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# THE WAR HEROINE IN THE FINNISH ORGANIZATION Lotta Svärd

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the Finnish women's paramilitary organization Lotta Svärd in 1944. During the Second World War, thousands of members of the organization served as volunteers with the Finnish Army. The primary data for this study consists of the organization's magazine, *Lotta*, and the Finnish War Document Archives. This study seeks to explore the representation of the heroine in the *Lotta* magazine. We found four representations of the heroine: Mother and Holy Sacrifice. While war histories are mainly written by men and for men, this study is intended to contribute to the knowledge of gender in a specific historical context.

**Keywords:** War, Heroine, *Lotta Svärd*, Finland

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the heroine for women in the Finnish paramilitary organization in Finland and whose members worked as volunteers with the Finnish Army during the years of the Second World War. The wartime in Finland continued for nearly five years from 1939 to 1945, with an interwar period from 1940 to summer 1941. One part, which is referred to as the Winter War in Finland, fought against the Soviet Union in 1939-40, was a major historical event that moulded the Finnish spirit. The fact that Finland was able to maintain her sovereignty as a result of the war, in contrast to many other small countries, has been considered a miracle (Takala and Kemppainen, 2007). The significance of the Lotta as a symbol of the Finnish woman - on both the war and the home fronts was emphasized by the Finnish media (Kalliomäki, 1986; Olsson, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Mäkinen, 2007; Seila, 1975).

In general, a hero is typically understood to be a man who gains admiration and praise by overcoming difficulties and the accomplishment of whatever task. A hero acts for the good of his people and performs daring deeds (Steyrer, 1998). Therefore, a hero in a text is a man who makes sacrifices and takes great risks to defend his homeland and its people. While war heroes are understood to be a male phenomenon, the understanding of womanhood traditionally shares the idea that the woman's strength and nurturing, gender

responsible for family and children (Tahvanainen and Kemppainen, 2007). In particular, most often the role of motherhood, which requires not only a close relationship with a child is idealized as the core of womanhood (O'Brien and Josselson, 1996).

To become a war heroine was not easy for women in the First and Second World Wars having acted specifically at their time in a way that was not in line with traditional gender as heroines or even womanhood. Women subverted cultural assumptions about femininity, marriage and by assuming that their place was to be alongside the men performing an active role in the war effort (Brass and 2004). In Britain in the Second World War, women were at first prevented from joining the Home Guard. When they were admitted, in 1943, they were not even allowed to handle guns, but only to do support work for the army. Women in the auxiliary armed forces were not allowed to handle lethal weapons. Women were mothers, not soldiers (Sunderfield, 2010). A war heroine was seen to mirror the ideal of the community and popular virtues of women, not participate directly in the war. The Second World War has been aptly termed 'gendering' activity, casting thought about sex and gender boundaries (Faust, 1990). The literature exploring war heroines is very limited indeed.

The aim of this study is to conceptualize the heroine for women in a highly male-dominated environment in which men are normally viewed as heroes. An empirical qualitative study is conducted with the objective of exploring how a war heroine was represented and how she was perceived in the Second World War. Additionally, attributes that were linked to the Lottas and how they were expected to behave in order to be heroines is explored. In light of the research objective, the study seeks to answer the following question: How was the war heroine represented and perceived in the Second World War?

As a research method we will use content analysis. Content analysis is a flexible method for analyzing text and useful with our study which aims to describe the concept of a war heroine, on which existing research is limited. The data for this study consists of letters and other stories published in newspapers and magazines. The data are from a time period from the beginning of 1939 to November 1944, when Finland had lost the war and the Lotta Svärd organization ceased to exist. Sources included the filed documents of the Lotta Svärd organization stored in the Finnish War Archives.

The contribution of this study is that it provides a female perspective on a traditionally thought of as male domain. We approach the topic from a gendered perspective. While war histories are mainly written by men for men, our study aspires to make women's roles visible in their social context for our study of wartime Finland. This women's organization with its masculine military ideology provides not only an interesting but an exceptional social context for researching heroines. As the study motivates us to

challenge prevailing power relationships, particularly the dominant male perspective on knowledge at war. According to Hayman, feminism is not merely a perspective on research or a way of knowing, in itself, a way of being in the world. Nor is it a purely subjective or objective ontology, but understood as a way of being *graiwoma meinn sa waen'* (Hayman 2008).

