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PANDOURS, PARTISANS, AND *PETITE GUERRE*: TWO DIMENSIONS OF ENLIGHTENMENT DISCOURSE ON WAR.*

Bruce Buchan

During the Enlightenment period a certain notion of war came to prominence in European thought. This notion, which I here refer to as ‘civilized war’, centred on the idea that European war-making in the eighteenth century was characterised by humanity and honour. This image of European war-making was sustained by a variety of intellectuals and even some military practitioners who reflected not only on the practice of war in Europe in this period, but on the practice of war among supposedly less ‘civilised’ peoples in other parts of the world and in Europe’s barbaric past. In these other places, among other peoples, and at other times, warfare was characterised as altogether less ‘civilised’, less ordered, less humane and honourable, and was thus considered more ‘savage’. I will argue in this paper, however, that there were at least two dimensions to the Enlightenment discourse on civilised war: the first dimension stressed the moral qualities of civilised war, its honour and humanity above all; the second dimension emphasised its technical or rational qualities that gave European war-makers a decisive military advantage over non-European war-makers. These two dimensions applied to conventional or symmetrical war between sovereign militaries contending by massed fire power on the field of battle. They were less easily applicable to *petite guerre*, that is, unconventional, asymmetric or partisan war. Here, the two dimensions of the idea of civilised war were shadowed by persistent anxieties about the status of both dimensions of civilised war.

In his *New Voyages to North America* of 1703, the Baron de Lahontan imagined what he referred to as ‘the Moral Thoughts of a Savage’ American warrior to satirise ‘the Custom that we [Europeans] have of killing Men with Justice and Honour’.¹ Lahontan’s satire was pointed at

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¹Baron de Lahontan, *New Voyages to North America* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1703, 1970), vol. 2, 495–6. Lahontan’s satirical use of the term ‘savage’ here, especially in relation to warfare, signals that it was far more than a ‘tired platitude’, or mere term of ‘abuse’. Rather, it signaled an ethnological and historical scheme that came to underlie European self- and other-perceptions. B. Lenman, *England’s Colonial Wars 1550–1688. Conflicts, Empire and National Identity* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001), 120, 289.

an emergent shibboleth of European thought and culture, namely, that Europeans practiced war in a 'rational' manner with careful 'regard to humanity and justice', unlike the American 'savages' who were regularly demonised for 'terroristic' and 'criminal' attacks on colonists.² No other feature of European war-making was so consistently cited in support of this claim than the practice of 'sparing those who surrender', which, as both Gentili and Grotius concurred, was consistent with the 'rights of humanity and the laws of war'.³ No respecter of juridical authority, Lahontan used the diverse practices among Indigenous North Americans in relation to prisoners of war, to offer this further reflection:

[...] that we ought to make a great difference between the several Nations of *Canada*; some of which are Warlike, others Cowardly; some a Lively Active People, others Heavy and Dull: In a Word, the Case is the same in *America* as it is in *Europe*, where every Nation has not the Virtues or Vices of another.⁴

Lahontan's satire here broached a radical possibility, that the practice of war was a cultural variable rather than a moral universal, and that the presumed normative superiority of European war was a self-serving fiction. That Lahontan should bother to satirise European notions of war and war-making reminds us that he knew his sentiments were out of step with the 'mainstream' of Western European thinking on war. That mainstream in the eighteenth century represented European war-making as not only technically more efficient but morally superior to previous European and other non-European ('savage' and 'barbaric') ways of war. This presumption became entrenched in European thought during the Enlightenment, but as Helen Dexter reminds us, it continues to shape Western discourse on war.⁵

In this paper I will explore the articulation of this presumption in Enlightenment discourse on war, but I will also argue that it was complicated by the practice of *petite guerre*, or asymmetrical warfare involving hit-and-run, guerilla-style tactics against combatants and non-combatants alike.⁶ The ubiquity of this style of war, both within Europe and in European colonies,

²P. Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors. How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), 41, 57. Lenman is right to warn that Europeans on American colonial frontiers throughout the early modern period rarely if ever enjoyed an actual military superiority over Indigenous foes. Nonetheless, as he also suggests, over time the 'aboriginal way of war became obsolete'. In the field of self-perception especially Europeans proved masters in the art of overstatement. Lenman, *England's Colonial Wars*, 244.

³A. Gentili, *De Iure Belli Libri Tres*, translated by J.C. Rolfe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1612, 1933), vol. 2, 216. H. Grotius, *Of the Rights of War and Peace, in Three Volumes* (London: [1625] 1715), vol. 3, ch. 7, 129–38.

⁴Lahontan, *New Voyages*, 504. Lepore has argued that Indigenous American and European ideas on war shared similar notions of what was just and unjust in war-making, but that colonial wars of elimination premised on the depiction of Indigenous warriors as cruel savages shaped American identity. J. Lepore, *The Name of War: King Phillip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 112–16. More recently, Grenier has argued that the experience of brutal and 'exterpitive' total war against Indigenous Americans constituted the bedrock of an 'American way of war' centred on the 'strategy of annihilation'. J. Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3, 11–13.

⁵H. Dexter, 'New War, Good War and the War on Terror: Explaining, Excusing and Creating Western Neo-Interventionism', *Development and Change*, 38:6 (2007), 1062.

⁶J. Grenier, *First Way of War*; A. Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment 1700–1789* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 133–69; A. Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 46–56.

fed suspicions that Lahontan had raised early in the century, namely, that the presumed moral superiority of European war-making was illusory. Existing scholarship on Enlightened *petite guerre*, where it is discussed at all, has tended to represent it as a stark and brutal contrast to Europe's supposedly civilised ideas and practices of war-making.⁷ Carl Schmitt, for example, characterized 'partisan war' as a phenomenon unleashed by the era of total mass mobilization for war in the name of national liberation in which the aim was to harness the 'absolute enmity' of 'friends' against one's nation's 'enemy' and to combat the latter by any means, without recognition of legal or moral constraint.⁸ Schmitt is hostile to this type of war precisely because it strikes at the heart of the '*jus publicum Europaeum*', the public law of Europe, which emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which warfare came to be defined as state-to-state activity bound by recognised laws and rules that 'bracketed' war by limiting hostilities to conventional military forces under sovereign command, and specifically excluding non-combatants, wounded soldiers and prisoners of war.⁹ Partisan war stood outside this legal bracketing of conventional war, and in fact denied the legitimacy of that bracketing. In doing so, the modern partisan figured as a 'destructive' figure because, in Schmitt's words:

[...] with the bracketing of war, European humanity had achieved something extraordinary: renunciation of the criminalization of the opponent, i.e., the relativisation of enmity, the negation of absolute enmity. That really was extraordinary, even an incredibly human accomplishment, that men disclaimed a discrimination and denigration of the enemy.¹⁰

This analysis continues to shape the interpretation of Enlightened *petite guerre* as 'a relic of pre-modern times', and even a 'bad joke' on 'the Age of Reason and of Enlightenment.'¹¹ On this view, *petite guerre* appears as a kind of 'primitive' war characterized by an incessant cycle of rancorous revenge.¹² The presence of *petite guerre* as an atavistic and anachronistic survival, akin to popular beliefs about witchcraft, served merely as verification for the modernizing narrative that has shaped celebratory perceptions of the European Enlightenment. In this paper, I want to suggest a different interpretation, one that emphasizes that European contemporaries were all

⁷Much of the historical literature on warfare tends to ignore the eighteenth century and the experience of *petite guerre* altogether. See for example, *The Ashgate Companion to War: Origins and Prevention*, edited by H. Gardner and O. Kobtzeff (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012). Gat has insightfully discussed Enlightenment military discourse but has little to say about *petite guerre*: A. Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1989).

⁸C. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, translated by G.L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, 1975/2007), 52, 82. Schmitt offers a Clausewitzian interpretation of partisan war as a feature of the 'people's war' originating in the French Revolutionary Wars of national defence (1792–1800) and the Spanish guerrilla war against Napoleon (1803–13). Though he is not ignorant of the earlier Enlightenment history of *petite guerre*, he dismisses this early phase of the history of irregular war as being essentially non-political and limited in scope. On Clausewitz's interpretation of *petite guerre* see W. Hahlweg, 'Clausewitz and Guerilla Warfare', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 9:2–3 (1986), 127–33.

