

Breaking the Seal, Keeping it Real

On Authenticity and Masculinity in Engaging with Bunkers

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When the howling voice of “Hesa Fredrik”¹ echoed in Sweden once every fourth month during the Cold War, the siren was a reminder to citizens that they lived in an insecure world characterized by a balance of terror, arms races and nuclear threats. At the same time, it was a reminder that Sweden invested heavily in its military and civil defence. The doctrine of “total defence” included mandatory conscription for all male citizens, a domestic weapons industry (Åselius 2005) and one of the highest rates of bomb shelters per capita in the world (Hörnfeldt 2015; Cronqvist 2008, 2012). However, at the end of the Cold War, the Swedish security policy strategy took a different direction. The international geopolitical upheavals of 1989 were followed by a period of radical downsizing and professionalization of the Swedish military. Conscription was abandoned in 2010, and the nationwide “people’s defence” system was replaced with combat units designed for international missions. As the Cold War “died”, things associated with it, both concrete and abstract, began to gain a second life as heritage. The bunkers and shelters that had been erected lingered in the physical landscape, and today they still seem to be linked to ideas of protection, security and threats, but in new ways.

This article focuses on the heritage processes related to the Cold War in Sweden, specifically, the male-dominated interest in bunkers and shelters. The purpose is to understand how constructions of masculinity and authenticity interplay in the heritagization of the Cold War when bunker enthusiasts encounter bunkers and participate in other bunker contexts. How are authenticity and masculinity established when the actors involved engage in Cold War remnants?

We will draw on ideas from a critical heritage studies perspective, which means that the contemporary popular interest in bunkers and the activities it generates are analysed as meaning-making practices, in which the past is activated and mobilized in the present (Smith 2006; Harrison 2013; Winter 2013). Heritage processes, or heritagization (Harvey 2001:320), can be understood as negotiations where certain ideas and meanings are linked to objects, places or phenomena (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) and where pasts are used as resources in the present production of an imagined community (Graham & Howard 2008; Anderson 1983).

Central to our stance is a gender perspective. In line with Butler, we argue that “gender cannot be understood as a role which either expresses or disguises an interior ‘self’” and that “gender can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent” (1988:528). Masculinity and femininity are constructed in relation to each other as two contrastive cultural categories (Connell 1995:44), and practices of masculinity necessarily activate notions of femininity and vice versa. We reject any essential gender reality behind the gendered performance and instead regard gender as part of a configuration, serving to sustain relations of domination within a given societal order (Connell 1987:71 ff). Following this, masculinity should not be understood as a fixed category but as a type of continuous meaning-making where different ideals, norms and conditions interact and give a set of different masculinities, and where a certain variant constitutes an ideal, hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan, Connell & Lee 1985; Connell 1995). Exactly what constitutes hegemonic masculinity has

changed over time, but it has persistently been linked to militarism as well as heterosexuality.

Constructions of masculinity and femininity in military contexts have been and still are crucial for a gender order in which men (in the name of nations) are assigned the role of active protector and warrior, while women are linked to the passive role of being protected (Morgan 1994; Elshtain 1982 & 1987). Masculinity and femininity give meaning to military institutions and practitioners in the same way that military activities contribute to perceptions of masculinity and femininity (Higate 2018; Hutchings 2008). These gendered aspects of the military framework are essential to our analysis, as we understand the masculine meaning-making among bunker enthusiasts to be a prolongation of established connection between militarism and gender. In this, the Cold War history of the Swedish military is noteworthy. The period's "deep militarization" (Kronsell 2012) reinforced gendered citizenship (Eduards 2007; Sundevall 2011) and underpinned a division between masculine-coded protection and feminine-coded susceptibility (Åse 2016).²

Also central to our stance is the comprehension of authenticity as a concept "that can be strategically configured and deployed according to the task at hand" (Silverman 2015:69). In line with many others, we see the ever-present search for authenticity as an expression of modernity (Bendix 1997; Handler 1986; Trilling 1974) that is intimately connected with the heritage field (Woods 2020). The discussion of authenticity in heritage studies is both widespread and varied (Hewison 1987; Cohen 1988; Wang 1999; Crew &

Sims 1991; Chhabra, Healy & Sills 2003; Holtorf 2013; Khalaf 2021). In the present study, we have no ambition to discuss the different definitions of the concept but focus on the authentic as something desirable and perceived as genuine. However, ascribing authenticity to something not only adds positive value (of some sort) but also reveals an aspiration to reach the unspoiled reality, in other words, to claim an absolute truth. We understand the search for authenticity and masculinity as an inter-formative process in which the gendered aspects of military protection are constantly activated and reinforced.

