

Re: He, she and it against hem

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- *From:* Aidan Kehoe <kehoea@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Tue, 02 Aug 2005 22:49:55 +0100
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Ar an dara lá de mí Lúnasa, scríobh António Marques:

> Even a now genderless language* ** as English kept 3 pronouns for the
> singular, while it manages with 1 for the plural. Does anyone know of any
> language which at one time had a similar pronominal distinction, gender
> associated to sex, lost it, and lost the pronominal distinction too? (for
> instance, some IE language?)

Afrikaans still has the distinction, which was the first language I d have
looked at. Tok Pisin
doesn't—cf. <http://www.une.edu.au/langnet/tokpisin.htm#grammar-hce>.

> (*) Yes, I know, gender isn't sex
>
> (**) And to illustrate it take portuguese: every noun belongs either to the
> 'masculine' or to the 'feminine' gender. 3rd person has masculine and
> feminine pronouns, both singular and plural. However, the use of those is
> reserved for living creatures or personified objects ('don't blame my poor
> little car, it isn't _his_ fault'), and unacceptable otherwise. (Deictics
> have neuters, though.)
>
> Incidentally, can anyone give a sensible spelling for «em», now we know
> it's not a reduction of 'them'?

em is fine for spelling a reduction of hem ... and I wouldn't be in a
hurry to rule out the analysis of it as a reduction of them, today. My
argument would be a lot stronger if I could rustle up an example of [æt] for
that, but right now that's not happening.

—
Russian has no phoneme that corresponds directly to Germanic /h/. As a
result, for a not-insignificant number of people, the Second World War
involved the Soviet Union defeating „>;LD 8B;5@, Adolf Gitler.

• *Follow-Ups:*

Re: He, she and it against hem

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 - ◇ From: Aidan Kehoe
- ◆ **Re: He, she and it against hem**
 - ◇ From: António Marques

• **References:**

- ◆ **He, she and it against hem**
 - ◇ From: António Marques
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