

43-“There is no place like home”: A Derridean analysis of Rushdie’s conceptualisation of “home” in “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers”

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Abstract

Salman Rushdie (1947–) is one of the prominent postcolonial authors writing in a postmodern style. *East, West* (1992), which is one of his short story collections, problematizes logocentric binaries. “At the Auction of Ruby Slippers” is one of the stories in the collection. The story is a magical realist work based on the movie *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), which was adapted from L. F. Baum’s children’s fantasy novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) depicting little girl Dorothy’s, first, aspiration to migrate from her homeland Kansas, then her struggle to return there, leaving the idyllic atmosphere, new friendships and good experiences in the host land Oz. The story, set in the auction of the slippers, which take Dorothy back to Kansas, tells about the narrator and the other characters’ quest for “home”. The study argues that the story parodies the postcolonial concept of “home” which refers to the native country for immigrants. Moreover, it suggests that the story reconceptualizes the concept of “home”, indicating that it has lost its meaning as a physical or cultural space in a dystopian capitalist society in contrast to the fantasy world of Oz, which enables Dorothy to return her house. Therefore, the postmodern story is examined within the framework of Jacques Derrida’s terms such as “archive”, “différance” and “supplementary” in addition to Rushdie’s essays on the movie. The analysis of the story reveals the play of significations in the conceptuality of “home”. It indicates how the story decentres the signified “home” in Baum’s novel within the postponement of an ultimate signifier and signified. Thus, this study concludes that inhabitants of the multicultural materialistic world are indeed exiles longing—and desperately searching for “home”, which is an ever-changing relative metaphor for everything they are deprived of and cannot just attain through materiality in their lives.

Keywords: Archive, différance, home, memory, supplementary

“Yuva gibisi yok”: Rüşdi’nin “Yakut Pabuçların Müzayesinde” adlı öyküsünde “yuva” sözcüğünü kavramlaştırmasının Derridacı bir analizi

Öz

Salman Rüşdi (1947–) postmodern tarzda yazan ünlü postkolonyal yazarlardan biridir. Yazarın kısa öykü koleksiyonlarından biri olan *Doğu, Batı* (1992) adlı eseri mantık merkezli ikilikleri sorunsallaştırır. Yazarın “Yakut Pabuçların Müzayesinde” başlıklı öyküsü bu koleksiyondaki öykülerden biridir. Bu öykü, küçük kız Dorothy’nin önce memleketi Kansas’tan göç etmek isteğini sonra ise misafir olduğu Oz adlı ülkedeki pastoral ortamı, yeni arkadaşlıkları ve güzel deneyimleri bırakarak Kansas’a geri dönme çabasını anlatan L. F. Baum’un *Oz Büyücüsü* (1900) adlı fantastik çocuk romanından uyarlanan 1939 tarihli filme dayanan büyülü gerçekçi bir eserdir. Dorothy’yi

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Kansas’a geri götüren pabuçların müzayedesinde geçen Rüşdi’nin öyküsü, anlatıcı ve diğer karakterlerin “yuva” arayışını anlatır. Bu çalışma, sözü edilen öykünün, göçmelerin anavatanına karşılık gelen postkolonyal “yuva” kavramının parodisini yaptığını iddia etmektedir. Ayrıca, öykünün; Dorothy’nin evine dönmesini sağlayan fantastik Oz dünyasının aksine distopik kapitalist toplumda “yuva” kavramının fiziksel ya da kültürel uzam olarak anlamını yitirdiğini göstererek bu sözcüğü yeniden kavramlaştırdığını ileri sürmektedir. O yüzden, bu postmodern öyküyü Rüşdi’nin filmle ilgili deneme yazılarının yanı sıra Jacques Derrida’nın “arşiv”, “ayırım” ve “eklenti” gibi terimleri çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Öykünün analizi “yuva” sözcüğünün kavramlaşmasındaki imlemeler oyununu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma, öykünün nihai imleyen ve imlenenin ertelenmesiyle Baum’un romanındaki “yuva” imleneni nasıl merkezlesizleştirdiğini göstermektedir. Böylece, çok kültürlü materyalist dünya sakinlerinin; yaşamlarında yoksun oldukları ve maddiyatla bir türlü erişemedikleri her şeyin sürekli değişen göreceli bir metaforu olan “yuva”nın özlemini çeken ve çaresizce arayışında olan sürgünlerden ibaret olduğu sonucuna varmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Arşiv, ayırım, ev, hafıza, eklenti

Introduction

Literature is home to postcolonial authors for expressing themselves free of what is/was told or written about them. Salman Rushdie (1947-) is a renowned postcolonial author regarding literature as an “unafraid form” (qtd. in Tivnan, 2015), and “best suited to challenging absolutes of all kinds” (1991, p. 424), alluding to the role of fiction in contradicting all grand narratives without fear. In this regard, *East, West* (1994) is one of his short story collections which asserts his claim, putting all binaries into question. The collection is divided into three main sections, composed of three stories in each, written on different dates and published separately until they are collected in a single book. The stories interplay between the binary oppositions of the East and the West through some postmodern devices including intertextuality, parody and magical realism, which pave the way for poststructural readings.

