

# Today's dating game asks, 'Who gets the check?'

## Changing social rules confuse old-fashioned gender roles

I was raised by a Southern Belle who knows – no doubt in her mind – that a man 1) calls a woman; 2) asks her out; 3) plans the date; 4) picks the woman up; 5) opens the car door for her; 6) DEFINITELY pays for the date; and 7) walks the woman to the door at the end of the evening.

Modern theory – as I interpret it – lays down a very different set of rules. Women and men are allowed to ask each other out, to call each other, to each pay half the cost of dates and to follow other changes from the old-fashioned outlook of my mother.

Here's the problem – many modern women subscribe to both of these outlooks. Where and how do they merge?

Before last summer I tended to ignore the newer side of the argument. Men paid for the dates I went on, instigated all relationships and always called me first. Then, after my last serious relationship ended in the first semester of my sophomore year, I began to look closely at how I handled relationships.

The contemporary theory does make more sense. The closer you examine it, the less sense

**ELIZABETH PRESTON**  
Columnist



the old-fashioned view makes. The point of dating is that two people who seem interesting to each other spend time together to see if they have anything in common. Nothing in that definition specifies which gender needs to begin the relationship.

Also, at this point in our lives we are all pretty poor, so why should men bear most of the financial burden for dating?

So I decided on a great plan to leave the ridiculous, old-fashioned notions behind and embark on a great modern dating experiment. It worked great for a while. I went on a few dates and paid for half of the dinner, or my date got the dinner and I paid for the movie. I never did actually ask someone out, but I was feeling pretty cocky about my impressive change towards a more equal dating game.

The problem is that I didn't really like any of the guys I went out with in that fast heartbeat, sweaty palm kind of way. They were nice guys and most are now good friends, but none inspired me romantically.

Thus, my new system worked perfectly because I always wanted to make sure the boundaries were set and no one had any false illusions.

Then, recently, I met someone – "Thomas" – in whom I am actually "interested." Here is the dilemma. Because my former boyfriends had always acted in the old-fashioned manner, a large part of me considers that idea as the way men act when they are really interested.

My brain tells me that this is a pretty stupid notion, but my heart, and my mother, are telling me different things.

ing half means he is not very interested in me. Sometimes I wish that we could just keep the old-fashioned roles – they are an easier fit for me than the more modern ones I am trying on now.

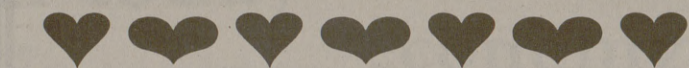
So how can modern women merge these two theories? Some of my friends use the method of paying for one date and letting their significant others pay for the next. This is nice because it still seems that someone is treating the other, and going out of their way to show the other that they like them. Then the problem is keeping it even. If one person always pays for McDonalds and the other for Cafe Eccell, it becomes a little unfair.

Another option might be to get over our collective hang-ups and each pay for half of the date. This is fair, but not very romantic and a tad uncomfortable at check-paying time.

I'm positive that there is a way for modern styles and old-fashioned roles to merge, it will just be an awkward road. Our parents were raised in different times and attempted to raise us in an old-fashioned manner.

In contrast, our world is trying to leave these stereotyping roles behind.

And yes, I'll have fries with that, honey. Thanks.



**My former boyfriends were old-fashioned, and a part of me thinks that's the way all men act when they're interested. My brain tells me this is stupid, but my heart – and my mother – tell me differently.**

The contemporary theories were great when I wanted to keep my distance and set boundaries; but when I am actually interested in someone they quickly fall to pieces. Thomas and I have been splitting the cost of dates and hanging out casually, but a part of me (and my mother, in the background, saying pointedly, "He's not picking you up?") thinks that his agreement to my pay-

ferent times and attempted to raise us in an old-fashioned manner.

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Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major

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**EDITORIAL**

## ABORTION SLAYINGS

Crime merits maximum sentence

Former Presbyterian minister Paul Hill was sentenced last week to the maximum penalties for violating the abortion clinic-protection law for the slayings of an abortion doctor and his bodyguard in Pensacola, Fla.

Despite Hill's strong religious convictions, which he used to rationalize his acts, they were inexcusable and the punishment given to him was rightly deserved.

Regardless of political, social and religious beliefs, vigilantism is never justifiable and should not be tolerated. The Constitution grants individuals the right to express their own opinions and beliefs, but they should not be expressed in such a manner that they are harmful to others.

Hill's actions wounded three individuals who were simply doing their jobs and living by their beliefs. Dr. John Bayard Britton, Col. James Barrett and his wife June Barrett were all shot in the attack this past July.

Hill is the first individual to be prosecuted under the federal law for using violence or harassing those who enter abortion clinics.

In a nation where there are multi-

ple interests and opinions, actions such as Hill's are inexcusable. Just as Hill has the right to believe that abortion is morally wrong, others have the right to believe that there is nothing wrong with abortion.

If Hill was so against abortion, he should have worked to change the law the law instead of taking it into his own hands. What Hill did is no different from committing an act of terrorism, and this type of anarchy cannot be tolerated in society.

Hill justified his attack by stating "God does not look with favor on the taking of any human life." This seems to be somewhat of a contradictory statement; those wounded in the attack could have been killed.

Hill said he was trying to prevent the abortion doctor from taking the lives of 30 innocent unborn babies, but Hill himself was using violence against three other individuals.

