

“Civilizing” the “Barbaric” Child: The Case of the Khadr

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Submitted: October 31, 2021

Accepted: March 14, 2022

ABSTRACT

In this article I explore the Khadr family through shifting Canadian news media representations and the CBC’s documentaries, “Al Qaeda’s Family” and “Out of the Shadows.” Omar Khadr and his parents, Maha Elsamnah and Ahmed Khadr, came to be framed as a “bad” Muslim family as a result of supposed failed (Muslim) parenting. I interrogate how media attach Omar Khadr’s acts of violence to orientalist images of the violent (terrorist) Muslim family, and framed Elsamnah and Ahmed Khadr as foreign and un-Canadian parents, unable and unwilling to socialize their children within the Canadian state order. When Omar Khadr was released from prison, it was only under the guidance of his white lawyer, Dennis Edney, that he could be rehabilitated and brought back into Canadian society in Canadian news media framings. In order for Khadr to be portrayed as worthy of reentering Canada, images of him practicing his religion, wearing non-Western clothing, and even speaking Arabic were subdued. It is within the images of Khadr in the Edney home, severing his relationship with his family, that the Canadian public could be reassured that Khadr would be able to reinvent himself as a Canadian citizen, a child soldier, rather than a Muslim terrorist.

Keywords

Omar Khadr; Family; Canada; Terror; News Media; Race; Gender; Adoption.

On 11 October 2001, *The Globe and Mail* published an article titled, "Muslim Militant or Family Man: Terrorist Suspect has Many Faces" (Stackhouse A4). The article is about Omar Khadr's father Ahmed Said Khadr, whom media frequently describe as the "patriarch" of the "first family of terrorism in Canada" (Blatchford, "The Rule of Law, Upheld" A21; Blatchford, "Sitting Down for the Judge" A6; Greenberg A16; "Unleashing CSIS" A11; Ziyaad D8). What is striking about this article's title is the word "or," as if fatherhood and violence are mutually exclusive. That the senior Khadr could be a Muslim man involved in militancy and have a family is newsworthy.¹ What exactly makes fatherhood and violence incongruent with one another? There seems to be a disconnect between fatherhood and violence, and there also seems to be a leap in popular media where fathers who are accused of terrorism are connected to violence within the home and therefore disconnected from Canadian fatherhood. In a Canadian context, Canadian fathers are often imagined as non-violent; theories around the home as a space that is conceptually safe and comforting informs myths about normative Canadian families, even though feminist analyses of the "home" illustrate that this space rarely meets this ideal (Hill Collins 68).

In order to delve into how family and parenting are conceptualized in connection to portrayals of Muslim families in Canada, I examine Canadian news media's shifting representations of Omar Khadr and his parents, Maha Elsamanah and Ahmed Khadr, to explore how they came to be framed as a "bad" Muslim family as a result of supposed failed (Muslim) parenting.² As a result, when Omar Khadr was released from prison, it was only under the guidance of his white lawyer, Dennis Edney, that he could be rehabilitated and brought back into Canadian society in Canadian media and state framings. For Khadr to reintegrate into Canadian society and exist as a Canadian citizen who is not

1. Another example is when CBC's *The National* released "Al Qaeda's Family." The *Washington Post* published an article soon after titled, "TV Film Portrays Bin Laden as Father." The article states, "A Canadian television documentary about a family closely linked to Osama bin Laden portrays the al Qaeda chief as a family man who banned ice in drinks, loves volleyball and has trouble controlling his children" (Ljunggren). In the CBC's *The National*'s interview, Zaynab Khadr and Abdurahman emphasized that bin Laden was a "normal human being," a "father," and "a person," and that he made time to read poetry with his children, and played sports and games with the children in the communities (McKenna, "Al Qaeda's Family").

2. I draw on the concepts of "good" and "bad" Muslims, and further, "good" immigrants and "bad" immigrants, from Mahmood Mamdani's work; Mamdani argues all Muslims are assumed to be "bad" until proven to be "good" (15). Mamdani explains that "good Muslims are modern, secular, and Westernized, but bad Muslims are doctrinal, anti-modern, and virulent" (24).

perceived as a threat to the public, Canadian law demanded that he distance himself from his family. This is evident in some of his bail conditions which not only required Khadr to live with the Edneys, but also indicated that he could only leave Alberta to go to the Edneys' vacation home in B.C., and that he could only speak to his family in English under Dennis Edney's supervision.