Even the comma in the title has a poststructural significance “as a separator and a bridge” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 20) as it resists binaries by situating itself in between implying that it belongs neither to the East nor the West, but at the same time that it is both Eastern and-Western. In an interview, Rushdie associates the comma in the title “East, West” with himself and notes: “I am that comma—or at least I live in the comma... I feel like a comma” (Reder, 2000, p. 163) rather than a slash, denoting difference. As a diasporic British Indian author, Rushdie has a hybrid identity like the comma between “East” and “West” in the title of the collection, deriving from both the Eastern and Western cultural background. He is at once inside and outside cultures, thus, in Bhabha’s words, represents the “insider’s outsideness” (1994, p. 20). This is also reflected through his works commingling and subverting the binaries of what is accepted as Eastern and Western.

Magic(al) realism constructs imaginary homelands surpassing the “borders” between the East, which is labelled, in Said’s words, as “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes” (2003, p. 1) and the West, which is depicted as rational, masculine, strong and progressive in the Orientalist thinking, through imagination in the stories. The magical lens to this realism reflects the social, cultural, political and economic corruption behind the appearance. In this aspect, Rushdie asserts Boehmer’s claim that postcolonial authors use magic(al) realism “to indict the follies of both empire and its aftermath” (1995, p. 235) by depicting how technology and consumerist capitalist ideology have differed the conceptualization of some values, among which “home” is problematized in

his works to a noteworthy extent. Similarly, the postcolonial facet of magical realism departs from the traditional Western concept of knowledge, which tends to exclude "the periphery and the different" and produces a new, non-Western discourse which is full of possibilities (Baysal, 2015, p. 2). Thus, it may be claimed that Rushdie's magical realist fiction creates a dystopic Western society, where everything is commodified, ranging from nature, human achievement, human souls and human beings. Postcolonial aspiration of "homeland" or "native land" has lost its meaning and significance. It refutes any binaries and leaves the inhabitants with a bombardment of signs and signifiers, which lacks stability and the supposedly only "signified". Therefore, Rushdie's stories are worthy of examining from a deconstructive approach revealing the ambiguous nature of the binaries on which relations or terms are based within an opposition.

Although there are numerous studies on Rushdie's fiction, a few of them deals with the story in the collection, entitled "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers", and none provides any approaches to it from the poststructuralist critic, Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Moreover, unlike various postcolonial readings of Rushdie's concept of "home" in his works, this paper is concerned with this concept in another aspect and indicates through the Derridean analysis that Rushdie's critical approach to the conceptualization of "home" surpasses the concept of "home" as a physical or cultural space. Apart from its controversial signifying "in-between space" in Bhabha's postcolonial sense (1994, p. 2), "home" stands for both as a signifier and signified in the analysis of this study. It reveals that the signified "home" is inaccessible and constantly changeable along with fluctuant signs and signifiers for anyone in today's world and that everybody is an exile whether it be (be it) someone with colonial background, Easterner or Westerner. Using the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, as an intertext in his story "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers", Rushdie problematizes the relativity of the concept "home" which is desperately attempted to be attained, indeed, merely replaced by something else, materialism, in today's world. The aim of the study is to indicate through the Derridean terms including "différance", "supplementarity" and "archive" that the concept of "home" trespasses the limits of "house" or "hometown" signified in L. Frank Baum's children's fantasy novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900).

The question of "home" in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers"

Fantasy genre depicts the utopian or dystopian worlds of wonder or nightmare, inhabited by giants, fairies, princes and princesses or allegorical characters. However, in the introduction of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum notes the novel to be "a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out" (1900, pp. 11-12). In other words, it is a modern version of the conventional folk fairy tale. What makes the novel vivid in the reader's mind years later is the portrayal of the utopian world of Oz, drawing a contrast to Kansas representing the everyday world. This strong utopian element in the novel commits it to both children's and adults' memory.

Some literary critics including S. J. Sackett, Barry Bauska, Henry M. Littlefield, David B. Parker and Quentin P. Taylor evaluate the Land of Oz as an American utopian land. Sackett argues that the novel disregards the materiality foregrounding the power of free will, individuality and education, the harmony of feelings and intellect, the equality of opportunities as well as the supremacy of man over the machine to make a better world possible (1983, p. 220). In this regard, he emphasizes the urge of changeable human nature in the novel even though he states that "human nature is too corrupt for so

perfect a fairyland” as Oz (1983, p. 212). Furthermore, Bauska notes that the country Oz represents the American dreamland where crises are always overcome by goodness and virtue (1976, pp. 22-24). However, this fantasy world of Oz is not free of dangers, perils and evil. The control of good and wicked witches over people's fate and life is controversial for some critics including Littlefield, Parker, and Taylor who provide the political readings of the novel and argue that it is an allegory representing Baum's populist² order of life (1964, pp. 47-58; 1994, pp. 49-63; 2005, pp. 413-26).

