



RESEARCH PAPER

**Fractured Selves and Partitioned Identities: A Postcolonial Reading
of Saadat Hasan Manto's *Raam Khilawan***

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ABSTRACT

The partition created a number of problems, such as disruption of identity, loss of liminality, and forced identities. The problems related to partitions can be found in literature that was written during the partition time as well as post-partition periods. The story written by Saadat Hassan Manto, named "*Raam Khilawan* (2016)," has also touched upon the themes of disruption of identities, loss of liminality, and forced identities but has not yet been explored through this perspective under the broader umbrella of postcolonial theory. The current paper aims to analyze the partitioned identities and fractured selves in the short story *Raam Khilawan* (2016) using Alan McKee's (2003) model of textual analysis under the broader umbrella of postcolonial theory. The findings of the study revealed how the story portrays the themes of othering, loss of liminal space, and the voices of the lower class, which were kept silent/subaltern voices. The findings of the study suggested that Manto was criticizing not only the brutal situation of the partition time but also the ideological and political tensions of the partition discourse, which caused such issues. The issues during the partition were the inheritance of colonial discourse, which worked under the othering/binary opposition to make space between the indigenous people.

Keywords: Partition, Saadat Hasan Manto, *Raam Khilawan* , Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Othering, Hybridity, Subaltern, Alan Mckee, Textual Analysis

Introduction

The partition of 1947 led to one of the greatest forced migrations in modern history. Nearly twelve million people were forced to cross the border from India to the newly formed Pakistan and vice versa. In addition to this mass displacement, over one million people died in communal violence that involved Hindus, Muslims and other communities. Beyond destruction of material and human life, Partition created ruptured subjectivities, as people found themselves caught between competing religious, political and communal identities. Literary texts have depicted these traumatic circumstances in most critical ways. Among the writers who said about the horrors of Partition, Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955) occupies a central position because of his realistic, ironic and powerful prose style. His short stories vividly portray the absurdity, brutality and psychological devastation of Partition. While Manto's other well-known works such as *Toba Tek Singh*, *Khol Do*, *Naya Qanoon* and *Thanda Gosht* have been widely studied, his short story, *Raam Khilawan* (2016) has not been widely studied.

Raam Khilawan (2016) is a Partition story which condenses the violence and ideological tensions of the times in a devastating way. In the story, the narrator goes out at night during curfew looking for his washerman but is faced with a horrible reality where a mob only asks one question as the sole identifier of human and that is the possibility of being a Hindu or Muslim. The situation is so vicious that even familiar and close people turn against each other due to communal divisions and underlying ideological structures. These imposed communal categories put human beings in complex and tragic situations in which their personal, social and professional identities are dwarfed by religious labels. The present

study has been made on the short story of Manto, named Raam Khilawan (2016) using postcolonial theory, and more specifically the notions of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and by using the model of textual analysis by Alan McKee (2003) as the methodological framework. With the postcolonial theory and textual analysis, the study argues that the narrative exposes the ideological violence of Partition at both of the cultural and social level, especially in connection with fragmented identities, interrupted liminal spaces, and silencing of marginalized voices.

The Partition of 1947 was an explosive separation that affected the entire Indian subcontinent. Millions were displaced, and the deep scars inflicted upon the collective psyche of the people lasted for generations. Manto's short story, *Raam Khilawan* (2016), essentially narrates the chaos and human tragedy of this event by unearthing the identities, both individual and cultural, which were subjected to moral disintegration and their coming apart. The text portrays how Partition had the power to scatter the very essence and roots of personal and cultural life. Raam Khilawan (2016), through its vivid portrayal of trauma, displacement, and loss, also becomes a sharp critique of the political and social forces that reduced human beings to the very instauration of survival amidst the ruins of divided identities.

Literature review

Partition has been discussed among literary scholars, using a variety of critical approaches: oral history, existentialism, realism and post-colonial theory. With time, the postcolonial theory has become one of the most influential formulas in creating a subtle meaning of literary texts related to Partition. Despite the fact that postcolonialism is a general theoretical framework that examines a very broad spectrum of topics that go beyond the studies of Partition, numerous researchers have used it to examine the sociopolitical, cultural, and ideological aspects of Partition literature.

