Szöllősy, Éva. 2015. *A férfiak és a nők képe modern értelmező szótárainkban* ('The Image of Men and Women in Modern Hungarian Dictionaries'). Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (ELTE) Kiadó. 201 pp.

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In Hungary of the first decades of the twentieth century practical feminism was fairly strong: there were groups and organizations acting to achieve more rights -- and first and foremost suffrage -- for women, feminist movements had their own successfull journals, universities gradually accepted ever more women, and women appeared and functioned more often in the public sphere. The communist era of the second half of the twentieth century further developed this situation. In communism women could vote, and to have a job became not only a possibility for them but a requirement and general norm. The traditional view on genders, and the everyday life dictated by it, however, did not change as housekeeping and child rearing continued to be almost entirely in the women's responsibility, side by side with their role as co-providers, and this view has little changed even after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989. Women nowadays often refer to their dual role using the "second shift" term; meaning that they practically work two shifts a day, one at their work place or "from home" and one at home, after work hours.

In its heyday the communist regime claimed that women had already achieved equal rights so feminist organizations, just like other civil-rights advocators, were unneeded, and this ideology is influential in the present as well. In addition, even without any strong feminist movements in sight, there is a strong backlash against feminism, as right-wing politics and its ideas about women and feminism have in recent years gained strength by their overwhelming propagandistic call for women to "be a housewife and a mother." Consequently, according to polls and other measures (like the ratio of women in politics, executive boards, leading positions in the academic or economic spheres, etc.), present-day Hungary is a strongly sexist country compared not only to Western-European states but also to other countries of the former Soviet block. Gender stereotypes are strong and sexist stereotypes are common in government controlled areas of expression and influence like the media, public speeches, and textbooks. However, in the academic world of the last ten to fifteen years Hungarian gender and women's studies have developed very dynamically, exploring many areas and using various study methods. Linguistics has so far contributed to this development far less than fields such as history, philosophy, literature and cultural studies. This lack or lagging behind of linguistics is especially felt with regard to the study of large, systematic corpuses such as dictionaries, newspapers and magazines, the live discourse of preset-day communities and the like.

Éva Szöllősy's book is important not only because in it she analyzes a huge language corpus but also, or more so, because she intends her analysis to reveal the image of women and men that is both explicitly and implicitly embedded in several basic Hungarian-language contemporary

dictionaries. Besides the media and school and university textbooks, widely used dictionaries may be seen as reservoirs of traditional worldviews; although dictionaries, at least theoretically, could do more by way of changing these olden-days views, too. For many people, dictionaries are authoritative codifyers of the world and markers of the "real" and "right" meaning of words; therefore, the explanations, examples, usage descriptions and connotation mapping that they supply to words, or rather lexemes, are of immense cultural importance.

Szöllősy's first, introductory chapter, based on an overview of the existing research on her topic, shows that to-date there are only few works dealing with this topic in the entire international scene. The author then scrutinized the largest contemporary Hungarian dictionary, published between 1959 and 1962 (and edited by Géza Bárczi and László Országh), as well as the two concise versions of it that were published in 1972 and 2003 (this time edited, respectively, by József Juhász et al. and Ferenc Pusztai), and also two dictionaries created for younger generations (student dictionaries) and published in 1992 (eds. László Grétsy and Gábor Kemény) and 2007 (ed. Vilma Eőry). The time lapses amidst these dictionaries enable and call for not only a chronological examination or comparison among them but also for reference to their changing historical periods and ideologies. The two oldest ones of the five dictionaries were prepared in the communist era, and the next one was published in 1992, right after the political changes that created the "Third Hungarian Republic," whereas the last two were published almost two decades after the start of these changes, around the year of 2004, in which Hungary became a member state in the European Union. It seems a well grounded common-sense assumption, then, that time itself would cause changes in the culture reflected in the examples given in these dictionaries, and that changes of ideology would do so even more effectively and spectacularly. However, Szöllősy's findings show that this is not the case.

At the outset of her book Szöllősy makes a clear-cut differentitation between sexism that is overtly expressed in the meaning of a word and covert sexism that is expressed in the example sentences following a word. The first one must be reflected in the dictionaries as part of the (explanation of the) meaning of a word. The latter, however, could be avoided. Szöllősy also makes a distinction between example sentences that are cited from poems, novels, etc., which may mirror the culture of their time and place, and examples created by the dictionary editor/s and which may or may not express their own standpoints. In her analysis, Szöllősy pays much attention to the dilemmas of dictionary editors facing stereotypical descriptions, i.e. situations in which words are supposed to be described within their most commonly accepted contexts, which may indeed be utterly stereotypical, biased or mysogenic.The structure of the book adheres to the author's initial differentiation between inherent sexism (in the very meaning of a word) and so-called optional sexism (in the editor's or editors' example sentences explicating a word). To support this distinction, the first chapter of the book gives an overview of existing international research on sexism in dictionaries and of specifically Hungarian-language issues, like the tension between the grammatical genderlessness of this language and the range of lexical, semantic and societal-cultural ways of marking and belittling females/women as expressed in contemporary Hungarian textbooks (for more on this linguistic tension as a feminist issue see: Louise O. Vasvári, "Grammatical Gender Trouble and Hungarian Gender[lessness]. Part I: Comparative Linguistic Gender," *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 4 (2011), 143-170, at: http://ahea.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/ahea/article/view/40/31; idem., "Gender Trouble in a Grammatically Genderless Language: Hungarian," *Gender Across Languages* 4 (2015), 203-225).