I examine how shifting media representations of the Khadr draw on the family's incongruities with normative understandings of Canadian families as non-violent and how such representations demonstrate parallels between race and the "good" family. Canadian media portrayals raise doubts about Ahmed Khadr and Maha Elsamnah's parenting which open up questions about normative "safe" homes and normative motherhood and fatherhood. Media portrayed how Elsamnah and Ahmed Khadr, framed as foreign and un-Canadian, produced and nurtured children who were prone to violence. In the latter half of this article, I explore how the Canadian state becomes the saviour of Omar Khadr. The image of the violent Muslim home relies on the image of the "good" Canadian home and orientalist perceptions of Muslim motherhood and fatherhood. As a result, in much of the news media coverage of Khadr being unable to reconnect with his family, the question of loss does not arise as a negative repercussion of being placed in the Edneys' home in media narratives. What Khadr loses in terms of his kinship, religion, and culture are not framed as losses that should be mourned.

Images of "dangerous Muslim men" and "imperiled Muslim women" (Razack, *Casting Out*) bleed into the private sphere and inform framings of supposedly violent Muslim families. The image of the "bad" Muslim family is measured against the image of the "good" Canadian family: while the "bad" Muslim family is constituted as patriarchal, polygamous, prone to domestic violence, and encourages children to put culture and religion first, the "good" Canadian family is egalitarian, monogamous, safe, and allows children to be individuals. The purportedly "bad" Muslim family is imagined as the reproductive site of "terrorist pathology" (Bhattacharyya 56-57; Puar, "Genealogies of Terrorism" par. 4; Razack, "The Manufacture" 63-64), and is associated with images of the "terrorist" father who is an "Oriental despot" (Razack, *Casting Out* "Monster Terrorist" par. 1). The image in popular media of the Western father (which is closely linked to how white Canadian fathers are conceptualized) as heroic, protective, self-sacrificing, and never violent towards his partner and children emerges in opposition to images of the Eastern father, who is authoritarian, hostile, a patriarch, and who rules his home employing violence against his wife and children. The Eastern home in many Western representations is associated with "custom" and "tradition," a space rife with generational conflict, where children must reproduce the ideologies that their parents supposedly impose on them (Ahmed 134-135). Even prior to 9/11, media tended to focus

on women of colour specifically if they discussed the abuse they experienced at the hands of those in their communities (Jiwani, "On the Outskirts" 60). Sunera Thobani explores in depth how the immigrant family in Canada (with whom the Muslim family is often associated) is "constituted as hyperpatriarchal at best, and pathologically dysfunctional at worst" (109). In popular depictions of immigrant families, we see how breaking from their family and tradition helps to align immigrant women and children with the Western nation (Ahmed 148).

With that said, the imagined "good" Canadian family can also include Muslim Canadian families. For Muslim women to be read as "good," for example, they must reproduce the ideologies of the Canadian nation. Jasmin Zine argues that women covering their heads or faces are not only seen as undesirable immigrants and citizens, but they are also portrayed as a threat to the nation itself (147). Muslim women who are anti-hijabi and publicly express their gratitude for the West's attempts to "liberate" Muslim women are portrayed as "good" Muslim women, while purportedly "bad" Muslim women continue to veil themselves (Thobani 237), and resist the West's philanthropic interventions to "save" them. "Bad" Muslim women are viewed as being oblivious to the male dominance in Muslim communities, and they are seen to embrace Islam without simultaneously embracing Western norms and values (Thobani 237). Gargi Bhattacharyya argues that the "extremist mother" emerges as a figure who "conflate[s] motherly love and filial duty with celebrations of violence," and is willing to sacrifice her children in the name of culture and/or religion (53). The figure of the "extremist mother" is said to facilitate in reproducing terrorist violence that finds its roots in failed parenting, which is evidenced in the lack of "affective family relations" that purportedly produce balanced citizens in the West (53). Muslim women's supposed capacity to reproduce children that will pursue extremist Muslim religious ideologies and violence means that the figure of the "bad" Muslim woman can literally give life to the terrorist.

Disassociating the normative "egalitarian" Western home from the purportedly violent and "despotic" Eastern home that forces (violent) "culture" and/or religion on children, works to reaffirm the "goodness" of white Canadian parents and the Canadian state, as well as affirm the "goodness" of ethnic bodies that adhere to normative family dynamics through processes of assimilation that leave traditions "behind." Affirming orientalist framings of the "dysfunctional" Muslim family (assumed to be immigrants) helps to consolidate the white Canadian family in media narratives as the "good" family, that is nuclear, hetero/homonormative, and nonviolent, where children are able to be individuals who can choose who they want to be and are not attached to tradition or religion.

