

THE WAR HEROINE IN THE FINNISH ORGANIZATION – LOTTA SVÄRD

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Abstract

This paper focuses on a Finnish women's paramilitary organization called 'Lotta Svärd' in a wartime context, from 1939 to 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 consist of the organization's magazine, Lotta Svärd, as well as archival documents stored in the Finnish War Document Archives. This study seeks to explore what kind of war heroine was constructed in Lotta Svärd. We found four representations of the heroine: Mother, Soldier, Body and Holy Sacrifice. While war histories are mainly written by men and for men, this study is intended to contribute to research by presenting women's part in the war and increasing our 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 war, specifically in 'Lotta Svärd', which was a women's paramilitary organization in Finland and whose members worked as volunteers with the Finnish Army in the years of the Second World War. The wartime in Finland continued for nearly five years from 1939 to 1945, with an interval from spring 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 retain her sovereignty as a result of the war, in contrast to many other small countries, has been considered a miracle by many (Takala and Kemppainen, 2007). The significance of 'the Lottas' – members of the Lotta Svärd organization – on both the war and the home fronts was remarkable (Kallioniemi, 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 dangers in the accomplishment of whatever task. A hero acts for the good of his people and performs daring acts for the cause he pursues (Steyrer, 1998). Therefore, a hero in a war context 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 is nurturing, gentle, caring and

responsible for family and children (Takala and Kempainen, 2007). In particular, most often the role of motherhood, which requires not only a close relationship with a child but also a mother's skill to build such a relationship with a child, is defined as the core of 'real' womanhood (Oberman and Josselson, 1996).

To become a war heroine was not easy for women in the First and Second World Wars. Lottas can be seen as having acted specifically at their time in a way that was not in line with traditional gender assumptions about heroines or even womanhood. Women subverted cultural assumptions about femininity, marriage and motherhood by assuming that their place was to be alongside the men performing an active role in the war effort (Brassard, 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 allowed to learn to fire 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 supposed to be mothers, not soldiers (Summerfield, 2010). A heroine was seen to mirror the ideal morals of the community and popular virtues of women, not participate directly in the war (Hume, 1997). War has been a pre-eminently 'gendering' activity, casting thought about sex differences into sharp relief as it has both underlined and realigned 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 war 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 legitimated in the *Lotta Svärd* magazine during 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 main research question: *How did the Lotta Svärd magazine represent war heroines in stories published during the Second World War?*

As a research method we will use content analysis. Content analysis is a flexible method for analysing text data, and useful with our study which aims to describe the concept of a war heroine, on which existing theory is limited. The data for this study consist of articles and other stories published in the *Lotta Svärd* magazine during wartime. The data are from a 6-year period from the beginning of 1939 to November 1944, when Finland had lost the war and the *Lotta Svärd* organization was disbanded. Furthermore, our sources included the filed documents of the *Lotta Svärd* organization stored in the Finnish War Document Archives in Helsinki.

The contribution of this study is that it provides a female perspective on war – a domain traditionally thought of as male (Haynes, 2008). We approach the topic from a gender-historical perspective. While war histories are mainly written by men for men, our study aspires to make the women's viewpoint visible by giving a rich and fresh insight into their roles in war (Latva-Äijö, 2004). The social context for our study is the *Lotta Svärd* organization during wartime Finland. This women-only organization with its masculine military ideology provides not only an interesting but an exceptional social context for researching heroines. A gender approach to the study motivates us to

challenge prevailing power relationships, particularly the dominant male perspective on knowledge about and being at war. According to Haynes, feminism is not merely a perspective on research or a way of knowing, but ontology in itself, a way of being in the world. Nor is it a purely subjective or objective ontology, but understood in this paper as a way of being a woman in a men's world or in a men's war (Haynes, 2008).

