremarkable. When he wrote that we do not know "whether to blame or to applaud," he was referring both to the overthrow of the French monarchy and to the fact that France was offering his compatriots a gripping spectacle. In this realm of mass spectatorship, political events acquired their significance as much from their status as something to be consumed or ignored as from their consequences for the agents who effected them. In lauding both the audience and the actors, Burke underscored that the performance could be fully appreciated only from a god's-eye view that encompassed those on stage as well as onlookers in England and abroad.

If the French Revolution established the framework for this theater of world history, sustained warfare among the European powers would come to take top billing in the ensuing twenty years. Burke's sense that the emerging mass audience was conscious of its own significance as a witness to world affairs was intensified by the universalizing forces of the French revolutionary wars, which were formalized with the *levée en masse* of August 23, 1793, the proclamation on the basis of which all Frenchmen became part of the army.[4] "Suddenly," as the Prussian soldier and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz wrote, war "became the business of the people."[5] With the advantage of hindsight, Raymond Williams would echo this sentiment, arguing that the modern notion of the "mass" was forged at the turn of the nineteenth century.[6] He might have added that it was first and foremost a mass of spectators consuming war. As Georg Lukács has observed, the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars made history "for the first time . . . a *mass experience*, and moreover on a European scale" such that "the whole of Europe becomes a war arena."[7]

The new notion of the citizenry as a conglomeration of individuals mobilized to wage war was paralleled by the equally novel idea that the populace was now united in its status as an audience viewing the conflict. For millions in Great Britain and across the Continent, government bulletins and the burgeoning newspaper industry offered an opportunity to monitor the campaigns via published reports, and reading about them became a part of daily life.[8] By 1815 European civilians had all become virtual battlefield spectators, observing from afar. The remote monitoring of war may have been a necessity for British citizens, whose campaigns were not fought on their home soil, but it also became the norm in the rest of Europe since the Napoleonic era did not yet see the mass displacement or annihilation of populations, and relatively few people witnessed the battles firsthand.[9] Henceforth, waging a military campaign required managing the spectacle of battle consumed on the home front as much as defeating one's foe on the field of combat, as clashes of armies came to be assessed not just with reference to the number of dead and wounded but also as objects of observation and analysis: What kinds of reports about them were available?[10] Did these representations of combat enlighten, horrify, or stupefy their audiences?

These questions have proven intractable. Over the past two centuries, both scholars and pundits have engaged in a wide-ranging series of debates about whether human beings abhor or enjoy reading about and viewing the suffering of others, with warfare—the ultimate manmade disaster— serving as the crucial test case. Since the Vietnam War, these conversations have only intensified as advances in telecommunications have offered media consumers a growing wealth of still and moving images of dead bodies and devastated cityscapes. Widespread access to such material has led to no consensus about whether military spectacles fascinate the mass audience, repel it, or simply distract people temporarily from their day-to-day concerns. As the archetype of sublimity, a battle ostensibly promises us a great deal to see, but modern viewers are neither sufficiently appreciative of nor sufficiently traumatized by the show, as if even the most extreme engagement with the combat can never be stimulating enough. Several years after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, movie and television news producers remained unanimous in their despair about the poor ratings that had been garnered by shows about the war; with little fanfare, the public had moved on to reruns of *Lost* and the new season of *American Idol*.