In a Canadian context, one can cite numerous examples of how the nation reproduces images of the "good family," even if these ideals are not consistently performed by Canada's citizenry. The state shapes the rhetoric around family

and ties it to nation building (Beaman 13), and deciphers which families are named as worthy of the rights of Canadian citizenship because they are presented as conforming to Canadian family “values,” such as those who are heteronormative and middle-class, produce non-violent and consistency children, and adhere to dominant marriage and kinship norms. Franca Iacovetta’s work on the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto illustrates that this Institute operated in the post-WWII years and counsellors encouraged clients to pursue a “stable family environment,” which ideally consisted of working husbands, and moral and loving mothers who kept house (Iacovetta 272). “Financial success” was viewed by the Institute’s director as necessary for immigrants to adjust in Canada (Iacovetta 272). Thobani argues, too, that in the post-WWII era, the emergence of the welfare state facilitated the reconstitution of Canadians as compassionate and caring citizens, and their families, by extension, were constructed as egalitarian despite the existence of classism and heterosexism within them (108). The traditional, nuclear, middle-class family ideal is central to the formation of the Canadian nation, which necessarily differentiated the experiences of Indigenous families and families of colour (Thobani 113). The state dictates which family formations are legitimate, and which types of families are healthy for children, that is: which families will foster children’s growth as future consistency citizens?

Leti Volpp argues that in the post-9/11 era, nationalist discourses have reinscribed Western gender roles (which are linked to traditional Canadian family formations) through the masculine citizen-soldier, the patriotic wife and mother, and the properly reproductive family (1590). Catherine Scott, too, explains that media narratives in the post-9/11 era depicted the Taliban and Saddam Hussein as using their power to indoctrinate youth, while media depicted U.S. soldiers as “restoring kids’ worlds in ways that look similar to US kids” (102). Scott states that, even though women served in the U.S. military in record numbers after 9/11, media narratives still focused on male soldiers protecting families in the U.S. and a domestic sphere mostly made up of women and children back home (110). In this way, the War on Terror was also depicted as a fight to maintain the traditional family structure, where protecting domestic life seemed natural (Scott 110). Thus, the War on Terror secured Western (white) male identity as it (re)asserted the male citizen as the protector of women and their bodies (Rygiel 151).

Methodology

Since Omar Khadr’s incarceration in 2002, he has garnered intense media attention. Using “Omar Khadr” as the keyword searches in both *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post*, it became evident quickly that the coverage of Omar

Khadr frequently referenced his father. I also chose to include an analysis of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC)'s documentaries "Al Qaeda's Family" and "Out of the Shadows" because so much of what is written about the Khadr, both within news media and academic analyses, include references to the former documentary. "Out of the Shadows" was Omar Khadr's first public interview after his release from Canadian prison. Though "Out of the Shadows" is seemingly sympathetic to Omar Khadr, the documentary illustrates how the Canadian state disciplines racialized bodies into adhering to the state order, and it is through this adherence that portrayals of Omar Khadr shift from the "terrorist child" of a "fundamentalist family" who should be evicted from the nation, to the misguided child soldier who should be saved by the nation under the supervision of his white lawyer, Dennis Edney, and his family.

Omar Khadr

In 2002, news broke that U.S. military forces had detained Ahmed Khadr's second youngest son, Omar Khadr. Omar was detained at the age of 15 for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a member of the U.S. military, Sergeant Speer, in Afghanistan. It is still unclear whether he was actually responsible for the death of the U.S. soldier.³ He was held in Guantanamo Bay for ten years where he was interrogated by CSIS officials without legal counsel and subjected to various methods of torture. In addition, these agents knew that he had been subjected to sleep deprivation, and that the information gained would be shared with the U.S. In 2010, Omar accepted a plea bargain; he pled guilty to war crimes before a military commission so that he would be moved to a Canadian facility to continue an eight-year prison sentence. In 2012 he was moved to a Canadian maximum security prison and was released in Spring 2015 on bail, after which he lived with his lawyer, Dennis Edney. In 2017 it was leaked to the public that the Canadian government quietly offered Omar Khadr an apology and a \$10.5 million settlement for violating his human rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This leak led to a frenzy of media attention debating whether or not Khadr was "deserving" of an apology and settlement, and what alternatives the government could have pursued. Omar Khadr was the last Western national left in Guantanamo Bay, and many argued that he should have been treated as a child soldier.

3. For example, there are changes in the battle report that originally state that the person who threw the grenade had died. See Shephard, "At Omar Khadr Hearing, U.S. Officer Explains Changing Battle Report," and Williamson (10-12).