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In the next section we highlight literature on women's history and women in war, and the ideology and operations of the Lotta Svärd organization. Subsequently, we will present the data and methodology. Finally, we will present four representations dealing with war heroines in the Lotta Svärd organization, and our summary and concluding comments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's History

Women's history (defined as historical work on women) and feminist history (defined as historical work infused by a concern about the past and present oppression of women) are not identical (Bennett, 1989). It has been said that women's history is writing women back into the record, rewriting the past, ghetto history, the study of the dynamics of power and oppression, the discovery of heroines and gender analysis. The history of women has three dimensions. The first, and most obvious, is to locate women in history, recovering their past roles and situations. However, there is no common role or place for women, but their experiences vary depending on their social class, area and time. This leads us to the second dimension, which is to give the history of the period a gender perspective; for example, women in economic or social life, women in revolution, and as in this study, women in war. The third dimension tells of women's lives in a changing society and is called the history of mentalities. Women live in societies that have changed over the centuries and shaped their story again and again. In this process, women have worked in minor positions in society and obtained the right to work and freedom more slowly and later than men. The church and religion, especially in Catholic Europe, have produced a mentality of a certain kind in which the role of women has been very limited (Humphreys, 1994). In this study we will describe women's positions in a war time context in relation to the male soldiers.

Women's history, in fact, has modified the shape of the discipline of history, enlarging its subject matter and influencing its modes of explanation through more than 40 years (Walker, 2008). The first histories of women in the 1970s focused on notable individuals in women's movements and introduced heroic women from the 1920s. The agenda of this first phase of women's histories was the feminist imperative to recover and restore women to history, and hence, contribute a voice from their thus far subordinate position in history writing. Maybe the greatest achievement of the gender history pioneers was the development of the concept of gender in the social rather than biological sense of a sexual difference. In addition, they noticed that relations between men and women varied

cross-culturally and historically, and researchers have to turn their focus from a 'pure history' telling of women's life stories to the various issues in social life (Rose, 1993; Walker, 2008).

However, this shift involving gender in other social relations was not accepted by researchers who saw that the primary goal of women's emancipation had been forgotten. Some others, on the contrary, considered that historians should rethink the issue and focus on moral and political commitment in women's history (Rose, 1993). New subjects for women's history writing emerged in the 1990s, when researchers developed new approaches and methodologies in gender history. This phase is known as the linguistic turn in history analysis. Language, discourses and representations were used to reveal power relationships and gender identities (Walker, 2008). Women's experiences in the past 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 relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and as a primary way of signifying relationships of power (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 *causes* of the social construction of gender to the meanings of gender, particularly its use as a metaphor for many human relations and activities (Bennett, 1989; Scott, 1991). 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 experience'. Historical experiences of Third World women suggested that race, gender and class are interlocking and interdependent dimensions of domination, and 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 experiences have been accepted as a complementary approach. Gender history research operates through theoretical issues on gender that are seen to be connected to cultural and social factors (Walker, 2008). Gender and feminist history research is moving toward topics of gender as a social and linguistic relation (Rose, 1993).

What can women's history contribute to historical research? Bennett (1989) has shown that crisis studies can give another sort of perspective on patriarchy – one that will enable us to examine the causes of the remarkable durability of patriarchal structures. Women's history can enlarge our knowledge of what has happened in the past – why relations between men and women in our time are as they are and how they have come to be this way. Second, women's history can be seen as part of social or economic history, and subcultural or religious history. Women do not form a unified group, rather 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, provides new approaches to historical writing, and therefore, contributes to writing history (Humphreys, 1988).

Women in War

During the World Wars traditional gender roles changed. Women were an integral part of the war effort, because they were needed in the war (Maitra, 2013). The World Wars changed women's lives in several ways (Kelly, 2015). Women had borne heavy responsibilities during the war; they did underground work and took care of children, often saving their lives. With some exceptions, women generally did not participate in armed resistance activities (Withuis, 1994).

