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Postmodern Feminist Reverberations in Manju Kapur's *Home*

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Contemporary Feminism has taken a glide towards a belief that there can't be a universal, unitary definition of Feminism. The range of female experiences is diverse enough to give rise to the notion of multiple selves which refuse to be interpreted in singular or universal terms. It is here that Feminism joins hands with Post-modernism which challenges monolithic structures and unitary definitions. It advocates multiple perspectives, open endings and ambiguities and dwells on the ethics of 'difference'. As such, Manju Kapur's *Home* (2006) falls in line with the tenets of Post-modern Feminism. Women in *Home* have taken recourse to multiple strategies in their effort to underline the notion of selfhood. Likewise, they adopt different strategies for self assertion too, thereby denying a singular, one-dimensional view of Feminism. This write-up is an effort to take up *Home* as a reference text to highlight the areas and issues where the wavelengths of Feminism and Post-modernism converge.

Manju Kapur has five novels to her credit till date and in one novel after the other, she has put her finger on the struggle of women in redefining their spaces – emotional and intellectual – and striving for a perpetual quest for their identity. In the process, the novels transcend the level of the plight of the characters to question certain epistemological structures, the so-called secure institutions like family, marriage and the blindfolded acceptance of values and standards like patriarchy. Be it *Virmati* of *Difficult Daughters*, *Aastha* of *Married Women*, *Nisha* of *Home*, *Nina* of *Immigrant* or *Shagun* of *Custody*, they all devise their own different ways to assert themselves in a society that is yet not ready to budge out of the cocoons of certain traditional norms which come in the way of self realisation of these women. How much do they succeed in their endeavour is relatively less important, more significant is their effort and determination to stand for themselves, to dare to flow against the current without divorcing or disturbing much of tradition, within the family bindings.

Manju Kapur demonstrates that change in the social norms is a slow process and not a drastic and rapid one, despite the fast-paced changes being witnessed in the spheres of economy and technology. Indian Constitution might have conferred women equal rights with men, but social attitudes are bound by traditional and cultural hegemony and are extremely slow to change. In such a scenario, Manju Kapur shows an in-between, transitional phase where something of the old, though familiar and secure, is shed in pursuit of something new, howsoever unknown and ambivalent, as a necessary step to interrogate the age-old patriarchal structures of domination and power. Though a complete reversal is nearly impossible to achieve but women in her novels have actually contributed towards deconstructing the age-old myths.

In fact Manju Kapur goes a step further and showcases that women have been victims not only of patriarchy, the suppression comes from many quarters. In doing so, she challenges the monolithic structures and perceptions regarding relationship of men and women as upheld by feminist literature. Women in her novels have been exploited not only by men but by the members of their own species i.e. women themselves. Manju Kapur in *Home* (2006) has highlighted the nuances of women in relation to other women very subtly. The mother-in-law, daughter-in-law relationship (Sona Vs Maji), mother-daughter relationship (Sona Vs Nisha), sister-sister relationship (Sona Vs Rupa) stand focussed in *Home*. The turning point is signified in the fact that men are rather supportive of their wives. This definitely marks the next phase in the growth of Indian Novel in English and the decades long critiquing of the husband-wife antagonism dealt at length by Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandya etc. This trend has now been replaced by a more balanced, sane and multifarious approach.

Feminist criticism takes a new dimension by taking in its stride postmodernism as a complementary and sustaining force in feminist theory and practice. One of the chief features of post-modernism is the decanonization of all existing master codes, conventions, institutions and authorities. It advocates that any text that seeks to challenge the dominant discourse becomes post-modern. "Post modernism constitutes the expressing of a contextual discourse that problematizes other discourses and thus enables us to critically examine the givens of other discourses. It exists thus as an alternative discourse to prevent a hegemonic domination of any one discourse" (Salat 36)

Against this backdrop, there are situations in which post-modernism and feminism converge. Both ideologies challenge unitary definitions of truth. Post-modernism opposes essentialism and decanonization of master codes. In the case of the feminist writers too, the consciousness of self is constantly reshaped in view of the variety of factors such as past and present constantly reshaping and modifying each other due to changing social conditions and levels of knowledge, thereby giving birth to the notion of multiple selves which cannot be defined in singular or universal terms. Thus the image of feminism as a coherent ideology is only a misconception. Both post-modernists and recent feminist theorists assert that any attempt to formulate a universalistic concept of woman is futile. This decentering of woman is almost akin to the episteme in which there are no essential subjects or objects, but only individuals caught in a network of historical and psychological power relationships.

