

continuing to take a back seat to her desire for power and control, many men are turned off by this and look back to having a more traditional woman as our partner.” This site also disparages feminists as “feminazis” claiming radical feminists especially “want a man to be sensitive to their needs and desires to the point of losing everything about him that makes him a man.”

Stated in the 2007 UN report on trafficking, the women on these websites commonly pay high fees to the agencies, including travel costs. These debts can become barriers to personal freedom if the purchasing husbands restrict their ability to repay. Sigma Huda, UN Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, further explains these purchased bride marriages often become “forced marriages because women are not free to leave due to immigration status and a risk of deportation if they leave the marriage... isolation, economic dependence and fear of husbands” are additional barriers that brokered women experience, along with a high risk of violence and abuse because of a predetermined power imbalance.

In several publications, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women includes mail and web order brides when it defines sexual exploitation, as an aspect of prostitution. Sheila Jefferys, scholar and political activist takes this further, equating the industry with trafficking, based on her position of traditional marriage as prostitution. Jefferys uses the example of India, where trafficked women are also trafficked into marriage; a woman can be bought for marriage for around 300 dollars. Additionally, she points out the pimping out of the brides to other men by some husbands, as well as the sexual use that they are subjected to by the husbands themselves. She considers the main difference between street or brothel prostitution and forced brokered marriage to be “the number of men that the woman is sexually used by. In marriage, there are usually fewer than in prostitution.”

The website, BigBadChineseMama.com, is another rebuke to the bride industry. Sarcastically beginning with “[h]ere, you will find the ‘demure lotus blossoms,’ the ‘geishas,’ the ‘oriental sluts’.” This goes on to suggest that men interested in mail order brides are fulfilling their “patriarchal, colonialist longings of global conquest,” asserting that males are only claiming what they are entitled to. The site continues to claim the brides are “Third world women” who come from poor families and a low social status which may force them to enter the multi-billion dollar sex industry by working in “sex resorts” or being sold off as mail-order brides. The “women in real mail-order bride websites do not “fantasize” about loving you, but seek overseas marriage to escape the usually brutal and semi-slave like conditions that living as a sex worker entails.” In a section containing “brides in action” BigBadChineseMama.com also



*A Poster for a Documentary on Filipino Mail Order Brides*

places these words in a man’s mouth: “Thank God for your site! I am a pathetic lonely man who needed porn sites because real women won’t pay me any attention. But now, I have a sweet Asian flower kicking my butt everyday.”

Some feminists reject this theorizing, claiming web order brides to be, as Nora Demleitner, academic and jurist suggests, “free agents, voluntary actors, highly adventurous, courageous, strong-willed and resourceful individuals.” Sheila Jefferys responds to this denial of victimization by stating that feminist theory should not be abandoned because of perceived insult to women: “There should be no necessary contradiction between recognizing the harms women suffer from male dominance as well as their courage and resourcefulness in dealing with them.”

Canada’s inaction in regulating this industry has left the door open for women around the world to be exploited by Canadians in Canada. Flying under the immigration radar, women entering Canada as mail order brides, regardless of legality, are arriving unaware and in many cases incapable of exercising their basic human rights.

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