In the material, we have identified three different but interconnected ways in which configurations of masculinization and authenticity play out. One is what we term a *desire-masculinizing feminization of materialities and spaces*. Here bunkers are constructed as untouched or unspoiled spaces, which in turn enable masculine conquering projects. Another way is the *feminization of spaces and materialities*, which enables a *protector-masculinity*. Here bunkers, along with their purportedly genuine aura, are framed as exposed to threats and risks. The third way we term *homosocial masculinization*, the process in which the articulated knowledge that there are significantly more men than women interested in bunkers is naturalized and rationalized. We will briefly refer to the two first ways throughout the text, and finally deepen the analysis and include the third way in the concluding discussion.

People engaged in the exploration of abandoned bunkers are referred to as "bunkerologists" (Bennett 2013). In Sweden there is a wide bunkerological network that is reflected in a number of publications,

associations, organizations and forums on the internet. The same phenomenon is also found in other national contexts (see, e.g., Bennett 2017). Bunkerology is related to some other contemporary social movements, such as so-called preppers, who prepare for an impending disaster of some kind by hoarding food, learning skills such as first aid and, *nota bene*, preparing bunker-like installations. Like bunkerologist groups, prepper groups are dominated by men, something that has been analysed in relation to male victim roles and the staging of masculine know-how (Kelly 2016). Similar quests for safeguarding a genuine masculine lifestyle that is perceived as threatened have been scrutinized in various studies (see, e.g., Matthews, Hancock & Gu 2014; Hunt 2008; Rademacher & Kelly 2018). However, although we identify that bunkerologists are guided by a search for a sensed lost masculinity, the starting point is not that masculinity today is in crisis (Seagal 1990). In contrast, we argue that masculinity will never be final or fully achieved but always has been and will always be under negotiation (Roper & Tosh 1991).

The empirical material for this study was gathered as part of a three-year project that included ethnographic fieldwork at Cold War heritage sites of various kinds in Sweden. We visited a number of official and unofficial heritage sites, made observations and interviewed people in different positions. The study includes social media, websites, policy and planning material and media. In this article, examples are given from visits to museums and leisure home areas, social media feeds, interviews with enthusiasts and heritage administrators, and newspapers and television pro-

grammes. The collaborative analysis combines an ethnographic interest in how people reflect, act and perform as individuals and groups, with the attention to the uses, adaptations, functions, transformations and representations of material structures within architectural history.

In the following, we introduce the empirical examples. Initially, we address bunker enthusiast activity on Facebook. This is followed by descriptions of heritage sites with a bunker theme interspersed with quotations from interviews with bunker enthusiasts. We take a closer look at the project “Save Sonja” under the auspices of the Military Preparedness Museum (Beredskapsmuseet) in Helsingborg in the south of Sweden, and end in Bungenäs on Gotland, Sweden’s biggest island located in the Baltic Sea, with a slightly longer analysis of an area that has abandoned bunkers converted into exclusive leisure homes. The empirical examples draw attention to the performative actions where masculine security negotiations take place and in which the bunkers play and co-play a constantly mobilized role.

Cosy and Genuine Bunkers

“My girlfriend asked what makes me happy! I sent this picture in response”.³ The comment is from the feed in a Facebook group for Swedish bunkerologists. The photo depicts a steep concrete staircase in a barren rock room, leading down to a concrete wall where a grid door stands partly open. To an outsider, such a dark, gloomy and remote environment would probably appear hostile. In the Facebook group, however, examples of what we have conceptualized as “bunker cosiness” are recurrent. Sometimes, the concept is even

specifically proclaimed in captions such as “Sunday Cosiness”, “Cosy Saturday snow”, “Good Friday Cosiness” and “Cosy Friday”. Sometimes it is expressed in the form of desire, for example, “several thousand square metres of pure love of moisture, rock and concrete” or “2500 square metres of damp, frost, darkness and pure love”. One post shows a shady picture, where one can barely see the contours of a very worn and damp room. An iron hand-rail and an iron door are covered with rust. Accompanying the photo is only one desire-laden word: “Longing”.

In constructing damp rock chambers, raw concrete and desolate tunnels as cosy



1. Bunker cosiness? Photo: M. Frihammar.

and captivating places, the concept of cosiness is reinterpreted. Feminine coded attributes like warm homey comfort are denied, and instead, cold, remote and hard surfaces are put forward as sources of enjoyment. Here, masculinity mashes with notions of authenticity in different ways. We interpret the bunkerological search for a cosy Cold War pristineness as activating a *desire-masculinizing feminization*. In this, the ability to generate a feeling of untouched purity is crucial. Comments such as “It is pitch black, narrow and still [has] a thick layer of dust on the floor” or “Completely untouched for many years” signal and emphasize that the person making the post is the first to enter that space. Pictures of graffiti, on the other hand, are more often accompanied by formulations of the type: “An old rock room that has not aged with dignity.” In the interviews with the bunker enthusiasts, the appeal of the untouched space is highlighted in formulations such as “it’s based on being first and disturbing the dust” or that it is “a pretty fucking luxurious thing” if the place visited does not bear traces of previous visits but seems to have stood untouched since it was abandoned.