The acknowledgement of contemporary feminists that there can't be a universal, unitary definition of feminism brings it closer to post modernism. "Feminisms are several and they are culture-specific. The feminist discourse in India has, at times, gone all out to differentiate itself from the feminisms of more affluent societies primarily, because of cultural reasons" (Jain 81).

Some similar views have been expressed by Rajul Bhargava: "During the last decade, Feminism and women studies have been forced to acknowledge the diversities of women experiences as well as the patriarchal oppressions they share. An emphasis on difference has shattered the illusion of homogeneity of, and sisterhood between, women which previously

characterised white, middle class westernised feminist politics and analysis. With this has come awareness that although women may be oppressed by men within patriarchal relationships, there are other areas of oppression in their lives which they experience in a gender way” (Bhargava 75).

Feminist theory has passed through different stages of development. The first was a concern with a right to equality and political rights; the second phase emphasised a need to look for certain alternative way outs, and questioning the epistemological structures. Both these stances fail to demolish the binary opposition. The reason is clear to see. The first held ‘men’ as central and ‘women’ desperately trying to become like them, to imbibe their traits in order to establish an equality with them on their (male) terms. In doing so, women instead of gaining identity, lost it by mimicking the male identity, by trying to fit into their boots. This was followed by a focus on differences. Jameela Begum, A also observes: “Feminism has however come a long way from early patterns that have categorically been displaced. The feminine phase which had sought to identify the nature of women within a masculine ideology gave place to the feminists’ liberal views of equality and the levelling of differences between the sexes. This position was held by early liberal feminists who tried to fit woman into the masculine mode. It resulted in treating women as if they were men, since men constituted to be the subject of discourse. This was later considered to be a fake position and the difference between men and women came to be emphasised in the female phase.” (Jameela 143)

In the 1990s one can see a lucid inclination towards the ethics of difference as provided by post modernism in Indian writings in English by women. These feminist narratives are not concerned with female struggle for equal rights but rather with the inherent conflicts and constraints in implementing these rights in society which still clutches tightly to the traditional patterns. These novels bring out emphatically that despite the opposing forces from all sides, the women in India have learnt not to succumb and in this process, they have moved towards self perception and maturity. These women managed to be different within seemingly similar environment and situations, thus becoming instrumental in bringing change slowly but surely, without creating much ripples. Thus a rather long period of struggle has taught them to believe in themselves, to have faith in their potentialities and power to bring about a change. The first realisation that struck them was a need to articulate and bring to limelight the grim areas that cause problems, for instance, the discrimination extended to them. It further taught them to adopt a moderate middle way to keep themselves alive and going. It was an awareness to cautiously avoid extremes – that has saved the feminist movement from being dead and decayed. Indian feminism largely adheres to Carol Gilligan’s model of inter dependence and caring even if it means fragmenting themselves. Manju Kapur’s *Home* displays the intertwining of post modernism with feminism in an apt and subtle way - the multiplicity of ways that the female characters have adopted to assert themselves, the presence of history in the form of generational sweep, and the complex terrain of joint family with all the characters having relatively different experiences, though caught up in almost similar situations. *Home* therefore clearly falls in this category of post modern feminism. The jacket blurb of the novel bears a testimony to it. It reads:

“Banwari Lal, the patriarch of the family runs cloth business in Karol Bagh, is a believer in the old ways. Men work out of the home, women within. Men carry forward the family line, women enable their mission. But all is not as it seems. His two sons may unquestioningly follow their father in business and life but their wives will not. Neither will his granddaughter who is determined to strike her own path”

Home thus is a story of joint family headed by the patriarch Banwari Lal and goes down to the depiction of three generations. The daughters-in-law Sona, Sushila, Pooja and the granddaughter Nisha adopt a balanced way—neither do they rebel nor surrender. The curious ways and strategies that they adopt to counter the pressures fit this novel in the postmodern feminist mould.

