Media (Mis)Representations and the Muslim Body:

A Lived Curriculum

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Krista Sarah Baliko, candidate for the degree of Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction, has presented a thesis titled, *Media (Mis) Representations and the Muslim Body: A Lived Curriculum*, in an oral examination held on April 1, 2014. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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Abstract

My research explores the ways in which dominant media (re)presents, embodies, and constructs Omar Khadr in contradistinction to “real” Canadians, reflects upon the potential consequences of such representations for both “strangers” and “exalted subjects,” and contemplates as well ways to disrupt both these dominant and oppressive narratives. I also provide a framework for Khadr’s case as it relates to the biopolitical – that is the management of bodies by regimes of truth. To do this I analyze the larger context under which Omar Khadr’s case has unraveled by considering the ways that different techniques of management (re)produce bodies in complex ways and how a politics of fear and states of exception manifest in these exalted subjects and strangers.

Further, despite the persistence of dominant national narratives – of Canada as a fair, tolerant, equitable and accepting nation – we are still at a time in Canadian history when many examples point to the opposite being true. Thus, as the rhetoric persists while the paradoxical reality exists, it is crucial to critically examine how race, colonialism and nationhood work and intersect to oppress non-white bodies in relation to dominant discursive narratives of the nation, racialized governance, and citizenship formation. In order to investigate how these often exclusionary practices articulate with one another I analyze their materialization in media accounts of the complex case of Canadian citizen Omar Khadr through a close reading of two documents: a letter that Omar Khadr wrote to his Canadian lawyer, Dennis Edney, dated May 26, 2010, and Margaret
Wente’s *Globe and Mail* editorial entitled, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”

I then think about the “big picture” that surrounds Khadr’s case to better illustrate how a politics of fear is manifested in the bodies of exalted subjects and strangers and what some of the consequences of doing so are by considering how populations of bodies are managed and controlled. In this section I analyze how the Muslim body has been produced as a dangerous body that is separate from “real” Canadians by exploring how techniques of control – such as risk management, safety, security – are enacted upon the social body in order to obtain/maintain optimization where such regulation further establishes a separation between the exalted and the stranger.
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my family – some members who began this journey with me but were unable to see it through to the end. To Panka, for his unconditional love. He was so concerned about my schooling that he gave me a car so that I might make it back and forth from the University, especially on the coldest of winter days. Never mind that I mostly took the bus. To my dad, Les, for whom education meant so much. Although he died before he saw me finish this thesis, I know he would be proud and would wish to be in the crowd when I finally receive the piece of paper, though he knew that education should be about so much more than mere documents. To my mom Joan, for her support and encouragement, for giving me rides before the car, and for always believing in me, no matter what. To my sister Shaeya, brother-in-law Boonie, and niece Nylah – for their love and encouragement throughout the process. Their chit-chats in the middle of writing surely sustained me. To James – if not for him I doubt I would have pursued a Master’s degree at all, and, once started, would have long ago discarded this work. His loyalty, friendship, and creative problem solving has carried me through some difficult times. His respect and kindness will always be cherished. And last, but certainly not least, to Sarah. I dedicate this thesis to her. We did it! Sarah lives and breathes through these pages. To the countless drafts she read, to ensuring I was nourished throughout this journey – both physically and emotionally – this work simply would not exist if not for her unwavering love and support. She knew I could do it even when I did not. I love you.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Media is an influential tool that works to (re)produce and (re)construct identities.¹ Furthermore, because media are ubiquitous, and walk into the classrooms with teachers and learners alike, as scholar Diane Watt argues, media can be considered the “unofficial curriculum of the everyday [which is] much more influential than the formal curriculum on offer in our schools.”² Media, then, are the unofficial textbooks that everyone reads. Media teaches about the world, and it is often through media that people come to know about difference, race, and nationalism. Being aware of the power of media is necessary, in its ability to inform and to (re)construct identities. Of particular concern in this thesis are representations of Muslim bodies and dominant white bodies in a post-9/11 world, and especially as these representations relate to the case of Omar Khadr. My research explores the ways in which dominant media (re)presents, embodies, and constructs Omar Khadr in contradistinction to “real” Canadians, reflects upon the potential consequences of such representations for both “strangers” and “exalted subjects,” and contemplates as well ways to disrupt both these dominant and oppressive narratives. Moreover, I also consider how a politics of fear


manifests in the bodies\(^3\) of these exalted subjects and strangers by exploring the biopolitical – that is, how the social body is managed and controlled by regimes of truth. These bodies – entire populations of bodies – are intervened upon in order to secure optimization. Throughout the latter part of this thesis I analyze how differing techniques of control such as risk management, safety and security are used to manage bodies in order to obtain/maintain optimization and how such regulation of the population leads to a demarcation of bodies, a politics of fear and to exceptional states – circumstances in which Omar Khadr has found himself for years.

Despite the persistence of dominant national narratives – of Canada as a fair, tolerant, equitable and accepting nation – we are still at a time in Canadian history when the Prime Minister of the country can insist at a G20 meeting, without irony, that Canada has “no history of colonialism”\(^4\); when a provincial legislature can introduce a bill that would allow the legal banning of Islamic clothing – or face having basic rights such as health care and schooling denied – in order to guarantee “human rights”\(^5\); when security certificates continue to be used, mainly against Muslim men,\(^6\) even after having been deemed a violation of

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\(^3\) Throughout this thesis I use the term “body” or “bodies” to indicate both individuals and populations of people. That is, the body is taken to include both collectivity and individuality, complexity and one-dimensionality depending upon how each body or population of bodies is/are being constituted.


\(^6\) Matthew Behrens, “Between home and a hard place,” Briarpatch, June 2009.
the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by the Supreme Court of Canada.\(^7\) Thus, as the rhetoric persists while the paradoxical reality exists, it is perhaps more necessary than ever before to critically examine how race, colonialism and nationhood work and intersect to oppress non-white bodies in relation to dominant discursive narratives of the nation, racialized governance, and citizenship formation.

In order to investigate how these often exclusionary practices articulate with one another I analyze their materialization in media accounts of the complex case of Omar Khadr - a Canadian citizen who has been enmeshed in complex and controversial circumstances since 2002, when he was just fifteen years-old. Although not until 2010, Khadr was accused of, and pleaded guilty to five war crimes, including murder, for killing an American soldier in Afghanistan. Although the case itself is contentious, it is even more so because Khadr was never treated as a child soldier, which would have been the legal status of someone his age who was involved in a war, captured, and then imprisoned. After his detention he remained in legal limbo for years, in contravention of national and international laws, mostly in the American prison–base of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he also suffered under acts of torture. It is this case which I will examine through a close reading of two documents chosen for their ability to provide lenses through which racialized hierarchies can be analyzed: a letter that Omar Khadr wrote to his Canadian then-lawyer, Dennis Edney, dated May 26,

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2010 which Edney released to the media, and the editorial of a well-known and provocative editorialist, Margaret Wente, who writes for one of Canada’s leading newspapers, the *Globe and Mail*, from October 26, 2010 entitled, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”

In the next section I then attend to the larger context in order to provide a framework for Khadr’s case as it relates to the management of bodies by regimes of truth. To do so I explore the complex ways that the biopolitical encompasses and is bound with a politics of fear, states of exception, and the essentializing of the Muslim body and the constructing of the “true” Canadian, as well as how they all work to (re)produce one another.

As media theorist Douglas Kellner observes:

> Individuals are often not aware that they are being educated and constructed by media culture, as its pedagogy is frequently invisible and unconscious. This situation calls for critical approaches that make us aware of how media construct meanings, influence and educate audiences, and impose their messages and values.\(^8\)

The critical approaches Kellner calls for are certainly necessary as they pertain to Khadr, for the circumstances surrounding his life have been chiefly mediated by media, constructing much of the knowledge production around the case.\(^9\) As such, I analyze how, and the extent to which, both Muslim bodies and racialized

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white bodies are produced, represented and controlled in relation to the two aforementioned texts and through an analysis of the biopolitical, to create a clearer picture of how and why the exalted subject comes to be positioned in contradistinction to the stranger.

“*We’re at War*”

On September 11, 2001 I found myself at a bus depot trying to get to the Denver airport so that I could make my way from where I had been working – on a secluded mesa in Colorado – back to Saskatchewan, Canada. The bus depot was deserted; all that was left was a note fastened to the door in hurried scrawl: "Closed until further notice." I was perplexed. I had a flight to catch, and I had to get to Denver in order to catch it. When I finally found someone, the only person at the depot, I inquired about when there might be a next bus. "Who knows," was the reply, followed by, "We're at war. Don't you know we're at war?"

It didn't take me long to discover the events that had unfolded only hours before while I was waking up and preparing to leave my technology-free existence. And I had much time in the U.S. while waiting to get back to Canada to hear the story – at least the mainstream, dominant news stories, as they spilled out of the television screens. The expounding of binary oppositions began immediately: "us" against "them," "innocence" and "evil," "goodness" and "terrorists," "Christian" and "Muslim." The now-familiar discourse of the "war on terror," which has since become normalized and ubiquitous in media, on street
corners, in coffee shops, had only just begun; yet still, more than a decade later, this discourse continues to be played out. Even once I returned home the binary system was being employed daily, and the news media was continuously perpetuating it.

At this point, so many years later, I understand that although 9/11 was the beginning of my journey of trying to better understand and of beginning to critically analyze the way that Muslim bodies, Othered bodies, are “known,” I recognize that using this date re-inscribes the legitimacy of 9/11 as a kind of starting point for Muslims to be recognized as a people to be feared, to be identified as “dangerous,” to be treated extra-legally and as essentialized – to name a few racially motivated acts perpetrated against the Muslim body. Now I am well aware that this is not the case and that it is problematic to assume that 9/11 is such a signpost, for such Othering has a well-formed history, as Said and Shaheen, for example, have previously framed so well.

Yet it is no less true that I grew up in Regina, Saskatchewan, a small prairie city, where I routinely heard people wax racist slurs nonchalantly. My memories of these words and phrases are of them sitting uneasily with me. And yet, the phrases, and the beliefs behind the words, still appear at the ready, continuing to haunt me, and continuing to force me to question them, their

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validity, their meaning and their history. Looking back, there was a point when I started to know what I heard was wrong, but I was not yet able to articulate what I knew needed articulating – perhaps unwilling to do more than ignore at the time, and then eventually to question. And then I heard about Omar Khadr. A young Canadian who was being called a terrorist, was being tortured, and Canada was playing a role. Canada - the tolerant, peace-keeping country. Yet - not in this case. Not only in this case? I started to see a connection between the racism of my past and present, of what I heard and witnessed back in 2001, and this extraordinary case. What I began to learn is that there was nothing extraordinary about it. All of these complexities were being presented as black and white by the newspapers they were written in. Yet his case seemed to be saying something much larger about Canada, I just did not know what exactly that was, or, at least, I did not know how to express what this story had to say about the Canadian story, writ large. This story of Omar Khadr, then, is what has brought me to this particular work, and has taken me further into questioning my role in perpetuating racism in Canada.

As such, it is incumbent upon white academics to analyze whiteness as it relates to and connects with nationalism, and how these discourses normalize racisms in Canada and reveal “internal and attitudinal effects of [white] privilege.”12 It is this privileging and empowering of racialized whiteness which

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must be critically examined, for as the anti-racist educator, Zeus Leonardo argues, “when minorities resist sociological knowledge of race, they further their own oppression; when Whites resist, they further their own supremacy.”[^13] No doubt, then, that it is necessary for me to engage in this work so that I might better understand how my position as a racialized white Canadian causes me to (re)produce white privilege and white supremacy[^14] in my everyday lived experience. “White domination,” Leonardo writes, “is the responsibility of every white subject because her very being depends on it.”[^15]

Understanding my complicity in the oppressive nature of these interlocking systems of oppression, I can work from a place of deeper understanding to deconstruct and dismantle these systems. By critiquing Wente’s article about Omar Khadr I discover how this particular piece of writing contributes to the national narrative, created predominantly, although not exclusively by white, European colonials, while I also put forward ways to disrupt and challenge these discourses because I am concerned about the effects such narratives have in reproducing racisms and colonialisms in this country and beyond; and therefore my objective is to contribute to that growing body of literature seeking to challenge dominant mythologies of nation and the oppressive effects that result from them. Moreover, by delving into the biopolitical and analyzing the larger

[^15]: Ibid., 144.
context surrounding the management of bodies, which ultimately creates racialized hierarchies, I also show how a case such as Omar Khadr's comes to be not only possible, but also probable.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Because of the circumstances surrounding his life – both before and after his detention – Omar Khadr’s case has garnered much media attention. The fact that the case is primarily known through media accounts means that the knowledge that has been produced around the case, and, hence, around Omar Khadr himself, has been chiefly mediated by media.¹⁶ As such, understanding how he is represented as a Muslim man in a post-9/11 world must be examined; and interrogations of whose voices are heard, whose knowledge is valued, circulated and deemed worthy must take place. Consequently I delve into one particular media response to Khadr’s case in order to help analyze how, and the extent to which, both Muslim bodies and racialized white bodies are produced, represented and controlled in media. Omar Khadr has also written documents that have been made public, such as a sworn affidavit and letters, which have allowed an otherwise almost silent public voice, some representation. In this thesis I use one such letter, written by Kahdr to his lawyer, to represent Khadr’s voice, although in a limited manner.

As part of my review of relevant literature, I look first at a global understanding of the effects of the social construction of whiteness and Othering and how this relationship interacts and articulates with white supremacy, nationalism and colonialism – what scholar Ghassan Hage calls the phenomenon of “the structural affinity (and sometimes complicity) between what is categorized

¹⁶ Said, Covering Islam; Razack, Casting Out; Razack, Race, Space, and the Law; Thobani, Exalted Subjects.
as ‘racist’ and the discourse of the dominant culture,” as if the two were mutually exclusive. This is because there exists the idea that some people belong to the nation, while others, regardless of their actual place of birth, do not. In the West, this “belonging” is codified as whiteness, while those who do not belong are Othered, and are, according to scholar Sara Ahmed, considered, seen, and understood as “strangers.” These strangers, then, must be watched and monitored, where “the good citizen is a citizen who suspects rather than is suspect, who watches out for departures from ordinary life.” These “good citizens” are most concerned with the “goodness” of their nation, and are thus best able to determine “ordinariness” and to organize these Others into hierarchical groups of sorts, wherein strangers are not only recognized as Others, but are also then marked as Others who are “stranger than other others.” It is in this monitoring and categorizing that one becomes the watched or the watcher, the stranger or the “good citizen,” the one who is known or unknown, categorizations which work to establish normalcy – including who is able to make such “commonsense” determinations, including, as Hage asserts, who and/or what is allowed into the national space and who and/or what is not.

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19 Ibid., 25. Italics in original.
20 Hage, *White Nation*, 16.
The racialized white national becomes the one who can make such
decisions, and thereby the ones who naturally “govern”\textsuperscript{21} the nation. It is, as
Ahmed writes, in knowing who the strangers are, in seeing the strangers again
and again, and recognizing them as strangers, and therefore as the danger, “by
which the ‘we’ of the community is established, enforced and legitimated.”\textsuperscript{22} This
“we” is the white national, and such policing of the nation by white nationals
endures, working to impose and solidify white supremacist notions of citizenship
upon every citizen, thereby both subjugating and denying the Othered citizens of
the nation their rights.