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

The media reproduces values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that integrate individuals into the institutional structure of the greater society (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). The media tells us what to value, who is important, how to behave (Lule, 2001). The media is a strong tool for war propaganda. In the US, the national news media presented the mothers of US combat soldiers in the Iraq War as archetypally good mothers, who continue their maternal work even after their children are deployed. Unlike the archetype of the patriotic mother, the mothers of combat soldiers were not depicted as necessarily stoic and silent. While all the mothers supported their children in combat, some clearly did not support the war. The mothers of the soldiers in the Iraq War opposed the nation's war effort, and the image created of them by the press does not completely reflect the historical image of the

patriotic mother. The present-day picture of wartime motherhood is more nuanced and complex than that suggested by the myth of the historical image of the patriotic mother (Slattery and Garner, 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 context of war in Israel has been the icon of women as mothers, not as soldiers. When women serve in combat roles on the front, they are located in the dual position of a woman in a hyper masculinist environment. In this position women tend to mimic the identity of the male combat soldiers. From this contradictory standpoint, women soldiers offer a critical gendered voice, which focuses on criticism of combat masculinity. In fact, they were infantilizing the men soldiers, which allowed them to place themselves in a position of power, and behave like mature soldiers. In addition, they were emotionally identifying with the Palestinians victims of the occupation (Sasson-Levy et al., 2011).

'Lone girls' in Israel's Defence Forces (IDF) are women serving in bases where the majority of the soldiers are men. Many of these women find that doing gender in traditional ways in the army is empowering. They manipulate gender and femininity to their advantage as IDF soldiers, as a means of attaining a sense of organizational belonging when other paths are blocked. Therefore, lone girls benefit from their army experiences at an individual level, while at a collective level their presence on male-dominated bases does little to strengthen the position of women in the IDF and in Israeli society in general. Rather, it serves to reinforce traditional gender expectations 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 mother, the daughter and even the whore (Hauser, 2011).

There is something potentially meaningful and relevant to our understanding of the military that might emerge through its mediated representation. The military body is a masculine body. However, fundamental to this gendered performance is the implicit and explicit invocation of the feminine body. Indeed, it seems that, even when the military body is female, as in Lotta Svärd, it must be made masculine. When a woman becomes a member of a military body, she must either conform to the male projection offered to her or else acquire a metaphorical 'member' as the price of entry into 'membership'. The feminine serves a number of functions in the military: it is frequently employed as a gauge against which the masculine is measured or as a foil against which it can appear. Utilized in this way, gender categorization creates separation and difference. As such, it functions as a disciplining technique, which seeks to 'normalize' the military body in carefully coded, masculine ways. The norm becomes an effect of power or knowledge, and divergence from it becomes punishable. As Foucault remarks: 'Like surveillance and with 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 unavoidable consequence of the disturbance of normal social patterns by mobilisation. Rising rates of venereal disease,

abortion, illegitimacy and divorce were anticipated. In war time and on the war front the women's sexuality was controlled. There were ethnic and racial requirements for women's sexual behaviour as well. In Second World War Britain white women's relationships with black and white enemies as well as black allies were forbidden, and they were subject to sexual patriotism and discipline (Webster, 2013). However, women's experiences were more complex than the official constructions of mobilised women. The personal stories of women at war told about conformity to traditional norms of sexual behaviour, as well as rejection of such rules and norms (Summerfield and Crocket, 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 and the women's service (Robert, 1997). The British women who wore military-style uniforms could not be treated as equal partners with soldiers in the First World War. They were under the men's control and did not take independent action by themselves. They were 'as good as a soldier' only for other women (Watson, 1997; Summerfield, 1997). The romantic image of the First World War nurses is well known from several dramas and publications. Womens' involvement in war is presented as the image of idealistic, brave, young heroines. In fact, this image was a myth, and the experiences of nurses in the First World War were full of disease and death, and fighting for recognition both professionally and as citizens (Kelly, 2015).

The feminine not only serves to mark subordination, however, it also signifies military defeat (Gofrey et al., 2012). Women soldiers serving in 'masculine' roles in the Israeli Army shape their gender identities according to the hegemonic masculinity of the combat soldier through three interrelated practices – mimicry of the bodily and discursive practices of combat soldiers, distancing themselves from 'traditional femininity', and the trivialization of sexual harassment. These practices signify both resistance and compliance with the dichotomized military. Indeed, adopting masculine combat norms does not ensure that women soldiers in 'masculine' roles will attain the hegemonic status of the combat soldier. Usually, their military careers are blocked at an early stage and their 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 either in the military or in civilian life (Sasson-Levy, 2003).