⁹Schmitt, *The Partisan*, 24–25.

¹⁰Schmitt, *The Partisan*, 90.

¹¹M. Rink, 'The Partisan's Metamorphosis: From Freelance Military Entrepreneur to German Freedom Fighter, 1740 to 1815', *War in History*, 17:1 (2010), 11 and 12.

¹²See for example Gat's recent depiction of 'pre-state' warfare. A. Gat, 'So Why Do People Fight? Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of War', *European Journal of International Relations*, 15:4 (2009), 579.

too aware that *petite guerre* was not a 'throw back' to pre-modern war, but a very real corollary of modern European war-making.¹³ In its brutality, however, it posed a live threat to Europe's self-image as the home of rule-bound as well as tactically and technically sophisticated war-making.

The image of European war-making as morally refined and technically sophisticated is deep seated.¹⁴ It often shades into overt praise for a supposed Western way of war characterized by advanced civilization, by its conventional nature, assuming a 'distinction between combatants and non-combatants', and its extension of rights to non-combatants and prisoners of war.¹⁵ Uncivilised or 'savage' war by contrast is said to 'include everyone', combatants and non-combatants alike, and thus is incapable of limiting the means and methods of war. More recently it has been argued that Western (American, European and Australian) armed forces must fight within modern legal limitations on war (such as those enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights or Geneva Conventions). Failing to do that would mean 'descending to the same moral level as the insurgents [in Iraq].'¹⁶ For Michael Walzer the phenomena of terrorism and counter-terrorism are largely conducted in a moral and political space between 'zones of war and peace' which are defined by the laws and agreements among sovereign states. Because he is skeptical of the claim that terrorism cannot be fought except by suspending 'the rules of peace or the rules of war', Walzer argues for the extension of the 'rules of war' to incorporate terrorists and counter-terrorist forces.¹⁷ Others, such as Victor Davis Hanson, make a different kind of claim by arguing that the 'Western way of war' demonstrates a technical superiority, an almost inexorable power and reach enabled by powerful moral and political principles.¹⁸

Hanson's thesis is that the West has 'achieved military dominance' over other non-Western peoples and nations which rests on the historical and cultural continuity that underlies what he calls the 'Western way of war'. At its simplest, the Western way of war hinges on the employment of overwhelming military might in order to bring one's political opponents to complete surrender – to destroy their capacity to resist and fight and thus to compel their abject surrender.¹⁹ Nonetheless, Hanson's account of the dominance of Western war-making is reliant on an inherently *normative* view that the Western way of war depends on its moral and not just its technological superiority. In his words:

[...] beginning with the Greeks, Western culture has shown a singular propensity to think abstractly, to debate knowledge freely [...] and to devise ways of adapting theoretical breakthroughs for practical use, through the marriage of freedom and capitalism. The result has been a constant increase in the technical ability of Western armies to kill their adversaries.²⁰

¹³My interpretation here is consistent with Beatrice Heuser in her 'Small Wars in the Age of Clausewitz: The Watershed Between Partisan War and People's War', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:1 (2010), 141–4.

¹⁴B. Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 98.

¹⁵The eighteenth century origins and dissemination of the idea of modern, civilized war in Europe is insightfully explored in John Richardson's 'Modern Warfare in Early-Eighteenth-Century Poetry', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 45:3 (2005), 557–77. For an early twentieth-century distinction between civilised and savage war see: Elbridge Colby, 'How to Fight Savage Tribes', *The American Journal of International Law*, 21:2 (1927), 281.

¹⁶D. Whetham, 'Killing Within the Rules', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 18:4 (2007), 727.

¹⁷M. Walzer, 'On Fighting Terrorism Justly', *International Relations*, 21:4 (2007), 482.

¹⁸V. D. Hanson, *Why the West Has Won: Carnage and Culture from Salamis to Vietnam* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2001). See also Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006), 83, 167–9.

¹⁹Hanson, *Why the West has Won*, 22.

²⁰Hanson, *Why the West has Won*, 230.

Here Hanson urges us to believe that the Western way of war is civilized war – war-making that is both overwhelming in its technological aspects yet subject to powerful moral constraints, especially in the West's adherence to the ideal of freedom and civilian control and critique of the military.²¹ In this way Hanson traces the power of Western warfare to key values of Western civilization (such as rationalism and individualism) that he supposes Western warfare embodies. He implies thereby that the Western way of war is normatively superior to non-Western forms of war that he associates above all with unconventional, asymmetrical, guerilla or partisan warfare, or even terrorism.²² In a similar vein, others have argued that recent conflicts and terrorism exhibit a 'barbarisation of war', or even the birth of 'post-modern war' lacking the careful limitations built up by and around sovereign states and their professional, and disciplined militaries.²³ These sentiments imply that Western symmetrical warfare between sovereign militaries employing conventional tactics is the implicit standard of modernity, opposed to pre-modern war, or to the supposedly indirect and unconventional non-Western or 'Oriental approach to warfare'.²⁴

This characterization not only implies that there actually was a time when warfare was civilized, but it does so by sustaining the myth of a European commitment to conventional war as opposed to a non-Western espousal of irregular, asymmetric or terrorist violence.²⁵ By focussing on discourse on war in the European Enlightenment, I will argue for a different interpretation of Enlightenment notions of civilized war, and the relationship between ideas of civilized war and *petite guerre*. I will argue in this paper that there were at least two dimensions to Enlightenment discourse on civilised war. These two dimensions were usually expressed separately, and indeed there was no presupposition that the articulation of one dimension necessitated recourse to the other. The first dimension was that the practice of eighteenth century warfare was or was becoming a civilised activity. Civilised war in the first dimension was characterised by honour, civility and respect for the humanity of belligerents and civilians. The second dimension of the idea of civilised war could be linked to the first dimension but did not necessarily presume it. Civilised warfare in the second dimension was 'rational' war; war developed to an ultimate stage of unparalleled power and reach. This second dimension of the idea of civilised war stressed the technological and administrative advances that gave European war-makers a decisive tactical advantage over non-European war-makers. Importantly, both dimensions of civilised war applied above all to conventional or symmetrical war waged between sovereign militaries in campaigns of manoeuvre and battle under a recognised command structure. Alongside this form of war, however, asymmetric or partisan war, known as *petite guerre*, flourished in the eighteenth century. In discourse on *petite guerre*, I will argue, European writers addressed persistent anxieties about the brutality of this form of war by merging the moral and technical dimensions of civilised war.

²¹Hanson, *Why the West has Won*, 445–6. Heuser casts doubt on Hanson's central thesis of an unbroken Western tradition, committed to pitched battle, from the time of Ancient Greece. Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, 89.

²²V.D. Hanson, *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), 140–5, 228–9, 244–5.

²³*The Barbarisation of Warfare*, edited by G. Kassimeris (London: Hurst, 2006); W. J. Olson, 'War Without a Center of Gravity: Reflections on Terrorism and Post-Modern War', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 18:4 (2007), 575.

²⁴R.J. Bunker, 'Unconventional Warfare Philosophers', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 10:3 (1999), 137.

²⁵S. Gunn, D. Grummitt and H. Cools, 'War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Widening the Debate', *War in History*, 15:4 (2008), 371–88.