I turn now to what is already known about nationalism and its articulations
with racism/colonialism, and more particularly, how these intersections affect
representations of the Muslim body in Canada, particularly since 9/11. I examine
what, according to the literatures, the national grand narrative that exists in
Canadian public memory is, and how this narrative works to continuously
(re)create and maintain a hierarchal racial order which privileges the white
colonial body and oppresses the racialized Other.\textsuperscript{23} As anti-racist educator
Timothy J. Stanley asserts, “Public memory supplies historical accounts that
make it seem both normal and natural that certain things are associated with
Canada….It does so by recurrently giving voice to a particular interpretation of

\textsuperscript{21} See Hage, \textit{White Nation}.
\textsuperscript{22} Ahmed, \textit{Strange Encounters}, 37.
Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives, and Canadian History,” in \textit{To The Past: History Education,
Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada}, ed. Ruth Sandwell (Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2006), 32–49; Thobani, \textit{Exalted Subjects}.
the past best characterized as ‘nationalist grand narrative.’ The literature establishes that this narrative works to ensure that the white settler story is the one that is known, the one that is understood to be natural, inevitable, and fixed, while the story of the racialized Other is one that is largely unknown, untold, or, at least, one that is understood to be about an uncivilized and irrational peoples, and is, in the end, an un-Canadian story. This untold or unknown story is what Foucault might refer to as subjugated knowledges – those knowledges, for example, that are generally considered “inferior” by exalted subjects.

These discursive measures imbue a sense of righteousness, and certainly power, into and onto the white nationals, who in turn govern and police those they have marked as Other, or, in other words, un-Canadian, thereby legitimating their ability to make such determinations and perpetuate the dominant narrative. Further, there is also resentment on the part of the exalted national at the claim that these Others make up, and even contribute to the Canadian identity, making the claim of “citizen” a well-guarded privilege. Making such an assertion, on the part of the Other, can provoke outrage from the dominant centre. A hierarchy of belonging results, and this undoubtedly leads to the creation of racial inequalities, while the rhetoric of fairness and equity persists in the collective conscious – and story – of the nation.

24 Stanley, “To the Past,” 34.
As has been noted by several scholars\textsuperscript{26} the result of this for Muslim Canadians, and those who are perceived and received as Muslim, is subjugation within Canadian society. For Muslim men, in particular, this representation is one of, at the very least, an irrational and/or uncivilized body, or, at worst, a terrorist and, thus, a threat to Canadian society. Consequently, the result is a culture of fear, and the idea that in order for “real” Canadians to be safe the “terrorists” must be stopped at any cost. As many scholars have noted\textsuperscript{27} such depictions of Muslim men, and of this seemingly compulsory fear, are constructed and (re)inforced by mainstream media, aiding in the solidification of these notions in the broader Canadian conscious and the larger national narrative.

These articulations form the basis of what Canada is and who Canadians are. In other words, what it means to “be” Canadian is reliant upon the national narrative or what Anderson refers to as an “imagined community,” of those who belong and those who do not.\textsuperscript{28} Further, those who read/view/listen to accounts of Khadr in the media, also come to know through this same media what Canadian-ness is through the way it is represented to them. As Sunera Thobani articulates, “the racialization of the category ‘Muslim’ made it inevitable that racialized Others inside the country would come to be linked directly with the enemy outside the borders of the nation-state…. [and] the Muslim strangers


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within, even if claiming the legal status of citizens, comes to be constructed as not only not sharing the threat faced by the nation, they are the threat to the nation.” In other words, regardless of citizenship, the Muslim body becomes a threat to Canada and to Canadians – that is to those who are not regarded as “strangers” – and thus the discourse of danger is constructed, by government and media, and the Muslim becomes the dangerous stranger, the terrorist, inside our nation. The Muslim and Muslim “looking” body, then, does not fit within the national narrative, and thus lives outside of it, regardless of where one lives or where one’s citizenship is held. National narratives play a significant role in the marking of racialized difference onto some bodies deemed sojourners, outsiders, and interlopers, while privileged others are deemed to be authentic, legitimate, and real insiders.

These bodies, essentially demarcated into worthy and unworthy lives, are produced in such a way so they are more easily managed. Such management is what Michel Foucault refers to as biopolitics, and it is through the biopolitical that the social body is supervised and intervened upon. Foucault writes that this is the “biopolitics of the population…the regulations of the population…around which the organization of power over life was deployed.” As Foucault and

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29 Thobani, Exalted Subjects, 239.
31 Ibid. Italics in original.
Nikolas Rose\textsuperscript{33} have asserted, it is the state that intervenes upon the individual and the social body imposing techniques of regulation in order to control it. These techniques include a focus on risk management, safety, security and optimization, where each system employed is dependent upon what “type” of body is being enacted upon.\textsuperscript{34} That is, through the national narrative a delineation of bodies is created, which produces a racial divide, turning bodies against one another. These acts then work to control our very lives while also creating a type of classification of these bodies for their “value and utility.”\textsuperscript{35} These techniques of control work to create a climate of fear around the Muslim body in a post-9/11 world and allow for the “management” of the body in whatever way is deemed necessary. For Omar Khadr, this has meant that he has been subjected to a “technique of government”\textsuperscript{36} wherein laws and judicial treatments to which he has been subjected sit both inside and outside of the law in what Giorgio Agamben terms a “state of exception.”\textsuperscript{37} In this way, although Khadr’s life has not yet been taken, in that he is alive, his life has certainly not been his and has indeed been given over to such techniques of management and control based on a politics of fear in this post-9/11 era.

For the last ten years Omar Khadr has figured prominently in national news media, and work that focuses on Khadr within the discourse of nationalism

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{34} See ibid.
\bibitem{35} Foucault, \textit{The History of Sexuality}, 144.
\bibitem{37} Agamben, \textit{State of Exception}.
\end{thebibliography}
and its relationship with racism/colonialism/militarism, as well as how these articulations act to portray the Muslim body in Canada, is now beginning to appear. I position my work as contributing to this growing and significant body of work. For Khadr’s is not just any Muslim body, his is one deemed to have killed a soldier of “our” ally and “friend,” the USA, in a “war” in which “our” nation has also fought and lost its soldiers (who are deemed heroes). Further to this, this war has been labeled as the war on terror, and as such, the (male) Muslim body continually stands in for the “terrorist” and is, as such, a threat to “our” (read: Canada and the United States, and the rest of the “West”) “exalted” way of life, which is so frequently cast in binary opposition to “their” way of life.

By being so often referred to and represented as a terrorist, and, therefore, a body to fear and to control, Omar Khadr has been represented, chiefly in the media, as a body that poses a real threat to Canada – at least to the Canada as it has been imagined in the national narrative. In this way Khadr’s story – his constructed representation – actually reinforces the national narrative. This thesis explores questions about the extent to which Khadr’s case might stand for the inequality that exists here between the white settler society and, in particular, the racialized Muslim Other. Because of this national narrative and its connection to race and colonization even though Khadr was a child according to national and international law when he was detained and tortured, he has nevertheless been

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consistently treated as the “dangerous” Muslim man – a characterization that personifies the fear attached to these bodies. How have management practices enacted through media on Khadr and the Canadian public – the techniques of control – worked in cultivating that fear, and worked to reinforce the national narrative? And, in the end, how has the maintaining, (re)producing, and protecting of the national narrative contributed to Khadr’s situation? In this thesis, it is these spaces to which I contribute.
For this thesis I investigate discourses\(^39\) in order to perform a focused analysis on my two guiding concepts which are fully explored in subsequent chapters: the “exalted and the stranger” and the “biopolitical.” To do this I perform a close reading of the two aforementioned documents: a letter Omar Khadr wrote to his Canadian lawyer, Dennis Edney, dated May 26, 2010 which Edney released to the media, and Margaret Wente’s *Globe and Mail* editorial from October 26, 2010 entitled, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.” I engage in a close discursive reading of how discourse reproduces the exalted and stranger subject positions, in particular in order to help investigate questions of power, governance and representation.\(^40\) In conjunction with this, I also utilize concepts from cultural and media studies\(^41\) as part of my theoretical framework.

Teun Van Dijk argues that “text and talk play a vital role in the reproduction of contemporary racism.”\(^42\) This is especially true for what he terms the “elite discourses,” that is, those with the power and ability “to say” – of which media is a part.\(^43\) This “text and talk” is discourse, and it is through discourse that racism

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\(^{42}\) Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*, 102.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 106–107.
is learned and constructed: racism/s are/is not inherent. Learning about and constructing racism happens through discourse. In order to analyze how these racist discourses convey meaning and influence we must “gain deeper insight in the way discourses express and manage our minds.” By using techniques from discourse analysis in order to examine Wente’s editorial and Khadr’s letter I articulate how this type of “management” is done in regards to these two texts. Thus, for this thesis I will draw on Teun Van Dijk’s position that media controls “part of the production of public discourse, …[and thus] part of its contents, and hence, indirectly, the public mind – maybe not exactly what people will think, but at least what they will think about.” Moreover, a main condition for employing discursive readings, according to Van Dijk, is to “study the discursive reproduction of power abuse.” This includes the analysis of how “domination and inequality” are (re)produced through discursive practices, and how such abuse (such that domination and inequality are abuses) influences the social body – and in particular in this case the way this is achieved through an editorial and a published letter.

I am questioning the nature of knowledge itself, that is, to question how we come to know what we know. As such inquiry occurs, there begins to be a recognition that what is “known” has actually been constructed, or produced, rather than being something that is fully intelligible, or an actual “truth” that exists.

44 Ibid., 106.  
45 Ibid., viii.  
46 Ibid., viii.  
47 Ibid., 18.
Yet, these “truths” work to produce knowledge through discourse or discourses, which, for Foucault, are those series of statements that produce subjects and objects. “In other words,” Howarth and Norval Stavrakakis argue, “all objects are objects of discourse, as their meaning depends upon a socially constructed system of rules and significant differences.”  

Whether they are meant to do so or not, these rules effectively “regulate the conduct of others,” by “sustaining a regime of truth,” that is, by sustaining those “truths” that are upheld at a given time by media or government, for example, and which are part of the dominant discourse of the day. The discursive formations maintain the “truths” that are produced and consumed, which then not only regulate subjects and objects, but also represent and form them. Such regulation and production creates “insiders” and “outsiders,” and therefore “always involves the exercise of power, as their constitution involves the exclusion of certain possibilities and a consequent structuring of the relations between different social agents.”  

For Foucault, power and knowledge are implicated in one another, hence power/knowledge. Foucault asserts:

Truth isn’t outside power….it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth; that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is

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49 Hall, Representation, 47.

50 Ibid., 49.

51 Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis, Discourse Theory and Political Analysis, 4.
sanctioned...the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.52

This power, for Foucault, however, is not purely hierarchical, that is, not only top down, rather it is circulatory; power oppresses and privileges at once. Individuals and groups have discursive agency whereby there can be resistance to dominant discourses.53 Media is a major part of discursive formations, for it (re)presents subjects and objects for consumption while also (re)producing “social power structures.”54 Therefore, it is central to examine media as part of that which reflects, articulates with and reproduces relations of power, the governance of people, and the (re)production and (re)presentations of subjects.

Following Chadderton and others, throughout this work I assume that racialized structures already exist, while acknowledging that systemic racism is continually (re)produced.55 I push to reveal these systems, while striving to advance a social justice framework and to push for social change56 and/or “some impact on (or challenge to) negative racialized relations.”57 A goal of my work is to question, disrupt and challenge naturalized white racial domination, especially

52 Michel Foucault in Hall, Representation, 49.
54 Van Dijk, Discourse and Power, 55.
within governance and media representations of Othered bodies, as revealed through both Margaret Wente’s article and Omar Khadr’s letter and through my analysis of the biopolitical. Trying to understand discourse through these close readings, then, best informs my work as it strives to “understand[...]...lived oppression – the struggle to make a way out of no way – which propels us to problematize dominant ideologies in which knowledge is constructed.”

While permitting that racialized structures are fully entrenched within the Canadian context, one must not, as Kevin Hylten writes, “lose sight of the complexities of the intersection of ‘race’ with the constructed and identity related nature of other forms of oppression.” These meeting points or junctures of different oppressions is referred to as intersectionality, and in the case of my research race intersects prominently with religion, where a hierarchy exists between Christianity and Islam, for in the West, post-9/11, there has been fervent opposition to the East. This is particularly characterized through Islamophobia – defined by Jasmin Zine as: “a fear or hatred of Islam and its adherents that translates into individual, ideological and systemic forms of oppression and discrimination.” By performing a close reading of discourses, with attention to the racialized structures that exist, as well as the intersectionality of oppressions, I analyze how the media articles I have chosen create and/or (re)produce dominant ideologies, at once oppressing the strangers within and privileging the

59 Ibid., 29.
exalted subject.

As Chadderton and others have articulated context is vital to understanding situations where these interlocking systems of oppression are at work. Gillborn argues that “the call to context is essential to understand the full background to any major dispute or issue” Much like a camera, while still focusing on the case of Omar Khadr, I also zoom out to attend to the larger context of the case by exploring what has brought us to the place we find ourselves, where risk management, safety, security and optimization lead to the management of bodies and, ultimately, hierarchies of oppression. By deploying a discursive reading I examine the biopolitical and the way that managing bodies is wrapped up in the constructing of states of exception, a politics of fear, and the Othering and exalting of bodies as I analyze the way that discourse produces subjects. I problematize the dominant ideologies which have led us to this place of putting value upon our very bodies, and how doing so ultimately informs the case of Omar Khadr – as constructed through the abovementioned media artifacts and through the biopolitical.

As Teun Van Dijk argues, the media is discursively elite because of its ability “to say.” What is “said,” however, does not enter into an empty void;

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rather, the information enters into our culture, the discourse, and our minds. Coming to understand this production and reception of information is an important part of critically analyzing media. Because of this, my work is influenced by cultural studies, which articulates that media objects, such as Wente’s article and Khadr’s letter, work much like a circuit, whereby representations, production and reception flow from one to the other, back and between producing and constructing meanings.64

As knowledge is produced and received, and received and produced, interpretations and representations of these meanings occur and the public is inevitably influenced. Moreover, as Foucault argues, this influencing “knowledge,” these discursive formations, permeates with power and succeeds in managing and controlling – and producing – the social body. These representations work to construct knowledge, to create meaning, and, hence, also subject-positions, “that is, specific positions of agency and identity in relation to particular forms of knowledge and practice.”65 As part of this thesis, I analyze and understand what is being (re)presented to me by media, for, as Stuart Hall writes, “Representation connects meaning and language to culture.”66 That is, through representation comes understanding, interpretation and meaning making. We construct meaning based on our experiences of the world, ensuring that in this act of interpretation, no meaning is fixed or “true,” because, as Hall argues, “every signifier given or

64 See Montgomery, “‘Shut Up and Teach’: Collisions of Nationalism, Militarism, and Racism in Public Education”; Johnson, “What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?”.
65 Hall, Representation, 303.
66 Ibid., 15.
encoded with meaning has to be meaningfully interpreted or decoded by the receiver." These signs are not fixed, nor are they neutral; connotations exist, which serve particular interests, privileging – or naturalizing – certain interpretations over certain others. These connotations work to produce meanings and subjects – including dominant meanings that can work to oppress some and not others, creating a social or cultural hegemony.

