

## **Stop this sort of stereotyping**

*Rachel Chan Suet Kay, published 8 September 2006 in [The New Straits Times](#)*

I refer to Syed Omar Mohamed's letter "It's a woman's right, after all" (NST, Aug 24). With all due respect, Syed claims to be a dream interpreter, a "modern-day" version of the biblical Daniel who has read the minds of all women. Citing that "all women dream of having boyfriends or husbands who are handsome and rich", Syed's discovery has found the elusive common ground among women of all races, age groups, and background. Surely one could not have missed out the fact that the impoverished women of say, Nepal, constantly dream of rich, handsome Shah Rukh Khan descending from his Bollywood throne to embrace them with money and riches. What were our other social critics doing?

I, as a woman indeed echo this sentiment. Daily I spend my time dreaming of trips to Italy and France, and of Marco Materazzi and Zinedine Zidane. For that is the life! What are studies, career, or social obligations when compared to this everywoman dream? Dust, I tell you!

My one and only goal in life is to own a substantial amount of pocket money to splash on whatever catches my fancy. Surely that is what is innate to all human beings!

Hence that explains some Malaysians' nastiness, brutishness, and selfishness especially on the road! But I am a woman who only thinks about money, France, and Italy! So why do I care? If I ever see Syed getting up a bus beside me, the first thing I will do is to shove him aside unless he is rich and handsome, and plays football for France or Italy!

Such mindsets like that of Syed's are the cause and the root of the corrosion of character in Malaysia.

First he reduces women's minds to mere cash registers, then attempts to justify this by reading their dreams.

Then, in the vein of a seasoned "sleep with me" bomoh, he carries on to claim that the 21st century is "materialistic" and that we should tolerate it, condone even, perhaps.

He tells us to wake up and inhale the scent of money in the air.

This stereotype not only demeans the worth of women as thinking human beings, but is an injustice to men! Such a lifestyle pushes back the fight for gender equality to the Stone Ages! Perhaps it is Syed who should move with the times!

Syed's view echoes a bitter and dejected notion of marriage as a mere economic contract, a popular trend in the Dark Ages of Europe rife with plague. His statement that "A woman marries a man for security" completely wipes out the importance of love and understanding crucial to any relationship. Perhaps Syed is trying to 'educate' our young in the creed that 'money conquers all'?

Where is the mutual understanding and fairness to each other if the husband is the one who constantly provides while the wife laps it up? And to go back one step, is he implying that this is in fact the trend amongst our educated, aspiring, and successful young Malaysian women?

I am deeply saddened that the evils of the consumerist culture has decided to reveal itself in the form of such a tirade.