Encounters with bunkers are framed as multisensual experiences and are described in affective terms. When asked what determines whether it is a good place or not, one informant answered “the scent, because we often talk about how it is, yes, it is a good mountain, because it smells”, and to emphasize how strongly the memory of the scent affects him, he showed his forearm to indicate that his hair was rising. Reference is made to the memory of scent on Facebook posts, such as in one with an image of a partially lit underground passage with the



2. The wreck of the DC3 aeroplane resting in an enormous showcase producing authenticity at the Swedish Air Force Museum. Photo: F. Krohn Andersson.

comment “Do you recognize the scent?” References to the sense of smell paint the bunkerologist as a connoisseur, underpinning a proper masculinity (Ferguson 2018), with an ability to sensorially judge whether a bunker is “genuine” or not.

A focus on the affective receptiveness of objects and the things being seemingly untouched and strong bearers of emotions is also found in official heritagizations. In an exhibition at the national Swedish Air Force Museum (Flygvapenmuseum) in Linköping of a DC3 aeroplane that was shot down, the entire plane, salvaged from the bottom of the Baltic Sea more than 50 years after it disappeared in 1952, is displayed on the sparsely lit underground floor of the museum (Åse & Wendt 2021; Ekström 2021). The museum’s presentation (in text and in the guided tour) emphasizes that the wreck of the plane is

displayed exactly as it was found and that the exhibition includes all the loose objects (wedding rings, handkerchiefs) found in the vicinity of the plane on the bottom of the sea. In an interview, the former director of the museum described the wreck as “lying in a sarcophagus” still on the bottom of the sea. According to the former director, the placement of the plane wreck in an enormous showcase, beyond the reach of the visitor, is meant to create a physical but, more importantly, mental distance that contributes to the feeling of authenticity and something very special and something that “creates a stronger experience”. If the visitors were allowed to come close and perhaps even touch the objects, this would lead to what the director describes as “breaking the enchantment” (interview 31 January 2019) and, paradoxically, a decomposition of the carefully staged authen-

ticity. The wreck is enclosed by portraits of the men who died in it, as well as stories about the men who eventually found and salvaged it. The staged authenticity invites museum visitors to feel reverence for the men who made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation and the male saviours of their remains – underpinning myths of military protection and masculinized bravery (Baggiarini 2015).

Notably, despite The Air Force Museum's claim of displaying the absolute totality of the DC3 remains, we have found other objects presented as being from the same plane wreck in two other exhibitions at the Swedish National Defence Radio Establishment (FRA) museum and Defence Museum Gotland (Gotlands försvarsmuseum). Our interpretation is therefore that the Air Force Museum's focus on the exact arrangement of objects and their entirety is primarily focused on producing an aura of authenticity.

Secrets and Revelations

As demonstrated above, in the bunkerologist community a place can lose its appeal by being already (visibly) visited by others or, even worse, vandalized. However, we have also identified a threat that is both more general and more ephemeral – the secrecy of the place being lost. In the Facebook group, whose *raison d'être* is to help members show each other pictures, the rules, despite what one might think, include a ban on mentioning location information or the names of the depicted facilities. It is equally forbidden to “fish”, i.e., ask where the place in question is or what kind of object it is. This urge for secrecy sometimes has preposterous effects. During our fieldwork in Boden, in the north of Sweden, we vis-

ited both official and grassroots Cold War heritagizations. One of the places that one of our guides, the owner of Kalix Defence Line Museum (Kalixlinjens museum), took us to see was the new submarine museum in the port of Töre in Kalix. The key object there is the mini submarine Spiggen, a gift from the Swedish navy to the municipality of Kalix. The municipality has lent Spiggen to the museum foundation, which expresses on their website the wish that the exhibition will give “the region a positive marketing [tool] for upcoming tourist visits” (Website Siknäsförtet). However, when we found photos from the same submarine exhibition in the Facebook feed, the text explicitly called for silence about where the boat is located, as if it was a top-secret military site and not a public museum in search of an audience. Here the principles are characteristic of the *feminization of spaces and materialities*, allowing for a *protector-masculinity* to be brought to the fore. The male bunkerology group safeguards the objects (perceived as) being at risk of exposure by calling for mutual silence.