In order to investigate these hierarchies I engage with the work of those who have argued that media plays a significant role in constructing and shaping the Western discourse around the East and what such utterances can and do entail at this point in time – including how the “war on terror” has produced Muslim subjects. These pervasive representations assail Islam, are void of complexity and reduce the faith, and those who follow it, or those who are presumed to follow it, to a handful of stereotypes about a violent and primitive people. With dominant media at the helm such simplistic stories are nevertheless circulated, worming their way into public and political discourse. Such racialization, argues Thobani, leaves the Canadian national, “who in the post-9/11 era imagine themselves to be ‘terrorized,’ perceiving the threat to their survival as under attack.” The result is that the gulf between “real” Canadians and those who are Othered grows incalculably. Omar Khadr is one Canadian

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67 Ibid., 33.  
68 See Said, Covering Islam; Said, Orientalism; Razack, Casting Out; Thobani, Exalted Subjects; Zine, Islam in the Hinterlands.  
69 Said, Covering Islam, xvi.  
70 Thobani, Exalted Subjects, 246.
citizen caught up in the chasm created by these powerful representations. In this thesis I analyze the ways in which Wente uses language to uphold the legitimacy of the exalted and the stranger within the Canadian context, and ask if, and how, her editorials contribute to this divide and how Omar Khadr’s letter might close it.

Although other responses to Omar Khadr are plentiful,\textsuperscript{71} I limit my analysis to Wente’s article from October 26, 2010 in order to keep the scope of this thesis manageable; and while there are other writings by Omar Khadr, I restrict my investigation to the letter he wrote to Dennis Edney on May 26, 2010. We rarely hear from Khadr himself, and analyzing this letter in contrast to Wente’s open editorial allows for an interesting juxtaposition. While the analysis is on a small set of texts, this should not be interpreted as an insignificant or inconsequential set of media representations. Media is, as Van Dijk argues, an elite discourse with “preferential ‘access to the minds’ of the public at large.”\textsuperscript{72} Indeed, Wente’s articles appear in a Canadian mainstream paper that has more than one million readers per week, making it one of the country’s highest weekly readerships,\textsuperscript{73} legitimating Wente’s opinions as relevant to the national discourse – certainly


\textsuperscript{72} Van Dijk, Discourse and Power, 106.

\textsuperscript{73} According to the Canadian newspaper research company, Newspaper Audience Databank (NADbank), in a survey conducted in 2009, http://www.nadbank.com/en/study/readership/totalweekly.
contributing to what her readers “think about,” to paraphrase Van Dijk. Her columns have appeared in the paper for a decade, a record which reveals she is a profitable contributor, perhaps a source for credible opinions, someone who provides thoughtful analysis about topics of national interest – including ideas about nationhood and personhood in the Canadian context. Moreover, with a ten-year run, Wente has a large audience and sufficient influence to make her editorial relevant to a discussion about media influence and nationalism, racism, and colonization in Canada.

On the other hand, although Omar Khadr’s letter was intended for the eyes of Dennis Edney, there is a provision in the post script which allows for the letter’s distribution. Edney chose to share the letter with two leading papers in both the United States and Canada, all with large readerships: "Toronto Star, Washington Post, Miami Herald and Edmonton Journal." In any case, both pieces for analysis have had wide public distribution, have contributed to the discourse, and thus are valuable media artifacts.

The ensuing analysis of this thesis is organized into two main sections, the “exalted and the stranger” and “the biopolitical.” In the first section I examine both

77 Dennis Edney practices law out of Edmonton.
Wente’s editorial and Khadr’s letter using the concepts of the exalted and the stranger to examine how these theories are used to construct the national mythology. I show how media (re)representations privilege the understanding of nationhood and go further to suggest that the delineations that occur through such writings are necessary in nation building where the exalted subject oppresses the stranger in order to preserve the nation.

In the next section, the biopolitical, I explore the context around how racialized subjects are produced by discourses through an examination of how Omar Khadr’s case came to be. “Thus,” Van Dijk writes, “we can conclude that for each discursive practice we need to examine carefully the special context, norms and values that define adequate practice.” I do this by explaining how through the management of bodies regimes of truth work to ensure risk management, security, and optimization and what some of the consequences of these systems are. That is, one of the processes of controlling the public comes through the use of discursive formations. In this case I show how constructing discourses around safety, security, risk management and optimization work to influence the social body and what the effects of such discursive measures – such as taking certain actions in order to maintain safety and/or security – can be. Within these processes, which are all bound together and work in partnership with one another, exists also a politics of fear and exceptional states. It is these systems, specifically as they relate to Omar Khadr, which I examine, as well as

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what the consequences of these processes can be – including, in the end, how these systems can also be both resisted and unsettled.
Chapter 4: The Exalted and the Stranger

Civilization, are we really civilized, yes or no?  
Who are we to judge?  
When thousands of innocent men could be brutally enslaved  
and killed over a racist grudge\textsuperscript{79}  

\textit{Arrested Development}

In \textit{Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Makings of Race and Nation in Canada}, critical race, social and political theorist Sunera Thobani agrees with Edward Said\textsuperscript{80} and others, that media has an enormous influence on how Canadians, and Westerners, view not only the “War on Terror,” but also the East, Islam and, effectively, Muslim people, as well as those who are perceived to be Muslim.\textsuperscript{81} This view, which is often an attack on Islam, is seemingly ever-present in the West, and is, according to Said, an “unacceptable generalization of the most irresponsible sort, and could never be used for any other religious, cultural, or demographic group on earth.”\textsuperscript{82} Nevertheless, these reckless stories about Islam continue, propagated by media – crafting and shaping public and political discourse. This contributes, Thobani adds, “in no small measure to the growing anti-Muslim racism in North America and to the erosion of their citizenship rights. The distance between ‘immigrants’ and ‘real’ Canadians has thus vastly

\textsuperscript{79} Arrested Development, “Mr. Wendal,” 3 Years, 5 Months & 2 Days in the Life Of..., Chrysalis/EMI Records.  
\textsuperscript{80} For an in depth account of media portrayal of Islam, and its affects, see Said, \textit{Covering Islam}.  
\textsuperscript{82} Said, \textit{Covering Islam}, xv1.
increased since 9/11, with unforeseeable consequences for the future."\textsuperscript{83} Omar Khadr is one Canadian citizen who has certainly felt the sting of this divide.

In exploring this role of the media in creating and preserving Canadian citizenry, I will employ Sunera Thobani’s scholarly notion of the “exalted subject,” that is, those from within white, settler society who believe they are the “true” Canadian subjects, superior to, and in contradistinction to the Other. My analysis will also draw upon Sara Ahmed’s examination of the “stranger” – the Other, who, set in opposition to the exalted subject, is the “outsider inside.”\textsuperscript{84} First, however, I will provide a snapshot of Omar Khadr and Margaret Wente.

\textbf{A Snapshot of Omar Khadr}

For the general population, without the efforts of the media, there would be no picture, no snapshot of Omar Khadr. Much of the existing public information and literature on Omar Khadr originates from media: journalists’ accounts of court proceedings in Cuba, released tapes of the Canadian officials’ interrogation of Khadr in 2004, past narratives about his family, and also editorials and writings based on interpretations of this information.\textsuperscript{85} Much knowledge has been

\textsuperscript{83} Thobani, \textit{Exalted Subjects}, 247.
\textsuperscript{84} See Ahmed, \textit{Strange Encounters}.
garnered from reports based on official court documents that have been made public, and from interviews with people close to the case, such as Khadr’s long time Canadian lawyer, Dennis Edney, as well as from interviews with politicians, officials inside Guantanamo and, in some cases, also with family members.\textsuperscript{86} There exist rare accounts that Khadr, himself, has provided through sworn affidavits, a letter to a presiding judge at the military commissions, and letters to his lawyer – all available to a probing public only because media (re)produced and/or revealed the information. Trying to establish an understanding of Omar Khadr’s case and putting together a reasonable timeline of events can be done only by piecing together bits from various disparate sources, a frustrating, yet necessary process.

And still, it is important to establish some information about his background, and that of his case: As a child, Khadr was ushered back and forth between Canada, Pakistan and Afghanistan by his father Ahmed Said Khadr, who, it has been reported, had connections to and relationships with many elite militant leaders and members of al-Qaeda, including Osama bin Laden.\textsuperscript{87} During this time, Omar Khadr was in contact with many of al-Qaeda’s elite; and because he was able to speak English, Pashto and Arabic, Omar Khadr’s father allowed him to act as an interpreter for an al-Qaeda leader, which is how Omar Khadr eventually ended up in a compound with several al-Qaeda members in Ayub.

\textsuperscript{86} Shephard, \textit{Guantanamo’s Child}; Côté and Henriquez, \textit{You Don’t Like the Truth}.
\textsuperscript{87} See Shephard, \textit{Guantanamo’s Child}. 
Khey, in Afghanistan, on July 27, 2002. It was on this day that the then fifteen year-old Canadian citizen was captured after a firefight with American soldiers, during which an American soldier was killed, and Khadr himself was shot in the back twice and blinded in one eye by shrapnel.

After his capture, he was sent to an American prison base – first to Bagram prison in Afghanistan, and later to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he remained for eight years without a trial. In fact, he also went almost completely without contact from anyone outside of Guantanamo until he was finally able to meet with legal counsel, for the first time, in November 2004. Although not until years after his incarceration, Khadr was also finally accused of war crimes, including conspiracy, support of terrorism, spying, attempted murder and murder in violation of the law of war. It is this final allegation that has been both the most serious and the most highly contested as there exists no official report of anyone actually having seen Khadr throw the grenade that killed Sergeant Christopher Speer.

88 This account of events has been reported by numerous journalists. See ibid.; Sheema Khan, “Politics Over Principles: The Case of Omar Khadr,” in Omar Khadr, Oh Canada, ed. Janice Williamson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 51–66; Erickson and Mitchell, “Mock Justice.”

89 Ibid.

90 Omar Ahmed Khadr vs. The Prime Minister of Canada, The Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Docket: T-1228-08 Citation: 2009 FC 405, on April 23, 2009.

91 Ibid.

In late October 2010, Omar Khadr received his first opportunity to participate in a trial when he entered into the controversial military commissions at the base in Cuba.\(^{93}\) Prior to these proceedings, he had refused to plead guilty to the charges against him, maintaining his innocence throughout his almost decade-long ordeal. Yet, during the commission, in order to avoid what his lawyers and Khadr have called an unjust trial,\(^{94}\) Khadr pleaded guilty to all five charges against him in exchange for a plea bargain that promised him a return to Canada after serving one more year in solitary confinement\(^{95}\) in the highest-security section of the detention facility in Guantanamo.\(^{96}\) Although the plea bargain he signed ensured Khadr would spend no more than eight more years in prison, without knowledge of the plea, and after deliberating for almost nine hours, his military jury, made up of seven American military officers, sent a clear message when they asked for a forty-year sentence, despite the prosecution’s request of twenty-five.\(^{97}\)

Khadr was a minor according to international and national laws, yet he has been denied his rights as a child, rights which are internationally recognized under the United Nations’ *Convention on the Rights of the Child*; his rights under Article 7 of the *Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*

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\(^{93}\) Keller, “Stalin Would Have Been Proud.”
have been violated, as the Government of Canada did not meet its international and national obligations in accordance with its policies on child soldiers;\textsuperscript{98} his rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have been violated; he has been denied his rights under the under the Geneva Conventions, as well as under the United Nations’ \textit{Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment}. Up until his military commissions began in late 2010, Khadr was also denied his right of \textit{habeas corpus} – a person’s right to a trial in order to determine innocence or guilt.\textsuperscript{99}

Moreover, on April 23, 2009, in a Federal Court of Canada hearing, \textit{Khadr v. Canada}, the presiding judge in the case ruled that the Government of Canada had violated Omar Khadr’s constitutional rights and was complicit in his torture at Guantanamo. It was ruled that Canadian officials were fully aware that Khadr had been tortured prior to their arrival at the prison base in March 2004 since they knew he had been subjected to a notorious interrogation method called the “frequent flyer program,” an unrelenting sleep deprivation “program” that lasted for weeks.\textsuperscript{100} This torture technique was used “in an effort to make him more amenable and willing to talk”\textsuperscript{101} to the Canadian authorities. And while this abuse has been proven, it does not take into account all of the other forms of torture and abuse that Khadr has endured since he was incarcerated, as he has

\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Khadr v. Canada}.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
disclosed in a sworn affidavit from July 30, 2008.\textsuperscript{102} Omar Khadr is the only Westerner in Guantanamo not to be repatriated by his country and the first minor to be prosecuted for war crimes since World War II.\textsuperscript{103} Of the 800 men and boys held at Guantanamo since 2002, 166 remain.\textsuperscript{104} Khadr is no longer one of them, as he was transferred back to Canada in the early morning of September 29, 2012, two years after his 2010 plea bargain, and ten days after his twenty-sixth birthday.\textsuperscript{105} In February of 2014 Omar Khadr was moved from the maximum-security prison in Edmonton where he had previously been incarcerated to a medium-security institution called Bowden near the town of Innisfail, Alberta.\textsuperscript{106} In March of the same year Khadr underwent surgery to treat a shoulder injury he received during the firefight in Afghanistan. He is currently in a prison hospital in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan recovering.\textsuperscript{107} CBC news also reports “According to Correctional Service Canada, Khadr was eligible for day parole in January [2013], but he has yet to have a hearing. He was eligible for full parole on July 1, [2013].”\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{102} See Omar Khadr’s affidavit from July 30, 2008 as reproduced in Williamson, \textit{Omar Khadr, Oh Canada}, 154–162.
\textsuperscript{105} Rosenberg, “Youngest Guantanamo Detainee Goes Home to Canada.”
Since 9/11 – although certainly well before – “terrorists” have been synonymous with Muslim men. Muslim men have come to be seen and (re)presented as “dangerous,”¹⁰⁹ and as bodies that need to be managed and controlled. These representations, or stories, about Muslim men are propagated by media – (re)creating representations of representations.¹¹⁰ This certainly seems to be the case for Canadian citizen Omar Khadr. Despite the national rhetoric that exists – that of a peaceful, fair and democratic Canada – Khadr has been detained in contravention of both national and international laws. Yet, many Canadians support this violation of rights, as can be seen by the comment sections following e-articles about Khadr’s situation.¹¹¹ Thus, in the midst of discourses of diversity, tolerance, and multiculturalism, Khadr has been denied rights; and the management/containment of his body in the interest of national safety continues. How and why has this come to be?

A Snapshot of Margaret Wente

In order to critically engage with Wente’s article it is imperative to disrupt the fiction of newspaper writing as “objective,” as “just the facts” and the writers as “just writers” without context. As with any newspaper writer – but perhaps more salient for editorialists who engage in personal opinion pieces – establishing context for the production of articles is necessary. This is certainly

¹⁰⁹ For Sherene Razack the “dangerous Muslim man” is “[c]onsidered irredeemably fanatical, irrational, and thus dangerous.” See Razack, Casting Out, 16.
¹¹⁰ Said, Orientalism.
the case with Margaret Wente, a columnist for the *Globe and Mail*, one of Canada’s most respected national newspapers, which tags itself as “the most authoritative news in Canada, featuring national and international news.”\(^{112}\) This mainstream paper also has one of Canada’s highest weekly readerships.\(^{113}\) As Wente’s columns have appeared in the paper since 1992,\(^{114}\) she certainly has a large audience to write for and to influence, and has, over the years, also amassed a following of people who agree with her.