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In the next section we discuss war and women in war, and the ideology and operation of the data and methodology. Finally, we conclude with war hero organization, and our summary and concluding comments.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

*K c a Y b D g ' < J g h c f m*

Women's history (defined as historical work on women's history) is a concern about the past and present oppression of women (Deane 1989). It has been said that women's history is writing women back into the dynamics of power and oppression. The history of heroines and gender has three dimensions. The first, and most obvious, is to locate women in history, recovering their past role. However, there is no common role or place for women, but they depend on their social class, area and time. This leads us to the second dimension, which is to give the history of the past from a women's perspective; for example, women in economic or social life, women in revolution and war. The third dimension tells of women's lives in societies that have changed over the centuries and shaped their story again and again. Women have worked in minor positions in society and obtained the right to work and freedom more slowly than men. The church and religion, especially in Catholic Europe, have produced a mentality of a male world in which the role of women has been (Hempstead 1994). In this study we will focus on women in a war time context in relation to the male soldiers.

Women's history, in fact, has modified the shape of history, influencing its content and explanation through more than 40 years. While the first histories of women in the 1970s focused on notable individuals in women's history, the agenda of this field is to recover and restore the women's history, and hence, contribute a voice from their thus far subordinate position in history writing. The achievement of the gender history pioneers was the development of the concept of gender rather than biological sense of a sexual difference. In addition, they noticed that relations between men and

cross culturally and historically, and researchers' life stories to the various issues (Rose, 1993; Walker, 2008).

However, this shift involving gender in other social relations was not accepted by researchers whose primary goal of women's history was to show that women's experiences were not the same as men's. In the contrary, historians should rethink the issue (Rose, 1993) and focus on New subjects for women's history writing. These emerged new methodologies in gender history. This phase is known as the linguistic turn in history analysis. In this phase, discourses and representations were used to reveal power relationships (Walker, 2008). Identities were understood in order to trace meanings and discourses that had constructed masculinity and femininity over time. Gender was seen as a constitutive element of social relations. Perceived differences between the sexes, and as signifying relationships (Rose, 1993). Experience, in this sense, is discursively produced and there is no experience of the ways that language constructs it. Joan Scott argued that we should move from looking at the social construction of gender to the meanings of gender, particularly its use as a metaphor for human relations (Bennett, 1989; Scott, 1997). The other aspect that emerged in gender research came from researchers who challenged the idea that there is something that can be called 'women's history'. They suggested that race, gender and class are interlocking and interdependent dimensions of domination. These dimensions are experienced simultaneously (Rose, 1993).

In the 2000s, a new phase of gender history has been reached, when the studies of discourses and representations have been accepted as a complementary approach. Gender history research operates through the analysis of discourses on gender that are connected to cultural and social practices (Walker, 2008). Gender and feminist history research is moving toward topics of gender as a social and cultural relation (Rose, 1993).

What can women's history (1993) has shown that this studies can give another sort of perspective on patriarchy that will enable us to examine the causes of the remarkable durability of patriarchal structures. Women's history can help us to understand why relations between men and women in our time are as they are and how they have come to be. Second, women's history can be seen as part of a broader history of social relations. Women do not form a unified group. There are women of high and middle class, Muslim and Catholic, young and old, whose experiences are indeed different. Gender, related to other demographic and class factors, is a key to new approaches to historical writing, and therefore writing history (Thompson, 1988).

*Women in War*

During the World Wars traditional gender roles changed. Women were an integral part of the war as they were needed in the home (Maitra, 2013). The World Wars changed women's lives. Women had borne heavy responsibilities during the war; they did underground work and took on dangerous tasks often saving their lives. With some exceptions, women generally did not participate in armed resistance (Withuis, 1994).

There are few studies exploring how the press represents women when a nation is at war. Many studies deal with motherhood and they suggest that the relationship between motherhood and the military has often been confused (Egglestein, 1987). De Volo (2004) presented three benefits of militaries mobilizing mothers and maternal imagery. The first benefit is channelling maternal grievances. Mothers, mothers' images and mothers' mothers are no less integrated into war propaganda and ideology. Along with their sons, they are usually affected negatively by conscription. For militaries at war, mothers are potential opponents as their sons are drafted or killed, and therefore, a potential threat to the war effort. By mobilizing mothers' organizations, the military attempts to control their anger at the drafting or death of a son or daughter (Egglestein, 1987; Zeiger, 1976). The second benefit comes from disseminating propaganda. Mobilized mothers can themselves promote propaganda from a perspective which seems apolitical. When mothers are speaking from the heart out of love for their children rather than from a political standpoint, they are more effective (De Volo, 2004). During the Contra War, mothers protested against the Sandinista state policies through a non-oppositional maternal framework, putting the state in the difficult position of either permitting the protests or repressing apolitical mothers. Sandinista mothers, Catholic hierarchy, used a non-oppositional maternal framework to gain the moral upper hand. The third benefit, then, is evoking sympathy nationally and internationally. Through a maternal framework, women have made powerful statements for war and peace by appealing to the emotions to rally a thirst for revenge, a resignation to patriotic duty or of hostility (De Volo, 2004).