Female suicide bombers have been active since 2000. They have been called Black Widows by the Russian and international press when it became clear that their aim was to exact revenge for the deaths of their husbands. They have been personally deeply traumatized, but in fact they were religiously motivated and were seeking to become martyrs (Speckhard and Khapta, 2006). They believed they were fighting for Allah and will soon be in Paradise, with their families and friends (Bloom, 2007; Nivat, 2005). It was not a question of women's rights or gender equality in their society. Women were tightly controlled by male leaders in terrorist organizations, and not allowed to govern

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

The Lotta Svärd Organization

The roots of Lotta Svärd go back to the beginning of the 19th century. The war of 1808–1809, referred to as the Finnish War (*Suomen sota*), was documented by J. L. Runeberg in an anthology of poetry praising the heroes of the war. One such hero was Lotta Svärd, a woman who followed her husband to war (Runeberg, 1848). After the Civil War ended in May 1918, the women who had participated in it in the white army, established a women's organization named after the myth of Lotta Svärd. According to the organization's rules, the purpose of Lotta Svärd was to invoke and promote an ideology of home, creed and fatherland, and to contribute to the national defence spirit. Another central aim was to lift people's morale and will for national defence (Kallioniemi, 1986; Latva-Äijö, 2004; Lukkarinen, 1981).

The organizational structure of Lotta Svärd resembled the military. At the top of the organization was a Central Board. The Board was elected at the annual general meeting, while the chairperson was nominated by 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 activities was assigned to sub-committees for nursing, provisioning, equipment, fundraising and social support, and office and signal services. Every woman who became a member of the organization was designated a position in a sub-committee based on her education and personal skills (Kallioniemi, 1986).

According to the organization's annual reports, Lotta Svärd had almost 173,000 members in 1943, the last year its membership was counted. There was also a department for young girls, called 'Little Lottas' and later 'Girl Lottas', which was established in 1931 and by 1935 already had about 13,000 members. Girls were eligible to join the Little Lottas at the age of eight. The young girls learned nursing skills, and packed food and clothing to be sent to the unknown soldiers on the frontlines. The number of Lottas serving on the war front in the years of World War II was around 10,000 at a time, but they did not carry weapons and were not trained in self-defence (Utrio, 2006).

As early as summer 1939, under threat of war, they were involved in building defence lines along the Karelian Isthmus, for instance, by supplying food to the builders. In the war they served in air surveillance, worked as nurses, and arranged provisions and clothing for the army. One of the hardest duties was serving in the casualty evacuation centres, from where fallen Finnish soldiers were taken back home and laid to rest in their local churchyards. When the war ended the Lottas also helped in the evacuation of the population from Finland's ceded areas. Although the Lottas took an active part in the war, even those serving on the frontlines were unarmed. Debate on this issue had 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 the many 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, meanwhile, I hold to be the exclusive right and duty of men (Latva-Äijö, 2004).

Being denied the duty to fight as soldiers on the front meant that war was men's work and that women were left as outsiders. During the period of peace in the 1920s and 1930s, the Lotta Svärd organization, nevertheless, made heavy propaganda for war:

We have to strive for eternal peace, and if there is a nation, which will not submit to peace, then it must be forced (Lotta-Svärd yhdistyksen ja keskusjohtokunnan vuosikertomus).

All endeavours that weaken the will for defence are against peace (Latva-Äijö, 2004).

The values shared within the Lotta Svärd organization were fear of God, patriotism, temperance, goodness, loyalty and self-control. New members took their oath in a ceremony usually held in a church, where they pledged to serve for the sake of home, creed and fatherland, and fulfil their obligation to national defence. The most important duty of Lotta Svärd was organizing the activities of the women who were assigned to the war front. They needed clothing and footwear, food and housing. Even though the Lottas on the front 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 by the organization in specialized courses. Women working in hospitals or first-aid stations, for instance, attended medical courses. From 1941 onwards, the training subjects included veterinary medicine, radiotelegraphy and communication, among others (Söderström, 1929; Riipinen, 1929).