Editorials are often based on primary-news stories and “Indeed,” writes Stuart Hall, “the decision to produce an editorial at all is some indication of the significance accorded such stories by a newspaper.”\(^{115}\) Such is the case with Margaret Wente who often writes about controversial national issues, including Indigenous rights, immigration, multiculturalism, diversity, and religion.\(^ {116}\) Her biography states “she provokes heated debate with her views on health care, education, and social issues.”\(^ {117}\) Anderson and Robertson are among those who claim her pieces are awash with stereotypes and presuppositions.\(^ {118}\) These authors also contend that Wente’s columns lack the rigour or the facts that are

\(^{112}\) This tag appears once the *Globe and Mail* is accessed online.  
\(^{115}\) Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978), 89.  
\(^{116}\) See, for instance, “The Immigration Debate We Don’t Want to Have,” from June 16, 2010; “Scoring Points with Detainees,” from April 28, 2010; and “Playing the Diversity Game,” from April 5, 2010.  
\(^{118}\) For an informative analysis on Wente’s writings and representations of Indigenous peoples in Canada see: Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red*.  

usually associated with news pieces, but which have come to be accepted and acceptable in editorial writing.\footnote{119} As an example, Anderson and Robertson write that “Wente’s columns rely on every imaginable alleged Native shortcoming, from sexual depravity to financial corruption, thievery to alcoholism, poor parenting to childish behaviour, receiving special rights to reverse racism against whites, inherent violence to being stuck in dying cultures without being smart enough to realize it.”\footnote{120}

Her columns employ a neo-liberal framework and are often cruel to those she considers to be inferior. It is, as Anderson and Robertson argue, that her column “specializes in the sort of outrage and indignation that helps sell newspapers.”\footnote{121} Wente, as an editorialist, affects privileged understandings of personhood and nationhood in opinion-based, persuasive writing that has the potential to influence the ways in which Canada and Canadian identity are formed as the subjects of national narratives.\footnote{122} Yet, as troubling as her words are, her certain contempt for those she considers “inferior” would not be tolerated if such discourses of racism and fear of otherness were not already in place within the Canadian context.

\footnote{119} Ibid., 271.  
\footnote{120} Ibid., 274.  
\footnote{121} Ibid., 271.  
\footnote{122} Ken E. Montgomery, “‘A Better Place to Live’: National Mythologies, Canadian History Textbooks, and the Reproduction of White Supremacy” (University of Ottawa, 2005).
One Lucky Guy?

The editorial that I will focus on for this thesis is one written by Wente and that appeared in the Globe and Mail on October 26, 2010. Wente’s editorial, entitled, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy,”123 appeared only days after Omar Khadr’s guilty plea, the one that has since allowed him to return “home” to Canada. Throughout her piece, the language Wente uses reinforces the exalted and stranger position that already exists within the social body – that is, she uses this editorial to bolster the position of those whom she considers to be “real” Canadians while also emphasizing that this is who Khadr is not.

The title at once alerts readers to the popular late 1970s show entitled, Welcome Back Kotter, a show about a class of “misfit” students who are in remedial education, and who are considered by everyone, except the class’s teacher, Gabe Kotter, to be useless, hooligans, and not “real” students, a not so subtle comparison to Khadr, whom Wente alludes to as being another kind of hoodlum, and certainly not a “real” Canadian. Moreover, by referencing the show, Wente also makes a comparison between Omar Khadr and his case and a television show almost four decades old. This reveals a contradiction for Wente at once asks her readers to take seriously Khadr as an al-Qaeda terrorist – she states in her piece that his goal was to “kill as many [Americans] as possible”124 – while, at the same time, the title compares him to a pop culture television show that is now well past its prime. Such a paradox exposes the exalted subject’s –

123 Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
124 Ibid.
here Wente’s – (mis)representation of Omar Khadr. Wente signals her readers, and, therefore, Canadians, that they need be aware that Khadr is merely a “character,” that is, a stereotypical Muslim. However, throughout her piece she reinforces how dangerous Khadr is, this “stranger” – a Muslim man, hence, a “terrorist” who, according to Wente, tried to kill as many Westerners as he could. Wente emphasizes, therefore, that Khadr is someone who should be feared.

Further to this, despite the assertion by Wente, there seems to be nothing “lucky” about a case such as Khadr’s, one that has seen him move from childhood into adulthood under horrific conditions and circumstances. Yet, Margaret Wente writes that Khadr is, indeed, lucky: lucky “to be entitled to Western justice, however rough….lucky to have been born in Canada….lucky to be alive….”¹²⁵ “Luck,” Wente’s chosen descriptor for Khadr, is at once ironic and the antithesis of its actual meaning – that is of good fortune, of destiny, of getting a break.

Omar Khadr has undergone horrendous violations of his basic human rights, by both Americans and Canadians – even worse is that these violations occurred while Omar Khadr was still a child. Wente disregards the fact that Omar Khadr is the first child soldier to have been convicted for war crimes since World War II. She then eschews any research or interviews about child soldiers. Yet,

¹²⁵ Ibid.
other child soldiers have been allowed to be rehabilitated. But, as often is the case, these are child soldiers of colour who have killed other people of colour, an offense that seems forgivable, or, at least, something that can be largely discounted, and an act for which one can be rehabilitated. The killing of a white American soldier by a Muslim child, however, is much more threatening to the exalted subjects of the nation.

This is exemplified by an interview that took place on CBC Radio One’s, The Current, which aired on October 18, 2010. The guest that day was Ishmael Beah, who, during the interview, revealed that as a child soldier he had committed crimes far worse than those Omar Khadr has been accused of committing when Beah was recruited, at age 13, by Sierra Leone’s army during that country’s civil war. Beah recounts that he fought for three years before UNICEF removed him from the army, took him to the U.S and then rehabilitated him. There are many similar instances where the children were, once rescued, protected by international laws and rehabilitated, measures that were not extended to Omar Khadr.

Moreover, as many media outlets have reported, Radhika Coomaraswamy, the UN’s Special Representative for Children and Armed


Conflict, states in a letter to the military commission at Guantanamo Bay that, “In every sense Omar represents the classic child soldier narrative; recruited by unscrupulous groups to undertake actions at the bidding of adults to fight battles they barely understand. That Omar was abused by his own father exacerbates the harm done to this young man.” Wente, in her article, writes that it is only “sympathizers” who consider Khadr a child soldier, whereas to “foes, he is a hardened young fighter.” She then includes an interview with Sergeant First Class Layne Morrisin in support of bolstering the latter “opinion” of Khadr as a foe – the second representation of the only two binary positions Wente offers Khadr, and the public. Morrisin’s comments are followed by Wente’s pronouncement that Khadr is “more popular among the liberal media, the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP than he is among the general public.” Wente then asks her readers who “accuse our government of behaving brutishly” to recall that Khadr’s father was “sprung from jail in Pakistan” by former Liberal Prime Minister, Jean Chretien. This freed “terrorist” was then able to use “his new found freedom to train his sons as soldiers for jihad.”

Wente’s tone makes clear that the “liberal media, the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP,” is a group to which she does not belong, regards them as mere

130 Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
bleeding hearts, and does more than hint at the fact that this groups' “softness” is almost certainly responsible for these acts of terrorism, as they freed Khadr’s father, which then allowed him to commit acts of terrorism. More to her point, however, is the significant “fact” that such “liberal” acts of granting “freedom” lead to the deaths of Westerners. I read that it is those who are left leaning who are easily duped into supporting terrorism, and it is the actions of Omar Khadr “sympathizers” which will certainly result in more acts of terrorism and, ultimately, more deaths of Westerners. Although she does not explicitly state this, I interpret Wente’s words as making clear that Omar Khadr is a terrorist, convicted of killing an exalted subject, a white American soldier, and that this means he should not be considered a child soldier (regardless of the legal definitions of child soldiers), but rather a convicted terrorist.

Wente’s editorial struck a chord with her readers, as there were more than three-hundred and eighty on-line comments following her article, and although some of these voices disagreed with her opinion, many more did not. One Wente supporter wrote, “Please spare me the Canadian rights line...This guy and his family are not Canadian in [sic] heart and that's a reality no one can honestly deny.” This editorial is a stark example of just how the media helps craft, shape, and perpetuate public discourse in Canada.

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136 Written by 7th Generation Can., in the comments section of Margaret Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy,” The Globe and Mail, October 26, 2010,
In fact, in large part, media also helps to create and sustain a climate of fear, hostility and panic about Muslims. Media reveals Muslims to be strange(rs), at best, “terrorists,” at worst. These views, which are embedded in a world of binaries, are often based on the continuation of the Canadian colonial project. They work to define the “legitimate” Canadian citizen, and that citizen’s home. At the same time, media marks the Other, the stranger, as illegitimate, and makes Canada out to be the place where the Other may live, or have citizenship, but certainly not that outsiders true home – whether born in Canada or not.

Journalists, writers, commentators and editorialists, such as Margaret Wente, whose popularity and audience is broader than just the *Globe and Mail*, as she is also a frequent commentator on national television and radio programs, and has won the National Newspaper Award for column-writing twice, aid and mold this process of delineation throughout the days, weeks, months, and years. Although I am not expressly writing a critical analysis of newspapers in Canada, I am questioning and exploring what it means to be “Canadian,” who decides this in the first place, and, in particular, how the definition and decision of “Canadian-ness” does and/or does not apply to Omar Khadr. Media play a role in creating and preserving Canadian citizenry by describing what a “real” citizen looks like, what beliefs that citizen (should) hold, essentially what the boundaries that

constitute the “real” Canadian citizen are and who decides who can call oneself a “true” citizen of this nation.

The notions behind these constructed identities, which I have been referring to as the exalted and the stranger, constitute who is considered truly Canadian and who is not. Next I will delve into these (re)presentations with my analysis of how they work to justify violence in an effort to build the nation here in Canada.

**Building the Nation**

In, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson asserts the theory that the nation is a construction that people not only identify with, but also that which helps to shape people’s identities.\(^\text{137}\) The notion is socially constructed, or, in Anderson’s terms, imagined. He argues that this imagined community is “imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”\(^\text{138}\) There is a strong belief that something exists that connects us to one another – shared values and history perhaps – that makes “us” a nation.

As an imagined community, Canada is a nation created by white imperialists, a white settler society “established by Europeans on non-European

\(^{137}\) See Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.*

\(^{138}\) Ibid., 6–7. Italics in original.
soil,” who proceeded to delineate the borders, and, in so doing created a “home,” at least for those bodies privileged, or exalted, enough to belong. These conquering Europeans created an idea about Canadian national identity that continues to live in the minds of many Canadians, certainly those in power in this imagined nation, an idea that “real” Canadians act in certain ways and embody and stand for certain ideals, values, beliefs and ways of living and being. Examples of this include Canadians as peacekeepers, as tolerant, and as multicultural. These beliefs construct Canada as a nation that embodies these certain ideals which make the country what it is, and Canadians who they are. Wherein, Zine argues, “[d]efining Otherness as the antithesis of the ideal thus becomes a precondition for imagining the nation.” These ideals, however, were constructed, created, and thus constitute a mythology – and one that has become our national story, a story that, Razack writes, “enable[s] citizens to think of themselves as part of a community, defining who belongs and who does not belong to the nation,” and one that is firmly embedded, firmly rooted, in the Canadian psyche. So resolutely, in fact, that these values are also what many believe the country was founded upon and is still committed to, including democracy, freedom, human rights, peace, multiculturalism and tolerance.

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141 Razack, “When Place Becomes Race,” 2.
However, Wente’s article belies this imaginary construction. She writes that “Many Canadians don’t especially want [Khadr] back,”\textsuperscript{142} using a July 2010 Angus Reid poll to prove her point—stating: “Only 36 per cent [of respondents] wanted [Khadr] repatriated to Canada. (The others didn’t care).”\textsuperscript{143} This, she argues, is also the reason that the Harper government left Khadr in Guantanamo for such a lengthy time.\textsuperscript{144} This is a blunt example of the exalted subject determining who does and who does not belong to the nation, as well as what those “real” Canadians “think about” Khadr regardless of whether they answered the poll question or not. That is, only a minority of those who responded want him “home,” many more do not, while those who did not respond simply don’t care about Khadr. The insinuation is that this lack of care extends to not being concerned in the least about what he has been through, nor what will happen to him in the future.

Wente writes that it is people’s opinions, not national and international laws, that determine who can call this nation home, who can feel, and indeed, be safe and treated within the bounds of the law. In other words, she suggests that the people who don’t want to see Khadr returned to Canada should be the real deciders of judicial outcomes. Yet, given that Khadr remained in Guantanamo for so long, while other Western country’s citizens were long ago repatriated, does perhaps show that for Khadr the exalted subject’s opinion has indeed determined

\textsuperscript{142} Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
his outcome, for, as Wente writes, “That’s why, despite hectoring opinion columns and the odd judicial rebuke, the Harper government has been happy to let Mr. Khadr cool his heels in Gitmo for more than a third of his life.”145 Throughout her piece Wente shows Khadr as an Other who has violated the “laws” of normalcy and “proven” himself to be an outsider.146 Yet, this “stranger” is being allowed to return “home” – a privilege that should be reserved for those who are exalted, those “insiders” who are actually entitled to such freedoms. Wente takes exception to the fact that Khadr is being allowed to return “home,” something he is simply not entitled to. When the general population sees it this way too – it is in this way that such discourses gain the force of truth.147

Wente draws upon the mythologies of the nation throughout her editorial when she writes about the many ways that Khadr does not belong to the nation – particularly emphasized by the fact that “Many Canadians don’t especially want him back.”148 Yet, Canada’s history contradicts the nation’s, and, in this case, Wente’s imaginary construction. White, European, Christian settlers arrived and enforced compulsory assimilation, brutally killed Indigenous peoples, forced the suppression of their traditional ways and understandings of life – including spiritual practices – stole their land, forced them onto reserves, ripped children away from their families and confined them in residential schools meant to

145 Ibid.
146 Razack, Casting Out, 13–16.
148 Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
“civilize” them, all the while proceeding under the name of lawfulness. 149 This raises questions such as for whom was/is there peace, for whom was/is there democracy, and for whom was/is there freedom? Razack writes, “A quintessential feature of white settler mythologies is, therefore, the disavowal of conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation of the labour of peoples of colour…. [while] European conquest and colonization are often denied, largely through the fantasy that North America was peacefully settled and not colonized.” 150 Such disavowal was revealed earlier when Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper denied Canada’s history of colonialism. 151 Hence, despite the fact of the violence of the Canadian colonial project, the story that this nation was founded lawfully and peacefully – with a few exceptions 152 – has been upheld, and it is this utopian idea that constitutes the national identity. This national identity is one embraced by the exalted subject, as it is one that erases the violence the exalted subject has committed against the very bodies and minds of those constructed as Other. Wente reinforces this construction and favours the story of the dangerous Other who, in this case, was “trying to kill as many [Americans] as possible.” 153

149 See James W. Daschuk, Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013); Razack, Race, Space, and the Law.
150 Razack, “When Place Becomes Race,” 2.
151 Ljunggren, “Every G20 Nation Wants to Be Canada, Insists PM.”
152 Although there may have been more overt lawlessness that was admitted to among some of the European settlers, this was explained, and is seen still, by some, as an anomaly, not the rule.
153 Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
Violence – the Canadian Way

The national mythology upholds the Canadian identity, while racism and violence sit in opposition to the dominant discourses constituting such a mythology. Yet the violence and racism are no less a part of the Canadian identity, they are just not endorsed and defended as are the dominant discourses of the nation. Nevertheless, the constructed Canadian identity, the racism, and the violence have all become normalized within Canadian society, and indeed, Canadian law.¹⁵⁴ Omar Khadr himself recognizes this when he writes to Denis Edney in a letter from May 26, 2010:

Dennis you always say that I have an obligation to show the world what is going on down here [in Guantanamo] and it seems that we've done every thing but the world doesn't get it, so it might work if the world sees the US sentencing a child to life in prison, it might show the world how unfair and sham this process is, and if the world doesn't see all this, to what world am I being released to? A world of hate, unjust [sic] and discrimination!¹⁵⁵

In his own words, Khadr laments the processes that keep him incarcerated despite the contravention of laws. He points to the problem of ignorance when he argues that the problem is that people simply do not know what is going on at Guantanamo, as though word has just not yet gotten out. Nevertheless, what Khadr also points to when he writes about “a world of hate, unjust and

discrimination”\textsuperscript{156} is that there is a structured racism and violence that is continually waged against the Other, and within many mainstream systems is considered necessary in order to maintain order. In such an imagined national context violence committed against exalted subjects “whose rights had to be protected,”\textsuperscript{157} by those who are Othered, even as acts of resistance or defense, are seen as brutal and unnecessary. Thobani argues that “The Canadian nation and its subjects are sustained through such originary violence, both ontological and epistemological, with this violence having become instituted and regulated through the law.”\textsuperscript{158} Such institutionalized violence that shaped this nation, exalting certain citizens and denigrating certain Others, becomes even more difficult to discern, to challenge, and to disrupt.