The media reproduces values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that integrate individuals into the structure of the greater society (Horton and Chomsky, 1988). The media tells us what to value, who is important, how to behave (Jewele, 2007). The media is a strong tool for war propaganda. In the US, the national news presented the mothers of US combat soldiers in the Iraq War as archetypally good mothers, who continued maternal work even after their children are deployed. Unlike the archetype of the patriotic mother, combat soldiers were not depicted as necessarily violent. While all the mothers supported their children in combat, some clearly did not support the war. The image created of them by the press does not completely reflect the image of the

patriotic mother. The play depicts the picture of wartime motherhood is more nuanced and complex than suggested by the myth of the historical image of the (Sapientino-Gather, 2007)

Israel is the only Western country that has had a policy of compulsory conscription for both men and women. Although women are drafted into the military, the most dominant presentation of women in the Israeli media has been the icon of women as mothers. When women serve in combat roles on the front lines, they are located in the dual position of a woman in a hyper masculinist environment. In this position, they are expected to mimic the identity of the male combat soldiers. From this contradictory standpoint, a critical gendered voice, which focuses on criticism of combat masculinity. In fact, they were infantilizing women, which allowed them to place themselves in a position of power, and behave like they are soldiers. They were emotionally identifying with the Palestinians victims of the occupation (Sasson, 2011)

'Lone girls' in Israel's Defence Forces (IDF) are a new phenomenon. Many of these women find that their gender in traditional ways in the army is empowering. They manipulate their gender and femininity to their advantage as IDF soldiers, as a means of attaining a sense of belonging when other paths are blocked. Therefore, from their own experiences at an individual level, while at a collective level their presence does little to strengthen the position of women in the IDF and in Israeli society in general. Rather, it serves to reinforce traditional gender roles for men and women. The IDF attempts to get around this and include women in the military, while at the same time preserving their roles as weak and vulnerable to enemy hostility. Through both formal and informal means, the IDF has relegated women to traditionally female positions and expressive roles taking on the metaphor of the daughter and even the wife (Havron, 2011)

There is something potentially meaningful and relevant to our understanding of the military through its mediated representation. The military body is a masculine body. However, fundamental to military performance is the implicit and explicit invocation of the feminine body. Indeed, it seems that, in the military body is female, in Lotta Svärd, it must be made masculine. If a woman is in the military body, she must either conform to the masculine norm or as the price of entry, she must perform a number of functions in the military. This frequent dichotomy is employed as a gauge against which the masculine is measured or as a foil against which it can appear. In this way, gender categorization creates separation and differentiation. As a disciplining technique, which seeks to make the military body more carefully coded, masculine ways. The norm becomes an ideal of power or knowledge, and divergence from it becomes a mark of inferiority. In this way, it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power (Foucault, 1977)

In wartime, the relations between sexes were problematic. Abnormal conditions led to an abnormal consequence of the disturbance of normal social patterns. Risky mobilization of soldiers, the spread of venereal disease,

abortion, illegitimacy and divorce were anticipated and controlled. There were ethnic and racial requirements in Britain white women's relationships with black men were subject to sexual patriotism and discipline (Webster, 2013). However, women's experience was more complex than the official instructions of mobilised women. The personal stories of women at war tell of conformity to traditional norms of sexual behaviour, as well as rejection of conventional standards and norms (Crockett, 1992).

In Britain, there were more than 100,000 women serving in paramilitary units in the First World War. The units were the volunteer corps (Roberts, 1997). British women who wore military uniforms could not be treated as equal partners with soldiers. In the First World War, women did not take independent action by themselves (Watson, 1997). The romantic image of the First World War nurses is well known from several books and publications. Women's involvement in war is a fact, this image was a myth, and the experiences of nurses in the First World War were full of danger and fighting for them both professionally and personally (Kelly, 2015).

The feminine not only serves to mark subordination, however, it also signifies militancy (Simpson, 2012). Women soldiers serving in 'masculine identities' according to the hegemonic masculinity of the combat soldier through three interrelated practices of bodily and discursive practices of combat soldiers, of distance and sexual harassment. These practices signify both resistance and compliance with the dichotomized gender. Adopting masculine combat norms does not ensure the hegemonic status of the combat soldier. Usually, their military careers are blocked at an early stage and advancement and promotion are curtailed and limited. Moreover, their positive military experience is not carried into their civilian life. After their release from the army, they are not entitled to the economic privileges that combat soldiers enjoy, or the political voice and power. The power women soldiers acquire through their military service is revealed as temporary and localized, as it does not lead them to positions of power or in civilian life (Sasson-Levy, 2003).