The decade of 90s is important in the sense that literature shows an engagement with history - both national and personal - history of institutions, family sagas, gender discrimination etc. This sudden twist was impelled by a need to place the past in different perspectives and to deconstruct the knowledge structures legitimised by the imperial discourse. Behind this is an impulse for reviewing the past events. As such the focus is not on a search for identity in the existential sense of the term but the enlarged canvas (shifting the focus from person to people) expands the scope for unearthing multiple layers of hidden meanings. And thus, the narratives are full of family sagas – Nina Sibal’s *Yatra* (1987), Gurcharan Das’s *A Fine Family* (1990), Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* (1993) and Manju Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* (1998) and *Home* (2006).

History and family saga also provide an added advantage of analysing the institutions of marriage and family and see the issues of gender in relative terms. *Home*, an account of three generations, projects the slow and steady change taking place in the family. The long trail of Banwari Lal’s family is complex enough that Manju Kapur presents it graphically at the onset of the novel. The family tree facilitates an understanding of the members of the family and their relationships. In this age of multiculturalism and globalisation signifying the blurring of the boundaries, Banwari Lal’s joint family signifies demolishing of fences. Nuclear living is not allowed in the Banwari Lal’s family ethos.

Home gathers impetus through the conflicting polarities of tradition and modernity, poverty and prosperity, old and new, individual and group. It is the story of hardcore traders. They own a cloth shop at Karol Bagh at Delhi with the name Banwari Lal Cloth shop. The two sons of Banwari Lal – Yashpal and Pyrelal – are well versed in the ways of the market and business. Both are married, the former to Sona and the latter to Sushila. Banwari Lal’s daughter, Sunita is wedded to Murli, a jobless, irresponsible and greedy man expecting dowry and eventually responsible for the burning of Sunita at the age of thirty two leaving behind her only son Vicky, a lean and thin boy of shy nature, to the care of maternal uncles and aunts. Being businessmen down to the core, they tend to think of everything from a monetary point of view. Money is an important forceful ingredient of their thought pattern so much so that even their emotional lives are controlled and impacted by this indulgence in money. The decisions regarding the education of children, marriage settlement are governed by the idea of how they can contribute to the family income.

The novel is built upon contrasting characters. Manju Kapur is quite dexterous in conveying her point of view not directly. She rather infers by structuring anti-thesis and contraries. This way she gains objectivity and is also able to present multiplicity of experience. It also helps her to establish situations in a relative light. In *Difficult Daughters*, it is Virmati vs Swarna Lata (her roommate) on the one hand and Virmati vs Shakuntla (her cousin) on the other.

In *Home* too, Kapur dwells upon the study of contrasts – Sona vis-à-vis Rupa, Sona vis-à-vis Maji and Nisha vs. Pooja. It is this essential difference amongst these characters and their responses that highlight heterogeneity and plurality, the very pulse of post modernist ethics.

In this rich, affluent Banwari Lal family, Sona is a beautiful, yet restless woman. She is childless even after ten years of her marriage though her younger sister-in-law Sushila is blessed with two sons. This explains Sona's psychic restlessness and mental anxieties. Sona's younger sister Rupa is also issueless but nowhere is she shown to be perturbed much by it. She manages to maintain self control and gaiety of her spirits. Rupa is more focussed on financial success in her pickle business. That is why she does not feel much perturbed when Sona discloses the news of her pregnancy to Rupa: "Rupa received the information stoically. Her mind leaped to the little baby in her sister's arms" (Kapur 32). And then: "She was now supplying pickles and sweet chutneys to local restaurants as well as shops, and had hired a woman to help her. She wished to own a car, she wished to go on more holidays, and above all, she wished she had enough money to buy out the tenant who was causing her husband and father-in-law much tension. More than an elusive baby, Rupa focussed her attention on financial success". (Kapur 32).

The entire issue of the gender identity synonymous with motherhood is questioned here through Rupa. Motherhood is traditionally venerated in Indian culture. Manu perceived motherhood to be the main purpose of women's lives and placed a mother hundred times above the father. As Sudhir Kakar writes: "The absolute and all encompassing social importance of motherhood, the ubiquitous variety of motherhood myths and the function of offspring in ritual and religious life – all give to motherhood in Indian culture a particularly inconvertible legitimacy" (Kakar 67). In such a scenario, Rupa epitomises a break from the old traditional myths regarding motherhood. Through Rupa, Manju Kapur portrays the change that is seeping in our social and familial values. Barring indications of slight prick and passing pain, Rupa as well as her husband have no regrets for not having children, nor do they feel themselves misfits in a society which treats women with hostility for being childless. Both the sisters are the victims of thwarted maternal instincts but their response to it is diametrically opposite.