In fact, Thobani argues that “The violence necessary to bring into being the colonial order fashioned and propagated a racial order. It organized privileges, rights, and entitlements of juridical subjects through a race status actuated as essential and immutable.”\textsuperscript{159} Khadr recognizes this, and perhaps so too would others if a similar question were asked of Canadians, as the one Leonardo asks of Americans: “if...[one] would also consider slavery and genocide as founding principles of U.S. nation creation.”\textsuperscript{160} Then again, perhaps such a question would be just as easily ignored as is the structured racism and

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\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{157} Thobani, \textit{Exalted Subjects}, 56.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 40.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 38–39.

\textsuperscript{160} Leonardo, “Reading Whiteness,” 241.
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violence that the exalted subject already engages in against those who are Othered.

**Justified Violence**

When a person, or group of people, is perceived to be a threat to what Canada holds as national values, the façade of tolerance quickly erodes. Exalted nationals, who construct and determine what encapsulates Canadian values in the first place, are also justified, according to Thobani, in using whatever means they deem necessary to uphold these values. Activist Derrick Jensen expands this concept to the aspect of violence when he states:

Civilization is based on a clearly defined and widely accepted yet often unarticulated hierarchy. Violence done by those higher on the hierarchy to those lower is nearly always invisible, that is, unnoticed. When it is noticed, it is fully rationalized. Violence done by those lower on the hierarchy to those higher is unthinkable, and when it does occur is regarded with shock, horror and the fetishization of the victims.\(^{161}\)

Within the Canadian context, this means that when the exalted national needs to preserve the imagined Canadian way of life, then violence or brutal force is deemed appropriate and necessary.\(^{162}\) Thus, in the case of Omar Khadr, the “dangerous Muslim man,”\(^{163}\) the fact that many deem his circumstances – that is, both his physical and mental torture and the abuse of his international and


\(^{162}\) This can be seen with the Indigenous assimilation project, and again with the internment of tens of thousands of Japanese Canadians during World War Two, and again with Muslims since 9/11.

\(^{163}\) For Sherene Razack the “dangerous Muslim man” is “[c]onsidered irredeemably fanatical, irrational, and thus dangerous.” See Razack, *Casting Out*, 16.
Canadian human rights – necessary, if not acceptable, while others, according to Wente, simply don’t care and even find him “lucky,” is not anomalous. Rather, such treatment fits Jensen’s model of trying to ensure the maintenance of a racialized order of exalted nationals and denigrated Others. This is not lost on Khadr, which is confirmed when he writes: “About the whole MC [military commission] thing we all don’t believe in and know it’s unfair and know Dennis that there must be somebody to sacrifice to really show the world the unfairness, and really it seems that it’s me.”

Khadr acknowledges that he is easily “sacrificed” in this “unfair” process – where, throughout, Khadr’s perceived actions have been characterized as unthinkable, shocking and horrific.

This racialized hierarchy is further upheld using the “innate” Canadian values, which, although promoted on a national scale, only operate in limited and exclusionary ways. That is, the exalted subjects are the ones for whom these values are real and applicable. According to the perception of exalted subjects, the Other does not intrinsically possess national values, while the benefits of possessing these values – such as the ability to be tolerant, peaceful, and accepting of diversity – are also not extended to the Other by the exalted

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164 Khadr, “Letter.”
165 As an example, an exalted subject may be accepting of diversity when this means enjoying an Other’s culinary delights or interesting dances, but not accepting in actual or meaningful ways, such as when a Muslim community desires to build an Islamic school in certain neighbourhoods, as was the case in the Lessard community in Edmonton, Alberta, where there existed “concerns that religious extremism could seep into the teachings of a new Islamic school being proposed for the neighbourhood.” See Laura Tupper, “Dispute Between Local Muslim Group and Lessard Residents Heats Up,” CTVEdmonton.ca, Friday, August 20, 2010.
subject, thereby doing more to intensify white domination than to actually generate a more democratic, tolerant, peaceful, and free Canada for all Canadians. Consequently, those exalted nationals who consider Others to be outsiders, even those who are “inside” the nation, by acting as oppressing forces, act in ways that contradict the very values they purport to inherently possess. Maintaining that these values do exist, and are essential, however, allow exalted subjects to make certain claims about this imagined community which align with the national mythology, without actually having to make the changes necessary for them to become true in a wholly inclusive way – thus preserving this racialized hierarchy.

Wente maintains this exalted position when she writes that regardless of what kind of unforgiveable deed Khadr committed, he owes his life to the “first-rate medical treatment he received from the Americans – after trying to kill as many of them as possible.”\(^\text{166}\) That is, the soldiers, despite being under threat from Khadr, intrinsically did the right thing by saving Khadr’s life. Khadr, on the other hand, writes Wente, was only concerned with killing Westerners. She goes on to write that it was also “the humanitarian gesture [of the Chrétien government] that saved Mr. Khadr’s dad”\(^\text{167}\) – a democratic, peaceful and tolerant move that ended in acts of terrorism with lasting effects. In these examples Wente employs discursive practices that already exist within the Western discursive arena – the “truth” of the exalted and the stranger are already present,

\(^{166}\) Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
\(^{167}\) Ibid.
are already concepts that are well-formed and well “known.” These two instances – of Khadr being intent on killing as many Americans as possible in spite of the Americans working to save his life, and of his father committing acts of terrorism after the generosity of Westerners freed him – simply confirm the positioning of the exalted subject and the stranger. In these examples Wente accesses the discourses that are already in place and available to her. The racialized hierarchical order is maintained through the argument that the Other does not intrinsically possess the national values of which the exalted subject is imbued. Such discursive practices are available to wield and are well understood by the Western social body.

The Stranger at my Door

Despite Omar Khadr's return to Canada, he appears to remain a stranger here, not because people fail to recognize him, but precisely because they do not fail to do so. He is “the outsider inside.”168 For, as Sara Ahmed argues:

The figure of the stranger is far from simply being strange; it is a figure that is painfully familiar in that very strange(r)ness. The stranger has already come too close; the stranger is ‘in my face.’ The stranger then is not simply the one whom we have not yet encountered, but the one whom we have already encountered, or already faced. The stranger comes to be faced as a form of recognition: we recognize somebody as a stranger, rather than simply failing to recognize them.169

168 Ahmed, Strange Encounters, 3.
169 Ibid., 21. Italics in original.
In other words, the stranger is a body that we are already aware of existing, that we’ve already encountered, rather than one we have never encountered before. This is a particularly salient point in reference to how Muslims are perceived in Canada in a post-911 world. To exalted subjects, Muslims are “strangers,” considered to be threats to security, who have come to be “known” as bodies to be concerned about, to be cautious and fearful of. This is the type of stranger Wente writes about when she admonishes those “who accuse our government of behaving brutishly”\(^{170}\) towards Khadr, and then recalls, in the next sentence, that when Omar’s father, Ahmed Khadr was “sprung from jail in Pakistan”\(^ {171}\) by Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chretien, the “senior al-Qaeda operative…used his new-found freedom to train his sons as soldiers for \textit{jihad}.”\(^ {172}\) Wente’s warning is loud and clear – Omar Khadr is a stranger, and a dangerous one at that. In this light, Omar Khadr has always been, and will always be a stranger, as his father was, and he will exist as an Othered body on Canadian soil.

Ahmed agrees that there are decisions made about who is recognized as belonging, and who is recognized as a stranger. She argues:

To be alien in a particular nation, is to hesitate at a different border: the alien here is the one who does not belong in a nation space, and who is already defined as such by the Law. The alien is hence only a category within a given community of citizens or subjects: as the outsider inside, the alien takes on a specific function, establishing relations of proximity and distance within the home(land). Aliens allow the demarcation of spaces of belonging:

\(^{170}\) Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”

\(^{171}\) Ibid.

\(^{172}\) Ibid. Italics in original.
by coming too close to home, they establish the very necessity of policing the borders of knowable and inhabitable terrains.\textsuperscript{173}

Thus, those who are not exalted are strangers, are “outsider[s] inside.” Yet, what such demarcating does is, Ahmed argues, “define ‘us’ against any-body who is a stranger…conceal[ing] that some-bodies are already recognized as stranger and more dangerous than other bodies.”\textsuperscript{174} Knowing this dangerous Muslim body, then, this imagined body, is one way the exalted subject secures a place in Canada as the one who belongs, continually reiterating “the subject’s sense of being ‘at home’ in the national space.”\textsuperscript{175} The exalted subjects exert their gaze upon the Other through surveillance and disciplining of those “stranger” bodies.

As such, the public comes to “know” Omar Khadr, someone who is officially a Canadian citizen, as an alien, someone who has “come too close to home,” a stranger who not only does not embody Canadian values, but also one who threatens them and wants to destroy them. This becomes “known” as “truth” because not only is he a Muslim – thus an outsider – but also because Khadr, in order to secure his plea deal, confessed to killing a soldier who was committed to defending the West against the East, and thus the values of Westerners, an act which further assures – to the exalted subjects – that Khadr will never be, and never was, truly Canadian. In the end, Wente’s language accomplishes this task of further entrenching the national mythology within the social body of the nation.

\textsuperscript{173} Ahmed, \textit{Strange Encounters}, 3.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 3–4.
\textsuperscript{175} Thobani, \textit{Exalted Subjects}, 15.
by delegitimizing and trivializing Khadr, an act which allows her to uphold the legitimacy of the dominant Canadian story and the “real” Canadian citizen. She reinforces the message that Khadr, as Other, is not only not credible, but also that he has taken advantage of “our” good will, that his is a father who acted in ways that a “real” Canadian would not act, and therefore, ultimately, that Omar Khadr is not, and never will be, one of “us.”
Chapter 5: Biopolitics

Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure.

Helen Keller\textsuperscript{176}

I turn now to the larger context of the Khadr case to better illustrate how a politics of fear is manifested in the bodies of exalted subjects and strangers and what some of the consequences of doing so are by considering how populations of bodies are managed and controlled. I analyze how the Muslim body has been produced as both a body that is dangerous to the state and one that is separate from “real” Canadians by exploring how differing techniques of control – such as risk management, safety, and security – are enacted upon the social body in order to obtain/maintain optimization where such regulation further establishes a separation between the exalted and the stranger.

Since the war on terrorism began, though certainly before, Western democratic governments and Western society in general have done much to control individuals, communities and nations in the name of security. This is often done through a discourse of safety and of risk management, while the familiar rhetoric “for one’s own good” provides sufficient grounds to implement diverse actions of management. Even as this control traverses many different territories – from education to airports; from investment banking to prison cells; from the

\textsuperscript{176} Helen Keller, \textit{The Open Door} (New York: Doubleday, 1957).
molar to the molecular,\textsuperscript{177} that is, to our very bodies – it also wears various masks.

In particular, there persists a constant push for risk management, safety, security and optimization – that is, citizens are persuaded that they must increasingly protect themselves from potential threats, are advised to constantly strive for enhancement and betterment, and, in order to do so, must continually modify and alter. At the same time, these techniques are presented as the duty, the responsibility, of individuals, communities, and nations. Therefore, by looking at these masks: risk management, safety, security, and optimization, one begins to see that they are all mechanisms of control.

Yet, once recognized, one can begin to look through and past these masks in order to observe how it is possible to move from daily practices, such as having dietary and fitness regimes, to buying insurance policies, from replacing body parts, such as kidneys, to imprisoning, then torturing those labeled as terrorists at American prison bases, such as Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Although these examples seem to be separated by a vast expanse, in terms of thoughts around optimization, and certainly in terms of safety, security, and risk management, in the end, they are not so far as one may think, particularly when the management and value of the body is at stake.

\textsuperscript{177} In Rose, \textit{The Politics of Life Itself}, 262, Rose writes that he uses molar in the way that the Oxford English Dictionary defines it: “Of or relating to mass; acting on or by means of large masses of matter. Often contrasted with molecular.”
In this chapter I analyze the larger context under which Omar Khadr's case has unraveled. That is, I begin to connect and explain how the move from one of these examples to the next is possible, and how, in the end, people within the social body seem to be, or are complacent about, even accepting of the acts of torture that have been committed by the hands of Western democratic governments in order to provide a framework for Khadr's case as it relates to the biopolitical – that is the management of bodies by regimes of truth. As I navigate this landscape of control, I explore how this managing of bodies contributes to a politics of fear and to states of exception, which, as I argued in the previous chapter, leads to the essentializing of the Muslim body while, at the same time, constructing the “true” Canadian.

This chapter is an analysis of the framework from which the Othered Muslim body – the stranger – comes to be positioned in contradistinction to the exalted subject using the lens of the biopolitical. I consider the larger context surrounding Khadr’s case using a variety of concepts: homo economicus, vital politics, the ethopolitical, and states of exception. While I realize that a complete examination of these notions is far too large to be fully analyzed here, I will show how these ideas, though diverse, work together through the biopolitical to divide bodies and create a racialized division which ultimately leads to the Othering and venerating of bodies, including and excluding them as “true” Canadians or as “strangers.” To be clear, this is a look at the bigger picture, at what mechanisms
of control are and how they work to subjugate some and privilege others and how such demarcation has led to a case such as that of Omar Khadr.

**Homo Economicus**

At the end of Michel Foucault’s 1978-1979 lectures, editor Michel Senellart writes that for Foucault:

> The word liberalism is justified by the role liberty plays in the liberal art of government: a liberty no doubt guaranteed, but also produced by this art of government, which, in order to achieve its ends, needs continually to create, maintain, and frame it. Liberalism can thus be defined as the calculation of risk – the free play of individual interests – compatible with the interest of each and all. That is why the incitement to ‘live dangerously’ entails the establishment of multiple mechanisms of security.\(^{178}\)

That security and power play such pivotal roles in today’s liberal governments\(^{179}\) is central to Foucault’s work,\(^{180}\) especially as he discusses and analyzes the beginnings of neo-liberalism in these lectures, and how it becomes implemented in the United States, and, by extension, Canada. This type of governmentality emphasizes economic growth and supports a capitalist economy where competition is meant to be key, while striving to intervene as little as possible in the market economy. To this end, every person has a stake in the nation’s economy, because, according to Foucault, “*Homo economicus* is an

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\(^{178}\) Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 329.