Female suicide bombers have been active since 2000. They have been called Black Widows by the international press when it became clear that their aim was the death of their husbands. They have been personally deeply traumatized, but in fact they were religiously motivated and were seen as martyrs (Speckhard and Khatib, 2006). They believed they were fighting for Allah and will soon be in Paradise with their families and friends (Barnes, 2007; Wat, 2005). It was not a question of women's status in their society. Women were tightly controlled by male leaders in terrorist organizations, and not



with men in peace. The spectacle of female suicide bombers does not challenge male control, but sends a message that they are more valuable to their societies (Blom, 2007).

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The roots of Lotta Svärd began in the 19th century. The 1800s are referred to as the Finnish Women's War, as documented by Runeberg in an anthology of poetry praising the heroes of the war. One such hero was Lotta Svärd (Runeberg, 1848). After the Civil War ended in May 1918, the women who had organized the Lotta Svärd organization named the Lotta Svärd organization. The aim was to invoke and promote an ideology of home, creed and fatherland, and to contribute to the national spirit. Another central aim was to support the people's war (Kallioniemi, 1984; Aaltonen, 2004; Lukkarinen, 1981).

The organizational structure of Lotta Svärd resided in the Lotta Svärd Board. The Board was elected at the annual general meeting, while the chairperson was nominated as the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Army. The country was divided into district units with their own independent administrations, and subdivided further into local and village units. Responsibility for the different tasks was assigned to committees for nursing, provisioning, fundraising and social support, and office and signal services. Every woman who became a member of the organization was designated a position in a committee based on her education and personal skills (Kallioniemi, 1986).

According to the Lotta Svärd, the Lotta Svärd had almost 100,000 members. Membership was counted. There was also a department for children, which was established in 1931 and by 1935 already had 13,000 members. Girls were eligible to join the Lotta Svärd at the age of eight. The young girls learned nursing skills, and packed food and clothing for the unknown soldiers on the frontlines. The number of Lottas serving in the years of World War II was around 10,000 at a time, but they did not carry weapons and defend themselves (Lukkarinen, 2006).

As early as summer 1939, under threat of war, they were involved in building defence lines along the Isthmus, for instance, by supplying food to the builders. In the war they served in air surveillance, worked in the rear, and arranged provisions and clothing for the army. One of the hardest duties was serving in the casualty centres, from where Finnish soldiers were taken back home and laid to rest. When the war ended the Lottas also helped with the evacuation of the refugees. Although the Lottas took an active part in the war, even on the frontlines were unarmed. Debate on this issue started already during the Civil War, but was called to an end by the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Army, Marshal Mannerheim, who wrote in 1918:

I expect help from Finnish women in meeting urgent needs of the army, like in nursing, making clothes, caring for the home and comforting those who have lost their loved ones. Armed battle on the front should hold to be the exclusive right and duty of men, (Lotta 2004)

Being enlisted to fight as soldiers on the front meant that women were outsiders. During the period of peace in the 1920s, the Lotta organization was a heavy propaganda for war:

We have to rise for eternal peace, and if there is a nation, which will not submit to peace, then it is our duty to fight. (Lotta Svärd yhdistyksen ja keskusjohtokunnan vuosikokous 1929)

All endeavours that weaken the will for defence are against peace (Lotta 2004)

The values shared within the Lotta Svärd organization were self-reliance, self-control and self-discipline. New members took their oath in a ceremony usually held in a church, where they promised to be ready for the sake of home, motherland, and fulfil their obligation to nation. The most important duty of Lotta Svärd was organizing the activities of the front-line soldiers. They provided clothing and footwear, food and housing. Even though the front-line soldiers were paid no salary, they did receive a daily allowance plus free board and lodging. Before being sent to their positions, they were also trained in the organization in specialized courses. Women working in hospitals or in first aid stations, attended medical courses. From 1941 onwards, the training subjects included veterinary medicine, radiotelegraphy, and communication, among others (Stenroos & Riihimäki, 1999: 29)

Whether serving on the war front or at home, the Lottas were expected to behave blamelessly at all times and follow the rules of the organization. The regulations concerning their appearance, grooming, and dress were recognized by their military superiors. The Lottas wore a grey dress with white collar and cuffs and the outfit included a cap in summertime and a fur hat in winter, white or grey gloves, and simple, flat shoes. Lottas wore the same grey uniform as the Lottas.