Whether serving on the war front or at home, the women were expected to behave blamelessly at all times and follow the rules of the organization to the letter. The regulations concerning the women's behaviour, including greeting and appearance, were strict (Kallioniemi, 1986). Lottas were recognized by their military uniform: a modest grey dress with white collar and cuffs and the organization's pin. The overcoat also had a military appearance. The outfit included a cap in summertime and a fur hat in winter, white or grey gloves, and simple, flat shoes. The Girl 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 pre-war territory to the Soviet Union. It was also required to legalize communist parties and to ban 'fascist' organizations such as Lotta Svärd. The termination of Lotta Svärd caused fear, embitterment and sadness among 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 memory of Lotta Svärd was as much as buried: the Lottas were disparaged, and many lacked the courage to 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 women's experiences in the past is the paucity of documentary evidence. In this study, the historical data of a women's organization reclaimed from its archives offered a particular opportunity to write a women's history. Our main source of data was the *Lotta Svärd* journal, which had 22 issues a year from 1929 until 1944 when the organization was abolished. The journals were available in the Jyväskylä University main library. Furthermore, our sources included documents from the Central Board of the Lotta Svärd organization, private and confidential letters, instructions and other documents stored in the Finnish War Document Archives in Helsinki. The data collected from the Lotta Svärd Journal are presented in Table 1.

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 in the Lotta Svärd magazine in the war years from the beginning of 1939 to November 1944. In autumn 1944, it was clear that Finland had lost the war, and the Lotta Svärd organization was liquidated in November, and the magazine discontinued. In 1941, the journal was not published because of a truce agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union. The number of journals totalled 129 issues and 2,500 pages. The content of the magazine consists of articles, stories, announcements and other writings, and is rather mixed and rich. There are also pictures, advertisements, love stories and informative data published in Lotta Svärd. Special issues were published for Christmas and Mothers' Day. We scanned through all of the issues, and at the first textual level of analysis we picked out articles and other writings where our key words were used, and continued with a thematic analysis. The key words were heroine, motherhood, military (Elshtain, 1987), women soldiers (Sasson-Levy et al., 2011), and female body in a military circumstance (Gofrey et al., 2012), as well as martyr (Speckhard, 2006) from our preliminary understanding of the phenomenon based on previous studies. Previous literature was used to guide our analysis, and we sought to contribute to research by revealing new categories and new explanations during our data analyses by gaining a greater understanding of the notion of a heroine in Lotta Svärd. This kind of approach to qualitative content analysis is called conventional content analysis, which is appropriate when existing theory or literature on a phenomenon is limited (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

Content Analysis

The qualitative content analysis started with the observations we made when scanning the text data included in the Lotta Svärd magazines. At the first stage of our analysis we were looking for the words hero and heroine, as our study focuses on how the war heroine was represented in Lotta Svärd. The texts linked to heroines were, for example;

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

... There exist women who so easily, so naturally and persistently take on any heroic tasks (1:44)

... Her heroic death ... (1:19)

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

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

We carefully read through the magazines searching the texts for the key words and their latent meaning, and had in total 71 texts, which constituted our unit for analysis, and which we wrote into one file. The texts were then divided into units of meaning, in total 155 pieces of text that are understood to be a group of words that relate to the same meaning. We continued the analysis considering the context and condensed the units of meaning to shorter descriptions in the text, called *condensed meaning units*. Condensed meaning units were simpler and shorter expressions of the units of meaning; therefore, having the same core message. Since the texts were written more than 60 years ago, partly for propaganda and partly in a poetic manner, condensation was a difficult task. This stage, of course, was 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 code was Heroine, and under Heroine we found the sub codes Mother, Soldier, Body, Death and Martyr. It is notable that many of the quotations were linked to more than one code (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). Every quotation receives an ID in the programme, like 1:84, where the first number refers to the primary document and the other to the number of the quotation. We conducted the coding process many times, recoding, changing the codes and considering them carefully.

The codes that were finally selected in the interpretation process were Mother, Soldier and Body, which were found in previous literature on women at war. Furthermore, we found two attributers linked to heroines in our data in the Lotta Svärd magazine. These were Death and Martyr which were very close concepts, as they described that Lotta was able to become a martyr when she died in the war. Death and Martyr were described as a holy destiny which

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

4. WAR HEROINES IN LOTTA SVÄRD

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

Mother

To be heroines, the women in the Lotta Svärd organization faced the moral obligation of sacrificing their own 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 home. Despite their almost masculine appearance, the women were not expected to deny their motherliness. They were mothers, caregivers, nurses and cooks. The public role was controlled by strict rules concerning their appearance and conduct, while in their private behaviour the women in Lotta Svärd had normal feminine virtues and vices.