A similar logic is found in the explicit resistance to musealization that we frequently encountered in the material. “Our idea has been that this will not be a museum”, says, for example, the former director of Aerozeum, despite the fact that it is a state-funded heritage institution tasked with the responsibility of preserving and displaying the underground rock chamber built in Säve, north of Gothenburg on the west coast of Sweden, on behalf of the Air Force during the Cold War (interview 22 March 2019). A bunker enthusiast expressed the same sentiment in relation to the National Army Museum in Stockholm and its way of displaying and handling

the objects: “I don’t really like it, because it is an elitist way of looking at stuff” (interview 6 February 2019). Here a line is drawn between a masculine coded active use of the Cold War remnants, represented by the bunkerologists, and a feminine coded caring and nursing attitude by the heritage institution.

Scepticism towards heritage expertise is sometimes manifested in paradoxical expressions. The Military Preparedness Museum was, for example, excluded from the state museum network SMHA due to an unwillingness to follow the stipulated museum rules. However, the museum has stayed extraordinarily active as an insurgent outsider among the Cold War museums, quite often in open opposition to network management (interview 18 August 2020). In the following, we will analyse one of the museum’s high-profile projects, “Save Sonja” (“Rädda Sonja”). The project’s aim

was to excavate and open up an overgrown artillery battery that was sealed in 1990 by the Swedish Armed Forces. “Save Sonja” was described in depth on the museum’s website. The project was introduced with a black and white photograph of a young woman standing on a summer meadow in the middle of the twentieth century. She is wearing a light, floral dress, and her gaze is directed at the photographer. Her light, short hair is touched by the wind. Above the woman are the words “Save Sonja!” It was not clear from the text who the woman in the picture was. On the other hand, the page states that the actual cannon is “christened Sonja”. The project lasted several months, and its process, which consisted of exposing the concrete structure with the help of excavators and eventually picks and shovels, was documented in photos and presented on the website. In this example, the principle of *desire-masculiniz-*



3. Our idea has been that this will not be a museum. Interior entrance hall, Aerozeum. Photo: M. Frihammar.

ing feminization of materialities and spaces is at work, perhaps most clearly in the naming of the project: “Save Sonja”. More implicitly but equally effective, it emerges through the defloration trope, which is activated through the focus on exposing and uncovering the hidden, untouched and uninvaded room.

The actual occasion of the first opening of the artillery battery door took place under ritualized forms and was captured on film, which was later available on the website. The event was also featured in the local newspaper, *Skånska Dagbladet*, where the artillery battery Sonja was presented as a farmworker’s daughter who “is about to be awakened after 28 years of sleep behind her seal” (*Skånska Dagbladet*, 22 August 2019). The caption to the film on the website reads, “Film from the opening moment of 1st cannon piece Sonja”. In the film, two upper-middle-aged men dressed in work clothes stand in front of a concrete wall in which there is a low closed steel door. One of the men is pulling on a rough steel handle in the door, which seems to have jammed. Male voices are heard in the background cheering with shouts like “It’s going up, come on now.” When the handle still does not come loose, someone suggests that they use a “small sledgehammer”, and soon one is delivered. After the handle is hit a few times, it suddenly comes loose – shouts of joy and whooping come from the group of men. The man closest to the door opens it, and a voice in the background exclaims: “Damn, even the paint is still there!” The man who opened door poses for a while in the doorway and the others take pictures of him. He then disappears into the darkness. The End.

Gated Masculinity and Vulnerable Concrete

We see a variation in the bunker theme when we move our gaze from the Save Sonja project to the former military area of Bungenäs on Gotland. The military exited the area in 2000, and a contractor bought the land in 2007. The following year, the contractor also established an architectural firm as part of transforming the area into a so-called lifestyle dwelling area. The assignment for the architects included drawing up very detailed area regulations for the development plan and, eventually, helping design the houses. Here the principle of *feminization of spaces* is at work in paradoxical yet all-inclusive ways. As we shall see, despite the tough character, Bungenäs was constructed as a delicate, fragile place, in need of guard, galvanizing a *protector-masculinity*.

At first glance, the strong regulations in the area and the secluded location give the impression that this is a so-called gated community. These types of areas often focus on being pleasant and cosy and take preindustrial small town or village communities as models. Bungenäs contrasts in a drastic way. What greets the eye is the barren and unflattering Gotland coastal landscape with cobblestone fields, occasional trees and sparse vegetation. The area is also characterized by a military presence from the 1960s onwards and industrial limestone mining before that, and a deep, crater-like open pit mine lies deserted in the middle of the peninsula.

A visitor to Bungenäs first encounters a barrier in the form of a large metal gate and a fence with barbed wire at the top. This is a material relic from the military era when the peninsula was a protected military zone that it was forbidden to en-

ter. The fence and gate are the same today (Gestaltningssystem 2011:5). Old signs from previous military activities are still standing. The information board at the entrance reads “Information Bungenäs exercise area” with a red triangle on a yellow background and the text “Dangerous”. The fence, sign, symbol and text signal that this is a border, something we interpreted as a way to create exclusion and selectivity. On closer examination, however, the delimitation is fictitious; the border is permeable. Next to the imposing gate is an opening that visitors on foot can, and according to the municipal and regional directives, should be able to pass. In fact, the fence cuts right through a nature reserve formed in 2013. Bungenäs is thus also intended to foster an outdoor lifestyle (Utvidgning av naturreservatet Bungenäs, Länsstyrelsen Gotlands län 2013). During our interview, Gotland’s regional heritage administrator told us that he takes his dogs here on walks, so it is obviously successful at attracting people to the outdoors (interview 20 February 2019).