Both the utopian and dystopian sides of the work inspired Rushdie when he watched its movie version as a ten-year-old boy. He mentions *The Wizard of Oz* as the film which had “very first literary influence” on himself (1992, p. 9). He states that he felt the urge to rewrite the story in such a way to appeal to adults besides child readers (2002, p. 33) responding to Dorothy's migration to Oz and then her struggle to return “home”. Thus, he comes up with “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers” years later by using the movie as an intertext and subverting the direct relationship between the concept of “home” and homeland, family taking away the constraint over “home”, which is traditionally associated with the family, love, or nation.

The unnamed narrator of “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers” is the cousin of Gale, Dorothy in the movie and the novel, with whom he had a relationship in the past and appears in the story. The ruby slippers which Judy Garland in the role of Dorothy wears in the film are on an auction as they were and sold for 15.000 dollars in 1970 (Rushdie, 1992, p. 46). This reality is taken and used in the story blending with fantasy. A lot of people from different countries, ethnicities and backgrounds come together for the slippers. The portrayal of the multicultural society depicts people who may have achieved or still struggle for reconciling both the past they left in their homeland and the presence at the host land through a hybrid self.

Considering that the presence of one binary refers to the absence of the others indicating the superiority of the former one, it is evident that presence has authority over absence in the Western philosophy, which is based on the logocentric binarism. Accordingly, the presence of home is superior to nonhome, which is the situation inhabitants, particularly immigrants suffer from. Therefore, they make use of some signs to compensate for the absence of home. Indeed, as Burr notes, from the poststructuralist point of view, what makes presence valuable is its absence (1995, p. 107); thus, there is a correlative relationship between presence and absence in the poststructuralist approach, undermining the hierarchisation among binaries. Likewise, in Derrida's words, there is “no border to cross, no opposition between two sides” (1993, p. 20) as the limit between two poles of binaries is blurred, which Derrida calls “aporia”. The hospitality of multicultural Western society constructs the paradoxical atmosphere blurring fantasy with reality, absence and presence in Rushdie's story.

Problematising the Saussurean structuralist relationship between the signified, which may be taken as the concept, and the signifier, which refers to audio, visual or material aid to refer to the signified, Derrida takes a poststructuralist side and deals with the sign as an item, which defers the signified itself. Thus, rather than binary oppositions or direct and hierarchical relationship between the signifier and the signified, Derrida deals with language as a system, comprised of the “systematic” and “free” play of different signifiers (2003, p. 148), which cannot achieve attaining the final signified. Indeed, he concludes that the signified never exist in a presence and merely corresponds to itself rather than any

² Populism refers to the advocacy of representing common people rather than high-class people. It emerged in 1891 with the establishment of an American party to support the agricultural interests, “the free coinage of silver and government control of monopolies” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) as in the 1890s' American politics.

signifiers. Therefore, it is impossible to mention the presence of the signified concretely. To denote the deferral relationship between the terms, Derrida uses the word "différance" to explain that every signifier attempting to refer to the signified finds itself in a pool of signifiers, which are different from each other and defer the essential signified. Therefore, in Derridean thinking, searching for the signified requires considering all the other things which are not the signified. In Burr's words, "meaning is always both dependent upon a signifier's difference from other signifiers and constantly deferred from one signifier to another in an endless chain" (1995, p. 106). In this regard, the auction in the story is the portrayal of the modern capitalist society where inhabitants compete each other to purchase everything commodified so that they can compensate for the absence in their lives. Thus, the auction reveals how "home" differs and defers as the sign, the signifier or the signified.

Rushdie's story exemplifies how the Derridean notion of *différance* works through the free play of signifiers among the characters, desperately attempting to attain the supposedly origin. In Derridean thinking, language is merely an instrument which cannot serve the target to be attained, to express something beyond the language itself. Regardless of its form; written, spoken or visual, every expression is a part of the language. Language serves as a platform for the play of *différance* in various forms, independent of any center, creating an infinite pool of meaning where it is futile to seek for an essential "origin", "truth" or "reality" as they are subjective and multiple depending on subjects' relativity. As such, the logocentric view of presence is decentered as the subject's thought can never be precisely represented. Therefore, for Derrida, there are no reliable forms of language to access reality. However, for Derrida, "no context can determine meaning to the point of exhaustiveness" (1993, p. 9). In this aspect, there is no way out of infinite uncertainty, which is indeed constrained by language. In this context, the sign takes the place of "the present in its absence" (Derrida, 1982, p. 9), thus, as a "deferred presence" (9). Accordingly, the sign reappropriates the signified whenever it is used to refer to the concept in absence, in other words, substitute for the presence in absence. Therefore, to what extent the subject attempts to refer to the signified is constrained by language.