The role of mother in war is often presented through the symbol of the good mother, and as an archetypal patriotic mother. This was the case in Lotta Svärd as well:

She was gentle and prayerful when she cared for the pains of 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, mother of all the boys... a brave mother does not cry. (1:64)

The notion of a Mother was communicated using various images that extended the depiction of the caring 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 heavy, wounded Finnish soldiers, work in the kitchen at the front and take care of horses, are awake night and day in icy watchtowers and do not hesitate to empty the toilets 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 fiancé, your loved one to the front and asking for your help in many ways (1:12)

... Those who have got her motherly care, and whose suffering way her friendly and endearing smile lit ... (1:39)

The Mother portrayed in Lotta Svärd was not only a caring woman for her son in the war, but an active partner and sister to the men, fighting alongside them:

Next to me, my sister, you created the home at the front for me... (1:21)

The idea of Mother represented by Lotta Svärd deviates in some parts from the motherhood presented in the literature. In Lotta Svärd there is nothing confusing in the relationship between motherhood and serving at the front. The public role of women required a duty to contribute to the war effort, and emphasized feminine values like motherhood and caring in this role (Benhabib, 1987; Welsh, 1992). Women in Lotta Svärd were not apolitical or neutral elements in the war. They actively supported the fighting, and never mentioned any aspirations for peace. The mother, as represented by Lotta Svärd, was working not only 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 courageous, and even capable of changing the front into a home. This mother was surely not under the patriotic control of men but fought at the front willingly and heroically alongside the men.

In sum, Mother in Lotta Svärd was pictured as gentle, prayerful, brave, strong, hardworking, caring, smiling and self-denying. Mothers were legitimated and glorified as heroines 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 and expected to 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 was to serve in the war. The women who worked for the Lotta Svärd organization were described as deriving their motivation for national defence mostly from Finnish history as well as the Bible. New members took their oath in a ceremony usually held in a church, where they pledged to serve for the sake of home, creed and fatherland, and fulfil their obligation of national defence. In the organization the war was understood to be a holy fight for religion and fatherland. The women in Lotta Svärd were in fact not soldiers, but at the front they had the same experiences as the soldiers, and they were presented like soldiers:

She died while on observation service on a favourable working day from shrapnel... (1:21)

Like a soldier you are defending your own... (1:15)

Mimicking soldiers happened in many ways. The most visible way was the grey Lotta uniform, which was similar 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 equivalent group... (1:7)

The greatest value common to the Lottas and soldiers was the freedom and independence of Finland that legitimated the representation of the Lotta as a soldier. This was understood as an issue not only for the independence of the country but also for Finland's future as part of Western Europe or the Soviet Union:

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 it is the question of ideological direction and conviction... (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, the role of a Soldier was glorified and Lottas were presented like soldiers in many cases. In fact, the *Lotta Svärd* organization was allowed to be active in the war, but it could use power only over the other women. In other words, the organization was like a small women's society inside the army, strictly bounded by rules and order. 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 Finnish Army revealed that the Lottas were worn out on the front. Some of them even planned to escape, like the writer of the following letter:

As soon as possible I will escape. Our circumstances here are worse than a dog's, and you know what people are saying about Lottas (A letter from the front 7.12.1942).

Lottas felt home-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 grey uniform in service at the front. In *Lotta Svärd* female soldiers were highly respected, and their status was legitimated as a natural outcome from their taking part in the ideological fight for freedom together with the Finnish Army. At the same time, their feminine gender was distanced by their military appearance.