As mentioned, the design programme for Bungenäs is extremely detailed in terms of materials, paints and colours. What is accepted is unpainted, untreated concrete with cast grooves from the casting boards, unpainted wood panelling that becomes naturally grey, wood panel painted with dark green and black distemper paint, iron-vitriol-treated and oiled wood panel, limestone masonry and corten steel (Gestaltningssystem 2011:85). The programme divides the area into smaller sections with specific building regulations on height, roof shape, colour and facade material. Furthermore, there must be no lawns, fences, or plot markings of any

kind. According to the design programme, it is the tranquillity of Bungenäs, together with the traces of industry and military functions, that contributes to “the strong, barren and wild character that Bungenäs has” (Gestaltningssystem 2011:5).

In the everyday life of the residents of Bungenäs, there are also some hard regulations to abide by. In the clean-cut *Design Manual, Bungenäs (Designmanual Bungenäs)* publication, distributed to everyone who buys a house in the area, there is a short but strict admonition:

Exterior additions

List formulated by Aktiebolag Bungenäs lime quarry together with the Design Committee on things that may not occur at Bungenäs:

- Plastic furniture
 - Visible air-to-air heat pumps
 - Cars
 - Caravans
 - Plastic boats
 - Trampolines
 - Satellite dishes
 - Exterior decorations in deviating colours
 - Colourful parasols and sun shelter
 - Advertising
 - Plastic pools
 - Plants foreign to Bungenäs (does not apply to spice gardens)
 - Pressure-treated wood
 - Flagpoles
 - Christmas decorations
 - Extravagant outdoor lighting
 - Fences
 - Lawns
 - Dryers in plastic⁴
- (Sundström et al. 2015:49)

We first encountered the manual during fieldwork at Bungenäs, when we found the publication on display on the bookshelf of the house we rented through Airbnb. This

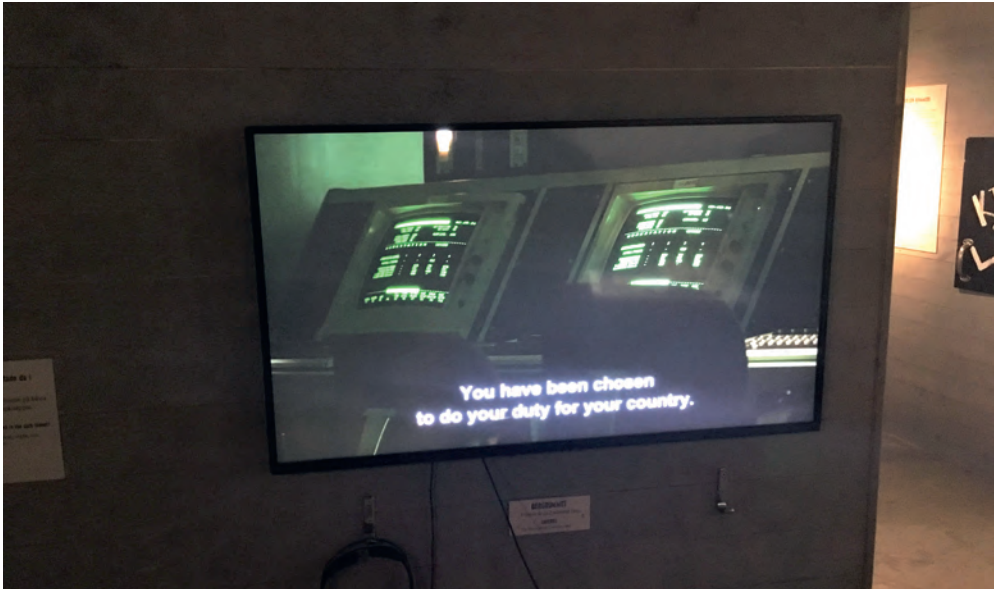
was not one of the spectacular buildings in the area. Even so, the house showed the characteristics of a Bungenäs house with a clean design and tasteful materials, and its interior and exterior meticulously conformed in every aspect to the design manual. However, one day, as we sat on the patio and lifted the lid of the inconspicuous military-green wooden box next to the wall out of curiosity, a kaleidoscope of colourful children's things such as plastic toys, pink balls, water pistols, swimming rings and inflatable dinghies met our eyes. The contrast between the sober, greyscale exterior and the bright festivity of colours inside the box was striking. We interpret the list's rigid rules of conduct as a way of meeting the threat posed by the family life that actually takes place on the site – after all, Bungenäs attracts an economically strong but relatively family-conventional group. Here, as in the bunker cosiness example, traditional feminine coded qualities threaten to sweeten and thus castrate Bungenäs's raw but aestheticized male concrete atmosphere. Looking out over the area, we started to imagine other aesthetically frivolous things in the surrounding houses similarly hidden away so as not to threaten Bungenäs's harsh masculine authenticity.