Khadr Family Background

Ahmed Said Khadr immigrated to Canada from Egypt in 1975 and married Maha Elsamnah, a Canadian citizen from Palestine (Shephard 18-20). The couple had seven children, one of whom died in early childhood (Shephard 31). In 1985, during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Khadrs moved to Peshawar, Pakistan, and Ahmed Khadr worked for Human Concern International, a Canadian charity that helped Afghan refugees (Shephard 38). The family travelled back and forth between Pakistan and Canada, sometimes making more than one visit a year (Shephard 26). Ahmed Khadr began to appear in Canadian media when he was accused of financing the November 1995 bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad. Pakistani police took Ahmed Khadr into custody that December when he was interrogated for five days by both Egyptian and Pakistani officials, and was blindfolded, threatened, and had his hair pulled (Shephard 48-49). Pakistani authorities held Khadr without charges, and Elsamnah sought the help of the Canadian High Commission in Islamabad. In January 1996, then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Team Canada went on a trade mission to Pakistan, and it was there that Elsamnah pursued Team Canada, held a press conference, and met with Chrétien. Chrétien took up Khadr's case with the Bhutto government, and he was assured that Khadr would be granted a fair trial (Shephard 54). Pakistani authorities ended up charging Khadr, but, within three months of Chrétien's visit, he was released on bail and the charges were eventually dropped. Publicity about Ahmed Khadr's connection to Osama bin Laden in 1998, and further news media reports about this connection in 2001, would help to create what is now known as the "Khadr Effect." The "Khadr Effect" often refers to the reluctance of many politicians, including Chrétien, to advocate for Omar Khadr because of Chrétien's intervention for Ahmed Khadr, who turned out to be potentially involved in terrorism (Khan, "Politics Over Principles" 54; Kielburger 88; Macklin 222).

What the media chose to include in stories about Ahmed Khadr in their coverage of Omar Khadr is of central importance to this analysis. That certain aspects of Ahmed Khadr's life were repeatedly stated in Canadian media while other aspects of his life were not mentioned helped to construct Ahmed Khadr as a father who is a "Canadian of convenience" (Friscolanti, "Lawsuit to Target Khadrs" A1; Greenberg A16; Martin A14), and helped to disconnect him from Canadianness, and therefore, Canadian fatherhood. For example, Canadian media frequently mention that he and his family used the Canadian healthcare system while living abroad, but, while *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* mention that Ahmed Khadr went to the University of Ottawa, not once do they state that he held a master's degree in Engineering from the University. Media reports often note that the Khadrs went long periods of time without living in

Canada, which suggests to readers that the Khadr's did not attempt to Canadianize. Instead, politicians and media, throughout Omar Khadr's detention, excavated Ahmed Khadr and Elsamnah's history of accessing Canadian health-care services. For example, in 2002, *The Globe* ran a story where they interviewed a family friend of the Khadr's. The article states that the Khadr's "gave up their quiet, middle-class existence after the Russian army invaded Afghanistan." The friend recalls "that the family returned to Ottawa a few years later to take advantage of Canadian health care" because Ahmed Khadr hurt his arm during a bombing (Freeze and Boyd A1). That Ahmed Khadr, once a middle-class father, moved his family from Canada, suggests that even those who appear to be "good" immigrants can be influenced by extremist Islamic ideology.

The Khadr family appears as Canadian in citizenship *only*, and not Canadian in terms of values or lifestyle choices. In another *Globe and Mail* article, Ahmed Khadr is named the father of a "viperous clan" and states that he "long exploited his Canadian citizenship and CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] funding to support al-Qaeda's global jihad, only returning to Canada for free health care and to raise money in the mosques" (Grady, "From far and wide"). In this article, Ahmed Khadr is again represented as having abused the Canadian healthcare system and Canadian charity funds and exploiting the goodwill of Canadians. Khadr is not portrayed as a father who makes an honest living and raises a "respectable" family; rather he is portrayed as taking advantage of Canadian generosity. As a result, in these depictions, Canadians emerge as generous and kind, and the "bad" Muslim family emerges as abusing the system and the kindness of fellow citizens.

Maha Elsamnah: Framing the "Mother of Terror"

Elsamnah is a key figure in the imagining of the "bad" Muslim family that does not assimilate to Canadian customs. Historical narratives of "good" mothers in Canada inform media framings of Elsamnah as a mother who has led her children to the violence of terrorism. Mariana Valverde traces how feminist ideologies in Canada, particularly first wave feminism, were based in the eugenics movement and ensured that the "mothers of the race" were racially pure (Anglo-Saxon and Protestant), but she also argues that often race was not specifically named. Valverde explains that rather than naming race as a physical characteristic that made women of colour less suited for motherhood, it was suggested that they came from cultures that made them less fit as mothers (20). The Canadian government also attempted to regulate the sexuality and fertility of women from "non-preferred" races because they were said to pose a threat to the "nation's purity" (Thobani 109). To restrict the fertility of women

that supposedly threatened the state's "purity," sterilization of economically disadvantaged women, Indigenous women, and people with disabilities were conducted so that they would not reproduce citizens who were thought to be "unfit" (Stote 125). Therefore, immigrant women (with whom Muslim women are often associated) have historically garnered state attention for their pivotal role in ensuring that their children assimilate and become "productive" members in Canadian society.