Our contemporary ambivalence about watching war is the product of several aspects of the Napoleonic inheritance. One is the notion of war as part of the "everyday."[11] As devastating as it may be to think of combat as permanent or routine, the very regularity and ubiquity of violence can make it simply one more thing for media consumers to keep tabs on, like the weather or sports scores. Despite the historically unprecedented degree of death and destruction it effects, war risks being received as commonplace or even monotonous—as if it rendered the distinction between pathos and bathos irrelevant. A second key feature of the Napoleonic legacy is the inherently mediated—today we would say "virtual"—nature of the battlefield. Recent scholarship on war and representational media has tended to underplay the radical changes in war spectatorship that took place at the turn of the nineteenth century, focusing instead on later technological innovations. Beginning with the rise of photography and continuing with the advent of film and digital telecommunications, soldiers have come to wage battles with the same devices that allow audiences around the globe to follow their exploits. Whereas combat was once thought to take the form of engagements of men and arms framed by distinct spatiotemporal parameters, today's military operations are characterized as exchanges between distant parties in which the weapons are electromagnetic waves rather than guns or bombs. These developments are sometimes seen as part of a broader disruption of the very distinction between a medium and what it mediates such that even the event of death, as Jean Baudrillard has observed, fails to serve as the basis for a coherent opposition between the real and the imaginary.[12]

As consequential as technological change has been, it is the argument of this book that the modern perception of warfare was distinguished by a conjunction of physical devastation and elusive simulacra long before the invention of photography or film, much less television or the Internet. If we live in an era of hyperreal wars, we have been doing so for a long time, which is why verbal media that make no claim to facilitate unmediated transmissions of information have been and continue to be as central to war spectatorship as visual media, which appear to offer a more direct encounter with the exigencies of being under fire. In Bonaparte's Europe, information disseminated through print media was an important medium of combat. At the end of the eighteenth century, the emergence of a vast reading public for the burgeoning discourse of newspapers and government bulletins meant that generals could widely disseminate

their own interpretations of battles as they fought them. Then, as now, to "win" a battle was as much to secure control of the story in the popular imagination as to rout the opponent's forces or take control of a particular locale. While subsequent refinements in recording and communications media have created new possibilities for experiencing the seemingly impossible speed and destructiveness of twenty-first-century violence, such advances repeat rather than essentially transform a viewing dynamic that had already taken shape at the turn of the nineteenth century, as the modern mass audience assumed its central place on the world stage. Contemporary missiles—be they nuclear or information based—may be faster than Napoleon's artillery or propaganda bulletins, but they only confirm the fact that, for the past two centuries, war has been defined by the interconnection of—even the identity between—the devices used to wage it and the devices used to view it. To speak today of the dissolution of the traditional battlefield as battles are now fought both within electronic networks and on terra firma is to describe something already set in motion at least two hundred years ago, when the scale and complexity of the emerging combat meant that the only observers with any chance of grasping these events were those who were willing to give free rein to their fantasies about what war was like.

Far from transparent in its mechanisms and consequences, Napoleonic combat manifested itself as both an awesome destructive force and a field of signs to be read and interpreted. Whether as a soldier, a bystander, or a civilian reading the newspaper, the individual confronted battles with a range of ideals and prejudices about what warfare was, a set of expectations that made up what I term the *Napoleonic war imaginary*. Under the influence of this military mythology, what one "saw" with one's mind's eye—how the waves of men and arms *should* have appeared—was deemed at least as reliable as what could be seen with one's retina. In turn, the ideal war spectator was characterized not as an eagle-eyed firsthand witness but as an individual with unique creative faculties, such as a novelist thousands of miles away writing about what the battle must have been like. Even the accounts of battles penned by seasoned military veterans of the period betray an apologetic tone for the degree to which their renditions of events could never be empirical enough, as if their retellings were structured by preconceptions about how a war story should sound to its audience. When, more than a century after Waterloo, Ernst Jünger recalled his time in the trenches of the First World War and wondered why

it now seemed as if it had been only a fantasy, he was merely pursuing the implications of the Napoleonic war imaginary to their logical conclusion.