In the story, the signifier "home" varies from someone to another in accordance with its discursive context. The narrator mentions a variety of people revering for the slippers, the possession of which promises the wearer the ultimate dream of "reverse metamorphosis" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 92). Some scientists and philosophers wish to examine the magical slippers. Some orphans wish to have it to reach their deceased parents. Some fundamentalists want to burn them. There are also some memorabilia junkies, movie-stars with auras and *The Wizard of Oz* characters including the Tin Man, who lacks a heart, the Cowardly Lion without courage and the Scarecrow, who is devoid of a brain and many other people dressed as these movie characters including many Totos (Rushdie, 1994, p. 89). Some exiles are also there to return their home. Among them, the "exile" narrator wishes to purchase the slippers to return his "home" which surpasses the physical referent of space such as house, hometown, neighbourhood or country. The bidders are fascinated with the faith for the magical power of the slippers and to practice their "cult" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 89) treating the slippers shining "behind bullet-proof glass...with questionable potential of power" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 88) like a shrine behind a glass case, surrounded by "pools of saliva" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 90). In the Derridean approach, the ruby slippers function as the sign of multiple possible signifieds, called "a lost state of normalcy" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 92), which modern-day people aspire to return.

The narrator portrays the bidders in the saleroom as desperate victims of the capitalist system who are dependent on money to exist by filling in the absence of their losses through the presence of materiality. People struggle to purchase the shoes competitively as they do for everything which is on

sale in the auction. It is not sentimentality but materiality that renders the memory valuable in the materialistic way of life. It is the portrayal of “the moral decay of our post-millennial culture” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 94) through which the story interrogates the rationality of the consumerist Western society relying on the magical power of the ruby slippers. The bidders appear to be worshippers of the slippers. The slippers which seem to be too large to fit Judy Garland, the actress animating Dorothy Gale in the film, also have the function of commodity fetishism for the ones who aspire to become another Dorothy as they are concerned with the material aspect of the slippers regardless of morality or spirituality. The slippers, thereby, are not other than a sacred commodity for watchers' existence. In this respect, although the ruby slippers are merely ordinary footwear, they serve as a commodity of fetish for the purchaser whose “money has become no more than a way of keeping score” at the auction (Rushdie, 1994, p. 102). Thereby, it is money that determines the worth of people's memory, present and future (Rushdie, 1994, p. 101). The saleroom is “home” to purchasable substitutes other than ruby slippers. People are in the mood of madly purchasing anything they encounter at the auction, from “the Taj Mahal, the Statue of liberty, the Alps, the Sphinx...human souls of all classes, qualities, ages, races and creeds” to partners (Rushdie, 1994, p. 98). It may be claimed that the story parodies the fantasy world of the novel and the movie, *The Wizard of Oz* by subverting the Western assumptions about race because lineage, blood or nationality appear to have merely a market value in the story. Thus, rather than racial origin or nationality, it is money that seems to be the sign of their status and identity in society and helper of supplementarity for the subject's losses or absent pieces.

Derrida argues that “supplement” compensates a lack of the thing to represent it (1998, p. 82). While doing that, it multiplies the presence of the absence for the lost or forgotten thing. Referring to Rousseau's notes to explicate the relation of the substitute to the original, Derrida exemplifies the substitute of the mother by another woman for a man in his future. Although such a substitute defers the presence of the mother, that is the “origin”, it enables him to abstain from any unhealthy intercourse with the mother and any other women. More precisely, substitute functions as a protective supplementary sign (1998, pp. 93-95). In this regard, the supplementary power of the money, which helps purchasers to obtain a material substitute for what they lost, thus a presence in absence, indeed facilitates the subject to survive their losses and feel at “home” and “peace”. The narrator remembers one of the auctions he attended to buy an edible panty for a popular pop singer's widower although the man already had “three thousand” of them (Rushdie, 1994, p. 100). He feels comfortable with their long-lasting odour which reminds him of his dead wife and keeps her alive in his imagination because the panty, obtained through money, compensates for the absence of the pop singer in the widower's mind.

Derrida asserts the Saussurean notion that the arbitrariness and differentiability of the signs are correlative. He posits the possibility of conceptuality through “différance” as the term “différance” is away from a supposedly single origin and refers to merely “the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences” (Derrida, 1982, p. 11). From the Derridean approach, the story displays the archival process of memory through various signs acting out the role of supplementarity. In this context, the objects such as the ruby slippers, edible panty, photograph and Gale herself are substitutes, functionalising the archival process on the différance of the signifier and the signified. Thus, as Derrida notes, this is how, the future of the signified is constantly reproduced and replaced (1998, p. 29) and creating additional supplementaries out of supplements. In other words, the archive, activated through the signifier, reforms memory witnessing the incessant production of the past in the present or the presence in the absence. That is why archive is associated with “fever” in the title of the work *Archive Fever* referring to the constant productivity of archive. Therefore, the act of

remembering through intermediary of a supplement enacts compensation rather than the signified (Derrida, 1997, p. 145). In this regard, the presence of the signs in the story is a part of the play referring to "the disruption of presence" in Derrida's words (2009, p. 369). Accordingly, the appearance of Gale disrupts the archival script of the orgasm in the narrator's memory and initiates the play of supplementarity as an alternative presence for the absence of the assumed origin. This creates anxiety in the narrator, who prefers escaping from her presence and dwelling into her absence and prefers the photo frame he carries in his arm and the event of orgasm in his imagination as substitutes for his loss.