In autumn 1944, it grew evident that Finland had lost the war. In September 1944, a truce was negotiated between Finland and the Soviet Union. Finland had to cede about one-tenth of its territory to the Soviet Union. It was also required to legalize communist parties and the termination of the Lotta organization. The Lottas' bitterest sadness arose from the fact that the women who had served in the organization. Their Lotta membership cards, badges and memories were stashed away in cupboards and drawers where they remained for five decades. In the post-war period of the 1940s and 1950s, the Lottas were treated as much as buried: the Lottas were disparaged, and many made no mention that they had been members of the organization during the war.

## 3. DATA AND METHOD

*Source Material*

One of the greatest impediments to capturing work evidence. In this study, historical data of a women's organization opportunity to write a women's journal, which had 22 issues a year from 1929 until 1944 when the organization was abolished. The journals were available in the University main library. Furthermore, our sources included the organization, private and confidential letters, instructions and other documents stored in the Finnish Archives in Helsinki. The data collected from the Lotta Svärd Journal.

TABLE 1 - DATA COLLECTED FROM LOTTA SVÄRD JOURNAL

Year	Numbers	Pages	Pages of data used in the study
1939	22	334	18
1940	22	421	14
1941	22	441	31
1942	22	451	21
1943	22	428	21
1944	19	425	15
Total	129	2500	120

We examined the articles published from the beginning of 1939 to the end of November 1944. In autumn 1944, it was clear that the organization was liquidated in November, and the magazine discontinued. In 1941, the journal was not published because of the agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union. The number of journals totalled 129 issues and the content of the magazine consists of articles, stories, announcements and other writings, and is very rich. There are also pictures, advertisements, love stories and information. Special issues were published for Christmas and New Year. In the first textual level of analysis we picked out articles and other writings, and continued with a thematic analysis. The key words were heroine (Ensham, 1987), military soldier (Sasson-Levy et al., 2011), and female body in a military uniform (Gofrey et al., 2012), as well as martyr (Speckhard, 2006). From our preliminary understanding of the phenomenon based on previous literature, we used to guide our analysis, and we sought to contribute to research by identifying categories and new explanations. Data analysis by gaining a greater understanding of the notion of heroine in Lotta Svärd. This kind of approach to data analysis, which is appropriate when existing theory or literature is insufficient (Shannon, 2005).

*Content Analysis*

The qualitative content analysis started with the observations we made when scanning the texts of the *Lotta Svärd* magazines. At this point, the use of the word hero and heroine, as one of our study focuses on how the war heroine was represented in the magazine, for example;

So began the legend of the Lotta heroines (1:94)

...There exist women who easily and persistently take on any heroic task (1:44)

...Her heroic death.. ( 1 : 1 9 )

Sometimes the meaning was not as clear, and we endeavoured to understand and interpret the texts. The following text, for example, does not use the word heroine, but the latent meaning was to link it to heroines:

Glory to those (Lottas) who made very effort, carried their valuable sacrifice to glory to them who were faithful to the death (1:58)

We carefully read through the magazine's texts for the key words and their latent meaning, and in total 71 texts, which constituted our unit for analysis, and which we wrote into one file. These were divided into units of meaning, in total 155 pieces of text that had a group of words that relate to the same meaning. We continued the analysis considering the context and condensed the units into shorter descriptions in the text, condensed meaning units. Condensed meaning units were simpler and shorter expressions of the units of meaning; therefore, having the same core message. Since the magazine was more than 60 years ago, partly for propaganda and partly in a poetic manner, condensation was necessary. This stage, of course, is a subjective process in which we made interpretations of the latent content. We used the Atlas.ti programme as a tool to help categorize the data of source documents. The super codes were Mother, Soldier and Body, and under Heroine we found the sub codes Mother, Soldier and Body. It is notable that many of the quotations were linked to more than one code (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). Each quotation receives an ID in the programme, like 1:84, where the first number refers to the primary document and the other to the quotation. We conducted the coding process many times, recoding, changing the codes and categories carefully.

The codes that were finally selected in the interpretation process were Mother, Soldier and Body, which were not in previous literature on women at war. Furthermore, we found two attributers linked to heroines in the *Lotta Svärd* magazine. These were Death and Martyr. The heroine was able to become a martyr when she died in the war. Death and Martyr were described as a holy destiny.

was offered only for the best among the Lottas who were happy to sacrifice their lives to God and country. We integrated Death and Martyr under one representation. The number of quotations that reflected the codes was 14 for Mother, 42 for Soldier, 69 for Body, and 117 for Holy Sacrifice.