Since anyone following from afar could participate vicariously in the imaginative exercise of witnessing the battle "as it must have been," the emergence of these mediated spectatorial dynamics blurred the boundary between the experiences of combatants and the representation of these experiences. The assumption that firsthand witness took priority over secondhand accounts of battles was further challenged by the widespread conviction that soldiers or bystanders could not fully grasp their experience at Austerlitz or Borodino until they had related it to others. A vexed interdependence thus emerged between witnessing a battle "live" and reading and writing about it after the fact, the one remaining incomplete unless it had been supplemented by the other. From the commanding general to the individual soldier under fire, combatants took steps to ensure that what transpired on the battlefield could subsequently be imparted to an audience. In this respect, the European public following the Napoleonic Wars from afar was no less a part of the action than those who were actually there. The resulting array of first-, second- and thirdhand reports helped to perpetuate fantasies about the insights to be won by the immediate experience of a battlefield's horrors at the same time as it unsettled the dichotomy between a direct and an indirect engagement with them.

Contemporary war audiences are frequently said to be under the thumb of an entertainment-military-industrial complex, a fusion of the corporate militarism identified by Eisenhower with the culture industry described by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.[13] In these terms, the spectacle of warfare, whether by intermittently shocking its public or inuring it to the horrors of combat, serves to normalize a permanent war economy and to render peace an anomaly. One of the most commonly discussed features of this system is the profound interdependence between the military and news services. Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, there has been intense scrutiny of the relationship between Western governments and the media. In an effort to perfect its own performance, the White House consults with public relations and advertising firms, as well as Hollywood executives, and the Pentagon has demonstrated particular skill at playing to the camera as it tailors its operations for their smooth integration into the twenty-four-hour news cycle. For their part, journalists have been criticized for their reluctance to question official proclamations, often seeming to defer to state authority

and to exploit the nationalistic impulses of their audiences in the quest for ratings.[14]

   Nevertheless, for all their efforts to entice viewers with the promise of "live" battlefield coverage, the Western media have just as often insisted that their transmissions fail to capture what their reporters are witnessing.[15] Even when the explicit intent of the story is to create a "you were there" effect, the limitations of the medium are openly acknowledged, if not foregrounded, as the "real" story. In a recent online feature, the *New York Times* posted helmet camera video from a soldier in a U.S. military unit's engagement in Afghanistan. Instead of offering the raw film feed, the paper provided an edited version in which the footage of the events was complemented with voiceover narration, intertitles summarizing the "plot" and foreshadowing events to come, and scenes of the soldier who made the video recounting the story at a comfortable remove from the battlefield. Despite the ostensible novelty of the core sequence, the article was explicit that all of this "does not quite capture" the scene and that, in watching the soldiers, what one most directly perceives is the inability to feel what they felt.[16] In fact, the very notion of a flawless conduit of information is profoundly threatening to the experiential authority of war participants and correspondents. To assert that one can impart perfect reproductions of combat experiences is to cede claim to the insight supposedly won by virtue of the fact that one is actually at the battlefield, while one's viewing, listening, or reading public is not. At the very moment when contemporary audiovisual transmissions have threatened to replicate military violence more exactly than ever before, it becomes incumbent on the living, breathing commentator to recast these events in fantastic and even mythological terms. Far from banishing the ghosts of war, technology reinstates their spectral authority in an attempt to preserve the fantasy of a pure immediacy that may never have existed.

   Uniquely difficult to observe or share, battles are not merely one object of mass spectatorship among others but have become paradigmatic for the way in which the mass audience processes information in general. In the wake of Austerlitz or Waterloo, to participate in a military campaign as a soldier or an onlooker was to adopt a host of positions on the complex relationship between the perceptual and representational logics that organized the appearance of combat. The result was hardly a triumph of theory over experience. If, as Paul Virilio has claimed, "the history of battle is primarily the history of radically changing fields of perception,"

it is a history not of the primacy of the abstract over the concrete but of the tangible violence involved when we attempt, as any war watcher must, to control the "immaterial" dimensions of perceptual fields.[17] Since the advent of the Napoleonic war imaginary, this "immateriality," which Virilio also terms war's "magical" or "spiritual" dimension, marks the gap between any given manifestation of war—an array of troops, an explosion-filled sky—and the overarching trajectory of a campaign in which establishing power over the intelligible realm is as important as dominating the corporeal one. It is the persistence of this gap that ensures that war will be uniquely destructive to both mind and body.