\(^{179}\) Here Foucault is not using “liberal” to refer to party politics, but rather as a means to represent Western democratic governments.

entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself.”¹⁸¹ Foucault’s *homo economicus* – the economic man – is important because he is integrated into the economy, is the economy, is human capital. In other words, people’s skills gain them money; they are the source of their own earnings. Being an entrepreneur allows the individual to be able to consume as well as to produce. “The man of consumption, insofar as he consumes, is a producer,” writes Foucault, “What does he produce? Well, quite simply, he produces his own satisfaction”¹⁸² The consumer, then, is also the producer. This is human capital, and it must be invested in, in order to ensure that everyone is able to produce and consume, and ultimately be able to participate in the market.

Furthermore, *homo economicus*, who is involved in the market, “responds systematically to systematic modifications artificially introduced into the environment. *Homo economicus,*” Foucault writes, “is someone who is eminently governable,”¹⁸³ and thus, is someone who can be managed. Hence, we have an individual who is not only governable, but someone in whom there is also an investment. Consequently, there is concern over this investment, or, concern over the making of human capital. Educational investment, investment in health care, the whole “set of cultural stimuli… all contribute to the formation of those elements that can make up a human capital,”¹⁸⁴ and therefore, Foucault writes, “*homo economicus* now becomes the correlate of a governmentality which will

¹⁸² Ibid.
¹⁸³ Ibid., 270.
¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 229.
act on the environment and systematically modify its variables.”

It is in the government’s interest, and individual and societal interest, to make and encourage these investments, investments that ultimately strive for the optimization of the individual – the improvement of human capital.

Foucault argues that once society is invested in the improvement of human capital, “it is inevitable that the problem of the control, screening, and improvement of the human capital of individuals, as a function of unions and consequent reproducing, will become actual, or at any rate, called for.”

Improvement of bodies, then, inevitably leads to the governance of bodies. The landscape of control begins to take root.

The Biopolitical

Governing bodies, intervening upon them, in an attempt to produce the best possible person with the best possible skills so that the individual can and is able to participate in the economy lies at the heart of the neo-liberal government. As such, it becomes easier to see why and how value comes to be placed on our very lives, and why not only improving, but protecting lives, securing them, is paramount. This is well articulated by the influential laissez-faire economist, Milton Friedman, when he writes that “the state’s sole functions were ‘to protect our freedom both from the enemies outside our gates and from our fellow-citizens: to preserve law and order, to enforce private contracts, to foster

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185 Ibid., 271.
186 Ibid., 228.
In other words, the state’s role is not only to ensure competitive capitalist markets, but also to ensure security. In order to do so, the neo-liberal government must be concerned with the body – must reach into the body – to intervene, to govern, to keep it secure. This is the biopolitical.

Biopolitics, then, is the management of not only the body, but also entire populations of bodies. It is the intervention on the corporeal by regimes of truth such as government, education, medicine and media. One of the main functions of intervention is security, which is formed to and molded around a discourse of safety and protection, of risk management – particularly risk prevention and risk minimization – in order to obtain and/or maintain optimization, which is future oriented. In other words, as Nikolas Rose writes, “a certain achievable and desirable future…requires action in the present for its realization.” Potential risks must be managed and minimized for a safe and secure future; hence, steps must be taken now in order to accomplish this. Therefore, in order for there to be optimization in the future, there must be risk management, there must be intervention that happens now.

Margaret Wente certainly shows her support for such systems when she writes that by not properly managing risks – in this case, Omar Khadr’s father by the Chrétien government – by not intervening at the proper time, impending disaster ensued. Wente asks her readers this:


Recall the humanitarian gestures that saved Mr. Khadr’s dad, Ahmed. In 1996, when Omar was just 9, then–prime minister Jean Chretien personally intervened to get Ahmed Khadr, a Canadian citizen, sprung from jail in Pakistan, where he’d been arrested in connection with the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad. Ahmed Khadr, who was also lionized by the media and human rights groups, really was a terrorist – a senior al-Qaeda operative who used his new-found freedom to train his sons as soldiers for jihad.¹⁸⁹

Her implication is that had proper risk management occurred, proper techniques of control, then so too would there be optimization in the future. That is, had Chrétien not intervened, had he not “sprung” Khadr from jail, then he would have remained incarcerated, never to be released to the world and to his sons. Rather, what did occur, according to Wente, was the killing of a soldier by Omar Khadr, a risk, Wente implies, that should have been entirely preventable. In other words, had the proper techniques of control been employed in the past, risks in the future would have been averted.

**Vital Politics**

This type of “risk thinking” is not new and has been central to biopolitics for more than a century.¹⁹⁰ Risk thinking is something the government is often tasked with, and it can be seen in countless instances such as in health care, food safety laws, law enforcement, and the penal system. Yet, there is also great emphasis placed on the responsibility of individuals to act in order to secure their

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¹⁸⁹ Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy” Italics in original.
own safety and security by managing and minimizing potential risks to ensure an optimal future. Rose writes:

Protection against risk through an investment in security becomes part of the responsibilities of each active individual, if they are not to feel guilt at failing to protect themselves and their loved ones against future misfortunes. The ethics of lifestyle maximization, coupled with a logic in which someone must be held to blame for any event that threatens an individual’s ‘quality of life,’ generates a relentless imperative of risk management not simply in relation to contracting for insurance, but also through daily lifestyle management, choices of where to live and shop, what to eat and drink, stress management, exercise and so forth. Of course, this inaugurates a virtually endless spiral of amplification of risk – as risk is managed in certain zones and forms of conduct (e.g. shopping in malls scanned by security cameras, fetal monitoring, low fat diets and heart disease), the perceived riskiness of other unprotected zones is exacerbated (high streets; unsupervised pregnancies; the uneducated dietary habits of children and the poor). These arrangements within which the individual is re RESPONSIBILIZED for the management of his or her own risk produces a field characterized by uncertainty, plurality and anxiety, thus continually open to the construction of new problems and the marketing of new solutions.¹⁹¹

In other words, pressure to intervene continually mounts in order to prevent “new” and “different” risks, all while the “unprotected zones” widen, and a rush to narrow them is created by establishing even more mechanisms of security. The discourse around the different masks of control raises anxiety levels, and citizens are not only encouraged, but also are expected to take the appropriate steps to manage risk, to create security, to ensure safety and to strive for optimization. People are effectively tasked with waging war on risk.

There are countless examples of this, even in something as seemingly innocuous as eating a healthy diet to maintain health and to avoid diseases. Something similar occurs in areas such as home security where alarms are monitored to prevent threats. Such risk management techniques, such interventions, are made to seem necessary and are expected of us. Citizens are tasked with ensuring their own well-being. Essentially, this is the citizens’ occasion to put controls into place in order to better equip them to win a war against that which has been identified as a danger – and the pressures to do so mount in such a way that the expectation of compliance ensues en masse.

Governments are also expected to manage potential risks and threats to safety and well-being, and to administer to citizens so that they may have the best opportunities for optimization. One example of government responsibility comes in the way of homeland defense – that is, of keeping borders safe from (potential) risks. Yet, more often than not, in this age of the politics of life itself, or what Rose refers to as “vital politics,”\textsuperscript{192} there is cooperation between government and the individual,\textsuperscript{193} and thus, “[i]n the politics of our present…the ethos of human existence….has come to provide the ‘medium’ within which the self-government of the autonomous individual can be connected up with the imperatives of good government.”\textsuperscript{194} Intervention in the present, by government

\textsuperscript{192} Rose, \textit{The Politics of Life Itself}, 51.

\textsuperscript{193} While both governments and individuals also collaborate with private companies, such as insurance companies.

\textsuperscript{194} Rose, \textit{The Politics of Life Itself}, 27.
and the individual in cooperation, works to (re)shape the future.\textsuperscript{195} We can see that there are many players involved in our lives, in our bodies, and that “this field of choices, judgments, values, and hopes about life itself is the territory of our new vital politics.”\textsuperscript{196}

Therefore, while individuals feel as though they are making autonomous choices, and are in control of themselves and their decisions, in this age of vital politics, where choice and decisions about individual enhancement and safety dominate our world, the individual is certainly not alone. Often the choices made about safety, security and optimization must be made within certain boundaries – such as those set out by government through rules and laws – and are dependent on others, such as doctors and private companies, who are regularly involved in the decision making. Often, there is societal pressure, familial pressure, simply the pressure to conform to norms and social codes, to make decisions that will reduce or cut down on potential risk(s), and those which promote safety and well-being. And thus, as the days and weeks persist individuals continue to strive to make the right decisions that will enhance their weeks, months and lives – as well as those of the ones they love – doing so to stave off the potential “wars” that exist all around us.

In the end, people become scared to not act in the present in order to secure their futures, just as they are expected to do so by friends, family, doctors, society and government. This type of pressure, which Foucault has written

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{196} Rose, \textit{The Politics of Life Itself}, 51.
extensively about,¹⁹⁷ is exerted through techniques of surveillance – which can mean actual surveillance through the gaze of regimes of truth, the social body, the internal gaze – or just the possibility that surveillance may occur or is going to occur. This type of scrutiny works to regulate the conduct of others and the self; it is an act of controlling the actions of the self and others without necessarily having to exert physical punishment. That is, we are constantly aware that we could be under surveillance and thus act in ways that we are expected to and that have been already established.

A useful way to understand this effect is through the Foucauldian analysis of the Panopticon¹⁹⁸ wherein a tower exists in the centre of a circular prison. Out of the tower shines a light that does not allow the prisoners to see the tower but does allow the guard in the tower to see all of the prisoners. This permits the guard to monitor the prisoners without the prisoners knowing if they are actually being observed or not. Regardless, the prisoners must act as though they are being watched at all times. That is, no one need actually be surveying for others to act as though they are being watched, and it is this type of disciplinary power at work through societal and self-monitoring. This disciplinary power, the act of (self) policing for normalized behaviours and conduct, is established through the dominant discourses of the regimes of truth, and when one acts outside of these societal norms discipline follows. This is the case for both strangers and exalted

¹⁹⁸ See Foucault, Discipline and Punish.
subjects, since the subjectivity of the exalted is constituted in part through the subjection of the stranger to a disciplining gaze, judgment, marginalization, and ostracization.

Hence, action occurs out of fear for consequences that have not yet occurred, that may never occur, in order to assuage judgment, exclusion, damage, disaster, illness and danger. On an individual level, on a daily basis, lives are organized around the techniques of control of which I have been writing: risk management, safety, security and optimization in order to enhance the value of lives and the lives of those whom are loved; people work within the boundaries that have been set up, and become used to and support the controls that are put in place to provide security, safety and optimization. These controls are accepted and followed, and there is a feeling of protection for doing so, even a protection from those who do not follow the rules and codes. People follow the norms and codes that have been established by the regimes of truth, all the while monitoring and surveying themselves and others. This is what Foucault refers to as a “disciplined society” where regulation of even the smallest details works its way into our lives.199

It is through participation in this system that the state is embodied while the expectation that others do the same exists and persists on an individual, community and national level. There is an expectation and a trust that the regimes of truth have also established and will continue to establish, have

199 Ibid., 198.
implemented and will continue to implement controls for the enhancement of individual lives for the security and safety of the nation, and there is a fear of the consequences that will ensue if such protections are not put in place.

To take a moment away from the bigger picture and once again focus on the case of Omar Khadr, we see that Wente believes that the Chrétien government let down its end of the bargain, and when this happened the consequences were dire. I read her writing about Omar Khadr and his father as a significant loss against the war on terrorism, at least a war within a war that could have been won, but that instead left Westerners open for the firefight Omar Khadr is said to have been involved in. Wente’s writing reveals that there was a crack in the security, safety and optimization system. Risks were not prevented and the result was death of the “innocent”. Putting Khadr’s case in such terms reinforces a fear that the nation has failed to guard against risk and which firmly places Khadr as the outsider who is dangerous and separate from the exalted Canadians who should, in fact, fear him and that of which he is capable. Wente’s writing is, thus, an example of Foucault’s “panoptic principle”\(^{200}\) as she sets her gaze upon those who do not fit within the dominant Canadian discourse bringing to light the consequences of not following the rules.

Therefore, this fear of that which has not (yet) happened, the constant urging to protect ourselves from the unknown, from possible, even probable dangers, and that the authorities are doing likewise, doing what is necessary,

\(^{200}\) Ibid., 216.
what is needed, has created a politics of fear. This is a fear that leads to support for or acceptance of or complacency in Omar Khadr’s plight: a child according to national and international laws being taken to and held in Guantanamo Bay amidst a sea of human rights violations in a tragic story that’s gone on for more than a decade. In this way the ethopolitical has become entirely central to biopolitics.

The Ethopolitical

Ethopolitics, writes Rose, “attempts to shape the conduct of human beings by acting upon their sentiments, beliefs, and values – in short, by acting on ethics…. [It] concerns itself with the self-techniques by which human beings should judge and act upon themselves to make themselves better than they are.” Ethopolitics is concerned with everything connected to life – “about the value of different forms of life, styles of life, ways of living, and how these should be judged and governed.” In other words, the ethopolitical is about determining the value of life itself, about judging and controlling that life, including one’s own, and about deciding on the function and the utility of the body by acting on ethics. In fact, “we are faced with the inescapable task of deliberating about the worth of different human lives – with controversies over such decisions, with conflicts over who should make such decisions and who cannot.”

201 Rose, The Politics of Life Itself, 27.
202 Ibid., 97.
203 Ibid., 40.
Ethopolitics, then, are front and centre in the case of Omar Khadr as decisions about worth of life have been made. Wente writes that if he hadn’t been saved by the Americans, he would just be a “casualty of war, dead in Afghanistan”\textsuperscript{204} – basically forgotten. Instead, she writes that he is a “cause célèbre,”\textsuperscript{205} but also a dangerous terrorist who is causing Canada problems. Omar Khadr writes, too, that decisions have been made on his behalf that place value on his life. He writes that if people don’t understand how unjust his case is, how “unfair and sham this process is”\textsuperscript{206} then he knows that the world is “full of hate, unjust and discrimination!”\textsuperscript{207} Yet more than that, he compares the unjustness of his case to those who had to sacrifice in order for civil rights laws to take effect. Essentially Khadr compares himself to those who have been judged and Othered before him. In the previous chapter I showed how these constructions about worth of life are present. I also demonstrated that a racialized hierarchy exists and is created and maintained by those who are considered to be exalted subjects over those who are considered to be strangers and represented as dangerous Others to be feared. Within the larger context, this means that fear itself helps ensure that steps are taken to mitigate risks of danger that could be present – or, might be in the future. I will now show how these steps can lead to extra-legal circumstances when a politics of fear is part of the equation.

\textsuperscript{204} Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{207} Khadr, “Letter.”
State of Fear

Since 9/11, although certainly well before, when terrorists attacked the World Trade Centre, the icons of capitalism, towers which seemed to represent the very neo-liberal ideas that have come to be the very foundations of the United States (and thus the West itself), much deliberating has occurred about the worth of different human lives, as well as who can or should decide on that value.

Furthermore, because the risks were not prevented, because the West was not protected, 9/11 has become the example of the consequences of not being prepared, or, at least, not being prepared enough. Hence, fears became reality and the need to secure and to evaluate the worthiness of life has increased.