( " ' K 5 F ' < 9 F C = B 9 G ' = B ' @ C H H 5 ' G J s F 8

This section presents the four representations of the heroine: Mother, Soldier, Body and Holy Sacrifice.

### *Mother*

To be heroines, the women in the Lotta Svärd organization and the lives of their loved ones to this was in direct contrast to the profile of women in Finnish society, which was to have domestic duties. Despite their almost masculine appearance, the women were not expected to deny their motherhood. They were mothers, caregivers, nurses and teachers. The public role was controlled by strict rules concerning their appearance and conduct, which emphasized normal feminine virtues and vices.

The role of mother in war is often presented through the symbol of the good mother, and as an active mother. This was the case in Lotta Svärd as well. She was gentle and playful when she cared for the wounded (1:84)

The duties of the mother were stressed in the texts in many ways:

Mother is a Lotta and an office lady but primarily she is mother of all the boys cry. (1:64)

The notion of a Mother was communicated using various images that extended the depiction of mother to a woman who is brave and strong enough to be active in the war:

Finnish Lottas wash floors, wash the bloody corpses of the fallen men, drudge and raise up head of Finnish soldiers, work in the kitchen at the front and take care of horses, are awake night and day and do not hesitate to empty the toilet at the front ... (1:47)

In a crisis a mother has the courage to incinerate her own home:

She set her own home on fire ... (1:49).

Mother had to sacrifice everything she had:

The fatherland is calling your husband, your son, maybe your brother, your loved one to the front and asking for your help in many ways (1:12)

... Those who mothered already whose suffering was friendly and dear smile... ( 1 : 3 9 )

The Mother portrayed in Lotta Svärd, but an active partner and sister to the men, fighting alongside them:

Next to me, my sister, you created the home at the front

The idea of Mother represented by Lotta Svärd in literature. In Lotta Svärd there is nothing confidential.

The public role of women required a duty to contribute to the war effort, and emphasized female motherhood and in this role (Benhabib, 1987; Welsh, 1992) women in Lotta Svärd were

neutral elements in the war. They actively supported the fighting, and never mentioned any aspirations.

The mother, as represented at home but also at the front where she was

understood to be a mother for all the soldiers. She was physically and mentally very strong and

even capable of changing the front into a home. This mother was solely in control of the patri

fought at the front willingly and heroically alongside the men.

In sum, Mother in Lotta Svärd was pictured as giving

self-denying. Mothers were legitimated and glorified as they were working for the war and rather

abandoned their families than the fight for the fatherland. They were first of all mothers of soldiers

care for them, as well as to contribute in every way to the war effort.

### *Soldier*

In the Lotta Svärd organization, the women's duty

Svärd organization were described as deriving their

well as the Bible. New members took the oath in a ceremony usually held in a church, where they pledged

serve for the sake of home, creed and fatherland, and fulfil their obligation of national defence. In

the war was understood to be a holy fight for religion and fatherland. The women in Lotta

soldiers, but at the front they had the same experiences as the soldiers, and they were presented

She died while on observation service on a favourable

Like a soldier you are defending your own... ( 1 : 1 5 )

Mimicking soldiers happened in many ways. The most visible way was the grey Lotta uniform, which

to the Finnish military uniform and this presented the women like a female army.

The Lotta uniform unites all of the Lottas to a great equal

The greatest value common to the Lottas and soldiers was the freedom and independence of the country but also for Finland. This was understood as the issue that legitimated the representation of the Lotta as a soldier. This was understood as the issue that legitimated the representation of the Lotta as a soldier. This was understood as the issue that legitimated the representation of the Lotta as a soldier.

The big aim for us, the freedom of our fatherland, joined us together (1:24)

The group of the Lottas in grey uniforms has known that the question of ideology (1:57)

A Lotta was presented as being highly respected when she looked like a soldier:

You really were like a soldier (1:27)

In the Lotta Svärd magazine as were presented like soldiers in many different cases. In fact, the Lotta Svärd organization was all women. In other words, the organization was like a strictly women's organization. The magazine, however, presented them as real soldiers and that way increased their value.

However, as the war continued, secret letters between the Central Board and the headquarters of the Lotta Svärd revealed that the Lottas were worn out on the front. Some of them even planned to escape, like the following letter:

As soon as possible I will escape. Our circumstances are very difficult (A letter from the front 7.12.1942).

Lottas felt sick, epidemics were normal and the work was hard:

A half of our group is sick. Terrible diphtheria is raging (A letter from the front, 12.2.1944.)

In sum, women were imagined to be equivalent with men when they wore the uniform in service at the front. In Lotta Svärd female soldiers were highly respected for their taking part in the ideological fight for freedom together with the Finnish Army. In the Lotta Svärd the gender was distanced by their military appearance.