To be a member of the war audience is potentially to affirm the natural or inevitable character of the show. Resisting the militarization of society thus means countering the authority of the spectacle—averting one's eyes may not be enough. However, it is far from obvious how the "masses" conceived of as a conglomeration of individuals following war in the press relates to the notion of the "masses" as a collectivity expressing itself at the ballot box or in the shopping mall. In *Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord proposed that "the spectacle cannot be understood as a mere visual deception produced by mass-media technologies. It is a world-view that has actually been materialized, a view of a world that has become objective."[18] There is no better example of such an objective materialization of a world-view than a battle, although we must be cognizant of Debord's claim that the spectacle does more than simply unite its audience since the "unification it achieves is nothing but an official language of universal separation."[19] One version of this separation-through-unification may be the semblance of solidarity effected by the communal observation of war. At the end of his essay on art in the age of its technological reproducibility, Walter Benjamin designated war as fascism's strategy for mobilizing the masses without altering the social relations of ownership, implying that the modern military enterprise sustains itself by enjoining populations to watch human beings destroy one another with the same fusion of pleasure and critical appraisal with which they watch Charlie Chaplin films. The spectacle of destruction, Benjamin proposed, had become a common focal point not to mobilize resistance to the status quo but rather to preserve the socioeconomic dynamics that pit people against one another, uniting them by solidifying their divisions.

Benjamin's invocation of film audiences is important because one of the most unrelenting features of Napoleonic war spectatorship is the il-

lusion of choice regarding our status as war watchers, born of the belief
that we, like Britons between 1792 and 1815, are securely tucked away in a
safe place with the actual combat held at arm's length. In recent years,
advances in digital telecommunications have seen the vanity of the shel-
tered consumer intensify, as Western media consumers wittingly or un-
wittingly embrace the notion that war is theirs to watch or not: as grip-
ping as live video feeds may be, we can always turn them off. The abiding
nature of this sense of spectatorial impunity is difficult to understand
given military historians' suggestion that the last two centuries have been
distinguished by the advent of total war, the dissolution of any boundary
between soldiers and civilians situated safely beyond the reach of vio-
lence. This book argues that one of the formative changes in the Napole-
onic era was the emergence of an explicit discourse about the fact that it
was no longer clear who was left to narrate military events "from the out-
side."[20] Discussions of the seemingly unlimited nature of combat were
accompanied by fantasies of a "total gaze" that could observe and record
the proceedings, providing perfect access to the sights and sounds of war.
Long before cell-phone cameras became ubiquitous on the field of battle,
the military experience was treated as unique because it offered up its gory
details to rigorous scrutiny.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe poignantly posed the question of what
the erasure of the distinction between soldiers and their audiences meant
for the possibility of telling war stories: "Formerly, somebody could com-
municate his sufferings to others; he could recount his war experience in
old age. These days misery is universal; the individual can no longer la-
ment anymore. Everybody must be on the battlefield—who is there to
listen when [warriors] tell their tales?"[21] Once a war story no longer im-
parts a content experienced by the few but simply repeats what everyone
already knows because everyone has collectively experienced it, warfare
names less a specific theme or topic than a template for a common dis-
course, a schema or filter that shapes all stories. In this respect, the total
character of modern war heralds the militarization of discursive experi-
ence in general. As with Debord's spectacle, this dynamic was unifying
precisely because it divided people. What Walter Benjamin wrote about
the twentieth-century press was already relevant at the beginning of the
nineteenth century: "Newspapers appear in large editions. Few readers
can boast of having any information that another reader may need from
them."[22] At its birth, the media's hottest topic was stillborn. The gaze of

the modern war watcher was defined not by a single pair of curious or horrified eyes—whether myopic or all-seeing—but by the gaze of a mass that surveyed a common property whose interest was by no means self-evident. Far from functioning as a force of discrimination or differentiation, observation served to amalgamate its objects and its viewers indifferently. The shared story of total war both atomized and united the populace since everyone was now independent of everyone else by virtue of not needing any assistance to share in the communal narrative perpetuated by print and word of mouth.