Derrida divides substitutes into two types as "secondary" and "provisional". The secondary substitute derives from the original and lost presence while the provisional one comes from the final and lost secondary substitute (1982, p. 9). In terms of "home", supplements differ in accordance with its proximate relation to the lost "home" and each supplement asserts the absence of "home". They defer forgetting the past and preserve it. In the Derridean theory, photographs are influential secondary substitutes people hold to supplement the absence of their loss. In this aspect, they have the "authority of presence", which results in the ontological difference of the "origin" (Derrida, 1982, p. 10) and people's endeavors seeking the origin create an archive by means of supplementarity within a chain. Derrida asserts that the archivization of the photograph "is constituted by the present itself" adding that it is "necessary that the present, in its structure, be divisible even while remaining unique, irreplaceable and self-identical. The structure of the present must be divided so that, even as the present is lost, the archive remains and refers to it as to a non-reproducible referent, an irreplaceable place" (qtd. in Richter, 2010, p. xxvii).

From the Derridean perspective, Gale's portrait which the narrator holds in his arms roaming and mourning on the street (Rushdie, 1994, p. 95) stands as the provisional substitute for Gale, who is the secondary substitute for the narrator's "home" in absence. Likewise, the desperate spaceman on Mars keeps looking at his fiancé's photograph, which is the provisional substitute of the secondary one, that is his fiancé he leaves on Earth for Mars and who keeps him connected to "home", the Earth. Furthermore, Dorothy also keeps herself at "home" along with her dead parents in Kansas and with Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, she left in Kansas, in Oz, through the family photograph, she always keeps with her all the time. The family photograph, in this sense, is a sign filling in the space of something or somebody for the characters, the void between absence and presence, death and life, loss and memory as the preservation against lamenting for their erasure. Photography captures a specific moment in time and keeps that for the present and the future. It, indeed, differs that moment and defers its loss, thus, proposing, in Derrida's word in the interview with Michael Wetzel, "a differing/deferring and differentiated duration" (2010, p. 8).

The photographs that the narrator, the astronaut and Dorothy keep, draw parallelism in terms of function with the photograph of Rushdie's house which he spent his early childhood and left for Britain. Rushdie's mentioning his visit to the home in India, where he lived until seventeen years old reveals that he keeps his past alive in his memory although he has not been there since his execution was demanded because of the controversial blasphemy in his *The Satanic Verses* (1988) (Haffenden, 2000, p. 31). He compares the house in the photograph in black and white and the one which he visits years later and finds it in colours. He expresses his deep impression and states:

The colours of my history had seeped out of my mind's eye; now my other two eyes were assaulted by colours, by the vividness of the red tiles, the yellow-edged green of cactus-leaves, the brilliance of bougainvillea creeper...when I realized how much I wanted to restore the past to myself, not in the

faded greys of old family-album snapshots, but whole, in CinemaScope and glorious Technicolor. (1991, pp. 9-10)

Rushdie prefers recalling his grey past through white and black photographs to the colourful renewed version which renders him alienated from his past. In this regard, the imagined Bombay prevails over the real one through the imaginary world of the exile author even though it is fragmented like snapshots in his memory.

All the photographs represent the characters' provisional substitutes of their “homes” keeping them bound to their present and future as active supplements functioning as, in Derridean term, “substitutive prosthesis” (2010, p. 13). Evaluating the Derridean approach to photography, Durden argues that containing the instant capture of presence, snapshots serve as a prosthesis between the past and the future (2013, p. 78). Whether it be of a person, a place or an event, photograph substitutes for the absence, rendering that realistically or metaphorically dead person, lost or missed thing or place alive as a form in memory by constructing a form of supplement differing from that absence. Richter states that photography is “an attempt to archive and preserve what is about to disappear for good, it also belongs to those moments that prepare the photographed subject for its own death” (2010, p. xxviii). Accordingly, photography, monumentalizing the loss, may also be used to lament for the absence and struggle the absence at the same time.

The other provisional substitute which the narrator uses as a substrate for his archival memory is the moment of the orgasm during the sexual intercourse with Gale. He keeps bond to the home with his memory of Gale; nostalgia, remembering the orgasm with her. In this context, Gale represents the archival body monumentalising the narrator's signified “home”, so he repeats the action of the sexual intercourse in his memory re-archiving the repetitive process of signification in his mind. Thus, the ruby slippers lose their significance. His memory of Gale releases from “rigorous controls” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 94). The narrator's case exemplifies the “involuntary displacement” from the native country because of various reasons such as natural disasters, war or economic conditions (Sanga, 2001, p. 14). He chooses this memory as home to accommodate instead of being able to get the ruby slippers. Other characters in the story wish to attain the slippers for various reasons ignoring their homelands or cultural backgrounds. They assert that, indeed, there is no place as home.