### Body

As the *ec h h* young girl portrayed her, Lotta was sporty and athletic, a woman who enjoyed skiing and had an international outlook and was interested in sports (Ahola, 1929; Krohn, 1929). She was also romantic and beautiful and loving (Bassett, 1929). Whether serving on the front or at home, the women

were expected to behave blamelessly at all times and follow the rules of the organization to regulations concerning the women's behaviour, i recognized by their military uniform: a modest The outfit included a summertime and a fur hat in winter, white or grey gloves and simple, flat Girl Lottas wore the same grey uniform as the Lottas.

There were many problems with the use of the military dress, however, and the magazine did instructions concerning the outfit and behaviour:

It is not appropriate to wear baubles with a Lotta uniform (1:8).

It is necessary to cover the legs modestly when wearing the Lotta dress (1:54)

When a Lotta wears a dress that is too short around the legs, it is her duty to make it longer. In this way Lotta Svärd directed women to avoid traditional womanhood and speed, Lottas were expected to behave like a kind and obedient girl:

Her bright and dear appearance (1:33)

She was calm and low and she won the love of her Lotta's

A happy and cheery Lotta (1:33)

She was dutiful always dedicated (1:67)

She was quiet and modest. (1:3)

However, the letters from the women on the front uncovered that the private behaviour of the w always appropriate for a Lotta:

When we arrived, everybody was awake, and the room was black from cigarette smoke. Some of drunk and everybody cussed like lumbermen (A letter from the front, 17.6.1943).

The commands here can often come from drunk officers who are lacking female company. Here who go with them drinking and celebrating (A letter from the front, 2.12.1943)

We have been dancing lately. And we had a very I then we moved to the canteen. We were drunk; we were dancing and singing (A letter from the front, 1.12.1943)

These kinds of letters were permitted, and the censorship stopped that individual members were expelled for reasons of inappropriate conduct, alcohol, venere dishonesty. Expulsions were frequently discussed by the Central Board in the last years of the war,



and several disciplinary decisions were made. Young girls under 20 years would not be assigned to the front. Women who gave birth to a child out of wedlock would be expelled from membership. A special disciplinary action was set up in 1944. In conflicting situations between individual Lottas and the Central Board opted to be loyal to the army, not to the Lottas, who may have needed support from the front. For example, when a woman was misbehaving on the front, she was punished, and she was not allowed to return home while this never happened to the men. So, instead of supporting the army, the moral and practical duty of the women was to serve the men at home, at work and on the front (Kloontz, 1988).

In sum, the desired characteristics of the women that were emphasized were: brave and faithful. The idealized image of the Lotta was limited: they should be athletic, sent to the front, that is masculine, but needed to make their feminine bodily features as invisible as possible. The idealized image concerning the conduct of the Lottas had a special status in the agenda of the organization, and however, the organization from the front discover that the real behaviour was different.

### *Holy Sacrifice*

According to information received from Lottamuseo (The Lotta Museum), the total number of Lottas was 90,000. There were casualties in September 1944, when the Finnish war ended, 287 Lottas had died in service: 113 of them at the front, 140 of disease and 34 from accidents. Mourning was seen even in those moments when a Lotta was killed while in service at the Lotta Svärd. Lottas were glorified with the best attributes, and were presented as heroines:

Don't be sorry for me, my beloved parents. I gave you a flower that has gone (1:103)

Death as a present and possible fate for the Lottas serving at the front, and there are many stories in the Lotta Svärd magazine, which presented death as a fate that was the best of the Lottas, and no bad attributes were connected to those who lost their lives in the war.

Her heroic death (1:19).

Look at the Finnish woman, she stands on guard until death (1:50)

The most happiness is to give the most satisfaction (1:79)

There is among the departed a Lotta who stayed on guard until her death (1:87)

Through death a Lotta could become a real heroine  
place in heaven:

...you are hidden in the grove of a hero's hometown next to the crushed chest (1:122)

... you have an angel's place ... you are a heroine (1:122)

Her death was a holy sacrifice, needed to protect the nation and save it from a future under the Soviet Union. The women that died at When a Lotta on the battlefield died, considerable efforts were made to raise her to the status of heroine, and therefore, to an equivalent with the men who died in war.

The relationship between the holy and the war was seen as a holy service and sacrifice. They were presented as angels. Dying at the front was seen as a holy call for a young body. To be a Martyr for the fatherland was to reach heroine status. Being a heroine was a holy service and a sacrifice to the fatherland and to God.