The twenty-first-century citizen's ability to watch war is starkly impacted by corporate and state forces determined to broadcast their versions of events. As we have already mentioned, the communal narrative that emerged in early nineteenth-century Europe was similarly shaped by the powerful information system that developed as warring generals and politicians took advantage of the new mass media, founding a discourse in which waging a war and disseminating their account of operations to the public would be one and the same. Monitoring the press, as well as appointing its editors and in some cases simply acquiring the relevant newspapers,[23] Napoleon's government also issued war bulletins that were distributed well beyond the borders of France.[24] Marveling at the power of this propaganda machine, Prince Klemens von Metternich of Austria opined that "the newspapers are worth an army of three-hundred-thousand men to Napoleon," adding that "the public cannot tell if news is true or false."[25] Naturally, this mass propaganda was accompanied by skepticism about the "official story." The readers who consumed the artful bulletins of the Napoleonic government were far from naïve or uncritical. If the English economist and theologian Richard Whately mockingly commented that "generally speaking, we may say it is on the testimony of the newspapers that men believe in the existence and exploits of Napoleon Bonaparte," he was also aware that much of the European public treated official French reports, in particular their casualty figures, as unreliable, even openly ridiculing them as lies.[26]

Whately was interested less in the credibility of the information itself than in the fact that there was now a common discourse in which war and indeed the very course of history could be followed and evaluated daily on a mass scale. In a sense, Napoleon and his exploits *did* exist by virtue of the mythologies that surrounded them, not to mention the evaluative systems popularized by his war machine, which were designed

to help people decide not just who had won or lost a particular engagement but also what that engagement meant for the future of the war and European history in general. This violent interplay of representational systems, physical destruction, and competing interpretive authorities has proven to be one of the most abiding features of the Napoleonic legacy, continuing to shape our cultural experience in the twenty-first century. First and foremost, it is a dynamic that claims to encompass everyone, obliterating any hope that we might critique it "from without." The all-inclusive nature of this system threatens the very identity of war's audience members as observers. If our status as onlookers to the battle is predetermined by the military's own script, then we are playing the role of bystanders from inside the war effort.

As Whatley's comments also suggest, Napoleon Bonaparte was more than one agent among others in this mythohistorical pageant; he was the name for a complex of aesthetic and political doctrines. A collection of emblems and slogans as much as a human being, the first great celebrity in the age of mass media boasted a cult of personality that aimed to make the chaos of modern combat comprehensible and the ubiquitous, predictable story of "another day at the battlefield" fascinating and all-consuming. This attempt to reaffirm order and meaningfulness in the European theater of war took the form of a dual legend of visual authority in which the Little Corporal was at once a superhuman observer, the standard by which all other war watchers would be judged wanting, and a wondrous object who captured the attention of all. His inner eye, "an intellect," wrote Clausewitz, "that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth," was matched only by his outer eye, his purported ability to take in the battlefield and process all of its mysteries in a single glance.[27] Even today, many historical descriptions of Napoleon's defeats turn on key moments at which his line of sight is said to have been blocked. When he was defeated for the last time, his supernatural optic powers were conferred to his vanquisher, Wellington, whose "lynx's eyes seemed to penetrate the smoke, and forestall the movements of the foe."[28]

The French emperor's legendary coup d'œil was complemented by his ability to make a spectacle of himself. The self-styled general as genius and auteur of world history routinely engineered mass events that would be the envy of any twentieth- or twenty-first-century filmmaker, and fictional and nonfictional accounts of his battles invariably include a

description of the magical moment when he is espied passing by. Seeing all and being seen by all, the usurper of the Sun King was said to be able to conjure *le soleil* when required. According to legend, the clouds parted at a crucial juncture at Austerlitz, allowing him to review the field of combat and thus to emerge victorious. Gathering light to overcome darkness, this mythical creature devoured the enlightenment emblem of the French Revolution and the Apollonian emblem of the French monarchy in a single gesture.[29] The subject of no one but the object of everyone's gaze, Napoleon was thought to be the individual uniquely able to narrate history as he made it, synchronizing the pen and the sword, since everyone was expected to watch him as both the ultimate exception—a superhuman among men—and the purveyor of the story of war that was everyone's story.