The Khadrs are portrayed as having too many children, denying their children adequate education, and passing on anti-West ideology to their children. Frequent references in Canadian news media to the number of Khadr children are noteworthy as concerns about immigrant women's fertility are heavily connected to ideologies around racial purity ("A Quick Sketch"; Bell, "FBI Hunts" A1; Bell, "Khadr Does not Want" A1; Bell, "Khadr Killed" A1; Bell, "Khadrs Reveal" A1; Bell, "RCMP Fears Return of Family" A4; Freeze, "Black Sheep" 1; Freeze, "CSIS Watches" 1; Freeze, "Khadrs Backed" 1; Mackinnon and Freeze 1; Vincent A1). Elsamnah's fecundity is also portrayed as troubling because she is represented in numerous news articles as having instilled a hyper-misogynist Muslim culture in her children. There were reports in Canadian news media, for example, that she wanted her sons to be "Islamic warriors" (Freeze, "Khadrs Backed" 1), training camps in Afghanistan instilled "proper values" in her sons (Freeze, "No Connection" A3), and that raising her children would result in "drugs [use] and homosexual relationships" (Greco, "Keeping up with the Khadrs"). As Enakshi Dua reminds us, white middle and upper-class women were not just responsible for biological reproduction, but also the social reproduction of the next generation of empire-builders (252). Therefore, representations of "good" mothers involve socialization of their children into Canadian "values," such as consistency ideologies, and the Canadian state's narrow definitions of gender equality.

Elsamnah defied normative framings of the "imperiled Muslim woman" (Razack, "A Typical Month" *Casting Out* par. 4), when in 2004 she appeared in the CBC documentary, "Al Qaeda's Family" (which aired on their flagship news program *The National* and was also taken up by *PBS Frontline* using the title, "Son of al-Qaeda"). Her autonomy in this documentary appeared as sinister and disruptive to national narratives of womanhood, where the state encourages women to become part of the imperial machinery. Elsamnah appeared with her eldest daughter Zaynab Khadr in the documentary, both wearing the niqab (6:50-7:45) and they made it clear that they did not reproduce the ideologies of Canadian nationalism. Their criticism of Western interventions in the Middle East in this segment, particularly in the immediate post-9/11 climate, framed Elsamnah as anti-Canadian because politicians and many media presented the invasion of Afghanistan as a mission to save Afghan women from the horrors of the Taliban's patriarchy (6:50-7:45). Elsamnah and Zaynab Khadr attempted

to contextualize their position within a wider system of global politics of resistance, particularly in Afghanistan, which had been plagued by decades of occupation, first by British colonial rule, then by the Russians in 1979, and the United States in 2001. Their statements, however, were often interpreted in both news media and political conversations as supporting terrorism and suggesting 9/11 victims deserved violence, rather than a criticism of U.S. global imperialism. As then President George W. Bush stated: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" ("President Bush Addresses the Nation"), homogenizing any opposition to the U.S. invasion as supporters of the Taliban. Bush's framework ensured that any resistances to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan would be read as support for terrorism, and within this context, Elsamnah's comments immediately aligned her with terrorist violence in Western media portrayals.

Sherene Razack explores how, even during Omar Khadr's trial, his military lawyer, Bill Kuebler, brought up Elsamnah and Zaynab Khadr's comments in "Al Qaeda's Family," and took up the argument that the Khadr family should be held responsible for Omar Khadr's circumstances; it was not the justice system that had wronged Omar Khadr, it was his family (69). Omar Khadr's alleged acts of violence were framed as connected to his mother's comments and as something for which he should be held responsible. Omar Khadr was unable to be disaggregated from his parents' actions. Elsamnah and her eldest daughter Zaynab's statements were frequently referenced in media reports as proof of the Khadr's disloyalty to the West, and Canada specifically. Elsamnah is framed by news media, and also frames herself, as an extension of her husband's character. She is represented as willing to submit to patriarchal Islamic ideologies and willing to accept her own subordination and the subordination of her daughters. Such media framings invariably invoke narratives of Canadian benevolence in understanding Elsamnah, as they present Canada as a place where Muslim women are freed from their "patriarchal cultures." But, instead of seeking a "better life," Elsamnah is represented as squandering the opportunities that Canada so generously offered her.

In her analysis of this segment, Yasmin Jiwani explains that Elsamnah appears here as the "extremist mother" (a term she borrows from Bhattacharyya 51-52) ("Trapped in the Carceral Net" 22). She explains that Elsamnah comes to be perceived as a dangerous Muslim woman, a mother figure who is "regarded as inept, fostering irrational hatred in her offspring" (Jiwani 22). Elsamnah was not represented as a grieving mother whose child was detained in Guantanamo Bay, or as a Muslim woman who is the victim of patriarchal religion and culture, and therefore was not portrayed as "worthy" of the viewer's compassion (Jiwani 378). As a supporter, or even an active participant, in a religion, culture, and family that is deemed hyper-misogynist and supportive of terrorism, she emerges as the extremist mother, and, like her children, she is seen as

someone who must be contained (Jiwani 378). Elsamnah was presented, and in some respects presented herself, as everything a purportedly "good" Canadian mother should not be: a strain on social services, homophobic, against Western interventions (particularly to "save" women), and the mother of many overly violent and hypermasculine children. Canadian media and politicians ensured that Elsamnah's statements would remain at the fore of Omar Khadr's case. Media reference this footage repeatedly when reporting on Omar Khadr, so that some have argued that Elsamnah and Zaynab Khadr's interview negatively affected Omar Khadr's circumstances (Kielburger 88; Macklin 222).