No one can justify such behavior and Hill deserves his punishment. American society depends on people who believe in what they are doing, but it cannot permit anyone to use belief to justify whatever they do.



## English speaks for whole world

Dominant language may endanger native tongues, cultures

Americans are renowned for their failures in languages. I only speak about 2.3 myself (my Spanish isn't what it used to be). I routinely run into people in Germany who are fluent in four.

**JAMES A. BERNSEN**  
Columnist



But I do have an advantage that many of them will readily admit. I am a native speaker of the most widely spoken second language in the world. The English language has become the new Latin, filling the gap that that language has left and building newer bridges of its own.

Do you remember in English literature classes, how every book began with a quotation in Latin at the top? In an economics, history or philosophy textbook, the writers threw out Latin phrases like hand grenades. They know most people don't understand them, but it makes the writers feel good. That's just how I feel when I read a German book or magazine. Except I understand all the English phrases.

And the Germans do, too. In school, those bound for white-collar jobs take an average of seven years of English classes. Many college students take 11 or more – they HAVE to know English to get by. All of the prescribed books for one of my friend's business classes are in English, because new "sciences" like that are all dominated by Americans.

My professors here are like those old books. Every now and then they will throw out English phrases. My political science prof, for example, said the following (I'll spare you the German), "blah blah blah demand flow," and later, "blah blah political correctness blah." Some of these phrases are as much a part of the German language now as "Wienerschnitzel" and "Bratwurst." The number of words they import is staggering. They don't even have their own word for neo-Nazis – it's "die Skinheads."

English is rapidly becoming the world lingua franca (a language spoken between people without a common native one). One can only guess about all the reasons. Morse Code was written by an American, so most international communications are in English. The airplane was invented and popularized by Americans, so all aircraft communications are in English. But it's much more than that.

English is attacking on both the cultural and scientific

fronts – and we know how poorly Germany, at least, fares in two-front wars. What religion did for Latin, computers and rock music are doing for English. Computers are dominated by English. Not only do many programs have English instructions, but the whole field of computer science is English-biased. And if anything can be seen as the wave of the future, it is computers. And likewise, every new science that is developed seems to be following this trend.

The impact of rock music cannot be underestimated. I went to a beer hall and watched in fascination as the band played favorites a hundred or more years old, then broke out into "Satisfaction" by the Rolling Stones. Every German of the last generation and a half knows the words of "Hotel California" or can sing something like it.

They can't help but want to learn English—they hear it on the radio every day. German-language rock songs tend to sound rather dumb, and many Germans will admit it. And then there are movies. Most are translated, but the English versions are always accessible and are much better. CNN and MTV are on all the cable stations, and NBC and Country Music Television are on some. While the older people are practicing their English by watching "Crossfire," the younger ones are learning theirs from "Beavis and Buttthead."

Naturally, having English-speaking troops of occupation in their country for the last 50 years has pushed Germans further along than most countries in this respect, but the prospects that the rest of the world will follow look good.

The U.S. and England can tag team the rest of the world while the only other valid contenders (Chinese and Japanese) are saddled with an overly complex writing system. The British created the cornerstone with their empire, and Hollywood and American scientists are moving in for the kill.

I don't know whether this is a good thing or not. Many more people will be able to understand each other and communicate, but I think there is also the possibility that this trend will inadvertently destroy some languages.

In the meantime, learn a foreign language if you can, but don't feel nervous if you can't—foreigners will learn yours.

James A. Bernsen is a senior German and journalism major studying abroad at the University of Tübingen in Germany

## NCAA playoffs should draw bigger crowds

First of all I would like to congratulate the Lady Aggie volleyball team on their opening round playoff victory over MSU. What I am about to say may offend some of you, but it needs to be said. When a Division I-A university such as Texas A&M lands a team in the playoffs and can barely get 600 or 700 people to attend the match, it is extremely embarrassing. We are the number three school in the nation in enrollment, and when we can't even fill our coliseum for a playoff game it shows the true amount of dedication that some of our fellow Ags have. All of our teams deserve to be supported, whether it's football, volleyball, basketball or any other sport.

Don't get me wrong. I know we're getting close to finals and some of you had prior engagements, but don't tell me that 43,000 of you had something you had to do. For those of you that were at the game showing the Spartans what Aggie spirit is, I'm proud to say I know you.

For those of you who were at home doing nothing. Well, do your best to be there next time.

Sean Miller  
Class of '98

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## Incidents at Zachry spark safety concerns

Two incidents have occurred this semester in the Zachry Engineering Building that worry me. My concern is that the problem is not only in Zachry, but in other buildings across campus as well.

The first incident happened when the flooding hit the College Station area this semester. I was working in the Chemical Engineering Computer Lab when the lights and electricity shut off through out the entire building. No generators or any type of lighting came on to help students leave the building.

The second incident occurred on Nov. 28. Again I was working in the computer lab when a strange smell passed over the room. It smelled like something was burning, but no alarms sounded, or so we thought. When we walked into the hallway, we could hear the fire alarms clearly. What is the point of fire alarms if students cannot hear them in class or lab?

This letter is in no way directed toward the chemical engineering department. It is a statement of a problem that needs attention. Our safety should be more important than it appears to be.

Anna Julius  
Class of '95

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