1. THE FIRST DIMENSION OF CIVILISED WAR

European thinkers in the Enlightenment period were self-consciously aware that, in Kelly's words, 'war was becoming more thoroughly modernized', reduced to a technical science divested of its older prestige as the field of sublime glory and personal valour.²⁶ Conversely, it was also believed, indeed it became an article of faith among Enlightenment intellectuals and militarists alike, that the 'modernization' of war led to its 'humanizing'. In this sense, war was perceived as another field of human endeavour subject to a historical process of civilization understood as the transformation of the rudeness of savage life into the flexible and rational manners of civilized society. A key to the transformation of civilisation was the development of societies in which the members were thought to conduct themselves in line with the interest to win the esteem of others and to avoid shame and disgrace by acting 'honourably'.²⁷ Honour denoted a quality of conduct central to civil life. For Montesquieu, the principle of personal honour was among the chief 'springs' of monarchical constitutions, opposed to the cruelty and terror of despotic regimes.²⁸ Lack of honour and of equality under despotisms, Montesquieu argued, led to the greater likelihood of vengeance in punishment and in war. His classic examples of both were from non-European cases, the people of Turkey under their Sultan, or the 'barbarous' Tartars of China.²⁹ The opposition of revenge to honour (in punishment and war) echoed a much older conviction that the desire for vengeance was merely a 'kind of wild justice'.³⁰ The spirit of revenge was thus an unpredictable and potentially unlimited quality likely to sustain grievance and rancour. By the eighteenth century thinkers such as Adam Ferguson interpreted the 'savage' desire for revenge as a cause of incessant wars leading to the consolidation of tribes, and eventually to the rise of 'barbarous' rulers.³¹ In these earlier stages of social development, exemplars of which included the 'barbarous' Ancient Greeks and the 'savage' American Indians, revenge was a constant source of conflict and a drain on population.³² The ungovernable desire for revenge and extermination of one's enemies was opposed, in Ferguson's view, to considerations of clemency, gallantry and above all, the principle of honour among combatants. These virtues, he suggested, first emerged in the age of 'chivalry' but had since become a hallmark of European 'civilization'.³³

Another Scottish Enlightenment luminary, Lord Kames, took issue with Ferguson's depiction of savages (as 'bold' and 'impetuous' warriors) by reinforcing the very notion of 'savage' war.

²⁶This and the following quotation are taken from G.A. Kelly, *Mortal Politics in Eighteenth-Century France* (Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1986), 142.

²⁷A. Smith, *The Theory of the Moral Sentiments* [1759], edited by D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 144–5; R. Bourke, 'Edmund Burke and Enlightenment Sociability: Justice, Honour and the Principles of Government', *History of Political Thought*, 21:4 (2000), 632–56.

²⁸Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* [1748], translated by A.M. Cohler, B.C. Miller and H.S. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985), 82, 87. For another statement of this view, see J. Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (London: C. Dilly, 1787–88), 330–1.

²⁹Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, 75, 295–6.

³⁰F. Bacon, 'Of Revenge', in *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall* [1625], edited by J. Picher (London: Penguin, 1985), 72. For Bodin, revenge was the distinguishing characteristic of tyrannous government. J. Bodin, *The Six Bookes of the Commonweale* [1606], facsimile, edited by K. D. McRae (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), chapters iv–v.

³¹A. Ferguson, *Essay on the History of Civil Society* [1767] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1995, 98.

³²This was Hume's view also. D. Hume, 'Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations', in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary* [1777], edited by E.F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), 404, 406.

³³Ferguson, *Essay*, 201–3. See also Gentili, *De Iure*, vol. 1, 122–7.

According to Kames, many 'savages' fight not according to recognisable standards of warrior virtue but by means of 'stratagem and surprise', whereas Europeans even in the depths of their ancient barbarity engaged in 'open violence' in pitched battle showing 'superiority in active courage'.³⁴ Savage war by contrast was a scene of terrible violence, passionate fury and limitless revenge. Kames identified this as the prevailing mode of war among the Indigenous peoples of North America, Siberia, South East Asia, New Zealand and Arabia. In Europe, however, warfare had been civilised since the rough days of the Dark Ages when 'every man' was 'a soldier', where justice offered 'no defence against power, nor humanity against bloody resentment. Stormy passions raged everywhere with unrelenting fury' and manners were 'barbarous and cruel'.³⁵ Civilised war, according to Kames, only gradually became the norm in Europe; only Europeans came to wage war in which there were 'no enemies but those who are in arms: we have no resentment against others, but rather find pleasure in treating them with humanity'.³⁶ The hallmarks of civilised war are 'magnanimity', 'benevolence', and 'heroism', all of which set modern civilised war apart from the barbarous warfare in Europe's less-civilised past. 'Humanity with us prevails even in war', Kames maintained, making those 'not in arms [...] secure', saving thereby 'much innocent blood'.³⁷ In the practice of 'civilized' war in particular, 'honourable' conventions (such as sparing the lives of prisoners and wounded) were thought to limit the extent of violence on the battlefield, and to direct war solely to the dispassionate pursuit of national interests. As Hume put it, 'where honour and interest steel men against compassion as well as fear [...] combatants divest themselves of the brute, and resume the man'.³⁸

In common with Ferguson and Hume, Kames identified chivalry in Medieval Europe as a decisive period of transition from 'savage cruelty' toward 'civilised war'. Kames maintained that codes of chivalric violence were an instance of the gradual control, or 'subduing' and 'dissembling' of savage passions, 'suppressed' by a more 'refined delicacy and nice sensibility of honour'.³⁹ Indeed, Kames soon warmed to his theme and later enthused about 'bonds of chivalry for succouring the distressed, for redressing wrongs, and for protecting widows and orphans' all of which 'tended strongly to improve' European 'manners' and foster 'humanity and gentleness' even in war.⁴⁰ So much trust did he place in civilised war among Europeans that he mounted an argument for preferring war to 'perpetual peace'. The practice of modern European war, he argued, bred civilised virtues (such as magnanimity and humanity), and served to make 'even Dutchmen heroes', whereas the fruits of peace bring only luxury, idleness, and 'effeminacy'.⁴¹ Here then, is the first dimension of civilised war in which the activity of warfare is construed as the essence of civilised European modernity. Modernity was *the* age of civilisation in which Europeans conducted war according to considerations of honour and humanity. Honour was to be won in the open conduct of battle in which the aim was to defeat the enemy by means which win the 'approbation and esteem of mankind'. Waging war according to the 'principles

³⁴Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man in Four Volumes*, Book I, (Dublin: J. Williams, 1775), 23–24.

³⁵Kames, *Sketches*, Book II, 377. On 'savage' war among non-Europeans see, Book I, 25, 244, 253, 267; and Book II, 376–7. The charge of 'savagery' and 'barbarism' in war was flexible enough for it to be levelled by American colonists against their British opponents in the War of Independence. See, Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 232–60.

³⁶Kames, *Sketches*, Book I, 263–4.

³⁷Kames, *Sketches*, Book I, 265.

³⁸Hume, 'Of Refinement in the Arts', in *Essays*, 274.

³⁹Kames, *Sketches*, Book II, 380–1, 427.

⁴⁰Kames, *Sketches*, Book II, 436.

⁴¹Kames, *Sketches*, Book II, 429, 435.

of humanity' would lead to abstention from 'slaughter as much as possible' and the protection of non-combatants.⁴²

It was still possible for some Europeans to see the threat to civilised war come from within Europe rather than from without, but in doing so the very idea of civilised war was reinforced. Burke, for example, warned of the dangers posed by the French Revolutionary call to arms and, more specifically, by French calls for a partisan's defence of the motherland by unconventional means. It would turn France into a 'country of assassins' where the 'mode of civilised war will not be practiced' and the French will have renounced any entitlement to 'expect it'. Hence there could be 'no modified hostility' but a continual cycle of 'retaliation' and 'revenge'. 'The hell-hounds of war' Burke ominously warned 'will be uncoupled and unmuzzled', French 'barbarism' will destroy 'the mode of civilised war, which, more than anything else, has distinguished the Christian world.'⁴³ Burke's 'mode of civilised war' was perhaps best represented in the writings of the Swiss jurist Vattel, who observed that in his own 'civilized' age, wars must be fought solely in light of considerations of justice and as a last resort. Even sovereign declarations of war must avoid 'opprobrious words' or any expressions 'indicating hatred, animosity, and rage' because these will only inflame dangerous passions.⁴⁴ Importantly, Vattel then reflected on the 'brutal outrages', 'roughness and violence', and lack of 'decorum' in the wars of the ancient Greeks and of Medieval monarchs and popes. 'Let us congratulate our age,' he urged, on the 'superior gentleness of its manners, and not decry, as an empty politeness, customs which have consequences truly substantial.'⁴⁵ Considerations of interest also played a role in leading to finer calculations of the benefits of securing a peace favouring future commercial prosperity rather than continual conquest. Accordingly, under considerations of honour and interest 'the Effusion of Blood is spar'd', and indiscriminate reprisal is forbidden.⁴⁶ In this Vattel also concurred. While '[m]oderation and generosity redound more to the glory of a victor than his courage', he also argued that 'honour' and 'humanity' bestow 'real advantages'.⁴⁷ The 'real advantages' Vattel had in mind were predominantly legal and moral limitations on the bloodshed of war. Others were convinced, however, that modern European war-making offered more practical military advantages.