Butalia (1998) addresses oral histories (in this case, those of women who were silenced by Partition). Even though the post-colonial theory does not expressly ground her work, its focus on silence of the voices aids a lot in the concept of subalternity by Spivak. On the same note, Menon and Bhasin (1998) criticize the gendered violence of the Partition and discuss how women were being victims of communal riots.

Pandey (2001) examines the narratives of the violence of Partition by various communities using their political and communal identities. His emphasis on the narrative construction is quite similar to the concept of Said (1978) that the discourse creates truth in the relations to power. Talbot and Singh (2009) emphasize on the history of colonial rule and how communal identities were created in practices. Their argument is similar to that of the Bhabha (1994) who believed that colonial binaries had an influence on the subjectivities of the post-colonial era.

Investigating the issue of the changing identities in post-colonial fiction, Karkaba (2010) refers to the works of Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, and Edward Said. Karkaba examines texts like *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *Fire on the Mountain* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* and claims that postcolonial fiction makes essentialist concepts of identity unstable and provides a third space where one can see the processes of hybridity and multiplicity.

He (2020) applies the post-colonial theory to analyze the experiences of immigrants in the novel *The Lonely Londoners* by Samuel Selvon. The article uses the post-colonial theory of hybridity and mimicry to demonstrate how the Caribbean immigrants in London create new identities and fight against assimilation. In the same vein, Al (2021), analyzes, comparatively, both the works, *Seasons of migration to the North* and *Admiring Silence*. She discusses the conflict of the once colonised subjects having fragmented identities and uses the theory of hybridity as developed by Bhabha to show the state of the main characters to

be existing in an in-between space, neither wholly belonging to the colonisers nor to the colonised.

Sheikh et al., (2023) examine how colonialism persists in Zimbabwean fiction. The paper relies on the theories of Fanon and Bhabha to present the imposed identities, and traumatic experiences created by colonial violence in an organized way. Similarly, Pathak (2024) analyses the fiction of Lahiri based on the theory of hybridity formulated by Bhabha, showing how the characters of the narratives are engaged in the process of Western culture mimicry, and yet are attached to their cultures of origin. Pathak holds that the characters of Lahiri are kept on a state of ambivalence, which can be said to be the post-colonial dilemma of belonging and identity in the migration.

Ahmad (2015) critically looks at Narratives of Partition by using the post-colonial discourse analysis and asserts that communal violence is an expression of the restructuring of colonial boundaries. His writing shows that the idea of Orientalism as proposed by Said can be productively applied to the South Asian situation. Nayyar (2019) has demonstrated in the last years that Manto opposed nationalist mythologies and disrupted colonial dichotomies in his book, *Manto and the Poetics of Anticolonialism*. Even though Nayyar utilizes the works of Said and Bhabha in his interpretation, he uses mostly thematic instead of textual analysis.

The fiction written by Manto has been analysed by many other scholars under different approaches. According to Bashir, Mustafa, and Rahman, Manto was an astute observer and his narrations of the Partition situation were portrayed with unbelievable realism, but his analyses are seen through the prism of displacement and trauma, instead of post-colonial theory. Kaleem, Asif, and Siraj (2023) focus on three of the stories by Manto using the psychological and nationalist concepts, with the primary focus on madness and nationalism. Naeem, Zara, and Khan (2022) examine the works of Manto and interpret them in the post-colonial gothic in order to study the violence and gothic images. Moreover, many essays that have been published in global journals have focused on one of the most renowned short stories of Manto, the title of which is *Toba Tek Singh*, which depicts the inherent binaries in postcolonial identity.

The stories of Manto have been analyzed by various scholars in a wide perspective. Other stories including *Toba Tek Singh*, *Khol Do* and *Thanda Gosht* have been analyzed in the wider context of Partition through the theoretical approach to post colonialism, existentialism, feminism and Marxism. Nevertheless, the communal violence and fragmented identities remain the key themes of the short story, *Raam Khilawan* (2016) has not been extensively discussed in the literary scholarship. This paper, thus, seeks to review the story, *Raam Khilawan*, through the postcolonial theory in an attempt to understand how colonial discourse generates communal violence and shatters the identity of the local population. The textual analysis model by Alan McKee (2003) is adopted as the analytical framework to reveal the textual patterns that depict the themes of Partition and the impacts it had on people with the pretext of religious and political ideologies as incorporated in colonial discourse.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in the postcolonial theory, specifically in the fundamental concepts propounded by Edward Said (1978), Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988). These concepts are used to examine the wider consequences of colonialism and how it has affected the identities of both the locals and the colonized. Within this analytical lens, Manto's short story, *Raam Khilawan* (2016) is interpreted as a literary representation of fractured selves, binary constructions, disruption of liminal spaces, and the subaltern. Through this framework, the study focuses on how colonial discourse continued to be used to define the identities of the victims of the Partition

