



CATALOG DATA

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| Authorship | Factory Wilhelm Hoppe-Henckels Zwillingwerk |
| Place of Production | Solingen (Germany) |
| Place of origin | València. Private donation |
| Title/name | Razor blade with box |
| Date | 1950s |
| Measures | 2,5 cm x 17 cm |
| Materials/Technique | Knife: steel and plastic. Cardboard box |
| Inventory Number | 105 |
| Location | Permanent exhibition <i>It is not easy to be Valencian</i> ; "Dryland and Mountain", "The Bachelor's Ball" area |

DESCRIPTION

Steel and plastic razor with its corresponding cardboard box. Both in the razor blade as in the case it is inscribed: "William Hoppe / Solingen" and "14 / J.A. / Henckels / Zwillingwerk / Solingen", so it is a razor from the German manufacturer from Solingen "Henckels Zwillingwerk", which absorbed another older knife brand, "William Hoppe". The German city of Solingen is known for its many razor, scissors and knife manufacturing industries. In fact, it is famous as "the city of knives and razors" or "city with a soul of steel".

REREADING

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| Related Topic | Gender Systems Gender Roles Sexual Division of Labor |
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Gender and Social Class
 Gender and Space
 Gender and History
 Gender and Life Cycle: Engagement, Marriage
 Gender Stereotypes: Public / Domestic
 Gender Stereotypes: Reason / Feelings
 Gender Stereotypes: Nature/ Culture
 Family and Relationships

Rereading

In one of the rooms of the exhibition of the area "Dryland and mountain", we can appreciate a black and white photograph printed on a panel illuminated to the rhythm of a *chotis* that sounds in the background. In the photograph, some men stand looking at pairs of men and women who dance in what looks like a typical village verbena. Those men who look passively at those active couples are the single people of the town, those who have not been married on time and patiently waiting for some girl to ask them to dance. Are men in their thirties, who have passed marriageable age: the "unmarriageable" of the village. Behind the photograph can be seen, when the panel is illuminated, some objects that were part of the imaginary of that society in which singles they went to dances not to dance: a razor, to go clean shaven and with their faces washed, a beret, essential masculine accessory, and a flask in the pocket to smoke cigarettes while watching couples dance. The music, the image and the objects are also accompanied by a fragment of Pierre Bourdieu's text *The bachelor's ball*, in which the sociologist analyzes, decades before the existence of the Studies of Gender and starting from the celibacy of the firstborn, the institution of marriage as one more question of "relationships between the sexes".

Until 1914, marriage functioned as an economic transaction, as an operation carried out by two families, not by two individuals, who negotiated the benefits of their union. The first-born male inherited the properties and over the rest of the sons and daughters developed other types of strategies that, until now, had worked and preserved the traditional marriage order. The growth of the rural exodus throughout the 20th century, however, was generating the collapse of the institution of marriage in the villages: the younger children could go to nearby cities to look for work and there restart their lives away from the town; and, in the same way, the daughters left in many occasions to serve the city or no longer aimed to marry the firstborn (village men who did not follow the new urban fashions), because the "second sons", Now workers in the tertiary sector could offer them a better quality of life. The eldest son, tied to his lands, ceased to be coveted by society and, with it, the bulk from that group of "unmarriageable", the bachelor, it became made up of first-borns, different from what happened in previous decades. All this led to the rupture, from 1914 and especially from the

fifties, of a matrimonial model that wore centuries operating in the western world.

With this brief text we have done nothing more than give theoretical substance to a reading that is already implicit in the museum exhibition, in which a small space speaks for itself: a *chotis* playing on a loop in a dark room; the photograph that captures a square full of couples dancing and a line of men watching; essential objects in the start-up point of a man for the dance such as the beret, the tobacco pouch or the knife of to shave; and an illuminating excerpt from *The Bachelor's Ball*:

“Planted at the edge of the track, forming a dark mass, a group of men somewhat elders watch in silence; all are around thirty years old, wear a beret and wear a suit dark, old-fashioned as if driven by the temptation to participate in the dance, they sometimes move forward and narrow the space reserved for the dancing couples. There has been no lack one of the singles, they're all there. Men his age who are already married have stopped going to the dance [...] Bachelors never dance, and that day is no exception [...] In dances of this type [...] bachelors have nothing to do. They are dances 'for the young people', that is, for those who are not married; bachelors have already passed the age nubile, but they are, and they know it, 'unmarriageable'. They are dances to which you are going to dance, but they do not they will dance [...] They will remain there until midnight, almost without speaking, in the midst of noise and lights of the dance, contemplating the unapproachable girls”.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bourdieu, Pierre. *El baile de los solteros*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2004