Body

As the *Lotta Svärd* journal portrayed her, Lotta was sporty and athletic, a woman who enjoyed skiing and exercise, had an international outlook and was interested in science and culture (Ahola, 1929; Krohn, 1929), but was also romantic and beautiful and loving as well (Ramsay, 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 the letter. The regulations concerning the women's behaviour, including greeting and appearance, were strict. Lottas were recognized by their military uniform: a modest grey dress with white collar and cuffs and the organization's pin. The outfit included a cap in summertime and a fur hat in winter, white or grey gloves and simple, flat shoes. The 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 its best to give 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 our duty is to command her to make it longer... (1:144)

In this way Lotta Svärd directed women to avoid symbols of femininity and sexuality, and distance themselves from traditional womanhood and specifically the woman's bodily appeal. By contrast, Lottas were expected to behave like a kind and obedient girl:

Her bright and endearing appearance (1:33)

She was calm and low-key and she won the love of her Lotta sisters...1:140

A happy and cheery Lotta (1:33)

She was dutiful and always dedicated (1:67)

She was quiet and modest. (1:37)

However, the letters from the women on the front uncovered that the private behaviour of the women was not always appropriate for a Lotta:

When we arrived, everybody was awake, and the room was black from cigarette smoke. Some of the Lottas were 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 are some girls 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 lively party on Lilja's day. We were celebrating in the club, and then we moved to the canteen. We were drunk; we were dancing and singing (A letter from the front 26.5.1944).

These kinds of letters were not permitted, and the censorship stopped them. The records of Lotta Svärd indicate that individual members were expelled for reasons of inappropriate conduct, alcohol, venereal disease or dishonesty. Expulsions were frequently discussed by the Central Board, particularly 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, and women who gave birth to a child out of wedlock would be expelled from membership. A special commission for disciplinary action was set up in 1944. In conflicting situations between individual Lottas and the Finnish Army, the Central Board opted to be loyal to the army, not to the Lottas, who may have needed support from their organization on the front. For example, when a woman was misbehaving on the front, she was punished, and she was guilty, while this never happened to the men. So, instead of supporting female members, the Lotta Svärd organization supported the army, and the moral and practical duty of the women was to serve the men at home, at work and at the front (Koontz, 1988).

In sum, the desired characteristics of the women that served in Lotta Svärd were modest, bright, quiet, happy, brave and faithful. The Lottas' bodily representation was legitimated as limited: they could be sporty and athletic, that is masculine, but needed to make their feminine bodily features as invisible as possible. Instructions concerning the conduct of the Lottas had a special status in the agenda of the organization. However, the letters 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 at the front was 90,000. There were casualties as well: in September 1944, when the Finnish-Soviet war ended, 287 Lottas had died in service: 113 of them at the front, 140 of disease and 34 from accidents. No anger and no frustration was seen even in those moments when a Lotta was killed while in service at the front. In Lotta Svärd, the dead Lottas were glorified with the best attributes, and were presented as heroines:

Don't be sorry for me, my beloved parents. I gave my best for my country. Remember me like I were a summer flower that has gone (1:103)

Death was a present and possible fate for the Lottas serving at the front, and there are many stories of death in the Lotta Svärd magazine, which presented death as the greatest sacrifice a Lotta could give to her country. Death was depicted as a fate that was offered to 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 sacrifice to the fatherland (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, she attained the place of a hero in the grave and an angel's place in heaven:

... you are hidden in the grave of a hero in your hometown next to the crushed church (1:122)

... you have an angel's place... you are a heroine (1:132)

Her death was a holy sacrifice, needed to protect the nation and save it from a future under the Evil that was the Soviet Union. The women that died at the front were glorified and deemed heroines in *Lotta Svärd*. When a Lotta died, considerable effort was exerted to raise her to the status of heroine, and therefore, to an equivalent position with the men who died in war.

The relationship between the holy and the war was evident and frequently discussed in the *Lotta Svärd* magazine. Women's involvement in the war was seen as a holy service and sacrifice. They were presented as angels, and dying at the front was seen as a holy call for a young body. To be a Martyr for the fatherland was the best way to reach heroine status in *Lotta Svärd*. To be a Martyr was presented as a holy fate, and a sacrifice to the fatherland and to God.

You feel a stirring holy joy when walking to your duty... (1:59)

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 an exceptional situation where sacrifice and becoming an angel was possible. The war was a holy battle, and everybody who died in the war was not totally dead, but had a new life in heaven.