and thereby engendered communal violence, fractured identities and silenced the voices of the marginalized.

Edward Said, in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), argues that the colonial discourse constructs a set of binaries such as East/West, civilized/uncivilized and rational/irrational. Said says that the west presents the image of the east as exotic, irrational, savage and barbaric to justify its presentation of itself as civilized, modern and superior. These representations are not rooted in empirical reality, but rather they are discursive creations that are created to justify colonial authority and domination. In *Raam Khilawan* (2016) Said's theory is relevant as identity is narrowed down to hard communal binaries - namely Hindu and Muslim - through the language of mob violence and communal suspicion. This reduction is an indication of the persistence of colonial patterns of categorization, where people are trapped in fixed labels for political expediency. Consequently, these binaries become the basis for communal violence and the destruction of liminal identities as well as the silencing of marginalized groups during Partition.

Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) introduces the concepts of hybridity and the third space or the liminal space where identity is not fixed but is negotiated. Hybridity refers to the blending of cultures and identities as creating a space in which hard categories of belonging do not exist. Bhabha valorises this in-between position because this position challenges essentialist conceptions of identity. In **Raam Khilawan** (2016), Manto introduces a character named Ram Khilawan who is at first a character inhabiting such a liminal space. Though he is a Hindu by faith, he is basically an individual by occupation, as a dhobi or washerman, who serves individuals regardless of communal differences. His labor is indifferent to religious boundaries and his identity is determined more by social function than ideological affiliation. However, Partition breaks up this liminal space by forcing people to take up absolute communal identities. Through Ram Khilawan, Manto shows how colonial and Partition discourses destroy hybrid social spaces and force people to think of themselves as either Hindu or Muslim.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her seminal essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) examines the process of the dominant discourse in which the voices of the marginalized are silenced through being deprived of their ability to represent themselves. Spivak says that the subaltern is too often spoken for by dominant power structures more often than allowed authentic self-expression. This idea is very pertinent to *Raam Khilawan* (2016), in which the titular character, although being central to the action, does not fully express himself. Although he is voiced within the narrative, he is silent on his own consent, agency and subjectivity. Rather, he is molded and formed by the communal and ideological forces that surround him. Ram Khilawan thus becomes representative for the voices that are silent and marginalized under the compulsions of Partition violence and were forced to change their identities. They were exploited as tools of power, ideology, and communal hatred and consequently their own identities were broken and displaced.

Taken as a whole, the ideas of Said, Bhabha, and Spivak provide a comprehensive postcolonial framework for this study. Said's concept of othering explains the construction of communal binaries; Bhabha's theory of hybridity explains the destruction of liminal identities; and Spivak's concept of the subaltern explains the silencing and manipulation of marginalized subjects. Through these interwoven theoretical perspectives, *Raam Khilawan* may be seen as a powerful, literary representation of the way in which Partition violence was constructed through colonial discourse and identities of ordinary people were sundered.

Material and Methods

This study uses a model for textual analysis by Alan McKee (2003) as the analytical tool of study for an analysis of Saadat Hasan Manto's short story *Raam Khilawan* (2016).

Textual analysis involves a close reading of the text with a special focus on language, story structure, and the ways in which meaning is created in the literary work. In the analysis of Raam Khilawan, special attention is paid to the words, phrases and sentences through which Manto portrays communal violence, colonial and partition discourse and fractured identities. This method allows the study to establish the linguistic and narrative strategies used by the author to convey the big themes of Partition such as communal violence, fractured identity and marginalized voices. The analysis also considers the narrative voice, dialogue, and descriptive passages to find out the internal conditions of the characters along with the political and ideological context that is embedded in the story itself. The study put forward the textual elements to show how Manto depicts the effects of colonialism and partition discourse on human identity and how this representation contributes to the thematic depth and character development in the text.