One of the first projects at Bungenäs was the spectacular building commissioned by H&M billionaire Stefan Bengtsson (*Gotlands Tidningar* 14 March 2014, *Dagens industri* 15 December 2016). Initially called "Building 104", the building was later renamed to the historically inaccurate but more military sounding, "Bunker 104". The origin of the building was the installation of a double Bofors m/51B 15.2 cm coastal artillery cannon, which extended three floors underground.

Between 2012 and 2016, the space was redesigned into a leisure home. The main part of the building today consists largely of the original concrete structures underground, which seem to have been left untreated and raw. Notable in this context, however, is that these surfaces were not raw but painted (light green and blue) when the spaces served as an artillery installation. In other words, the raw concrete is a gesture of authenticity rather than an actual remnant of previous activities. Sometimes the supposedly untouched concrete is contrasted with floors made from lavish materials such as marble, as well as terrazzo floors.

In a quite different context, that of official heritagization, the fabrication of authenticity through the symbolic use of concrete is stretched even further. In an attempt to capture the essence of the Cold War experience in a condensed image, the military vehicle museum Arsenalen in Strängnäs built a "concrete" bunker in the exhibition hall out of wood and plaster. Even though it is fake concrete, the aura and connotative power of the material of authenticity seem to (supposedly) rub off on the experience. Inside the "bunker", a film is screened where the auratic quality and strength of the ephemeral bunker materiality is even further pronounced. The film is composed of still images accompanied by a voiceover. There is an image of an underground concrete shaft. The voiceover begins, "I know that you are scared. You needn't be. In here, it is safe". The film then continues:

Here, there is everything that will ensure that *you* will survive. [...] You have been chosen to do your duty for your country. Do not think of the others. Forget your family. All those other people are not important now.



5. The visitor is addressed in terms of a male Cold War subjectivity in the film at Arsenalen. Photo: F. Krohn Andersson.

The voiceover here explicitly addresses the visitor in terms of a male Cold War subjectivity by the logic of the mechanisms of male conscription in conjunction with the phantasmatic rendering of a “war” that never happened. The short film ends with the quite disturbing lines, “Once we get out, nothing will be as before. There will be nothing left. Nothing.” This produces an experience of pure being and complete safety, facilitated and evoked by the associations of the mediated material quality of the concrete. The authenticity signalled by the imagined material elicits the sensation of an authentic life.

Returning to Bungenäs, the buildings in the area are distributed over a spectrum in terms of how close – or putatively authentic – a connection they have to the area’s previous military use. On one side are, like Bunker 104, the spectacular appropriations

of actual military bunkers and defence installations. These are sometimes so uncompromisingly readapted that we literally stumbled upon them in the terrain when walking around Bungenäs and confusedly found ourselves standing on the patio of a converted bunker. The buildings at this end of the scale are aimed at those seeking a lifestyle signalling unconventional avant-garde. However, there are a limited number of actual bunkers, and for those who strive for this stylistic fringe identity, the acquisition of an authentic bunker becomes both a cultural and an actual conquest of a social position.

At the other end of the scale are the buildings at Bungenäs that are completely newly built. Here, the connection to the bunkers is also used, but in an abstract way. There is an example of this form of bunker use in an episode of the Danish television



6. A desirable original bunker, redesigned into an exclusive holiday home, supplemented with a housing cube in trendy corten steel. Photo: M. Frihammar.

programme *Dream Homes of the Future* (*Framtidens drömhem*). The presenter of the television show travels around Nordic countries and “visits pioneering and personal homes” with different themes for each respective episode (*Framtidens drömhem* 2018, episode 1). The episode in which Bungenäs appears is entitled “Local inspiration” (*Framtidens drömhem* 2018, episode 4). The show begins with a series of environmental images of windy and rainy Bungenäs in autumn. The presenter states that “here are lime quarries and concrete bunkers, and the history of the place is revealed in the house I am going to visit”. She says that the male resident co-owns the house with some friends. This is an ownership constellation that is by no means representative of Bungenäs, and our interpretation is that it is chosen because it fits the image of the area. One of the owners and the architect of the house, both younger middle-aged men in urban

metrosexual style outfits, accompany the presenter around the site. The presenter notes a large concrete relief and exclaims, “Here is some art on the wall.” The owner responds, “That one was made by my friend, the artist Jesper Waldersten.”

