

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the conflicting notions of “home” and a consequent bewilderedness of identity in the selected works of Ayad Akhtar namely, *Homeland Elegies*, *American Dervish* and *Disgraced*. It discusses the various socio-political, racial, cultural and gender dynamics at play behind such developments. Torn between the blurred boundaries of their ancestral and their adopted homeland or in some cases their homeland by virtue of their birth, the Pakistani Muslim Americans fall a prey to an identity crisis. The characters in each of these works, develop a love-hate relationship with their ancestral homeland, Pakistan. However, strong is also the realization that they are not able to feel at home in America either, even if they want to. This sense of displacement that they encounter, does not only come from a longing for their ancestral homeland, but is also a consequence of the socio-political disempowerment that is especially on the rise since the events of 9/11. Whilst for the first generation Pakistani Americans the sense of displacement is the result of immigration-a relocation and consequent cultural differences, for the second generation Pakistani American Muslims this sense of displacement emerges from the differential political, racial and gender treatment meted out to them by the home of their birth. Although America is their home, they are not at home in it. Their bewildered identity is a consequence of a split between these two homelands. In the wake of 9/11, these feelings are further intensified as the second generation Pakistani Americans, too, are suspected, humiliated and disgraced time and again on one pretext or the other. Using Avtar Brah’s concept of the axis of differentiation which includes factors and contexts that affect the life and identity of diasporas and on the basis of which they are discriminated against, I argue that the question of home is intrinsically linked with the way in which the processes of inclusion or exclusion of individuals operate within a society and are subjectively experienced by them. Hence, the characters in Ayad Akhtar’s works, selected for this study, develop conflicting notions of home and consequently of identity. This thesis also highlights the ways in which there is a development and revision in Akhtar’s concept of home and belonging.