If the French emperor embodied the autoproductive ideal of a historical system that could simultaneously interpret and confirm its own significance as it shaped the course of world history, he was also the embodiment of the inherently incomplete and impermanent authority of this system. Nineteenth-century views of his reign were preoccupied with coming to terms with the spectacular nature of his fall. At the moment at which his tremendous eyesight and his ability to catch everyone else's eye could not save his cause, Napoleon became the greatest star on earth in the act of being deposed. As with the sudden demise of contemporary politicians or celebrities in tabloid feeding frenzies, the real excitement in viewing the Hegelian subject-become-object of world history was watching him go up in flames as his talent for "seeing and being seen" culminated in his spectacular self-destruction.[30]

The intimate relationship between seeing and not seeing that defined Napoleonic war watching makes it difficult to situate its spectatorial logics within the standard accounts of the modern politics of observation. Over the last several decades, Michel Foucault's conception of disciplinary society has inspired numerous studies of the ideological complexities of tele- and microscopic practices and their importance for post-Enlightenment regimes of biopower. The sense that "now more than ever we are under surveillance" has come to inform a variety of descriptions of the Western social order, which is characterized as a field of panoptic systems of limitless observation in which every business transaction, telephone conversation, or walk down the street gives rise to a mnemonic field of electronic traces.[31] Yet despite the manifold ways in which tech-

nological reproducibility has come to organize every facet of contemporary life, the legacy of Napoleonic war spectatorship suggests that the most comprehensive or intrusive gaze is not necessarily the most powerful. Discussing the primacy of vision in the military domain, Virilio invokes Napoleon's declaration that "to command is to speak to the eyes" without specifying what sort of authoritative speech is required to permit the eyes to "hear" or "see"—or correspondingly, what sort of political power is at work when vision "speaks."[32] Focusing on the tensions that organize the eminently fallible myth of Napoleonic infallibility, Foucault accords the emperor special ideological significance as "the individual who looms over everything with a single gaze that no detail, however minute, can escape," although he also regards Napoleon as a conflicted formation, a transitional figure with one foot in the old culture of spectacle and the other in the new culture of surveillance:

> At the moment of its full blossoming, the disciplinary society still assumes with the Emperor the old aspect of the power of spectacle. As a monarch who is at one and the same time a usurper of the ancient throne and the organizer of the new state, he combined into a single symbolic, ultimate figure the whole of the long process by which the pomp of sovereignty, the necessarily spectacular manifestations of power, were extinguished one by one in the daily exercise of surveillance, in a panopticism in which the vigilance of intersecting gazes was soon to render useless both the eagle and the sun.[33]

The shift Foucault describes from a society of spectacle to a society of surveillance, from the amphitheater or the stage to the panopticon, was never completed. Both systems persist, coexisting uneasily; at times they are at odds, at others mutually reinforcing.[34] If the "intersecting gazes" have proven insufficiently vigilant, it is because they continue to judge their objects through the earlier paradigm of a singular sovereign power and are therefore at best only half-hearted about what they see. Correspondingly, the individual mechanisms of surveillance are undoubtedly watchful, but they are unable to coordinate with one another to create a comprehensive composite, producing only an incomplete or confused picture, more kaleidoscopic than a perfect panoramic view.

The key question is how these developments have impacted the core of our Napoleonic inheritance, the notion of the battlefield as an unrivaled scene of force and destruction, the ultimate "spectacular manifestation of power." Has its primacy been blunted by the "daily exercise of surveillance,"