The generational sweep also facilitates the deconstruction of monolithic implications of universalist codes and highlights the diversity of women's experiences. Banwari Lal's daughter Sunita is a case in point here. She is married to a cruel alcoholic Murali whose eyes are perpetually set on the financial gains of Sunita's parental family. He also wishes that Sunita's parents should invest in Bareilly and "either open an outlet that he would manage or failing that, to help upgrade his shop" (Kapur 18). Sunita is a victim of his excesses. His greed for dowry pins her down to the status of a mute victim and spoils the family happiness.

As a comparison even Banwari Lal is not free from this social evil. Rekha, Vijay's wife brings huge dowry with her and the Banwari Lal's family is ready to give dowry in Nisha's marriage too. Nevertheless, Sona who belongs to a mediocre family and didn't bring dowry has not been treated the way Sunita is treated. She is only subjected to verbal assaults by her mother-in-law. Among this class only Arvind (Nisha's husband) wants no dowry and thus is an exception.

The two majorly depicted female characters in the novel are Sona and her daughter Nisha. Sona, wife of Yashpal, marries him through love-turned-arranged marriage in the hardcore traditional set up of Banwari Lal's family. This is like a big blow and a great breakthrough. Yashpal declares to his family that "If he could not marry her, he would leave the shop and spend the rest of his life celibate, by the banks of the Ganges" (Kapur 3). Obviously the family had to bend but this compromise was heavy hearted as it disturbs all the prevailing norms in the family: "His parents did not take kindly to this threat. They were traditional business people. In order to remain financially strong and ensure the family harmony that underpinned the security, marriages were arranged with great care. The bride had to bring the dowry, come from the same background and understand the value of togetherness. Falling in love was detrimental to these interests" (Kapur 3).

Marriage is eventually arranged and on the face of it everything looks even but it leaves simmer of dissent lurking in Yashpal's mother's heart. Kapur leads us to see the outpour of mother's anger towards Sona in the form of taunts. She doesn't lose a single opportunity to show her down. The subtle power game starts between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Sona not been able to conceive becomes even more vulnerable to the bitterness of her mother-in-law. To cite one such situation when Maji and Sona are alone in the house as everybody has gone away to attend Sunita's death she says: "What can you know of a mother's feelings? All you do is enjoy life, no children, no sorrow, only a husband to dance around you" (Kapur 18). The hurt caused by these comments makes Sona exert all her inner strength to swallow this humiliation. She feels torn inside. A sense of emptiness and desperation surrounds her. "She tried to calm herself by praying, closing her eyes to concentrate on the favourite image of God, the little Krishna - ... please, I am growing old, bless us with a child, girl or boy, I do not care, but I cannot bear the emptiness in my heart" (Kapur 18).

Noteworthy is the breaking of the hegemony of oppression centred at the male in man-woman relationship. The woman is liable to oppression from any quarter. Man is not the only one to cause indignity and assault her. Here the oppression comes from a woman who herself is brought up in a patriarchal society and has accepted the fact of woman as a victim as a norm. Yashpal on the contrary is all support to Sona in moments of crisis. He understands and empathizes with her. The phase of husband wife incompatibility seems to be a *passé*. As Sona is assured of Yashpal's support and love, she learns to develop her own ways and means to face Maji's torments. She learns to ignore her harsh comments and overlook her discriminatory attitude towards herself and Sushila. Kapur has consciously avoided the psychological angle to deal with these situations. Sona creates her own space and evolves her own defence mechanism for survival. She takes life as a continuity in which flux is the

dominating principle. This saves her from plunging into agony and negativity. In due course she gives birth to a daughter Nisha and a son Raju.

Another vital character that is indispensable to the theme of the novel is Nisha. Nisha is an agent of 'change'. She is the one who chalks her way to modernity and her struggle evokes a sense of sympathy and admiration for her. Truly adorable is her strength to face life squarely despite all odds flowing from all corners. She refuses to accept defeat or be curbed by the tough patriarchal and orthodox codes by which Banwari Lal's family lives. Since the establishment of society, a woman is termed as weaker sex who needs to be protected. This typical stereotype puts man at the centre and female on the margins and fixes them in a power relation of the subject and the object. As Simone de Beauvoir says, "The situation of women is that she – a free and autonomous being like all other creatures – nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compelled her to assume the status of the other" (Beauvoir 167).