The Metaphorical Adoption

Omar Khadr was deemed a terrorist by most Canadian media, but more recently has received some sympathetic media coverage. In 2015 Khadr was released on bail from prison in Canada, and went to live with his lawyer, Dennis Edney. Shortly after his release, the CBC aired a new documentary, "Omar Khadr: Out of the Shadows," where the Canadian public had the opportunity to hear from Omar Khadr himself. Dennis Edney appears at the beginning of the documentary in his home with his wife, Patricia Edney, as they discuss Khadr's case prior to his release. Dennis Edney lets reporters know that Khadr will not have a "lengthy conversation" with them but explains that Khadr needs to address the Canadian public (Reed 00:3:20-3:40). Khadr stands outside the house and speaks to reporters; he is jovial at times as he jokes with reporters and Dennis Edney (00:04:10-04:44). Dennis and Patricia Edney appear as guardians to Omar Khadr, as he stays in their home and attempts to reestablish his life outside of detention. This documentary is in stark contrast to the images of the Khadr family to which the Canadian public were exposed in 2004 in "Al Qaeda's Family" where we see the Khadr family doing interviews in dark rooms and confined spaces; the Edney home, conversely, appears bright and airy. In "Out of the Shadows" the Edney home is quiet with birds chirping in the background (00:42:23), and this differs significantly from the prison footage of Omar Khadr (00:24:00-25:45), and the images of Omar Khadr's father in Afghanistan (00:16:41-17:40). In "Out of the Shadows" Omar Khadr is also literally out of the shadowy spaces of the Khadr family and in the light of the loving embrace of the Edney home. It is here that he develops a new kinship relationship with the Edneys, represented as a move away from his biological family. For Khadr to reinvent himself to the Canadian public as unthreatening and a respectable member of Canadian society, his family must also be reinvented: he must settle into a suburban life with his white lawyer, a life of vacation homes, two pet dogs, and bacon and eggs for breakfast (00:19:26).

Dennis Edney is represented as a paternal figure in this documentary, and indeed a paternal figure in much of the media coverage of Omar Khadr in the few months leading up to, and after, Omar Khadr's release. Patricia Edney explained in an interview with CBC's *As it Happens* that Dennis Edney, "has seen Omar grow from a young injured man–boy–to a tall confident, talented man" ("Patricia Edney" 00:03:36). Patricia Edney describes their life with Khadr, including going bike riding, shopping, and buying clothes together ("Patricia Edney" 00:0:45-1:10). This news media coverage of Khadr being taken into the home of the Edneys and adjusting to a new lifestyle (that is, the Edneys' lifestyle) brings Khadr closer to Canadianness by demonstrating his ability to assimilate into a new life, and a new *family*. Taking on a new family is what the Canadian state legally demanded of Khadr if he wanted to leave prison, but the Canadian state here also intervenes to "protect" Khadr from his family. His childhood, in "Out of the Shadows," is fraught with violence, wars, and foreignness, inhabited by people wearing non-Western clothing and speaking foreign languages—this part of his life is portrayed as something other than Canadian (00:10:15-11:00; 00:11:20-11:35; 00:12:00-14:00). In "Out of the Shadows" Khadr is not shown practicing Islam and he is always in Western garb. He speaks eloquently about the employment and education that he wants to pursue, bringing him in closer proximity to the normative Canadian young adult (00:41:00-00:42:10). It is also noteworthy that Dennis Edney is originally from Scotland, and Khadr from Canada, but it is Dennis Edney who brings Khadr closer to Canadianness. In this way Canadianness gets tied to whiteness and white bodies, as we witness benevolent white parents intervene when parents of colour are said to "fail" their children. For example, as Khadr and Dennis Edney sit outside the Edneys' home in the documentary, Dennis Edney states: "I was aware that every adult figure that you had come in touch with had misused you, including your father" (00:27:45-27:55).

The documentary has an affective quality, where the Edneys' bright home is frequently inhabited by smiling or laughing people. Sara Ahmed describes how the feeling of happiness becomes associated with particular objects (25), but she also argues that certain objects also "come to embody a good life" (33). Happiness teaches us to be affected by objects in the "right way" (Ahmed 36) and Khadr's proximity to the happy objects in the documentary make him appear as though he is also in close proximity to a "good life," that is, a Canadian life. If family life is supposed to be a space of happiness (Ahmed 45), in "Out of the Shadows, the Edneys offer Khadr the happiness that his own family did not. This happiness comes through the images of a happy *Canadian* family where children can make choices and be free individuals. As Ahmed argues, in the West it is assumed that people are individuals who can be whoever they want (134). If audiences are to believe that Khadr is no longer the terrorist other,

and really is in the process of rehabilitation, viewers must see Khadr as being integrated into Canadian multicultural ethos where his racial and cultural differences are subdued.