The architect says that the house is divided into three volumes: “Here, inside we have the large living room.” He says that there are two bedrooms in another part and one bedroom in yet another part. “The idea is to socialize outdoors. Maybe mostly in the summer,” the architect says when they are out in the wind and rain. Once indoors, the presenter exclaims, “This is cool. What a view. [...] There is something about the colours. The ceilings and floors are dark, so everything is focused on the view.” She is sitting on a large wall-mounted sofa that occupies almost the entire room. The architect notes that this large living room where people enter is meant for gathering. It should, he says, be a social house where

people meet, eat food and spend time together. The owner says that during the planning period, they talked about how nice it would be if twenty people could fit on a sofa: "Let's make a sofa out of the whole room. And that's exactly what we have here." The presenter says that the owner of the house "loves to cook, so the kitchen was given high priority. The concrete slabs that come down from the ceiling create a room in the room." The owner adds, "It is like a small concrete bunker here."

The party exits the house, and this is followed by quick clips of a bunker that is strategically located, boasting a view of the sea from the massive panoramic windows in its living room. The presenter says that "the house is new, but inspiration was taken from the bunkers." The architect adds that it was important that there were clean shapes, concrete and wood. The presenter returns and mentions the strong regulations concerning the area: "You are not allowed to have fences, and cars are forbidden. A design committee must approve every single building. This is to maintain a clear common thread." To this, the architect responds, "It was very important to design this area with many rules. The main architecture in this area is done through the development plan. Then, you have to do experiments in the different places. But what holds everything together is the overall story. That's probably what makes this so different. You want this area to be just as nice in fifty years."

The presenter is then shown one of the bedroom areas and describes how the owners, who are labelled friends throughout, each have one bedroom. The owner states, "The idea has, in a way, been that you can sort of escape in here and just be alone."

Concluding Discussion

In this article, we have analysed the dialectical production of authenticity and masculinity among bunkerologists and in other contexts involving bunkers. The heritagization of the Cold War has functioned as a performative arena where the authenticity of masculinity and the masculinity of authenticity are mutually constituted in different, seemingly heterogenic, but actually consistent constellations, which are further communicated to all involved. Returning to the introductory question of how masculinity is generated through the heritagization of the Cold War and when bunkerologists encounter bunkers, as well as how authenticity is produced and evoked in negotiations and engagements between the actors and materialities involved, a pattern has emerged.

As previously stated, the starting point is that gender and masculinity are performatively constituted acts, and we regard engagement with the bunkers and the notions projected towards bunkers, military installations and other "secret" places as ongoing forms of masculinizing negotiations.

In the examples presented, the principle of *desire-masculinizing feminization of materialities and spaces* appears several times, most clearly in the case of the project Save Sonja through the name itself. The opening is marked by ritualization, which increases the cultural density of the implied defloration trope. The participants dig, saw, and cut themselves in. It is a hard job, but it is done purposefully and aimed at a final goal that is ultimately achieved. In the case of Save Sonja, the object of desire is also conceptualized through the ways the enterprise is represented by an explicit, actual image of a woman that projects an innocent, and by

virtue of the nostalgic framing, authentic femininity. This principle also emerged as particularly conspicuous when the newspaper *Skånska Dagbladet* described the artillery battery bunker as a farmworker's daughter who was about to be awakened after many years of sleep "behind her seal", and the obvious allusion to Sleeping Beauty when the feminized and virginized bunker was awakened by the bunkerologist-prince was repeated even more overtly in the film, where the museum director proclaimed that it was like disturbing the bunker "in its Sleeping Beauty sleep".

This virginity reference was also common in the other material, as shown by the informant, who underlined that it was about "being first and disturbing the dust". There were numerous references on social media to intruding and penetrating what is currently untouched. At Bungenäs, we observed a similar logic on a more abstract level. In this context, the goal is high social standing, which can be achieved by "conquering" a real authentic bunker. Both through economic capital – it is necessary to have significant monetary resources – and cultural capital, in other words the education or *bildung*, to be able to understand that this mechanism applies, i.e., being first to realize the desirability at stake. The condition is that the trophy is recognized as a cultural marker.

The way of structuring bunker engagement as a *protector-masculinizing feminization of spaces and materialities* relates to objects that appear to be exposed to threats and risk and thereby are produced as objects of protection. Among the posts in the Facebook group, for example, complaints about previous visitors' destruction are followed with affirmative expressions in the

comment field. A commentator responded to the previously referenced comment about the underground room that, due to graffiti, could not "age with dignity", with the "sad" emoji (a face with a sad look and tears in its eyes): the feeling of authenticity is hard to produce when there are physical imprints of earlier visitors and vandalism. The demands for secrecy function to define and confirm both what is threatened and who can offer it protection. The example of the submarine being photographed in a public exhibition space but nevertheless being accompanied by a call to keep the place a secret can be interpreted as a performative message. The request to keep the knowledge about the supposedly secret placement of the submarine only within the male-dominated group has a subtext that relates to joint masculine responsibility based on an equally common protective position – the male privilege of protection.