Manju Kapur has tried to craft in Nisha the emerging new woman, a more asserting, self assured and confident one who is 'different' in the sense that she doesn't take recourse to a dreamy world of make-believe in an effort to assert her space as seen in Shobha De's heroines, nor would she sink into the depths of darkness and depression. Most importantly, she dares to articulate her feelings and opinions. Kapur has given voice to Nisha which speaks of her modern outlook, a voice which is more curious to find a vent rather than indulging in a web of intricate maze of thoughts. As Rajul Bhargava says, "Women came to believe that what was needed was the articulation of the awareness of their position of disadvantage and discrimination so very repeatedly and in so many different ways that each attempt would erase the 'dark' past and help to reformulate a 'lighter' future of comparative equality". (Bhargava 73)

As a small child Nisha falls prey to the carnal desires of Vicky and she is left psychologically shaken. She is in a state of shock and is unable to sleep well or eat well. She is sent to Rupa's (her maternal aunt) house for a change. The congenial environment of Rupa's house brings her back to normalcy. Both Rupa and her husband treat her lovingly. She is admitted to a good school and a tutor, too, is arranged for her. The healthy atmosphere there makes Nisha bloom and she excels in studies too. After she finishes school, Rupa advocates college education for Nisha: "If anything happens in the girl's later life, she is not completely dependent" (Kapur 139). Her own mother Sona is unwilling to send her to college. She always feels that girls should develop their skills for kitchen work. Nisha has to fight such notions of her mother who considers a daughter a mere helper in the kitchen.

Nisha's journey to college that way is not an easy step. But somehow, on Rupa's insistence, she gets admission in Durga Bai college where she joins B.A. Hons in English. This brings a major turning point in her life. She meets Suresh, a student of Khalsa College of Engineering in the University Special Bus. After the initial hesitation both get talking to each other and eventually fall in love. Nisha however is never negligent of her studies. Suresh helps her with St Stephen's tutorials and she studies hard to secure first division. Her involvement with Suresh grows by the time she is in third year. The initial friendship swells into a love affair. She is once taken to a secluded room by Suresh but she cautiously guards her chastity and

tells him: “It is just as well there is something left for when we are married” (Kapur 191). Nobody in the family takes kindly to Nisha’s involvement with Suresh. Raju, her brother, alleges Nisha of being untrustworthy. To this Nisha reiterates “who are you to decide whether I am trustworthy” (Kapur 198). At another juncture she protests: “who cares about castes these days? You want to sell me in the market” (Kapur 199). She receives a slap from her mother for being so blatant and has to bear the consequences. She becomes a prisoner in her own house. Rupa’s husband tries to console Nisha: “Suresh’s family should have met your family” (Kapur 202). He advocates a traditional approach to which Nisha snaps back: “Uncle, this is the modern age. ...what harm is there if first we got to know each other? How can I tell him to send his family, if I don’t know him first?” (Kapur 201).

Nisha gets a big jolt when Suresh betrays her and changes his stance. Nisha has loved him from the depths of her heart and was ready to resist the pressure coming from her family but Suresh proves to be weak and infidel. But Nisha is left high and dry and the feeling of being cheated pulls her down. Now that Suresh is ousted from her life and she comes back on the terrain of reality after a short flight into the idyllic world, she thinks of pursuing some career oriented course. She shares her grief with her father: “I don’t want to be seen by all these people, why can’t I do some course? I want to study fashion designing. Lots of girls do it, why can’t I? Why should I sit at home every day waiting for proposals?” (Kapur 226)

In the meantime, Raju is married to Pooja. Manju Kapur has created in the character of Pooja a defiant girl who has no streak to adjust either with her mother-in-law Sona or Nisha. That self assertion taken to negative proportions can be destructive and can bring divisions is well depicted in the character of Pooja. Irked by all these things and feeling lonely, Nisha again turns to her father with a business proposition in her mind: “If only you could take me with you Papaji”, she pleaded in a rush, “I have seen girls working in shops. Why should it be only Ajay, Vijay and Raju? There must be something I too can do” (Kapur 268). Yashpal assesses the urge in Nisha to do something meaningful in life. He suggests that she should start working in a school instead of joining the shop. He exerts his connections and Nisha gets a job in a play school. Time flies and Pooja gives birth to a baby girl. The power struggle between Pooja and Nisha grows as Pooja doesn’t allow the latter to touch her baby thanks to the skin eczema problem that Nisha is suffering from.