2. THE SECOND DIMENSION OF CIVILISED WAR

The second dimension of civilised war did not preclude or obviate the humanity or even the gentle politeness of the first dimension. Rather, it celebrated a different set of qualities of European war-making in which the rational development and use of the means of war (money, troops, arms and

⁴²J.J. Burlamaqui, *The Principles of Politic Law: Being a Sequel to the Principles of Natural Law*, vol. 2, (Dublin: J. Sheppard and G. Nugent, 1776), 38, 209, 214.

⁴³E. Burke, 'A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly, May 1791', in E. Burke, *Further Reflections on the Revolution in France*, edited by D.E. Ritchie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992), 55–56.

⁴⁴Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations; or, Principles of the Law of Nature Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns* (Dublin: Luke White, 1787), Book III, ch. 4, 478.

⁴⁵Vattel, *Law of Nations*, 479.

⁴⁶S. Brewster, *Jus Feziale Anglicanum: or a Treatise on the laws of England relating to war and rebellion...*, second edition (London: T. Cooper et. al., 1740), 7. See also, F. Hutcheson, *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy in Three Books...*, (Glasgow: Robert Foulis, 1747), 232–4, 333; Hume, 'Of Refinements in the Arts', 274; C. Lofft, *Elements of Universal Law, and Particularly of the Law of England* (London: His Majesty's Law Printers, 1779), 127.

⁴⁷Vattel, *Law of Nations*, Book III, ch. 8, 539.

equipment) gave European war-makers a decisive advantage over other, less civilised war-makers. Civilised war in the second dimension was unparalleled war, overpowering war. This was not the same idea as Clausewitz's 'perfect' war, nor was it a foreshadowing of the disputed phenomenon of 'total war' in the twentieth century.⁴⁸ What Clausewitz had in mind with 'perfect war' was an extension of what I am here calling the second dimension of civilised war. Clausewitz's perfect war was an unlimited mobilisation of the nation for war by uncontested sovereigns. Total war in the twentieth century was a type of war-making dependent on multifarious civilian activities (such as industrial armaments production, public health regimes and rational bureaucratic tax collection) in which the aim of war was to destroy the enemy's capacity to wage this kind of war by targeting both civil and military functionaries of the war machine.⁴⁹

The second dimension of civilised war in the eighteenth century was slightly different to these two concepts, in that few if any Enlightenment thinkers warmly envisaged Clausewitz' ideal of mass national mobilisation for war. Similarly, no Enlightenment thinker I am aware of countenanced the *mass* destruction of civilians and civilian property inherent in the idea of total war. Rather, civilised war in the second dimension was thought simply to be more rational, more scientific, more tactically adept and hence a more powerful means of waging war. That it was also more humane and even more limited than supposedly less-civilised forms of war was thought an additional benefit. This second dimension of the idea of civilised war was perhaps less obviously expressed by Enlightenment thinkers than the first dimension, but it was an important theme. Consider, for example, John Millar's characterisation of war in the less-civilized or 'rude age' of human history as the preeminent source of booty, glory and status, thus prompting 'numberless acts of hostility'.⁵⁰ Only with the advancement of industry and commerce and the consequent softening of manners did warfare become a specialized activity of hired professionals, paid for by taxation. Among 'civilized and opulent nations' then, warfare has become an activity for disciplined professionals under rigid sovereign control, but is also 'protracted to a greater length of time [...] occasioning a greater variety of operations [...] [and is] productive of suitable improvements in the military art'.⁵¹ These 'suitable improvements in the military art' were made possible, as Adam Smith pointed out, by the division of labour which made modern warfare a much more expensive activity than it had previously been owing to the fact that modern standing armies were clothed, armed, fed and paid by the public. This situation tipped the balance in favour of those civilised nations with market economies, not simply because of their greater wealth, but their greater capability to invest that wealth in modern military technology and the incessant drill

⁴⁸ Clausewitz's contention was that 'since the time of Buonaparte' war had become 'an affair of the whole Nation'. But, rather than assuming a 'new nature', modern war 'has approached much nearer to its real nature, to its absolute perfection. The means [of war] then called forth had no visible limit, the limit losing itself in the energy and enthusiasm of the Government and its subjects.' Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* [1832], edited by Anatol Rapoport, (London: Penguin, 1968), 386.

⁴⁹ The usefulness of the concept of 'total war' applied to twentieth-century conflicts in particular has been disputed. The term has been conventionally used to underpin a teleological account of the rise and expansion of Western conventional warfare, and the term is so employed in H. Herwig, et.al., *World History of Warfare* (London: Cassell, 2003), 278, 426, 511–12, 549–50. In contrast to such accounts, it has been argued that modern sub-state conflicts as well as long-term cultural, economic and demographic changes (especially in Western countries) favour a clearer civil/military distinction, the rise of smaller militaries able to wage asymmetrical wars, and the 'waning probability of major war – certainly of war involving the efforts of the entire population'. M. Howard, *The Invention of Peace. Reflections on War and International Order* (London: Profile Books, 2000), 99, also 58–9; J. Black, *War and the New Disorder in the 21st Century* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 24–5, 44–5.

⁵⁰ John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* [1771], [1806] (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1990), 220–1.

⁵¹ Millar, *Origin*, 222–4.

and discipline devoted to the tactical deployment of maximum fire power at any point on the battlefield. As Smith put it, 'the great expence of fire-arms gives an evident advantage to the nation which can best afford that expence; and consequently, to an opulent and civilized, over a poor and barbarous nation.'⁵²

Few among the Enlightenment's luminaries, however, gave more thought to this aspect of civilised war than Major-General Henry Lloyd (c. 1718–83). Lloyd was a Welshman who was unable to purchase a commission in His Majesty's armed forces and so pursued his chosen profession abroad. He first fought for the French against the Austrians in the War of Austrian Succession (1740–48); then he fought for the Jacobite Scots against British forces in Scotland. During the Seven Years' War (1756–63), he enlisted in Austrian service against Prussia, then swapped to the Prussian army fighting against Austria. He finished his active military career fighting for the Russians against the Turks in the Russo-Turkish War 1768–74. Throughout his surprising military career, Lloyd rose through the ranks of the various services in which he fought, although he was never commissioned in Britain. Among his various works, the second part of *The History of the Late War in Germany, Between the King of Prussia, and the Empress of Germany* (1781) presented the most comprehensive philosophy of Enlightenment European warfare. Lloyd's starting point was that Enlightenment European war-making was characterised by a 'phrenzy of imitation' in which each nation sought to emulate the success of the king of Prussia by modelling their armies on Prussian models of dress and discipline.⁵³ This 'phrenzy' obscured the very real problems in Prussian and other European military discipline that prevented the true goal of European war from being realised. That goal was to defeat your enemy by exerting maximum force against the enemy's weakest points in order to compel surrender. In order to accomplish this end, Lloyd called for the renunciation of imitation and custom in military affairs, and for the rigorous application of precision and science. Guided by such knowledge, 'wise generals' may be able to 'reduce military operations to geometrical precision, and may for ever make war without ever being obliged to fight.'⁵⁴

At first glance this notion of Enlightenment war would seem closer to the first rather than the second dimension of civilised war. What Lloyd seemed to have in mind here was a perpetual war of precise manoeuvre in which actual bloodshed in battle was a rare exception. But Lloyd's concept of war was more complicated. It rested on a quintessentially Enlightenment mode of ethnographic reasoning. According to Lloyd, war-making was subject not only to national variations but to variations wrought by developments in weapons technology. The decisive feature of modern warfare was the invention of firearms. Firearms were 'superior to the missile weapons of the antients' which brought troops 'so close together' that there was 'no alternative [...] but to die or conquer'.⁵⁵ But firearms made war 'less bloody and decisive' because fewer were killed and there were greater opportunities for safe retreat:

Wars are not now as formerly terminated by battles, and complete victories. [...] victor and vanquished are almost equally exhausted and ruined. [...] Hence, in our days, no kingdoms are overturned, no nation is enslaved.⁵⁶

⁵²A. Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776], vol. 2, edited by R.H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 708.