The repetitive act of remembering through the sign or the monument reveals the repressed in the archive. In the Derridean approach, repetition may also depend on an event which never occurred in the past. However, no matter an event is real or imaginary, repetition is based on what was repressed in the past and reformulated in the present. Sometimes the repressed is materialised as the substrate, relating the archive to the memory. The substrate may be the archival body, enabling a specific event of the past to live in memory. In this way, such a substrate becomes a materialised memory which sustains the vigour of the memory to some extent within the controlled erasure of some details in the archive and re-inscription of the archive in the present. In this context, the narrator's encounter with Gale as the sign, the monument or the archival body serves as a substrate along with the memory of orgasm, performed by her body in the narrator's memory. Therefore, she is indeed a reminder of a possible erasure and reformulation of the archival process, the archiving of “home” in the memory at the same time.

In the Derridean thinking, every act of remembering comes along with the act of forgetting and every return to the past, which sustains the “original” one, is a step to reproduce the archive as it preserves the event in the past in a different way. More precisely, for Derrida, the repeated action in the memory

differs the archive, and the subject never attains the "origin" deferring its presence in the absence (1998, pp. 77-78). In the Derridean understanding, archive refers to a non-static material left by the impression in the event containing any documents or records of the past. It is exposed to an endless alteration in every attempt of remembering, therefore, differs and defers in time and turns out to be a load of documents or records, composed of lots of signifiers, to remember, indeed, reinterpret and recreate desperately to attempt to attain the signified every time. In this aspect, signs function activating the process of adding new substrates of the assumed origin to the archive repetitively. As Derrida asserts, "[t]he archivization produces as much as it records the event" (1998, p. 17). Thus, memory is constituted by archive, and substrate enables the contents of the archive to be protected in memory from any cases of forgetting. In other words, archive institutionalises memory, which requires substrate for protection of traces, deriving from the supposed origin against the possibility of being erased, in the manner of a museum; thus, memory, archive and substrate are related not only to each other but also to textuality; thus, it is substantially hard to make a clear-cut division among them. All kinds of archival substrates are evaluated in the context of textuality which goes beyond its literal understanding through the Derridean approach. Furthermore, archive refers to a process rather than a status.

From the Derridean perspective, the narrator's attempts to remember his dismembered memory belonging to his past initiates the archival process every time. As a substrate, he clings merely to his memory of making love with Dorothy, who repeats the word "home" several times loudly "at the moment of penetration: 'Home, boy! Home, baby, yes-you've come home!'" (1994, p. 95). The narrator reconceptualises the term home by associating it with his memory of Gale. In this regard, the notion of hometown and nationality is replaced by the feeling of comfort and security in the narrator's memory and it is not the country he left in the past but Gale's vagina becomes the signifier of the narrator's "home". He creates her image on an imaginary image screen and attempts to comfort himself through his "home" rather than Gale, whom he refers to as "[t]he real Gale" (1994, p. 96) to differentiate her from the Gale in his archive. Moreover, he implies through the use of the article "the" for Gale that Gale and the spirituality about her are also commodified. His "home" is inclusive of "an alternative universe devoid of ape-men" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 96) and "so few rainbows" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 93), denoting the scarcity of positive feelings such as hope and happiness, thus a "scattered" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 93) imaginary memory of an exile immigrant. The narrator's once "home", Gale's vagina, becomes "scattered" by other sexual partners whom the narrator calls "invaders" (Rushdie, 1994, p. 93) resulting in his own departure from there.

There is parallelism among Rushdie, Dorothy and the wizard of Oz in the novel and the narrator of Rushdie's story because none of them is a volunteer migrant, leaving their place of origin despite their longing for a dreamy land. It was Rushdie's dream to move to England, but he longed for Bombay after a while when he was in England. However, he was taken to Pakistan, which he tried to adopt as his new "home", by his father, whom he likens to the wizard of Oz. The wizard promises Dorothy to take back to Kansas travelling over the rainbow and clouds but does not as his father does. Therefore, he calls his father "a good man but a very bad wizard" like the wizard of Oz (Rushdie, 2002, p. 15) as he did not take his family back to India after England but to Pakistan, selling their house in Bombay. Despite her aspiration to travel away from Kansas, Dorothy's travel to Oz is not at her will like Rushdie, who is taken to Pakistan without being asked himself. She is taken to Oz by a cyclone. Therefore, she is referred to as "the Gale" denoting "storm". Furthermore, all of them attempt to attain "home" back because every individual is on the quest of something relevant for people and time; sometimes people wish to return home and to childhood and to the security of families. Dorothy is