In this documentary, Khadr is surrounded by a middle-class life of comfort, choice, and consumption, where he is free to choose what he eats for breakfast, shop for the clothes that he likes to wear, or go on a hike or bike ride. While representations of Khadr once situated him within a family that forced him into a life of jihad, there is a shift in the documentary that reframes the Canadian state as providing him with the choice to pursue a life of happiness. Khadr, in other words, in "Out of the Shadows," can be an individual who is not influenced by his family's religious ideology and hatred for the West; as Ahmed argues, "Freedom takes form as proximity to whiteness" (135). What remains unaccounted for are the political, social, and economic factors that produce the "happy" Canadian family, but that also produce the conditions of war that created the purportedly "bad" Muslim family.

Other Canadian media reproduced this narrative of rehabilitation through Khadr's association with the Edneys as well. Khadr's supporters often agreed with his separation from his family so that he could be rehabilitated and re-integrated into Canadian society, which reifies normative white Canadian identity and fails to challenge how these discourses draw on the systemic injustices that many "hyphenated" Canadians experience every day (Mackey 120-121). For example, *Maclean's* ran a story titled, "Omar Khadr's Next Home" which includes an interview with Dennis Edney. The article states that Omar Khadr was "shuttled between Pakistan and Afghanistan" (but not Canada), where he once lived on a compound with Osama bin Laden (Friscolanti, "Omar Khadr's Next Home"). The article actually states that Omar Khadr has little connection to Canada: "Khadr will walk into a home—and a world, for that matter—he has never seen. Even before he was locked up, he had little connection to the West; though born in Canada, he lived here only a few weeks before 9/11, when an uncle took him to a Toronto Blue Jays game" (Friscolanti). The mention of 9/11 discursively links Omar Khadr to the attack, and there is no mention of Khadr's grandparents who live in Toronto, nor is there mention of the Khadr family moving back and forth to Canada. Disconnecting Khadr from Canada and the West implies that the Edney family will be what (re)connects him to Canada. Home for Khadr now, the article tells us, will be "an upscale Edmonton neighbourhood, where he will share suppers with his lawyer's family and walk their dogs (Jasper and Molly, both labs) around the block" (Friscolanti). We see this emphasis on the Edneys' dogs in "Out of the Shadows" as well, where the camera frequently pans to the dogs (00:01:24; 00:18:42; 00:19:27; 00:20:25; 00:26:39; 00:36:18; 00:40:14). These images of dogs in the Edney home help to illustrate the homeliness of the space where even the animals are happy. It is also noteworthy that

permitting dogs in the home is a controversial topic in Islam, and therefore, many Muslim households do not allow dogs inside the home.⁴ Dogs, then, become a marker of a home that is not stereotypically a Muslim home, thus, shifting the portrayal of Khadr away from Muslimness and bringing him closer to a home that is not depicted as “tainted” with Islamic ideology.

The *Maclean's* article quotes Dennis Edney: “He can look forward to a loving household and solid family...A family that has good values, a family that talks to each other, a family that hugs and kisses each other. I say it with a bit of pride: Our family is not a bad place to start” (Friscolanti, “Omar Khadr’s Next Home”). Including this quote marks the Edney family as everything the Khadr family is not: a family that loves, shows affection, but most importantly has *good* values; whatever “good” values are, the Khadr family does not possess them in this statement because it is the Edney family that is stated to be providing the “start” of this kind of family life for Khadr. We do not see images of the Khadr family’s displays of affection toward each other, but we see Patricia Edney hug Omar (00:18:51), and Dennis gives him a kiss on the forehead in “Out of the Shadows” (00:42:24). There is an attempt in this scene to tame difference. In such representational frameworks, Khadr’s integration into Canadian society, and his ability to be Canadian comes through the Canadian state’s and the Edney family’s redirection of Khadr towards whiteness. Dennis Edney makes this clear when he says that Khadr can sleep in any bedroom he chooses, but he will encourage him to sleep on the second floor so that he can better “integrate into [their] family” (Friscolanti, “Omar Khadr’s Next Home”). The article continues, “Khadr’s real family, long linked to al-Qaeda, will be allowed to phone but Edney is clear: ‘My home is open for Omar. It’s not for the Khadr’s’” (Friscolanti, “Omar Khadr’s Next Home”). In this media framing, it is in this home where Khadr will/can reestablish himself in a “good” Canadian family as a rehabilitated Canadian citizen, distanced from his family and Muslim ideology. That is, Khadr can be allowed back into the Canadian public realm only after he has successfully and publicly replaced his Muslim birth parents with surrogate white parents.