⁵³H. Lloyd, *Continuation of the History of the Late War in Germany, Between the King of Prussia, and the Empress of Germany*, Part II, (London: S. Hooper, 1781), 4.

⁵⁴Lloyd, *History*, xxxi.

⁵⁵Lloyd, *History*, 8, 13.

⁵⁶Lloyd, *History*, 14.

This delicate balance of modern war, its technological and tactical sophistication, required that modern war be practiced as 'scientific' war so that commanders may best exhibit the great strengths of modern war, above all its protraction in both time and space.⁵⁷ Modern scientific war was thus characterised by less-decisive battles, by comparatively greater political stability, and by what Frederick II called 'a certain balance of power between sovereigns'.⁵⁸ This less-decisive war nonetheless involved far greater numbers of troops deployed in the field for longer periods of time on much more extensive campaigns. 'When I consider the wars', Lloyd reflected in classic Enlightenment period ethnographic style,

[...] carried on by the Persians in Greece, with those of Alexander the Great in Asia, between Romans and Carthaginians, those of the Tartars in China and other parts of Asia, those of Mahometans in Asia and Europe, I perceive a prodigious difference in the duration and the final success of them.⁵⁹

Specifically, Lloyd's point was that the capacity to wage extended war over a longer duration bestows greater advantages to the civilised, scientific practitioners of European war than to the practitioners of less 'civilised' and less scientific war.⁶⁰ European war should become more scientific, Lloyd argued, not only in the development and application of military technology, but in the knowledge and use of military psychology, because the 'philosophy of war' consisted in a 'perfect knowledge of the passions'.⁶¹ Such knowledge leads inevitably to an analysis of the shaping of individual and national dispositions by the prevailing manner and style of government. By means of this knowledge, commanders would not only be able to better lead their troops, but also to more accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of opposing forces.

Adopting Montesquieu's tripartite typology – of despotic, monarchic and republican governments – Lloyd proceeded to lay out the fundamental propositions.⁶² Despotic governments (and he clearly had the government of Ottoman Turkey and Saffavid Persia in mind) prevailed in Asia. Peoples subject to such governments were not nations, but resembled rather 'a flock of sheep'. The troops of a despotic ruler fight solely through fear of despotic punishment or hopes of winning despotic favours. This makes such troops ill-disciplined, impetuous, rapacious, 'formidable and dangerous in their assaults, but weak, when attacked, and easily thrown into confusion, broke, and totally dissipated'.⁶³ Monarchs, in contrast to despots, rule according to laws not personal whim, and thus the troops of monarchs are disciplined; but they fight solely for monarchical favour or for pay, neither of which are secure or powerful motivations.⁶⁴ Only under 'republican' or 'civilized' governments does a constitutional balance prevail between classes based on the legal protection of 'certain privileges'.⁶⁵ This means that only under republican governments are troops inspired by one of the strongest motivations, the 'enthusiastic fire of liberty'.⁶⁶ As a consequence, republican forces tend to fight 'short', aggressive wars of

⁵⁷Lloyd, *History*, 29–31.

⁵⁸Frederick II, *Frederick the Great on the Art of War*, edited by J. Luvaas (New York: Da Capo, 1966/1999), 45.

⁵⁹Lloyd, *History*, 98.

⁶⁰Lloyd does in fact employ the terms 'civilisation' and 'savagery'; Lloyd, *History*, 81 and 106.

⁶¹Lloyd, *History*, 70.

⁶²J. Speelman, *Henry Lloyd and the Military Enlightenment of Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 67.

⁶³Lloyd, *History*, 100–103.

⁶⁴Lloyd, *History*, 109–111.

⁶⁵Lloyd, *History*, 112.

⁶⁶Lloyd, *History*, 91.

'acquisition', that Lloyd contrasted with wars of barbaric 'conquest' by wholesale slaughter and systematic plunder, but are capable of vigorous and protracted defensive wars.⁶⁷

Lloyd's conception of war thus conforms to the second dimension of the idea of civilised war. His is an image of scientific war, of civilised war in which advances in technology and knowledge of geography, politics and psychology bestow inestimable tactical advantages upon the civilised nations of Europe. Lloyd's appraisal of war is also premised on the diversity of war-making practices among humanity, a diversity he clearly attributes to the different degree of civilisation or historical progress a people has attained. In this sense, the difference of European war-making to all others is also its distinction, because European war-making represents modernity. Every military has its weaknesses, and Lloyd was well aware that this applied to modern Europe as much as to other parts of the globe. Nonetheless, Lloyd's was an image of war in which science correctly applied might even be used to reduce the bloodshed of war to an incidental occurrence; a state of war would exist (and persist) not *because* of battle but almost *in spite* of it! At this point the first and second dimensions of the idea of civilised war seem to merge.

Lloyd's merging of claims about European war-making rested on the familiar historicizing manoeuvre in European Enlightenment thought, according to which European ideas and practices were associated with rational modernity, and non-European ideas and practices represented varying degrees of savagery or barbarism. On this view, European war-making could be neatly separated, morally and technically, from the supposed unrestrained and savage violence, or even the chaotic ill-discipline of non-European war-making. Though this would seem to sustain the historicised view of *petite guerre* with which I began this paper, in the following section, I want to argue differently that Enlightenment discourse on *petite guerre* was characterised by the anxiety that rather than being an archaic pre-modern survival, *petite guerre* was a necessity to which modern European war-makers had to adapt. This resulted in what became a distinguishing feature of contemporary discourse on *petite guerre*, that the two dimensions of discourse on civilised war were merged to sustain the claim that the European practice of unconventional *petite guerre* could itself be civilised and come to reflect the moral and technical superiority of conventional European war-making.

3. THE ENLIGHTENMENT ART OF *PETITE GUERRE*

Petite guerre was an integral feature of the European art of war since at least the late seventeenth century, though it was usually regarded as an inferior or subordinate branch.⁶⁸ The term *petite guerre* itself makes an appearance in Western European military discourse in the 1750s, especially in the intervening period between the end of the War of Austrian Succession in 1748, and the commencement of the Seven Years' War in 1756.⁶⁹ *Petite guerre*, as well as

⁶⁷Lloyd, *History*, 100, 114–15.

⁶⁸S.L. Powers, 'Studying the Art of War: Military Books Known to American Officers and Their Counterparts During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of Military History*, 70 (2006), 781–814; W. Laqueur, 'The Origins of Guerrilla Doctrine', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 10:3 (1975), 341–82. Marshal Turenne, for example, devoted barely one page to 'partisan Parties' in his *Military Memoirs and Maxims of Marshal Turenne* (Dublin: G. Faulkener, 1740), 22–23.

⁶⁹Grenier, *First Way of War*, 98–100.

related terms such as partisan war and *kleine krieg*, described a form of 'extremely irregular' war waged alongside and in support of symmetrical war involving mass manoeuvre and battle between sovereign militaries.⁷⁰ *Petite guerre* was war fought on a smaller scale, often with specialist 'light' troops sharing a distinctive national identity, such as the Croatian Pandours in Austrian service, or the Highland regiments in British service. In this 'small war', the job of partisan troops was to observe and report on the position and movement of the enemy, harass the enemy's manoeuvres, raid the enemy's supplies, interrupt their communications, but also to spread as much fear, confusion and terror among enemy troops and behind enemy lines even, if need be, by targeting civilian populations. This was war that did not fit the stylised model of civilised war with its rational, almost bloodless, and excessively virtuous qualities. *Petite guerre* was an altogether more savage war fought by what Kames had described as 'stratagem and surprise' rather than heroic open battle. In his *Military Collections and Remarks*, Major Donkin, a British regular officer in the American War for Independence (1776–1783), condemned the American 'rebels' for eschewing the disciplined, regular warfare practised among 'civilized nations'.⁷¹ The surprisingly large Enlightenment literature on *petite guerre* illustrates a very different appraisal of irregular military tactics, and indeed envisages not only the possibility but the need to civilise irregular war.