You feel a stirring holy joy when walking to your grave (1:32)

You are an angel behind the river of death. You are a heroine! (1:32)

It is notable that only the war could offer such a situation where sacrifice and becoming an angel was possible. The war was a holy battle. Everybody who died in the war was not totally dead, but had a new place in heaven.

You are not sleeping in your graves; you are not captives of dust (1:6)

In sum, again, Holy Sacrifice meant not only a simple death in the war, but the Lottas who died on earth to another reality. Women in Lotta Svärd magazine were presented as Holy Sacrifice.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we aimed to find out how the Lotta Svärd magazine presented the women during the Second World War. We found four representations: Mother, Soldier, Body, and Holy Sacrifice. A summary of the representations is presented in Table 2 with the four representations, attributes linked to each representation, how they were legitimated in each representation as well as how Lottas were expected to behave.

TABLE 2- SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS OF THE WAR HEROINE

Study questions Representations	What were the attributes linked to the heroine?	How was the representation legitimated?	How were Lotta expected to behave?
Mother	Gentle, prayerful, brave, strong, hardworking, cheerful, smiling, self-sacrificing	Women's duty during the war in minor positions brought motherly care to home to the front.	Mother cared for soldiers contributed so to the war effort.
Soldier	Equivalent, grey, uniformed, service, fight for fatherland, ideological fight	Being a soldier was the greatest honour that Lotta was equivalent with the fatherland in the fight for the fatherland.	Soldier fought for the freedom and independence of the fatherland.
Body	Modest, calm, brave, endearing, happy, cheerful, dutiful, quiet, kind	The feminine body and sexuality needed to be invisible, so, rules concerning clothing and behaviour were rigorous.	Lotta's behaviour had to be blameless and moral spotless.
Holy Sacrifice	Summer flower, happiness, sacrifice, heroine, holy joy, martyr	The Death was presented as a greatest happiness a woman could have.	Lotta had to die in the war gave them a holy martyr position as an angel.

Even though the representations detected in this study have similarities with previous research on women's role and image representations as they emerged in Lotta and those presented in earlier literature. The first representation, which was not dominated by the Mother, was not represented only as an archetype of a good mother for children brought out in previous studies (Benhabib, 1987; Welsh, 1992). Mother in Lotta Svärd was also strong in the war like a man. Mother supported the war effort, and willingly sacrificed her life and the life of her children to the fatherland. This is a difference to those presented by Elshtain, Slattery and Garner and De Volder (1987). They saw the image of wartime motherhood as (Elshtain, 1987; De Volder, 2000).

Furthermore, there was no contradiction between the role of Mother and the Soldier in Lotta Svärd. The role of the Soldier was mentioned and respected, even more than the Mother, and women did their best to look like soldiers. They had to control their appearance, and their body and behaviour were restricted by discipline. They could not show their emotions, tears or sensitivity, and they were never encouraged to use their feminine means in the war, like the Israeli Army, for example (Holler, 2011). In fact, femininity in Lotta Svärd's aesthetics and promiscuity were forbidden.

The representation of the Body includes not only the physical body but also behaviour and character. The physical body had to be masculine and controlled under discipline, and at the same time, the women had to show humble and submissive characteristics. Discipline created a whole new form of individuality for their physical bodies, which enabled them to perform their duty within the military organization. Their bodies were not their own any more but they were owned by the organization and used for the greater good. If they did not obey, they were punished.

The fourth representative sacrifice. A dead Lotta was seen as equivalent to a dead soldier, as in Britain in the First World War (Watson, 1997). In fact, the equivalence was only the hope of the women of Lotta Svärd, and the army rarely equipped them with weapons or otherwise to participate in the fighting.

The idea of the heroine represented by the Lotta Svärd was a wife and a mother. These women in Lotta Svärd sacrificed their lives and the lives of their loved ones to the nation. This was in direct contrast to the prevalent role of women in Finnish society, which was to act for the home (Benhabib, 1987). Their public masculine appearance was necessary to be believable in an authoritative position. Instead of adopting the role of victims, often seen as a woman's -role in the war, Lotta Svärd took a more masculine role. To be victimized because of gender, becoming a Lotta, a woman acquired the opportunity to obtain presence in society that extends to today, and which actually transformed the history of gender.

The Lotta Svärd organization is only for women, where a feminist ontology is achievable to create the knowledge of this kind of reality. Therefore, gender does matter in war and also today. Being conscious of the gender aspect makes it possible to analyze history and the world. The link to today is in the ontology of womanhood. Gender differentiation continues to permeate the gendered society of the 1940s. Gender differentiation continues to permeate the wartime had to dress in men's uniforms, women still suppress themselves in circumstances where men hold most of the power.

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