It seems that this politics of fear on an individual, communal, and national level was not unfounded, and the fallout has been not to try and calm anxieties, but instead to increase them. The clear messages of the need for constant risk management, risk prevention, security and optimization now arrive in an almost constant barrage, in many different ways and on many different levels. However, these messages begin to blur together, become masked, and the underlying message of control is pushed further out of focus while the necessity for security at any cost is pressed closer to the surface. This comes at a price that many of us do not perceive. For:

[T]he processes of continuous modulation of conduct have been accompanied by the intensification of direct, disciplinary, often coercive and carceral, political interventions in relation to particular zones and persons….As civility is understood as affiliation by consumption, dividing practices are re-configured to
problematize certain ‘abjected’ persons, sectors and locales for specific reformatory attention: the underclass, the excluded, the marginal.\textsuperscript{208}

Post 9/11, and for the purpose of my work, the “particular persons” discussed who must be disciplined and who are subjected to “political interventions” are so-called “terrorists,” and, more specifically in this case, Canadian citizen Omar Khadr. As discussed in the previous chapter, these “terrorists” are those Muslim bodies who are the “strangers inside.” Such bodies are Othered, particularly by exalted subjects, and are represented as posing an indefinite risk to the safety of those exalted subjects in the West, as trying to prevent the realization of Western optimization on both individual and national levels. This is how Omar Khadr has been represented in Margaret Wente’s editorial. As an example, Wente includes a quote from Sergeant First Class Layne Morris, whom she adds, “lost his right eye in the ambush.”\textsuperscript{209} She quotes him as saying that Khadr “wasn’t a panicky teenager we encountered that day….That was a trained al-Qaeda who wanted to make his last act on Earth the killing of an American.”\textsuperscript{210} Khadr is a body that is shown to be living outside of the controls set by governments and society and hence there is a push, which I’ve shown is supported, to bring these Othered bodies under control.

What must not go unstated or understated, however, is also the way that Omar Khadr has been subjected to extralegal circumstances. That is, that

\textsuperscript{208} Rose, “The Death of the Social?,” 344–345.
\textsuperscript{209} Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid.
government has also been living outside the controls of the law (although without consequence which I will discuss later) when it comes to how Khadr has been treated. This is not lost on Khadr who asserts in his published letter to Dennis Edney that he is well aware he has been put through an “unfair and sham” process. He further questions what kind of a “world am I being released to” if the “US sentencing [sic] a child to life in prison” is allowed to take place. Certainly one that is full of “hate, unjust [sic] and discrimination!”

Undoubtedly racialized hierarchy is central in Khadr’s case. “Justice and freedom have a very high cost and value,” writes Khadr, “and history is a good witness to it, not too far [sic] ago or far away how many people sacrificed for the civil right law to take affect.” He realizes, too, that in this case, though he “hate[s] being the head of the spear…life has put [him there], and as life have put me in the past in hard position [sic] and still is, I just have to deal with it and hope for the best results.” In these few lines, it seems that Khadr is cognizant that exalted subjects have pushed and succeeded in trying to manage his body, while his life is judged, not only by the military and the government, but also by citizens and regimes of truth, such as media. When such judgments are made, the realm of the ethopolitical is entered, and what follows is that measurements of value are

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211 Khadr, “Letter.”
212 Ibid.
213 Ibid.
214 Wente, “Welcome Back Khadr, You Lucky Guy.”
216 Ibid.
placed on the very lives of the stranger. This, then, also marks the entry into what
Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben, refers to as a state of exception.

State of Exception

A state of exception is a situation where the regular rules are suspended
and no longer apply. They usually occur during emergencies, such as in times of
war. This exceptional state is often manifested as an actual space or place, such
as Guantanamo Bay, where crimes occur(red) in open contempt of international
humanitarian laws, paradoxically breaking the law in order to uphold or maintain
it. This is precisely what happened in the United States after 9/11 under the
pretext of safety and security. Agamben writes that:

The immediately biopolitical significance of the state of exception
as the original structure in which law encompasses living beings
by means of its own suspension emerges clearly in the ‘military
order’ issued by the president of the United States on November
13, 2001, which authorized the ‘indefinite detention’ and trial by
‘military commissions’ (not to be confused with the military
tribunals provided for by the law of war) of noncitizens suspected
of involvement in terrorist activities.

The USA Patriot Act issued by the U.S Senate on October 26,
2001, already allowed the attorney general to ‘take into custody’
any alien suspected of activities that endangered ‘the national
security of the United States,’ but within seven days the alien had
to be either released or charged with the violation of immigration
laws or some other criminal offense. What is new about President
Bush’s order is that it radically erases any legal status of the
individual, thus producing a legally unnamable and unclassifiable
being. Not only do the Taliban captured in Afghanistan not enjoy
the status of POWs as defined by the Geneva Convention, they
do not even have the status of person charged with a crime
according to American laws. Neither prisoners nor persons
accused, but simply ‘detainees,’ they are the object of a pure de facto rule, of a detention that is indefinite not only in the temporal sense but in its very nature as well, since it is entirely removed from the law and from judicial oversight.\textsuperscript{217}

In other words, in order to protect the West from terrorists, it became “law” that anyone “suspected” of being involved in “terrorist activities” could be detained indefinitely. This order is presented as an absolutely necessary measure to the overall objective of protecting the country. Therefore, because the state of exception was put in place in the name of security, in order to protect the nation from the dangerous “terrorists” who were/are “out to get the West,” it is rationalized as both an essential and clear-cut act, which also makes it easy not to define any limits on the orders, such as what constitutes a terrorist and what exactly terrorist activities are. In order to “protect” the West, the governing and managing of these Othered bodies and their eventual evaluation occurs outside of the bounds of “normal” laws and seemingly without delimitations. Further, strategies such as those the “the military….calls ‘forward deterrence,’ a policy by which it deploys troops before a threat to the United States becomes manifest,”\textsuperscript{218} become commonplace, and are portrayed as crucial measures taken to assure safety and security. These types of tactics persist as “potential

threats are actualized as demonstrations of the need for further intervention.”

In this way the idea of threats manifests the need to prevent them.

The lives of those labeled as “terrorists” are not afforded their rights under national and international law. They are deemed not worthy of these rights and little or no value is placed on their lives. These devalued bodies are then rounded up, placed in Guantanamo Bay for an indeterminate amount of time, where they remain as bodies without rights. They are bare lives, they are what Agamben terms the *homo sacer*, “the life...that may be killed but not sacrificed.” That is, it is the life that may be killed with impunity by anyone, yet the act is also not considered a religious sacrifice. Omar Khadr seems to understand this when he writes that “there must be somebody to sacrifice to really show the world the unfairness, and really it seems that it’s me. Know Dennis that I don’t want that, I want my freedom and life, but I really don’t see it coming from this way.”

Although Khadr uses the word “sacrifice” to describe his role, there is no illusion that there is anything but the profane that is implicated. His body has been judged and presented as a risk to safety and hence, as not worthy of his international humanitarian rights, nor protection under international laws. He

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219 Ibid., 18.
220 It must be noted that there are several other such prisons, some known by the public, such as Abu Ghraib, while others remain unknown.
222 Ibid.
223 Ibid.
224 Khadr, “Letter.”
exists as the stranger, as if the understanding of “terrorist,” is indelibly inscribed on his very body.\textsuperscript{225} When this is the case, Rose writes, what seems to be required is “the long-term pacification of [this] irredeemable individual in the name of public protection, even if this means the rejection of many rule of law considerations, such as those concerning the proportionality of crime and punishment.”\textsuperscript{226}

I have shown, for Khadr, the circumstances surrounding his punishment are certainly dubious at best, while for many of those Others confined in places like Guantanamo there are no crimes at all. As Susan Sontag writes, “The charges against most of the people detained in the prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan [are] nonexistent – the Red Cross reports that 70 to 90 percent of those being held seem to have committed no crime other than simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time, caught up in some sweep of ‘suspects’ – the principal justification for holding them is ‘interrogation’.\textsuperscript{227} At once inside and outside of the law – confined at Guantanamo, but without their rights to charges and \textit{habeas corpus} – abuse becomes not only possible, but probable. Many prisoners have suffered torture at the hands of Western governments; and because it is committed against “dangerous Muslim men,”\textsuperscript{228} against the ubiquitous terrorist, and because it is done in order to keep the West safe from

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\textsuperscript{225} Rose, \textit{The Politics of Life Itself}, 235.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{228} Razack, \textit{Casting Out}, 16.
\end{flushright}
the East, it seems as though, against these bodies, this cruelty becomes
reasonable, possibly necessary, or at least something that can be overlooked. As
I’ve shown by looking at the larger context, it seems that Omar Khadr did not
stand a chance against the extralegal situation he still finds himself in today. And
certainly, as the fear of the Other continues, perpetuated by regimes of truth,
there is little doubt that such a case will happen again. More to the point, what
seems to be evident is that the continued demarcation of the Muslim body – the
stranger inside – positioned in contradistinction to the exalted white subject, the
“true” Canadian, will remain the same.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

I am totally confident not that the world will get better, but that we should not give up the game before all the cards have been played. The metaphor is deliberate; life is a gamble. Not to play is to foreclose any chance of winning. To play, to act, is to create at least a possibility of changing the world.

Howard Zinn

This thesis reveals the ways that both Muslim bodies and racialized white bodies have come to be (re)produced and (re)presented through media. In particular, I have attempted to identity how exalted subjects have constructed Omar Khadr as a stranger inside by analyzing writing by an exalted subject, Margaret Wente. I have endeavored to delve into the larger context of Khadr’s case by exploring the ways and consequences of valuing and managing bodies – how measures of safety and security are implemented to ensure optimization and how these actions are also part of states of fear and states of exception – the state in which Omar Khadr resides. I have shown that these states and these actions are complex and are wrapped around and within one another. Thus, in the end, this is an investigation that is relevant to education in profound ways, that is relevant to both teachers and learners who are inescapably entwined in the way that Muslim bodies and racialized white bodies are produced, represented and controlled.

Media as Curricular Body

Both teachers and learners are living bodies with varied and diverse lived experiences mapped into and onto them. These embodied experiences help us come to know what we know, as well as provide us with the tools necessary to process new information. It is, as Maxine Greene asserts, past experiences that help us to process what we are learning in the present,\textsuperscript{230} and these extensive experiences do not simply disappear inside an educational setting. Rather, knowledge and understanding grows with each encounter with bodies of information both inside and outside of schools. This is part of what Ted Aoki terms “lived curriculum,” and it encompasses the “fold[ing of] the past, present, and ongoing experiences together in the situated image of the curricular landscape.”\textsuperscript{231} In other words, curriculum, taken as bodies of knowledge, is incredibly vast, and includes not only the body of texts we encounter, or the “curriculum-as-plan,”\textsuperscript{232} but everything we encounter, the “everyday narratives,”\textsuperscript{233} from pop culture to the very bodies of others, including one’s own embodied experience of and relationship to these encounters.

As I have shown throughout this thesis, these also include encounters with media, which are incredibly influential – again, as Watt argues, more influential

\textsuperscript{233} Ibid., 263.
than the formal curriculum in our schools.\textsuperscript{234} What is offered is a story of the Muslim body – as Othered, static, essentialized, and unchanging. This body, in the case of Omar Khadr as represented by Wente, is a dangerous Muslim – a fixed body that inhabits a particular position that does not belong. One of the effects of such “oversimplified and reductive understandings of difference,” as argued by Watt, “is that we fail to see contradictions, and are therefore prevented from inhabiting more ambiguous and less rigid identities and relations to the world.”\textsuperscript{235} When such unmitigated understandings exist with no official curricular interventions, it is easy to see how these racist constructions come to be entrenched and how the Muslim body is “seen as a single homogenous entity [where] particularities don’t matter and are often erased in media representations and in our minds.”\textsuperscript{236}

Positioned in binary opposition sits the white, settler body, “the privileged signifier of normativity.”\textsuperscript{237} This white, normative body does not have to endure what Julien and Mercer, who employ Stuart Hall, refer to as the “burden of racial representation.”\textsuperscript{238} That is, negative portrayals of racialized whites, in editorials, for example, are not considered representative of all white bodies; damaging

\textsuperscript{234} Watt, “The Urgency of Visual Media Literacy in Our Post-9/11 World,” 32.
\textsuperscript{235} Watt, “Disrupting Mass Media as Curriculum: Opening to Stories of Veiling,” 151.
\textsuperscript{236} Watt, “The Urgency of Visual Media Literacy in Our Post-9/11 World,” 34.
\textsuperscript{237} Springgay and Freedman, “Introduction: On Touching and a Bodied Curriculum,” xviii.
depictions simply do not “stick” and are rather seen as anomalies.\textsuperscript{239} Further, this white body belongs to the nation as an exalted subject and the “true” Canadian subject, superior to, and in contradistinction to the Other,\textsuperscript{240} the Muslim body, the outsider inside.\textsuperscript{241} The “stranger” is at once recognized as not belonging – whether that be in a classroom, neighbourhood or the national space. Their Other-ness is perceived as dangerous and thus is demarcated from those who do belong.

This demarcation creates a hierarchy that inevitably comes from the racialization of the Other and the exalted subject; the discourses that work to manage the social body – those of safety, security and optimization – proliferate. What helps to solidify these messages of control and the governing of bodies by regimes of truth are the constructed narratives of risk and risk prevention. What is asserted are the risks that need be avoided and/or minimized, the potential threats that must be considered, and the steps that must be taken to protect from those threats in order to ensure safety, security, and optimization, while emphasizing the ramifications if the proper steps and interventions are not taken. The fear builds, an exceptional state – which I’ve shown is not so exceptional at all – is entered into, and from there fear mounts further still, until a body is inside the walls of Guantanamo Bay, tortured and humiliated.

\textsuperscript{239} Tim Wise On White Privilege: Racism, White Denial and the Costs of Inequality, DVD (Media Education Foundation, 2008), http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=137&template=PDGCommTemplates/HTN/Item_Preview.html.
\textsuperscript{240} Thobani, Exalted Subjects, 9.
\textsuperscript{241} See Ahmed, Strange Encounters.
Omar Khadr’s story, as it has come to be (re)presented and (re)produced is not absent from the classroom. It is a part of the discourse of the “war on terror,” of the Canadian national mythology of exalted subjects and the strangers inside. And hence this is a story that exists, whether it is openly talked about or not, for it is one that is everywhere. The classroom, educators and learners, are all embedded in the story, and this is precisely why this story is relevant to education and to Canada.

The Presence of Absence in the Classroom

Each body is tied to the stories that are written about them – written on their very bodies. In this way, Muslims are racially marked as Other. Yet, as I have shown, these are not bodies that are unidentifiable. In fact, they are bodies that we do recognize, that we “know.” In this way, the body is central to our coming to know identity.242 Yet, rather than understand and know difference, the body itself is replaced with stereotypes and with objectifications243 – (re)affirming the binary opposition of us and them, of belonging and not belonging. As Watt argues, “Educators concerned with social justice”244 need to understand the role media takes in producing “understandings of what Muslims are like, especially

243 Ibid.
given curricular absences.”245 And yet, despite the official curricular absences, through the regimes of truth, particularly media, there is presence.

As Van Dijk argues, media controls what people think about.246 As a result, how Muslims, and those who are erroneously identified as Muslims, are “known,” and thus discussed, is largely managed by media.247 Consequently, rather than there being a failure to recognize, Muslims are recognizable;248 they are apprehended, as Ahmed maintains, as strangers, as Other, as bodies “we have already encountered, or already faced.”249 The familiarity of these racialized Muslim identities has become part of an unofficial curriculum, part of both teachers’ and learners’ experiences, thus part of the lived curriculum. For that reason, despite Watt’s assertion of curricular absences regarding Muslim identity, these Islamaphobic ideas and understandings about Muslims are hyper-present in the classroom through the vigilance that occurs against Otherness.