Furthermore, the general scepticism in the field towards official musealization can be understood as, essentially, fear. Here, musealization means that the narrative is articulated and consolidated by heritage experts who, in this context, represent a politically "overcorrect" caring, thus feminine, authority. In this kind of reasoning, "uncurated" becomes equal to "unspoiled". In the bunkerologists' constant quest to reach the untouched, the work of memory authorities appears dangerous, and this threat toward the Cold War authenticity of the remnants produces a protective masculinity.

It is also against this backdrop that several of the observations at Bungenäs should be understood. On an overall level, the driving principle is expressed in the detailed regulations that address the threat of the barren, raw and genuine quality of Bungenäs being



7. At Aerozeum, interaction is prioritized in favour of curated exhibitions. Photo: M. Frihammar.

destroyed. Despite its robust and powerful character, Bungenäs is construed as sensitive, fragile and in great need of protection. The scope and level of detail in the regulations corresponds to the perceived seriousness of the threat. The danger consists of elements that threaten to destroy the existing scale as well as seemingly non-threatening elements such as rich and bright colours, neat plants and lawns. The principle is also followed in specific houses. The previously described readaptation of the bunker is described as an expression of care and concern for the site's heritage. Here, through careful adaptation, the bunker may stay as it is currently and as it has been. However, as we have seen, it is, in fact, concerns about staged authenticity, such as when the earlier interior painting had to disappear so that the bunker could become what it was imagined to have been, that are most telling.

In addition to the two aforementioned principles of structuring bunker engagement, there is a third principle, one that we term *homosocial masculinization*. It is an articulated knowledge that there are significantly more men than women interested in bunkerology. This circumstance is verbalized and given rational explanations, as expressed in one interview:

But what is conspicuous by its absence, that is the ladies, they are not included, at all. [...] They have no relation to this. There it is completely... there it is like zero, they had no mother who told them about this. Dad has told his boys, these 20-year-old energy-drink drinkers, like, so there's a... I think it's not that they're not interested... it's just, it's a world they don't give a damn about (interview 7 February 2019).

Because of these references to a strictly gender-segregated historical order, the in-

terest in bunkers emerges as a homosocially inherited disposition. The bunker thus becomes an arena for same-sex cohabitation where it is possible for one to behave as a man together with other men. This is realized through in-person visits to the sites and described in terms of symbolic relief regarding the new military facilities that are adapted to serve both men and women (resulting in the presence of shower curtains, various changing rooms, etc.). It is against this background, among other things, that bunker cosiness becomes understandable. The bunker constitutes a free zone where a supposedly uncomplicated male existence can be shaped, as a much-needed rest from the demands of ordinary existence to adjust to contemporary complexity.

This function is particularly clear in the newly built house in Bungenäs depicted in the television programme. It is a house where the surrounding bunkers, which are also in visual range through the large window, are said to have inspired the house. In a sense, this concerns how the aura of bunkers rubs off on the houses as well as on the lifestyle in Bungenäs. A simple, ascetic and authentic life where three male friends can live in seclusion, in terms of both geographical location and the spatial organization of the house, with the sleeping cells that are clearly not intended for family life, can be followed by pursuing only the essentials of life, such as cooking in the bunker-like kitchen or engaging in quiet meditation by the crackling fire while contemplating, enjoying, gazing at, and desiring the landscape and the bunkers outside. Not far from there, the threatening, colourful plastic toys lay securely tucked away in the safe military-green coloured box...

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Notes

- 1 An official broadcast delivering important messages to the public has sounded at 3.00 p.m. on the first non-holiday Monday in March, June, September and December since 1931.
- 2 Mandatory conscription of both women and men was reintroduced in 2019.
- 3 All translations of quotations from the source material are by the authors.
- 4 Utvändiga tillägg
Lista formulerad av Aktiebolag Bungenäs kalkbrott tillsammans med Designkommittén på sådant som ej får förekomma på Bungenäs.

- Plaströbiler
- Synliga Luft-luft-aggregat
- Bilar
- Husvagnar
- Plastbåtar
- Studsmattor
- Parabol
- Exteriöra dekorationer i avvikande kulörer
- Färgglada parasoll och markiser
- Reklam
- Plastpooler
- För Bungenäs främmande växter (gäller ej kryddträdgårdar)
- Tryckimpregnerat virke
- Flaggstänger
- Juldekorationer

- Överdådig utomhusbelysning
- Staket
- Anlagda gräsmattor
- Torkvindor i plast

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