The relationship between Khadr and the Edneys appears genuine in the documentary, but there are colonial and imperial power relations between white parents and racialized children that inform Canadian media representations of families that emphasize racial hierarchies. Given the histories, and the racial differences between white adoptive parents and racialized children, it

4. Although it is contested, dog ownership is not necessarily forbidden in Islam, but there are a number of Hadiths that discourage Muslims from keeping dogs in their houses (Subasi 42-56).

is difficult to analyze media narratives of Khadr and the Edneys' relationship outside the colonial encounter, as it reproduces some of the dangerous tropes where white parents "save" racialized children with the assistance of the Canadian state. David Eng analyzes how transnational and transracial adoption can involve loss but expressing loss is read as ingratitude to the white benevolent family that receives the racialized child (21). In "Out of the Shadows" it is implied that Khadr should be grateful that the Edneys are willing to take him into their home, and thankful that the Canadian state (and public) "gave [him] a chance" and allowed him to stay with the Edneys (00:40:40). The arc of the narrative in "Out of the Shadows" seems to imply that Khadr should be thankful for the opportunity to be incorporated into a white middle-class household.

Adoption in Canada is fraught with a long and violent history of removing Indigenous children from their homes in order to facilitate processes of assimilation. Removing children from Indigenous families in Canada is, and was, viewed as necessary for the project of empire. For example, the Canadian state frequently removes Indigenous children from their parents and places them in the custody of, often, white families. Contemporarily, there is an overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system in Canada (Choate et. al. 2). Historically, the Adopt Indian and Metis Program of the 1960s was a method of removing many Indigenous children from their families and placing them in white homes, even when other family members could have adopted them. These adoptions facilitated the erasure of Indigenous cultures, histories, and languages through processes of assimilation (Sinclair 9). In the case of Indigenous children specifically, Allyson Stevenson states that, "The Sixties Scoop and contemporary child welfare legislation continue to erode kinship as a way of eliminating Indigenous nationhood" (quoted in Longman 16). It is often through assimilating children (through loss of language, culture, religion, and kinship) that Canadian nationalist ideals can be reproduced. While the instances of non-Indigenous children of colour and Omar Khadr are absolutely different than the circumstances of Indigenous children in Canada, there remains an attempt to produce children that will continue the project of empire. In the case of non-Indigenous children of colour in Canada, who are encouraged to assimilate, they must only display aspects of their cultures and religions that can be depoliticized and coopted in the interests of multiculturalism, in order to facilitate in continuing the colonial project of dispossessing Indigenous people of their land and resources. The relationship between the Edneys and Khadr does not erase the colonial encounter. There are racial power imbalances because Khadr will always be read as a marked body, and the circumstances that produce children like Khadr remain intact.

Conclusion

The media's focus on Ahmed Khadr and Maha Elsamnah repeatedly implies that terrorist violence is rooted in disturbed Muslim families. These narratives eclipse broader questions about what produces terrorism and, instead, acts of terrorist violence connected to unassimilable terrorist families lend themselves to anti-immigration policies and racist assumptions about Muslim families. Even narratives that are sympathetic to Omar Khadr still link his alleged act of violence to his parents' supposed indoctrination. Focusing on Ahmed Khadr and Elsamnah's parenting in media narratives exonerates the Canadian state and the Canadian public from their complicity in Omar Khadr's mistreatment. Once Khadr was released from prison, "Out of the Shadows" represented the Canadian state as able to reassert itself as the protector of children by ensuring that Khadr would be distanced from his family and placed in a home where he could be assimilated and reproduce the characteristics of normative Canadian citizenship.

Khadr distancing himself from his family and reestablishing himself in the Edney home in "Out of the Shadows" is represented as a positive shift for him. The trauma of Khadr's inability to communicate with his family without surveillance after years of detention is overshadowed by the representations of the affection shown to him by the Edney family. In order for Khadr to be portrayed to the Canadian public as a worthy citizen who should be permitted to reenter Canada, images of him practicing his religion, wearing non-Western clothing, or even speaking Arabic were subdued. The Canadian public, too, had to be reassured through the imagery in "Out of the Shadows" that Khadr would be able to reinvent himself as a Canadian citizen, a child soldier, rather than a terrorist through severing his relationship with his biological family and settling into the Edney home. It is only within the Edney home that the Canadian state decided that Khadr could be rehabilitated. In Khadr's portrayals in "Out of the Shadows," it is also within this home that Khadr can be assimilated and become a neoliberal citizen who will continue the Canadian state order. Khadr is not portrayed as upset or angry with how he was treated by the Canadian government, but is instead shown to be moving away from his family and their religious ideologies and settling into the Edney's *Canadian* lifestyle.

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