The Muslim Mystique: The Use of Rushdie's Imaginary Homeland to Combat Prejudice Against Muslim Peoples Explored in Three Semi-Autobiographical Works of Popular Fiction by Muslim Authors of an American Immigrant Background

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Abstract
There is a largely unexplored trend in recent popular fiction that regards the semi-autobiographical work of authors of an immigrant or refugee background. These works seldom fall into the trap exposed by Said's Orientalism, but instead present the author's native country and culture through a lens similar what Salman Rushdie described as "imaginary homelands." This thesis examines three primary texts that fit that description: The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini, The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Moshin Hamid, and Habibi by Naomi Shihab Nye for their inclusion of the Islamic faith and their portrayal of America. The texts are analyzed and recommended based on their ability to combat racial and religious prejudice and ignorance in light of topical news and media portrayals of Muslim peoples.

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Imaginary Homelands is a collection of Rushdie's essays, seminar papers, articles, reviews published over a decade of his literary life time, 1981-1991. Like any collection of essays it is wide ranging, from the popular to the obscure. The essays deal with varying political, social and literary topics. The idea of Imaginary Homelands is that of a commentary documenting different living conditions in various parts of our world, looking at each continent from its writer's construct. My contention is that it was largely from the iconoclast Rushdie's hard-bitten lens. Apart from 'Outside the Whale' which is a brilliant complete critical essay, there isn't much to admire here. Some occasional astoundingly honest remarks on things in general and the excellent writing keep it alive. Reading Imaginary Homelands is like catching a glimpse inside Rushdie's personal diary. The work is a collection of essays in which he talks about various topics ranging from authors to movies to culture, as well as political issues such as postcolonialism and fundamentalism, which often interact with his thoughts on literature.