You are not sleeping in your graves; you are not captives of dust (1:65)

In sum, again, Holy Sacrifice meant not only a simple death in the war, but the Lottas who died rose above the earthly to another reality. Women in *Lotta Svärd* believed that they were killed for God and heaven that legitimated the representation of Holy Sacrifice.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we aimed to find out *how the Lotta Svärd magazine represented war heroines in stories published during the Second World War*. In the *Lotta Svärd* magazine they constructed a pattern of the heroic, in which 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 the heroine was 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 Lottas expected to behave?
Mother	Gentle, prayerful, brave, strong, hardworking, caring, smiling, self-denying	Women's duty was to work in the war in minor positions; they brought motherly care and the home to the front.	Mother cared for soldiers, and contributed so to the war effort.
Soldier	Equivalent, grey, uniform, front service, fight for the fatherland, ideological fight	Being a soldier was the greatest honour that made Lottas equivalent with the men in the fight for the fatherland.	Soldier fought for the freedom and independence of the fatherland.
Body	Modest, calm, bright, endearing, happy, cheery, dutiful, quiet, kind	The feminine body and sexuality needed to be invisible, so, rules concerning clothing and behaviour were rigorous.	Lottas' behaviour had to be blameless and morally spotless.
Holy Sacrifice	Summer flower, heroic, happiness, sacrifice, angel, heroine, holy joy, death, martyr	Death was presented as the greatest happiness a Lotta could have.	Lottas had to die in the war that gave them a holy martyr position as an angel.

Even though the representations detected in this study have similarities with previous research results concerning women's role and image in war, we also found that the representations as they emerged in Lotta Svärd differ from those presented in earlier literature. The first representation, Mother, which was not dominant in Lotta Svärd, was not represented only as an archetypal good and caring mother for children as brought out in previous studies (Benhabib, 1987; Welsh, 1992). Mother in Lotta Svärd was also strong and brave, hardworking and ready to fight in the war like a man. Mother supported the war effort, and willingly sacrificed her life and the lives of her beloved to the fatherland. This is a different idea to those presented by Elshtain, Slattery and Garner and De Volo, who saw the image of wartime motherhood as more patriotic (Elshtain, 1987; de Volo, 2004).

Furthermore, there was no contradiction between the role of Mother and the second representation, Soldier, in Lotta Svärd. The role of the Soldier was mentioned more often than the role of Mother. The Soldier was highly respected, even more than the Mother, and women did their best to look like soldiers. They had a military appearance, and their body and behaviour were restricted by strict army-like discipline. They could not show their tears or sensitivity, and they were never encouraged to use their feminine means in the war, like the women in the Israeli Army, for example (Hauser, 2011). In fact, femininity in Lotta Svärd was curbed, and signs of vanity, aesthetics and promiscuity were forbidden.

The representation of the Body includes not only the physical body but also behaviour and characteristics. The physical body had to be made 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 new form of the military organization. Their bodies were not their own any more but they were owned by the organization and used for the greater purpose. If they did not obey, they were punished.

The fourth representation found in *Lotta Svärd* was Holy 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 relegated them to positions where they could not carry weapons or otherwise participate in the fighting.

The idea of the heroine represented by the *Lotta Svärd* magazine deviated from the feminine experience of being a wife and a mother. These women in *Lotta Svärd* faced the moral obligation of sacrificing their own 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 peace (Benhabib, 1987). Their public masculine appearance was necessary to be believable in an authoritative position in a gendered society. Instead of adopting the role of victims – which is often seen as a woman's role in war – the women of *Lotta Svärd* took a more masculine role, working alongside men and refusing to be victimized because of their gender. In becoming a *Lotta*, a woman acquired the opportunity to obtain a presence in society that extends to today, and which actually transformed the history of gender in Finland.

The *Lotta Svärd* organization represents a specific kind of a community 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 it matters also today. Being conscious of the gender aspect makes it possible to re-inspect and re-analyse history and the world. The link to today is in the ontology of womanhood. Gender differentiation continues to persist: Women in the gendered society of the 1940s shared similar experiences to women in today's societies. As the women in wartime had to dress in men's uniforms, women still suppress their gender in order to be believable and to validate themselves in circumstances where men hold most of the power.

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