It is significant that the first European treatises on *petite guerre* were published by French military officers reflecting on their experiences of partisan war during the War of Austrian Succession (1740–48). The first of these texts was La Croix's *Traite de la Petite Guerre* of 1752, which was in effect a memoir of his service in one of the partisan companies raised *ad hoc* by France during the war. The first text to lay out a systematic art or strategy of *petite guerre* was Major General Thomas Auguste le Roy de Grandmaison's *Treatise on the Military Service of Light Horse and Light Infantry*, originally published in 1756. Grandmaison had been a commander of French light cavalry in Flanders and possibly Bavaria during the War of Austrian Succession.⁷² His *Treatise* makes the claim that 'light' troops have always been useful in war for gathering supplies, intelligence, and 'surprise' attacks, but their usefulness has been counter-balanced by an 'over-great eagerness [...] to plunder'.⁷³ The most important illustration of the usefulness of such troops for carrying on *petite guerre* was provided by the light troops from Hungary and Croatia who fought in the Austrian service against French and Bavarian forces ill-equipped to match them.⁷⁴ By means of such troops the Austrians

⁷⁰The characterization of 'partisan' war as 'extremely irregular' appears in the anonymous British officer's 'Dedication' to the translation of De Jeney's, *The Partisan: or, the Art of Making War in Detachment* [1759], translated by An Officer (London: R. Griffiths, 1760), iv.

⁷¹Donkin, *Military Collections and Remarks* (New York: H. Gaine, 1777), 123–4, 126, 223. A similar sentiment was expressed in R. Stevenson, *Military Instructions for Officers Detached in the Field Containing a Scheme for Forming a Corps of a Partisan* (London: D. Wilson, 1770), 176–7. Stevenson's text is basically a crib from de Jeney's *The Partisan*, but it expresses the ambition to reduce partisan war to a civilized activity by limiting its excesses and rendering it thereby a more reliable military technique. The German tactician of '*kleine krieg*', Johann Ewald, based his doctrine on both European warfare and the tactics of the American 'rebels'. See, J. Ewald, *Treatise on Partisan Warfare* [1785], translated by R. A. Selig and D.C. Scaggs (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991), 78 and 86.

⁷²T.A. le Roy de Grandmaison, *A Treatise on the Military Service of Light Horse and Light Infantry*, translated by L. Nicola (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1777).

⁷³Grandmaison, *Treatise*, 6.

⁷⁴Grandmaison, *Treatise*, 20.

[...] incessantly harassed us, carried off our convoys, hospitals, baggage, foragers, detachments, and marauders in great numbers, by which the finest armies we ever sent beyond the Rhine, were ruined without seeing or fighting against any other troops.⁷⁵

France's *ad hoc* response, raising small numbers of light companies and dismissing them upon cessation of hostilities, left them ill-equipped to deal with the threat of partisan war in the future. The point here is that Grandmaison clearly perceived the power and potential of asymmetric partisan war when matched against conventional forces. France's numerous professional troops, especially in Bavaria and southern Germany, had been humbled in 1744 by a host of 'the most barbarous nations' (such as 'Slavonians', 'Croatians' and 'Pandours') raised from the Balkans where they had been bred up to this kind of ruthless hit-and-run warfare by generations of fighting against the Turks.⁷⁶ Grandmaison held few illusions about these troops. They were hardy and intrepid, well mounted and well supplied with 'stratagem and temerity', but they were also 'inconstant', friends only to the 'strongest' and ever ready to go 'plundering the weakest'.⁷⁷

Among Grandmaison's chief targets here were the infamous Pandours raised in Croatia by the Austrians. Grandmaison's claim is that *petite guerre* needs to be systematically planned for and practiced in order to escape the excesses of the Pandours. Pandours were effective troops if well led, but Grandmaison also describes them as cruel and unreliable. By reducing *petite guerre* to a military art, by making it amenable to discipline, drill, training and above all, honourable leadership, it could be made a more effective and less indiscriminately cruel form of war. The kind of *petite guerre* Grandmaison envisaged was distinguishable from that practiced by Baron Franz von der Trenck, the commander of the Pandours. Franz Trenck achieved notoriety not only through his actions in the War of Austrian Succession, but also by means of his Prussian nephew, Friedrich von der Trenck, and his autobiography. Franz's nephew Friedrich was dismissed from the Prussian army and endured a long persecution at the hands of the Prussian monarch, Frederick II, in part at least due to the taint of infamy on the Trenck name thanks to Franz's military exploits against the Prussians and French in the early 1740s.⁷⁸ Though by no means completely unsympathetic to Franz, Friedrich von der Trenck labelled the Pandours a 'banditti' who fought with an 'excess of barbarity', while of Franz himself Friedrich wrote that

[...] he treated his prisoners with barbarity; and, never granting quarter in battle, the very appearance of his pandours inspired terror. Their cruelties, their irresistible attacks, and the artful stratagems they had learned in their thievish apprenticeship [against the Turks], were productive of effects equally dreadful and unforeseen.⁷⁹

⁷⁵Grandmaison, *Treatise*, 7.

⁷⁶Grandmaison, *Treatise*, 8. Wheatcroft has traced the origins of *petite guerre* in the century-long conflict between the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires for supremacy in Eastern Europe following the siege of Vienna in 1683. A. Wheatcroft, *The Enemy at the Gate: Hapsburgs, Ottomans and the Battle for Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 236–7.

⁷⁷Grandmaison, *Treatise*, 10–11.

⁷⁸Friedrich von der Trenck, 'The History of Francis [Franz] Baron Trenck, a Partisan Colonel, and Commander in Chief of the Pandours...', in *The Life of Baron Frederick Trenck, Containing his Adventures...*, translated by T. Holcroft (Boston: J. Belknap et.al., 1792). On Friedrich von der Trenck and his autobiography see J. Hennig, 'Trenck and Britain', *The Modern Language Review*, 41:4 (1946), 393–407. On Franz von der Trenck's notoriety, see for example, *The Annals of Europe for the Year 1743* (London: T. Astley, 1745), 390–7. The Pandours received their own entry in J.W.'s *A Military Dictionary*, fourth edition (London: T. Read, possibly dated 1730), no pagination.

⁷⁹Friedrich von der Trenck, 'The History', 355, 357.

Such warfare seems very far removed from the ideal that Vattel celebrated among 'European nations' who 'seldom fail of making war with a great deal of moderation and generosity [...] frequently carried to the height of politeness'.⁸⁰ It could be reflected here that what separates Vattel from practitioners of war, such as la Croix or Grandmaison, was that war remained for Vattel a theoretical possibility, a social or political phenomenon to be subjected to the domain of law. For military professionals, war was a brutal necessity ultimately amenable not to the civilising claims of law, but to the achievement of victory or the avoidance of defeat. Enlightened military discourse, even that produced by military professionals, was centrally concerned with questions about the civilisation of war. As far as Frederick II was concerned, the Enlightenment civilisation of war involved a moral, technical and above all historical advance over the primitive 'war of pandours'.⁸¹ Indeed, many writers on *petite guerre* argued that they could not separate tactical from moral claims. For them, *petite guerre* was a form of war that had to be civilised, made into a moral form of war because by doing so, it would become a more reliable, controllable, and therefore tactically more powerful weapon in the hands of European commanders.