Zine writes this about life in schools after 9/11:

In local schools, [Muslim] parents and students reported numerous incidents of racism, Islamophobia, and harassment. Many parents spoke of the harassment they faced when they came to the school yard to pick up their children or that their children were told that they should change their "Muslim sounding names." My own son, whose name is "Usama," was routinely referred to as "Bin Laden" by kids at school and was called a "terrorist" and told that his house should be blown up. In other incidents, school girls wearing hijab (headscarves) had stones

245 Ibid.
246 Van Dijk, Discourse and Power, viii. Italics in original.
249 Ibid.
thrown at them as they walked to and from school.  

Here it is clear that “understandings of what Muslims are like,” that is, the way Muslims have been (re)presented in media – as “terrorists” for example – is discursively present in the schools, regardless of Muslim absence in formal or planned curriculum. In this way, as noted previously, media acts like unofficial textbooks, but ones that everyone reads. However, not addressing these cultural texts is different from not discussing assigned readings. As the above example from Zine demonstrates, the consequences of not dialoguing about these problematic representations, of not critiquing these “readings,” results in violence enacted against Muslim bodies, in both words and actions; in this case, the violence was enacted against the very bodies of children. In this example we see how easily the children fall into identifying the risk, and then acting to manage those bodies, in a way “protecting” themselves by Othering the “strangers inside.” The children determine the value of life itself and take to judging and controlling that life. Perhaps the case that Zine presents allows the reality of Khadr’s to be brought even closer to home and shows the parallels between the two as not so distant from one another.

There are other consequences too. Such suppression of discussions are manifold, as scholar Angelina Castagno discovered after a 2008 study she undertook about silencing race in the schools. She argues that “teacher silence in

the face of student race talk served to support and possibly perpetuate racist beliefs and actions. Further to this, staying silent also maintains the status quo. That is, silence preserves the denigrated image and representation of the Muslim body as Other because there is no alternative understanding offered. Silence also allows the politics of fear to stay entrenched, as there is no discussion to alleviate or to challenge the fears that exist and that are perpetuated. To stay silent is to ignore the impact media has on our ways of coming to know, thus legitimizing white supremacy and racist representations, further entrenching such racialized discourses in the minds of teachers and learners alike. In this way, curricular absences of Muslims remain, while discrimination and vigilance against their presence is maintained.

**Freedom and the Disruption of Representations**

When the image of a terrorist, a fanatical and/or irrational body is recalled so easily when the word “Muslim” is heard, when this image is unwavering, when the Muslim body is easily believed to be “known,” then knowledge about this body has become essentialized, and hence, “terrifyingly normal.” As illustrated by Zine’s account of racist violence in the schools, although normalized, such

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(mis)representations are certainly not benign. Nonetheless, media continues to promulgate these discourses, ensuring dominations and oppressions persist in classrooms, schoolyards, and beyond. Yet, disrupting these representations is possible, for although these types of racist representations may not stop, the curriculum can work to disrupt the discourse around Muslim Otherness.

One way to interrupt the discourse is to, as Aoki posits: “embrace the otherness of others.” That is, to focus on difference in order to trouble the ideas and problems associated with fixed identities. Troubling identities in this way can begin to dissolve the binaries of us/them. This binary focuses on collectivity where some people are more alike than other Others; this focus on collectivity can lead to violence. Judith Butler writes, “the collective ethos instrumentalizes violence to maintain the appearance of its collectivity.” In other words, violence – understood both as physical and emotional violence, such as racism – is maintained when we try and preserve sameness, where some people are more the “same” than other Others. For instance, Thobani’s exalted subjects are understood as more similar to one another than to the Muslim body. Butler, using Theodor Adorno’s theories, argues that the violence she refers to is a violence of the universal because it fails to recognize the individual and their rights. The particular is ignored while the us/them binary

254 Ibid.
257 Ibid.
persists, which is an insistence on maintaining collectivity, or sameness.

Conversely, starting from difference – from the particular – allows room to move away from the binary, and thus start to alleviate the violence.

Starting from difference involves staving off an essentialized and static, and therefore knowable, nature – either as Other or exalted. One can begin from the unintelligible by understanding “the other as infinitely unknowable…[and thus] what is ethical or nonviolent, becomes an attentiveness to and the preservation of the alterity of the other.”\(^\text{258}\) Rather than constantly trying to fit our sameness with certain others, and Others’ sameness with other Others, we can instead rely on our “responsibility to others”\(^\text{259}\) and to their difference, which allows teachers and learners to always be becoming, as the multiplicity of each person is explored and accepted. As educational scholar, Bronwyn Davies, writes, accepting such plurality of being allows for “the rich complexity of life lived through multiple and contradictory discourses.”\(^\text{260}\)

Living and learning by embracing and engaging with multiplicity, with complexity, with a sense of always being in process allows teachers and learners to come to understand the self and others, not as fixed and whole beings, but as partial and paradoxical ones. Moreover, Watt, employing Julia Kristeva, argues that “in order to live with others, we have to learn to see ourselves as other. Difference is not the gap between one individual or group and another, but is a


\(^{259}\) Aoki, “Legitimating Lived Curriculum: Towards A Curricular Landscape of Multiplicity,” 266.

relation. The stranger is in us.²⁶¹ Bodies understood in this way are fluid, full of contradictions and inconsistencies, and thus everyone – ourselves and others – is made up of differences; no one is fixed, no one is static. These dynamic bodies, then, are not fully knowable, and thus cannot be reduced to a representation.

Davies writes:

An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product, but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which he or she participates. Accordingly, who one is is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one’s own and others’ discursive practices and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and others’ lives.²⁶²

In other words, although we are enmeshed with the lives and stories of others, and coming to know who we are is intertwined with coming to know who others are, we are never fully knowable for we are “constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak.”²⁶³ That is, we change as our stories change, and as the narratives and discourses around us change, so too do we. This continual transformation requires that the normative discursive formations be disrupted, for they too are continually shifting, and thus for the discourse to remain the same ignores our shifting natures, our difference, our bodies and minds in process. It seems, then, that disrupting the “knowable,” releasing the

fixed and the constant, is the way to freedom, wherein our freedom is bound up in others’ freedom.

Moreover, according to Paulo Freire, freedom is the only way to truly educate and make positive change. In order to engage with difference, with dynamism of the body, and move towards freedom, dialogue, rather than silence, is necessary. Whereas silence keeps us captive and tied to the static – the oppressive dominant discourses – Freire argues that real education is about dialogue between teachers and students, and that it is only through these channels of communication that real learning can occur. Ultimately, acts that lead to social justice, and thus to freedom, are possible only through dialogue. However, there is no formula or recipe for how to engage in this way. There are no numbered steps for implementing dialogue in the classroom. In fact, Freire and others reject the idea of prescriptive teaching and of instruction that limits what is to be learned. Communication is not simply about imparting information from teachers to students, nor about depositing points-of-view; it is about an exchange of ideas, about being critically engaged in and excited by what is going on in the world, followed by dialogue about the discoveries and ideas that arise. Further to this, Freire asserts that critical thinking, not naïve thinking, is


\[267\] Freire, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” 150.
essential to dialogue – where naïve thinking does not change and is unwavering, critical thinking is about awareness of the world, of how elite discourses present the status quo, entrench binaries and fixed identities, and what the repercussions of (re)producing such limited representations are.\textsuperscript{268} In this way, educators are challenged to confront media representations of Muslims, and others who are subjugated, allowing students to become aware of the oppressions that exist, as well as how they come to be. This takes risk, for ways of being and knowing that are propped up by powerful and elite discourses are being called into question. However, taking these chances allows education to be a proponent for change.\textsuperscript{269} As Maxine Greene asserts, “the student, will only be in a position to learn when he [sic] is committed to act upon his [sic] world.”\textsuperscript{270} In other words, learning occurs only when there is dialogue and critical thinking leading to a desire to act, while the fixed world and the dominant discourses are de-centred and destabilized.

To be clear, what I have proposed is not a step-by-step guide for practices of “very good teaching” that offer “solutions” to the “problem” of racism. Nor is it a prescription that starts in the classroom and then moves beyond until that same “goal” is reached. In fact, it would be naïve to believe that oppressions so systemically entrenched and so complex could be wedged out of place so easily. Rather, what I have articulated is a way to take action against, to challenge rather

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{269} Giroux, “Paulo Freire and the Crisis of the Political,” 338.
\textsuperscript{270} Greene, “Curriculum and Consciousness,” 164.
than ignore, to try and disrupt the damaging and oppressive positions and measures that surround and that are embodied. To act by embracing and engaging with multiplicity by actively participating in dialogue and critical thinking is not to be naïve, but rather is to be optimistic. Without optimism that change can transpire – even small change – taking up the difficult and often messy work that is questioning the status quo and revealing the national mythology for what it is – a mythology – by disrupting the representations of Otherness and of exaltedness would work to discourage most attempts. This is because such encounters of action are political and take courage to enact – they are doing battle by critiquing, questioning, de-centering, de-stabilizing and by addressing that which is challenging and complicated because it is embedded within the nation. Admittedly, they are also insufficient. Still, acting allows for learning to occur, and it is (or should be) the business of education to work for the disruption of oppressive and damaging positions. This is an optimistic outlook, but optimism is not about offering slick and easy answers in order to “feel good,” it is made of stuff that is much more difficult than that. In his article about optimism Howard Zinn writes:

An optimist isn’t necessarily a blithe, slightly sappy whistler in the dark of our time. To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us energy to act, and at least the
possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.\textsuperscript{271}

In the end, through dialogue and through an embracing of difference and multiplicity of being there is freedom; without these ingredients, there is no true freedom for teachers, nor for learners. There is no freedom for those oppressed, nor for those who are oppressing. This is because no one is free when we do not question and disrupt the constructed stories media relentlessly perpetuates about Muslim bodies, when we do not destabilize ideas about who is accepted and who is alienated. When there is no disruption of the normative we are bound to rigid narratives, to the static, rather than to embracing and engaging with processes of becoming. When there is a questioning, destabilizing and troubling of these dominant stories, presented through media – the “unofficial curriculum” – then learners and teachers can dynamically engage with the lived curriculum of the everyday, and not simply allow media to construct and govern the discourse. In this way students and teachers are able to work and move towards practices of justice, and, in the end, towards practices of freedom, for as educator and cultural critic, Henry Giroux, argues: “the way we educate our youth is related to the future that we hope for, and…such a future should offer students a life that leads to the deepening of freedom and social justice.”\textsuperscript{272}

\textsuperscript{271} Zinn, “The Optimism of Uncertainty.”
\textsuperscript{272} Giroux, “Paulo Freire and the Crisis of the Political,” 337.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Welcome back Khadr, you lucky guy
Margaret Wente
The Globe and Mail
Published Tuesday, October 26, 2010

Omar Khadr is a lucky young man. He is lucky to be entitled to Western justice, however rough. He is lucky to have become a political embarrassment to the Obama administration, which has sensibly negotiated a plea deal that will get rid of him. He is especially lucky to have been born in Canada, where prison conditions aren't too bad and where lots of people want to be his friend.

In fact, Mr. Khadr is lucky to be alive. Without the first-rate medical treatment he received from the Americans - after trying to kill as many of them as possible - Mr. Khadr would be just another forgotten casualty of war, dead in Afghanistan at the age of 15. Instead, he has become a cause célèbre, a hot potato and a poster child soldier for anti-war activists and human-rights groups. And before long, he'll be coming home, according to those who are familiar with the details of the deal.

Many Canadians don't especially want him back. According to an Angus Reid poll taken in July, 46 per cent of respondents were content to see him tried in a U.S. military court. Only 36 per cent wanted him repatriated to Canada. (The others didn't care.) That's why, despite hectoring opinion columns and the odd judicial rebuke, the Harper government has been happy to let Mr. Khadr cool his heels in Gitmo for more than a third of his life.

Mr. Khadr is a polarizing figure, to put it mildly. To sympathizers, he is a former child soldier who was brainwashed by his family, held without trial for years and obviously mistreated. They argue he deserves rehabilitation, not jail. To foes, he was a hardened young fighter. "That wasn't a panicky teenager we encountered that day," Sergeant First Class Layne Morris, who lost his right eye in the ambush, told The Boston Globe last month. "That was a trained al-Qaeda who wanted to make his last act on Earth the killing of an American." As far as they're concerned, it's a shame we don't have the power to send the entire Khadr clan packing.

Mr. Khadr is far more popular among the liberal media, the Bloc Québécois and the NDP than he is among the general public. A new documentary, You Don't Like the Truth, paints a sympathetic portrait of a young man abandoned by his country. Yet, those who accuse our government of behaving brutishly should perhaps recall the humanitarian gesture that saved Mr. Khadr's dad, Ahmed. In
1996, when Omar was just 9, then-prime minister Jean Chrétien personally intervened to get Ahmed Khadr, a Canadian citizen, sprung from jail in Pakistan, where he'd been arrested in connection with the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad. Ahmed Khadr, who was also lionized by the media and human-rights groups, really was a terrorist - a senior al-Qaeda operative who used his new-found freedom to train his sons as soldiers for *jihad*.

Omar Khadr can also thank the Obama administration, which has had a hard time keeping its promise to shut down Guantanamo and make the remaining detainees go away. The last thing it wanted was a full-blown trial that might prove messy and embarrassing. The last thing Mr. Khadr wanted was a lifetime in jail. The plea deal is a win for both, as well as a favour that Prime Minister Stephen Harper couldn't possibly refuse. So welcome back, you lucky guy! I wish you all the best with your celebrity, your book deals and your rehabilitation.
Appendix B

Omar Khadr’s letter from Guantánamo

Dear Dennis:

I’m writing to you because sometimes there are things you can’t say, but rather write on paper, and even if I were to tell you you won’t understand. So anyway here are the things:

First: About this whole MC thing we all don’t believe in and know it’s unfair and know Dennis that there must be somebody to sacrifice to really show the world the unfairness, and really it seems that it’s me. Know Dennis that I don’t want that, I want my freedom and life, but I really don’t see it coming from this way. Dennis you always say that I have an obligation to show the world what is going on down here and it seems that we’ve done every thing but the world doesn’t get it, so it might work if the world sees the US sentencing a child to life in prison, it might show the world how unfair and sham this process is, and if the world doesn’t see all this, to what world am I being released to? A world of hate, unjust and discrimination! I really don’t want to live in a life like this. Dennis justice and freedom have a very high cost and value, and history is a good witness to it, not too far ago or far away how many people sacrificed for the civil right law to take affect. Dennis I hate being the head of the spear, but life has put me, and as life have put me in the past in hard position and still is, I just have to deal with it and hope for the best results.

Second: The thought of firing everybody as you know is always on my mind so if one day I stop coming or fire you please respect it and forget about me, I know it is hard for you. Just think about me as a child who died and get along with your life. Of course I am not saying that will or will'n happen but its on my mind all the time.

Dennis. I’m so sorry to cause you this pain, but consider it one of your sons hard decisions that you don’t like, but you have to deal with, and always know what you mean to me and know that I will always be the same person you’ve known me and will never change, and please don’t be sad and be hopeful and know that there is a very merciful and compassionate creator watching us and looking out for us and taking care of us all, you might not understand these thing, but know by experience they have kept me how and who I am.

With love and my best wishes to you, and the family, and everybody who loves me, and I love them back in Canada, and I leave you with HOPE and I am living on it, so take care.
Your truly son,

Omar

26 May 2010 at 11:37am

P.S. Please keep this letter as private as can be, and as you see appropriate.