weary of “the gray inevitability of her life” (Rushdie, 2002, p. 29) in Kansas leaving her house, depicted as “dull and gray as everything else” (Baum, 1900, p. 16) for another place where she can lead a peaceful life without the threat of Miss Gulch, the wicked witch of the West in the novel and the movie, on her dog Toto somewhere without any trouble as she wishes in the film. Rushdie associates Dorothy's dream with his as an immigrant, who depicts moving to England as “an exciting travel over rainbows” (2002, p. 14) because he had a childhood when he was exhausted with his “family's mazy journeyings between India, England, and Pakistan” (p. 12). Dorothy's dream of leaving Kansas represents, in Rushdie's words, “the human dream of leaving” (1992, p. 23). He considers that Dorothy's song “Over the Rainbow” “is, or ought to be, the anthem of all the world's migrants referring to all those who go in search of the place where ‘the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true.’ It is a celebration of Escape, a grand paean to the uprooted self, a hymn—the hymn—to Elsewhere” (2002, p. 41). Rushdie argues that the film emphasizes the superiority of “home” to away suggesting that wherever or whatever it is, home is the place, the thing or the person that makes one feel well.

The migrants are expected to be happy in the “colourful” new land; however, Dorothy and the wizard of Oz attempt to leave Oz. The wizard leads a luxurious life in Emerald City, which reminds the reader of New York with “a thicket of skyscraping green towers” (2002, p. 77). The city is associated with civilization as Dorothy and her companions are civilized, being dressed smartly before they are introduced to the wizard of Oz. Nevertheless, he struggles to find a way to leave there. Similarly, Dorothy struggles to return Kansas despite her growing love and friendship with the Tin Woodman, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion besides charming beauty, colourful and fertile nature of Oz where she feels “unhoused” (Rushdie, 2002, p. 51, the emphasis is original). She realizes that “No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country, be it ever so beautiful. There is no place like home” (Baum, 1900, pp. 44) and she becomes “so glad to be home again” in Kansas (Baum, 1900, p. 215). Indeed, the notion of “There is no place like home” is parodied and it may be appropriated as “There is no place as home” in the capitalistic Western society as depicted in Rushdie's story. Rushdie does not lament for migration or acculturation, rather, he celebrates “hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs” (Rushdie, 1991, p. 394). Therefore, Rushdie's concept of “home” goes beyond homeland or native land.

The dystopic setting in “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers” is different from the dreamy land where Dorothy has the opportunity to return her home through three clicks with the slippers on her feet in *The Wizard of Oz*. Rushdie's story depicts a carnivalesque multicultural world, abound with fictional or realistic people from distinct cultural, historical and ethical background and their desperate struggle to supplement their “home” which they cannot attain. The reason that makes their cases distinct from Dorothy's case is that “home” is no longer merely the referent of hometown or house, more precisely, cultural or physical space. Thus, “home” is reconceptualized in a broader sense of signification in Rushdie's story. Through its hybrid nature blending fiction and realism, magic realism gets multiplicities, seemingly irreconcilable characters and worlds together. Thus, the author appears to blur the separateness of fact and fiction making the reader redeem the realities from different angles free of limits reconceptualising the concept of “home”.

The narrator presents people in multicultural modern society through the characters at the auction whom he observes and calls “humbugs” (2002, p. 87) reminding the reader of the wizard of Oz in the movie, who gives Dorothy's friends symbolic presents, indeed some supplements signifying their

wishes, which they cannot have like the bidders at the auction. He also fails to take Dorothy to her home. Thus, he leads the demandants to go on their desperate search of the supposedly “origin”. Likewise, the auction involves him into the endless rearchivization process on the way “home”. His case asserts Rushdie’s claim that “there is no longer any such place as home” (1992, p. 57). He reconstructs his home depending on his imaginative memory, in Rushdie’s words, “anywhere, and everywhere” (1992, p. 57). The narrator’s “home”, which is independent of the physical concept of home, enables him to have an opportunity to experience the comfort and freedom deriving from Gale’s erotic call recursively, and thus, to keep the sacredness of Gale’s constructed vision alive in his memory. His imaginary world based on past, indeed, makes him survive the present because, as Rushdie notes, “it’s present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time” (1991, p. 9). Thus, it is the archive that links the subject’s present between the past and the future, deriving its force from the fever of the constant archivization.

Every repetitious act of orgasm in the narrator’s memory comes into being along with some changes despite the prevention from erasure. Thus, referring to Freud, Derrida notes that the threat of “the death drive” for the event renders repetition compulsory to protect it from destruction (1998, p. 11). Such a threat makes the narrator escape from Gale’s archival body, to which he fears approaching. In this aspect, what he feels is indissociable from the astronaut, who is short of breath on Mars, away from his textualized monument, that is, his fiancé. Indeed, it is their archive that both causes the threat of erasure to their memory and guards against keeping it in altering forms for the future at the same time. Considering the Derridean notion that the archive is “the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility of tomorrow” (Derrida, 1998, p. 36), their archive is also concerned with the future rather than the past. Derrida clarifies the relationship between repression and archive as follows: “As if one could not, precisely, recall and archive the very thing one represses, archive it while repressing it (because repression is an archivization), that is to say, to archive otherwise, to repress the archive while archiving the repression” (1998, p. 64).