Nisha, in the meantime is struck with the idea of starting a boutique of women apparel. She talks to her father: “Give me a chance to show you what I can do. “ (Kapur 287). Yashpal agrees to it and arranges a place for her work and gives her twenty five thousand rupees as seed money on the condition that she will return the money in a year. She names her shop ‘Nisha Creations’ and proves her worth as a business woman. She also pays half the debt to her father in a year. This is a stage for Nisha that brings self fulfilment and a sense of achievement. In the meantime, she marries a thirty four year old widower and continues her business even after marriage till she gets pregnant. After ten months of her marriage, she delivers twins – a daughter and a son. She hands over her business to Pooja and there is a suggestion thrown through Rupa Masi that she will restart her business: “you know beti; you can always restart a business. You have shown a flair for it. But this time with your baby, this will not come again” (Kapur 333).

Nisha could create a space for herself and refuses to be treated as an object. She is truly an emerging new woman. Nisha's achievements become all the more praiseworthy when one looks at them against the backdrop of social scenario of that time. In such circumstances Nisha emerges as an independent woman in a society where "a woman is never regarded as an autonomous being since she has always been assigned a subordinate and relative position. Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man and she is simply what man decrees" (Beauvoir 534).

Like most post-modernist literary texts, *Home* is ironical, ambiguous and open-ended. The novel comes a full circle and assumes post modernist stance in its open ending though Manju Kapur has shown Nisha arriving at a decisive turn in her life. But the ambiguity arises from a plethora of questions that arise in readers' mind despite the so-called 'happy ending' of the story. Questions like how could Nisha sacrifice her business so easily?, what happens to Nisha's professional life?, what happens to her aspirations?, will she be able to start it again? is home real place for self fulfilment? if she was to return to the normal fold of a housewife, isn't it a retrograde step rather than progression or has Nisha ultimately found her nest - a place where she attains security, happiness, contentment? It would not be wrong to say that the readers would have liked to see her balancing her professional and private life and she needn't have to sacrifice her business enterprise in pursuit of home and hearth. The readers have formed an image of Nisha as an enterprising, iconoclastic individual who dares to venture into un-trodden territories. There is a subtle irony in what Nisha aspires to be and what she ends up with. Can it be deemed a failure of Feminism as commonly perceived. The author problematizes the subject with an open end.

Nevertheless, Nisha's backlog can be interpreted in another way if we take the symbolic interpretation of 'Home' which is the title of the novel too. Right from her childhood, Nisha could not have an experience of a sweet home that provides security and happiness to an individual. Her own home was incapable of providing her security and she had to be moved to Rupa masi's home. Although she blossoms at Rupa's house and all her insecurities and psychic turmoil are put to rest but she continues to shuffle between Rupa's home and her own. The constant feeling that this was not her real home and her own home couldn't accommodate her, deprives her of a sense of rootedness. Finally, this pursuit for home ends when she gets happily married, bears two children and gets a home which she can call her own in the true sense of the term.

Feminism can be interpreted as a discourse of power politics. But at another level, it is characterised by an increasing awareness of the principle of 'difference' and a continual deferment of meanings. Post modernism champions multiple perspectives and open ends. Contemporary feminist theory establishes a meeting point with post-modernism when it takes into account the relativistic implications of the post modern pluralism. Post modern feminism then is an epistemology that recognises the 'plurality' and 'multifariousness' of women's experience and dwells on the politics of 'difference'. As such, Manju Kapur's *Home* aptly fits into the post-modern feminist episteme. It caters to multiplicity, plurality of female experience. All the female characters in *Home* interpret the notion of selfhood in their own typical manner. They adopt different strategies for self assertion too. Sona adopts 'neglect',

Rupa diverts her attention to financial success. Pooja turns to defiance and rebellion, whereas Nisha glides towards positive and constructive means of self assertion. The restless women in Kapur's Home can be taken as one in a paradigm. And since post-modern Feminist theory cherishes ambiguities and open ends, Home falls in line with this league also. Home has a deceptive close ending. There are various tag questions attached with the seemingly happy ending of the novel. Also the story of three generations of Banwari Lal family depicted on a large canvas gives a historical profile to the novel which is typical of post-modernism. And Manju Kapur has left it to the readers to draw their own conclusions out of it.

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