It is true that some writers doubted whether the *petite guerre* of the Pandours and others could be civilised. On this view, 'it was impossible' to prevent 'plunder' or other 'ravages' because to do so would have 'dispirited' the Pandours whose 'avarice' and 'ardour' needed to be 'inflamed' in order for them to fight with such 'bravery and service'.⁸² Trenck's and his Pandours' excesses were legion, and they included slaughter of prisoners of war and civilians, widespread plunder, and it was even rumoured that Trenck had captured and released Austria's arch-enemy, Frederick II, in return for a bribe.⁸³ A major part of the opprobrium attaching to Trenck and the Pandours, however, related to their brutal and excessive use of the then very conventional military tactic of placing an area 'under contribution'.⁸⁴ Placing a locality under contribution was a standard feature of eighteenth-century warfare. More than simple occupation, 'contribution' was in effect a levy or tax paid either in coin or in kind, on the civilian population which helped to provide for the up-keep of the army present in that district. The area of contribution thus signified the extent of a commander's control of territory. The commander would levy a contribution and it would be paid either willingly or unwillingly in exchange, more or less, for protection from plunder and pillage. But there were a variety of techniques for raising contribution. Europe's chief exponent of what would then have been considered civilised conventional warfare, Marshal de Saxe, devoted some considerable time to discussing it in his much-read *Reveries*. According to Saxe, exacting 'contributions' was a legitimate 'method of drawing supplies of provisions and money from remote parts of the country', but it should be done regularly ('monthly') and in a disciplined way.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, he recommended that commanders 'be moderate and proportionable' in 'threatening the inhabitants with military execution', by which he meant

⁸⁰Vattel, *Law of Nations*, Book III, ch. 8, 539.

⁸¹Frederick II, *Frederick the Great*, 52.

⁸²R. Rolt, *An Impartial Representation of the Conduct of the Several Powers of Europe Engaged in the Late General War*, vol. 1 (London: S. Birt, 1749), 384.

⁸³Rink, 'The Partisan's Metamorphosis', 13–14. All of this contributed to Trenck's dismissal, trial for corruption and eventual death in prison in 1748.

⁸⁴Rolt, *An Impartial Representation*, 392. The contribution levied by Trenck at Brisac in Alsace involved a levy of 30 florins per house on the civilian inhabitants in exchange for being 'treated in a friendly Manner, and maintained in the full and peaceable Possession of their Estates and Effects'. Those failing to contribute however, 'will feel the utmost Severities of War, and expose themselves, their Houses and Lands, to be destroyed by Fire and Sword, &c.' These quotes are taken from Trenck's 'Manifesto' printed in *The Annals of Europe for the Year 1743*, 397–398.

⁸⁵Maurice de Saxe, *Reveries, or Memoirs Upon the Art of War* (London: J. Nourse, 1757), 94 and 96.

'strict orders' be given 'not to plunder, or commit any manner of outrage on pain of death.'⁸⁶ When faced by reluctance to contribute, he stipulated that the troops 'set fire to some detached house' and merely threaten to return and 'burn the whole village' unless the occupants comply.⁸⁷ Soldiers who commit 'rapine' or plunder must be 'hanged without mercy'. Importantly, Saxe maintained that this 'method of raising contributions', carried out by small numbers of highly disciplined troops, would be the most effective. Larger bodies of troops are harder to police. Widespread plunder will merely encourage civilians to 'conceal their cattle and effects', will generate resentment and even sympathy with the enemy. Above all, however, Saxe recommended his method as the best way to combat the irregular hit-and-run tactics favoured by Polish light horsemen who, Saxe reflected, made war in such a 'vague and irregular manner'.⁸⁸ In order to fight such an opponent it is necessary not to pursue them, but to remove their freedom of movement by 'subject[ing] the whole country round about to contribution'.⁸⁹

Saxe's discussion of contribution neatly exemplifies a merging of moral and tactical claims. Contribution, he suggested, inevitably involves the infliction of hardship on civilian populations, but that hardship must be limited and regulated. The important point was that only by doing so could hostile territory be securely held and the free movement of hostile irregular forces curtailed. Saxe was no misty-eyed idealist, nor were his *Reveries* a moral treatise. His approach to war was, however, premised on the presumption that practicing modern European war required attention to moral standards, even in *petite guerre*. A distinguishing feature of the French and later European discourse on *petite guerre* was precisely the anxiety to separate the properly regulated practice of irregular war from the taint of cruel excess, such as that attaching to Trenck and his Pandours, and to present *petite guerre* as a civilised, or civilisable activity. In this sense, discourse on *petite guerre* was characterised by a tendency to merge the first and second dimensions of civilised war. The tactical usefulness of *petite guerre* must be aligned with the moral qualities of civilised European war-making in order for its inherent usefulness to be fully realised by commanders in the field.

The lesson that Grandmaison drew from his experience was that France must raise, equip, train and maintain a permanent 'partisan' corps. This corps, however, must be able to engage in partisan war with all the flexibility and force as their opponents while eschewing their disreputable tactics. French commanders in *petite guerre* must 'govern' their troops 'properly' by remaining 'prudent, vigilant, and enterprising', '[p]reserving good order, and strict discipline' in order to keep the 'good will' of the local inhabitants.⁹⁰ The same theme was taken up by a number of other writers on the same and similar subjects who averred that humanity was a quality most needed in the waging of *petite guerre*. In his *The Partisan*, de Jeney (another serving officer in the French army) argued that avoiding those 'Excesses which are shocking to Humanity' could only be achieved by placing the partisan corps on a 'respectable Foundation' by means of the 'strictest subordination', the 'most rigid Discipline' and the 'utmost Vigilance, Patience, and Attention' of its officers.⁹¹ One of the other leading military manuals of the age, Turpin de Crissé's *Essay on the Art of War*, urged the extensive use of 'light' troops, who, if not quite partisans, were close to it. Nonetheless, de Crissé maintained that military success was 'dependent'

⁸⁶Saxe, *Reveries*, 94.

⁸⁷Saxe, *Reveries*, 95.

⁸⁸Saxe, *Reveries*, 100.

⁸⁹Saxe, *Reveries*, 101.

⁹⁰Grandmaison, *Treatise*, 22, 44–45, 97–98.

⁹¹De Jeney, *The Partisan*, 4.

on 'the moral virtues, of which humanity should always be considered as the chief'.⁹² Even light troops who fight on the margins of conventional massed tactics, de Crissé maintained, must be taught discipline and drill by which natural 'courage and bravery' are rendered into more reliable and serviceable 'artifice and address'.⁹³ Discipline, de Jeney reflected, 'is that which polisheth away the rust of simple Nature, and disengages every part of the Body from its natural Aukwardness and Rusticity'.⁹⁴

It is worth remembering at this point that the aims of such writers were rarely to mount a moral argument, but rather to recommend the adoption of a military tactic. In doing so, however, their arguments reflected a concern that unless partisans displayed honour and humanity the effectiveness of European war-making would be compromised. In this vein writers on *petite guerre* contrasted humane but effective war-makers from the wanton conduct of those whose undisciplined attraction to 'Women, Wine, or Wealth' leads to 'Crimes without Number' tainting 'all our Laurels'.⁹⁵ Such injunctions appear repeatedly in the subsequent literature on *petite guerre*. Two German officers who served on the British side in the American War of Independence (1776–83), for example, produced texts which paired honour in war with the discipline or 'good order' of partisans. Not only would such warfare be militarily effective, it would also ensure kind treatment of prisoners of war and civilians, respect for civilian property and indeed 'humanitarian behaviour toward all peasants'.⁹⁶ As Major Donkin put it, 'military virtue' needs to be 'reduced to practice and exercise continually'.⁹⁷ Donkin's purpose, however, was not to recommend *petite guerre* but to condemn it. Honour was only consistent with the disciplined, regular warfare practised among 'civilized nations' such as the 'polished potentates of Europe, Asia and Africa only', in contrast to the 'savage, barbarous and most torturing cruelties' practiced by the 'American rebels'.⁹⁸ According to him, the rebels 'delight more in murdering from woods, walls and houses, than in shewing any genius or science in the art military'.⁹⁹ Donkin's disdain for *petite guerre* thus served as an affirmation that moral qualities celebrated in the first dimension of European discourse on civilised war were integral to Britain's conduct of the war.

CONCLUSION

Despite the common image of rigid, disciplined and above all regular Enlightenment warfare, eighteenth-century military theorists and commanders actively engaged with the use of irregular tactics. Indeed, irregular tactics were inseparable from, and often a direct consequence of, the mass movement of conventional field armies.¹⁰⁰ Despite its usefulness, however, disdain for

⁹²Turpin de Crissé, *An Essay on the Art of War*, vol. 2, translated by Joseph Otway (London: W. Johnston, 1761), 134.