Results and Discussion

Saadat Hasan Manto's short story "Ram Khilawan", presents the brutal reality of communal violence when the Partition of 1947 took place and shows how regular people got stuck in the midst of violent identities politics. Through a simple but deeply symbolic plot, Manto exposes the ruin of human relations under the colonial and partition discourse. The story shows that identity, which formerly worked in the everyday life of people in social and professional life, is violently reduced to rigid communal labels. A man goes to fetch his clothes from his dhobi, but the mundane act becomes life-threatening when he is surrounded by mobs and is forced into a communal framework of recognition. In this way, the story is a powerful commentary on broken identities, Forced belonging, and drowned subjectivity.

Fractured Identities

The story is representative of fractured identities since it depicts how at the time of Partition, human beings were no longer viewed as individuals with personal histories, relationships, and professions, but only as members of religious camps that are at odds with each other. This can be productively read through Edward Said's idea of othering, in which identity is created through exclusion, opposition, and binary categorization. In Said's framework, the self is stabilized by creating an "other." In Manto's story, this mechanism can be seen in the most direct and violent form if the protagonist is surrounded by drunken dhobis and reduced to one question whether he is Hindu or Muslim. The narrator recalls that *"I had to answer only one question - was I a Muslim or a Hindu?"* This is a central moment because it sheds light on the fact that Partition discourse has erased all intermediate or shared identities. The man is not recognized as a customer or neighbor or human being. He is forced into a structure of two Said's notion of the othering explains the process of communal discourse changes social difference into antagonistic difference. The mob does not seek for knowledge, it seeks classification. The question is not neutral, but violent, for once the answer is given, life or death follows from it. Thus, Manto views identity not as something that exists inside but as something externally imposed (politically and communally).

The broken nature of identity is further emphasized by the contrast between the earlier human relationship and the division of communal later The narrator identifies Ram Khilawan over and over again through trust and familiarity:

"he is my dhobi for ten years . . . he was very ill . . . we treated him"

This line calls to reminiscence a pre-partition social world of everyday interdependence rather than communal separation. The relationship between employer and dhobi had been crossed earlier difference in religion without anxiety. However, the violence of Partition breaks that shared world. Occupational identity, ethical memory and

personal loyalty collapse before the need to categorize in communal terms. In this sense, Manto illustrates that Partition did not just divide territory, it divided consciousness. A person once known in terms of service, care and reciprocity is now read through the logic of "us" and "them" that is communal. The story therefore dramatises how colonial and partition discourse replaced fluid social coexistence, with hardened communal binaries. Fractured identity in Ram Khilawan comes not only among the victim's fear but in the collapse of a whole social order where human relations were again meaningful than communal labels.

Forced Identities

The story presents Ram Khilawan as a character whose hybrid and liminal identity was previously destroyed by the communal logic that permeates Partition. This phenomenon can be studied using Homi K. Bhabha's conceptualization of hybridity and the third space. Before the escalation of the communal violence, Ram Khilawan is in a social position that cuts across any rigid ideological demarcations. As a dhobi his labour is available to all regardless of religion, and he stands in an interstitial social milieu where practical concerns, labour and service are of prime importance as opposed to communal identification. According to Bhabha's words, this position is just like the liminal or hybrid space where identities are negotiated rather than fixed.

Manto carefully suggests that Ram Khilawan's real identity is based on labour and human relation, rather than the ideological extremism. He has been treated by the narrator's family:

"Begum Sab save my life. Dying from diarrhoea. Come to me ... in car ... took to doctor ... spent money ... big money"

This recollection makes him realize that once his existence had been ordered by mutual dependence and ethical obligation. His subjectivity was that of a common civic world and not a communal battlefield. Yet Partition obliterates this in-between space. Ram Khilawan is unprofessionalized out of humanity into communalized performance. He ends up in a congregation of violent dhobis and the world that had earlier given him the freedom to serve across boundaries now forces him to take sides in one communal camp against another. His hybridity is broken because the third space is no escape amongst ideological extremism. Colonial discourse and its aftermath of partition politics generates fixed identities and banishes ambiguity.