Following the double survey of sexism in dictionaries in general and in Hungarian textbooks specifically, the bulk of the book is a very detailed analysis of the chosen five dictionaries. First the author analyzes words referring to male and female entities and identities like boy – girl, man – woman, bride – groom, husband – wife, uncle – aunt, etc. Next she deals with example sentences explicating the meanings of gender-related words (like the componenets of the pairs listed above), and then she examines gender-neutral words that can still contain or invoke gender streotypes. Szöllősy devises five categories, representing five main areas of everyday experience, for these stereotypes: external looks, learning, job, home and housekeeping, and attraction (between males and females). The third part of the analysis examines the visual illustrations included in the five dictionaries and checks how often males and females appear in the dictionaries and how they are represented in terms of their looks and functions. On the whole, the results of Szöllősy's survey are not surprising for those familiar with the extreme conservativism and sexism of Hungarian culture at large. What is surprisig, however, is that there is no significant difference in this respect between the older and the newer Hungarian dictionaries. No less surprising is the recurrence of examples of word explications in which the "necessary" sexist bias of the word is needlessly expanded by its explanation. For instance, in the example sentences for boys we find adjectives like naughty, thoughtful, mischievous and playful; while for girls the attributes would be brunette, black, blonde, pretty, nice, smart, hardworking, spoiled, talkative and whiny. Moreover, in these examples men are invaribaly presented as more educated than women, whereas women are too often, compared to reality, shown as housewives or low-status employees; and when it comes to romantic relations women are unanimously presented as passive. For male jobs and occupations we find sentences like: "The young man has become a soldier" or "My grandfather was a respected professor of biology;" whereas for female jobs we find sentences like: "His/her mother was a general practitioner and not a specialist," "This [female] reporter makes remarkably many errors," "The aunt [lit. elderly woman] is an old piece of furniture, she has been selling tickets for twenty-five years," and "This woman works like a man," meaning too effectively, much better than a woman should.

The visual illustrations in largely all of the dictionaries are not only biased but also excluding toward women and their occupations, unlike their stressing of traditionally manly occupations; and when it comes to gender-neutral illustrations, again, men are present and women are absent. Finally, there is a striking imbalance in the way in which the dictionaries manage personalization or naming in their explications and examples. Largely, when using fictive names, these names are more often male than female, and this tendency becomes even stronger when it comes to real names of poets, writers, actors, musicians, etc. Although one may claim that throughout history men were more active and present in these public arenas, the last century and a half could have supplied the editors of these dictionaries with more than enough female names to make their representation in science and culture of the modern era more balanced.

In its form Szöllősy's book is more than a learned analysis because she also gives advise to future editors of dictionaries about how to avoid hidden sexism. Such advise is prudent and beneficial but it also creates a confusion between the genre of academic research and that of editors manual. In addition, there are many technical notes in the book, not only for future editors but also for the author herself and for some unidentified readers, who are none others than the members of the academic committe that evaluated the author's doctoral dissertation upon which her present book is based, as stated on the book's first page. For scholarly or any other educated public all these features create the

impression that what they read is a dissertation lacking of sufficient self-critical editing. Unfortunately, what is more disturbing for such readers, beyond stylistic or taste issues, is that the analyses themselves are very short. We get many examples, which enables us to create our own interpretation based upon the surveyed data, but it would have been even more beneficial for the readers to know the author's opinion about her findings, how she thinks her data support or contradict other analyses of Hungarian gender stereotypes, and other relevant questions. A concluding lengthy discussion chapter would have likewise been in place in such a book and so would have been some longer narrative and discursive parts at the end of each of its chapters.

 Notwithstanding these comments, on the whole, Éva Szöllősy's book is an innovative and well-based contribution to Hungarian sociolinguistic gender research, not only because of its thorough data descriptions but also or mainly because it reveals a segment of culture that somehow remained hidden from us as we leafed through the often used dictionaries she explores, making us more aware of the force and influence of so-called neutral dictionary definitions, explanations, short exchanges and the humble sketches and illustrations accompanying all these. If future editors of dictionaries, too, become more aware of the inherent bias of such seemingly innocent reference materials then we have all done our part in preventing further belittling and exclusion of women from our live culture.