Considering the survival struggle of the characters ranging from the narrator of the story, the pop singer’s widower, the spaceman to the author himself, it may be claimed that they hold changing signifiers to compensate for their loss of “home”, which also correlatively varies. In this aspect, while the Gale functions as secondary substitute for the narrator’s absent “home” and the fiancé for the astronaut’s loss, thus the signifiers of their signified “homes”, the photographs the narrator and the spaceman keep serve as provisional substitutes as Rushdie’s books and the photograph of his house in Bombay do. It is his literary works that supplement Rushdie’s loss of home, so he states that “loss of the East – is my artistic country now” (2002, p. 695).

The auction of the ruby slippers becomes meaningful for the narrator after he observes the real Gale for a while. He wishes to buy them to return to his “beloved” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 102). He says: “Perhaps I might even click the heels together three times, and win back her heart by murmuring, in soft reminder of our wasted love, *There is no place like home*” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 98) referring to Dorothy’s attempt to return to Kansas clicking her heels with the ruby slippers on her feet and uttering the same sentence. In this aspect, he wishes to gather snapshots of his scattered memory in a single frame with the help of the slippers. However, he is concerned with the loss of his memory with Gale in his imaginary land to which he bonded for a long time and prefers ignoring both the ruby slippers and the Gale herself. Thus, when the narrator realizes it, he feels free from the constraining force of the wish for the real Gale by means of the ruby slippers; and thus, materialism. He prefers “feel[ing] refreshed, and free” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 102) with his memory of Gale in his imaginary land to the

fetishist value of the suspicious ruby slippers. Thus, the narrator asserts Rushdie's claim that “[t]he broken mirror may actually be as valuable as the one which is supposedly unflawed” (1991, p. 11). In this regard, a single part of the memory, which may be concretized as a photograph or imagined through an erotic event, is the inclusive and representative of “home” for immigrants and as precious as the “home” itself.

The narrator of the story also keeps abide by the imagined Gale even when he encounters her in a bar. He stays away from her and merely watches her in the distance. Like Rushdie's concern with the interior side of the home, the narrator also does not want to witness what is ruined in Gale years later than he is exiled from his home; his relationship with her. The real Gale may represent his earlier “home” to which he is estranged. It is the imaginary Gale that is his home now. Therefore, he does not want to violate it by approaching to that foreign home standing there because Rushdie did not want to go into the house where he spent his childhood, keeping its archival presence in his memory. The narrator sees her watching the news about a hopeless astronaut at the point of death on Mars. The astronaut's case is associated with a the condition of a “dying computer” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 97) and said to be “a permanent resident” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 97) of Mars henceforth singing Dorothy's song “Over the Rainbow” wishing the rainbow to take it away desperately besides “half-remembered songs” such as “Show me the Way to Home” and “Swanee” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 97), which tell about the love for home. Stuck on that planet, the astronaut wishes to fly off like a bird above the sky. The desperate portrayal of the astronaut is the metaphor referring to the case of the immigrants in host land, Dorothy in Oz and the narrator of the story.

Considering the attempts of the characters in question and Rushdie in relation to the concept of “home”, it may be argued that “home” is reconceptualised as a piece of memory for which one does not have to pay. Therefore, immigrants do not need to have the ruby slippers, that is, to buy anything to go home. Anything sold or purchasable cannot compensate for the sense of comfort with the imaginary “home” in memory. The “home” is the imaginary land of the immigrant letting them survive in the present and future. The narrator realizes that the ruby slippers are nothing other than a dangerous “fiction” (Rushdie, 1994, p. 102) on the way “home”. In the Derridean terms, he gives up the supplementarity of the slippers. Gale is a monumental supplement like the ruby slippers and also becomes meaningless, deferring and differing the conceptual “home” all the time for the narrator who realizes that to be able to become and remain somebody is more essential on the way of searching for “home”.

Conclusion

The Derridean reading of Rushdie's “At the Auction of Ruby Slippers” which is of concern to this study depicts how signs and signifiers of “home” collide each other in a huge pool of signification and fuse in contemporary commodity-fetishist society as reality and fiction do throughout the story. Rushdie asserts through the story that transcendental homes no longer exist in the capitalistic world as they are replaced by provisional homes in a multicultural society, invalidating postcolonial longing and search for “home”. In this context, the concept of “home” expands its narrow scope of homeland or nation in *The Wizard of Oz*, and it is associated with what is repressed in the memory and kept alternatively present in the archive in Rushdie's story. While reproducing the past about “home”, its future is formulated at the same time. At that time, even the word “home” supplements something other than the house, homeland, sexuality, beloved or money as in Rushdie's story, constantly deferring and differing the signified in language. Thus, the term “home” trespassing the angles of physical or cultural

space is reconceptualized as a metaphor of everything, which modern-day people aspire desperately to have or get back to compensate for their losses through materialism in the capitalistic society where everything including "home" is commodified and commercialized. Thereby, the Derridean poststructural reading of the story reveals the challenge within the one-dimensional conceptualisation of "home" displaying its relativity within the fluidity of signification throughout the story.

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