This loss of liminality is most obvious in the denouement, where Ram Khilawan comes close to the narrator and confesses shamefully: *"Seth log give ... free ... say drink and kill Muslimeen." Nobody not take free liquor, Sab. forgive. I drunk.*" The confession has a profound significance; it proves that Ram Khilawan's violent identity is not inherent but made. He is manipulated by hegemonic forces, intoxicating, mobilizing and transforming him to become an instrument of communal violence. The utterance "say drink and kill Muslimeen" reveals the insertion of ideology into the body (through material inducement) and the transformation of a worker into a communitarian.

Thus, Ram Khilawan's enforced identity is not self-chosen but historically produced. He does not necessarily side with violence but is drawn into it by a discourse which makes non-communal existence impossible. Bhabha's understanding of hybridity helps to explain this tragedy that hybridity is not celebrated as liberation but exposed as fragile, vulnerable to the coercive influence of colonial legacies and partition politics. Ram Khilawan's liminality as a washerman who crosses communities is crushed, giving rise to a forced, violent, communal persona that he cannot fully occupy without the weight of guilt.

Representation of the Subaltern Class

The narrative embodies the theme of subaltern identity in terms of silence, mediation, and displacement, which can be interpreted according to the notion of subaltern that has been formulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. For Spivak, the subaltern is not simply the poor, the oppressed, etc., but the subaltern is a person whose voice is not permitted to fully infiltrate the dominant structure of representation. In Ram Khilawan, the titular character seems to be at the center of the action, but he does not completely narrate or define himself. He is mostly seen through the narrator's eyes, through the mob's behavior and through communal forces who speak for him and use him.

This is a considerable narrative strategy. Ram Khilawan is there but his subjectivity is still fragmented and mediated. He does not make his political stand publicly. Instead, he is represented by his community and is mangled up in its violence. Earlier, the crowd takes effect in claiming him by organizational identity through communal and occupational affiliation. The narrator is not asked his individual identity, but whether he belongs to Ram Khilawan as a Hindu or any other and of the opposite communal category. In this way Ram Khilawan himself stops existing as an individual consciousness and becomes part of a communal sign-system.

The last scene heightens this effect. Ram Khilawan speaks, but his speech is broken, emotionally strangled, and incomplete: "Sab, forgive. It's liquor doin free say drink and kill Muslimeen." His fragmented speech is the result of a broken subjectivity. He cannot come up with a fully coherent self defence as the discourse of violence has intervened through him. His apology is moving, but even here he does not take full agency back. Instead, he exposes the actions that others took through him. He isn't the master voice of his own narrative; he's the sick remnant of political manipulation.

Spivak's idea is relevant here in particular: Ram Khilawan cannot represent himself in any stable sense as he has by now been represented by dominant communal forces. He is mobilized, spoken for, and converted into a violence useful tool. The line "*Seth log give . . . free*" is important in that it implies the elite actors or power-holders are exploiting the lower class people for communal purposes. This implies that the subaltern is not just silent, he is ventriloquized. His body is part of violence, and the ideology of violence does not come from him.

Manto also uses brevity and irony as means of representing subalternity. Ram Khilawan, who is the title character, is denied a full narrative space in providing self-explanation. He is not silent due to accidental rather than his silence is due to structural violence. He lives on the intersection of class marginality, occupational vulnerability and communal manipulation. Even at the end, he leaves without warning: "*His voice choked . . . He flung the bundle over his shoulder and was about to leave.*" The scene ends without any reconciliation and fuller articulation, which deems the impossibility of complete self-representation. Consequently, the techniques of fragmented dialogue, mediated narration, irony, and the character's incomplete last confession are used in the story to show how subaltern subjects such as Ram Khilawan do not control the terms of his/her own representation. They are relegated to historical roles written by others. Therefore, in this sense, Manto puts forward Ram Khilawan not as simply just a perpetrator, but as a subaltern figure whose humanity is overridden by communal discourse and his identity is spoken for by his community.

Discussion

The analysis of Saadat Hasan Manto's Ram Khilawan has found that the Partition in the story is represented as an identity crisis, in which the ordinary people are re-created as communal subjects. The text attests to the fact that violence of 1947 was not only physical,

but also psychological and ideological in nature and also ruptured longstanding social relations and replaced them with rigid communal categories.