⁹³de Crissé, *Essay*, 131

⁹⁴De Jeney, *The Partisan*, 21.

⁹⁵De Jeney, *The Partisan*, 7 and 9.

⁹⁶Ewald, *Treatise*, 75–77. A. Emmerich, *The Partisan in War, of the Use of a Corps of Light Troops to an Army* (London: H. Reynell, 1789) <accessed online 14/4/10 at: <http://www.loyalamericanregiment.org/The%20Partisan%20in%20War.pdf>>. This online copy of *The Partisan in War* does not have page numbers. References to kind treatment of civilians and prisoners, and testimonies of Emmerich's military honour can be found in chapters 1, 4, 9 and 10.

⁹⁷Donkin, *Military*, 126.

⁹⁸Donkin, *Military*, 123–4.

⁹⁹Donkin, *Military*, 223.

¹⁰⁰G. Satterfield, *Princes, Posts and Partisans: The Army of Louis XIV and Partisan Warfare in the Netherlands (1673–1678)* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 179–214.

unregulated *petite guerre* was frequently expressed in military discourse. What separated Donkin's hostility to the form, from de Jeney, Grandmaison, Ewald, Emmerich's and even de Saxe's more positive appraisals, was the insistence that the techniques of *petite guerre* could be, indeed must be, regulated by powerful moral norms. This claim was not couched solely as a moral argument. Rather, the claim was that by morally regulating *petite guerre* it would become a more effective military technique. In other words, the two dimensions of Enlightenment discourse on civilised war, normally expressed separately in relation to conventional warfare, came together most clearly in discourse on *petite guerre*. By arguing that *petite guerre* should become amenable to moral norms, the commander's technical control of war would be enhanced. Together, these two claims amounted to a sustained effort to argue that this stereotypically most savage of military practices could and should be civilised.

While I have traced the imperative to civilise *petite guerre* to its intra-European context, perhaps the most forceful statement of it occurred in the extra-European colonial context of war against the Indigenous peoples of North America. Throughout the French and Indian War (1754–1763) – the Seven Years' War theatre in North America – European regular forces fought for supremacy well beyond the frontiers of American colonial settlement in settings where the martial skills of more or less regular colonial levies and frankly irregular Indigenous allies proved vital.¹⁰¹ At the height of that war, then captain (later general) James Wolfe expressed his disdain for this partisan war that he described as the 'dirtiest as well as the most insignificant and unpleasant branch of military operations' because there was little scope for 'courage and skill', and a 'perpetual danger of assassination'.¹⁰² This was a form of war that many Europeans and American colonists saw as savage and barbarous, lacking either the refined morality or the technical mastery that characterised conventional warfare.¹⁰³ It was also a form of war that Europeans and colonists fought with a consistent lack of success, and it was perhaps for this reason that the experience produced few reflections on how the nature of 'savage' war in America could be adapted to the presumptive (moral and technical or first- and second-dimensional) superiority of European war-making. One of the few tracts devoted to this question was William Smith's 'Reflections on the War With the Savages of North America' of 1765.¹⁰⁴ Smith's 'Reflections' were prompted by the decision to publish Colonel Bouquet's account of his successful command of a British campaign to relieve Fort Pitt from an Indian siege during Pontiac's War (1763–5).¹⁰⁵ Smith's 'Reflections' were an addendum to his ghost-written *Historical Account* of Bouquet's campaign, and both were based on Bouquet's papers.

Smith was, by the time he wrote the *Historical Account* and 'Reflections', a practiced hand in the art of 'anti-Indian' rhetoric, and both are replete with observations on the terrible kind of war

¹⁰¹B. Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat. The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783* (London: Penguin, 2007), 388–9.

¹⁰²'Wolfe to Rickson, 9 June 1751' in *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe*, edited by B. Willson (London, 1909), 141. Wolfe's proposal was that irregular troops from Highland Scotland be employed for this service because they were 'hardy, intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no great mischief if they fall.

¹⁰³Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 57–60.

¹⁰⁴The 'Reflections' were appended to William Smith's *Historical Account of Bouquet's Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in 1764* [1765] (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1868). Ross argues that a similar adaptation or 'higher synthesis' of Indigenous and European war-making was proposed by the colonial American commander of irregular forces, Colonel Robert Rogers. J.F. Ross, *War on the Run. The Epic Story of Robert Rogers and the Conquest of America's First Frontier* (New York: Bantam Books, 2009), 81.

¹⁰⁵The details of Bouquet's campaign are covered in F. O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 245–6.

that Europeans faced on the frontier in America.¹⁰⁶ This was war where the Indians had far more accurate intelligence, where Indians made clever use of feigned ‘flight’ and ‘ambush’, where in short ‘every thing is terrible’, where there ‘is no refreshment’, and ‘victories are not decisive, but defeats are ruinous’.¹⁰⁷ Smith reinforced the point by distinguishing this kind of war from European war-making in a series of oppositions in which the two dimensions of the idea of civilised war were invoked:

The firm and determined spirit with which the Colonel delivered himself [...] contributed to bend the haughty temper of the savages to the lowest degree of abasement. [...] when they saw the vigilance and spirit of our troops were such, that they could neither be attacked nor surprised, their spirits [sank into] [...] abject timidity. [...] instances of our humanity and mercy [...] shall make a lasting impression on their savage dispositions, as it is believed the instances of our bravery and power have done; so they may come to unite, with their fear of the latter, a love of the former; and have their minds gradually opened, by such examples, to the mild dictates of peace and civility.¹⁰⁸

Smith uses this opposition between civilised soldiers and savage warriors to claim that ‘European courage and discipline’ must be ‘adapted to this new kind of war’ in raising a ‘lighter corps’ to ‘fight them [the Indians] in their own way’.¹⁰⁹ In arguing so, Smith invokes the language of civilisation to characterise the Indians as exemplars of a ‘savagery’ in which war-making partakes the ‘same stratagems and cruelty’ of the hunt, in which Indian ‘revenge’, endurance and ‘ferocity’ are all incidental to their ‘savage’ way of life.¹¹⁰ Smith’s implicit purpose in writing the ‘Reflections’ was to offer to his American and European readers not simply a lurid picture of savage frontier war, but a validation of European military superiority. His message was that for all the terror they were able to spread, Indian warriors were beatable, but that this required adapting European war-making to frontier conditions. The aim was for ‘civilised’ European soldiers to learn the ‘savage’s’ skills in order that they may win the war on the frontier and demonstrate not merely European moral, but European technical and tactical superiority.¹¹¹ In Smith’s ‘Reflections’ the two dimensions of the presumed moral and technical superiority of civilised European war merged, and by this means the irregular tactics of *petite guerre* could be portrayed, perhaps surprisingly, as an exemplification of European claims about civilised war.

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¹⁰⁶Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 192–9.

¹⁰⁷Smith, *Historical Account*, 16–19.

¹⁰⁸Smith, *Historical Account*, 57–8.

¹⁰⁹Smith, ‘Reflections’, 101. Interestingly, Smith goes on to suggest that the Indians are ‘infinitely more active and dangerous than the [...] Pandours’ or any other European or non-European foe (106).

¹¹⁰Smith, ‘Reflections’, 95–98. On the importance of war in representations of Indian ‘savagery’ see Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 132–3.

¹¹¹Interestingly the French officer, Pierre Pouchot, seemed to claim that modern European mass military discipline held the key, warning also of the danger of relying on supposedly superior military technology: ‘the best recourse Europeans have in fighting the Indians is to corner them in some place from which there is no exit & to march at them with fixed bayonets. A company that tried to shoot it out would very soon be beaten because of the accuracy of their musket fire.’ Pouchot’s 1781 editor, however, claimed that the Frenchman’s own views on the subject cohered with Smith’s more ‘fully developed’ ‘Reflections’. P. Pouchot, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America Between France and England* [1781], reprint, translated by M. Cardy (Youngstown: Old Fort Niagara Association, 1994), 480.