The most important finding is that the narrative describes fragmented identities in terms of a binary oppositional framework. Drawing upon the notion of othering formulated by Edward Said, the analysis suggests that the identity is limited to "Hindu" and "Muslim" categories. The question which is asked by the mobs is not an innocent interrogation but a violently stratified act of classification. This is an example that Partition narrative created identities with mechanisms of exclusion and hostility, reducing individuals to communal labels for loss of recognizing them with humanity, occupation or personal relationships. Consequently, colonial and Partition-related discourses divided erstwhile shared and fluid identities into antagonistic blocs of religious identity.

The second finding argues that the story portrays the identity of Ram Khilawan as forced rather than natural. Through the application of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity the analysis notes that Ram Khilawan originally occupies an identity of liminal social space. As a washerman, he serves individuals from both sides of communal lines, and his trade is part of an everyday coexistence that ignores hard lines of religion and politics. However, this hybrid and humanistic identity is torn apart by the colonial and communal discourses. Partition removes space for allowing such interstitial roles, forcing Ram Khilawan into a fixed communal role. The story shows that his transformation into a violent participant is not a matter of personal decision but rather the outcome of ideological coercion and communal pressure and with his liminal identity crumbling under the force of the community politics.

The third finding is that the text represents subaltern identity in terms of silence, mediation and manipulation. In relation to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion of the subaltern the analysis depicts that Ram Khilawan does not fully depict himself in the narrative. Despite being the title of the story and being the nominal protagonist, his subjectivity is mediated to a large extent by the narrator, the mob, and communal forces that use him. He is denied an independent voice but is instead represented by his community and instructed for violence. His stuttered and shattered speech at the end of the narrative further shows his inability to be a full autonomous subject. Thus, the subaltern figures in the story are described as having identities that are controlled and articulated by dominant ideological structures.

Another interesting discovery is that Manto uses brevity, irony and silence as narrative strategies to heighten the tragedy of Partition. The simplicity of the plot contrasts powerfully with the profundity of its ideological implications and through this compressed structure Manto shows how quickly everyday life can devolve into fear, suspicion and violence. The story is discomfiting to the reader, rather than consoling, suggesting that Partition is not something that can be assimilated within simplistic moral conclusions. Instead it should be understood as a historic condition that engendered fractured selves, enforced identities and silenced voices. Overall, the study concludes that Ram Khilawan is not just a story of one man or one violent act. It forms part of an example demonstrating how colonial legacies and Partition discourse transformed human identity at each and every level. The narrative techniques of the story show that communal violence was perpetuated through processes of othering, destruction of liminal spaces and silencing of subaltern lives. In this way, the story uncovers the ideological structures of Partition, the deeper structures behind the Partition, and reveals how this most marginalized class became simultaneously victims and the tools of partition and history.

Conclusion

Saadat Hasan Manto's Ram Khilawan eventually proves that the Partition was not just a geographical division but violent ideological rupture that broke human identity,

reconfigured ordinary social relations into communal antagonisms, and silenced the very populations most impacted people. Through the interpretive frame of Edward Said's concept of othering, the narrative shows the disruption of identities by reducing individuals to rigid binary categories of "Hindu" and "Muslim," thereby destroying their human, social and occupational dimension and transforming recognition to a device of violence. At the same time, the application of Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity, Ram Khilawan is represented as a figure who once lived at the edge of the social space - as washerman whose work transcended communal boundaries - yet this intermediary and humanistic identity is destroyed by colonial and partition discourses that impose a fixed communal role, imposed historically, rather than natural. Moreover, quoting Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's subaltern paradigm, the story shows that Ram Khilawan is incapable of representing himself, as his identity and his actions are mediated, controlled and articulated through his community and wider ideological forces that use marginalized individuals as a tool of communal violence. As a result, the story ends not with resolution but with a profound insight into the way that colonial legacies and partition politics fractured individual selves, erased spaces for co-existence, and an authentic voice for denigrated subaltern subjects were denied, and thereby positioning Ram Khilawan as a potent post-colonial critique on coerced identity, communal violence and the tragic dehumanization of normal people during Partition.

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