



Gandhi: Naked Ambition

Jad Adams

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Jad Adams offers a concise account of Gandhi's life: from his birth and upbringing in a small princely state in Gujarat during the high noon of the British Raj, to his assassination at the hands of a Hindu extremist in 1948 only months after the birth of the independent India which he himself had done so much to bring about.

Gandhi: Naked Ambition Details

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From Reader Review Gandhi: Naked Ambition for online ebook

Manta says

the picture peering from the book's cover is off-centre; is far from the iconic Gandhi one has come to accept from mainstream media. and likewise this book - a powerful, sensitive biography that is unflinching in its examination of this historical giant.

I don't know much about modern Indian history; in fact this was precisely why I picked up this book. some reviews on Goodreads have accused Adams of slandering the good name of Gandhi; of taking every opportunity to slam him. That's really far from the truth of what this book does - it gives us a peek at the life and times of a great man, but it paints him in colours we can perceive. We see Gandhi for the man he is, as taken from many accounts from those close to him. It was a refreshing read that tried to do justice to the memory of the man.

I found Adam's writing intelligent, but at times the sheer attention to historical fact and detail left me dazed and a little bored. I suppose this is a book aimed for those more acquainted and familiar with the events mentioned. The British seem to figure only incidentally, and the driving focus is constantly and meticulously on Gandhi...which wears a little thin at times, for those looking for a little more breadth and background to the story around the events.

That said Adams' concluding chapter, in which he assesses Gandhi's contributions in sum I found to be fair, balanced and sensitive. in all, a challenging but interesting read.

Sarah says

Not sure I want to review books by authors I know personally, but I did enjoy this. Well researched, but quite refreshing to read a biography which is not so academic and footnote-heavy, and which doesn't shy from making personal character judgments. Like the focus on Gandhi's ability to reinvent his public persona for his various causes, and the newly found material on his experiments with chastity are bizarre and fascinating.

Umesh Kesavan says

The author is an apologist for British rule and is not a big fan of Gandhi's ideals. These two observations clearly show in every page of the book . Gandhi's achievements are touched upon briefly whereas his fads and strategic blunders are viewed through a magnifying glass. Nevertheless,an easy read which sees Gandhi as a human being in flesh and blood rather than an infallible Mahatma.

gramakri says

This biography is mainly based on Gandhi's own writings and that of his secretaries Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal. It is a fairly well narrated account of Gandhi's life. I came to know several little known facts about

Gandhi.

While the author has based this biography on authentic sources he has his own interpretation of the facts.

Read more about this book at <http://bookwormsrecos.blogspot.in/201...>

Umeed Mohd says

The Gandhi was a saint for the world but his treatment towards his wife and his own children was deplorable and his sexual experiment with young girls was sickening.

The Conch says

?This book presents black and white sides of Gandhi. Being spiritual and thinking driven by God are not a guarantee of a successful politician who can steer the country to the top. Gandhi was definitely fantastic leader, but worst politician.

Though this it's not a place for criticizing personality of Gandhi, however after reading one can evaluates him in an unbiased way.

Kavita Ayyagari says

I like biographies ... especially tales that don't just look at people as gods who can't possibly do any wrong... This one exposes Gandhi's trials with various ideas that took his fancy from time to time and how that shaped what he did/ promoted/ stood for ... Interesting read!

Nicola says

A biography of an incredible man who played a significant role in gaining certain rights for Indians in South Africa and in helping to gain India's independence from the British. I was expecting an account of Gandhi that was full of uncritical adoration for the spiritual leader, but was pleasantly surprised to discover a fairly even-handed approach. The book commends Gandhi's great achievements and vision for a united Hindu-Muslim India and equality for untouchables and for Indians generally in places where they were not given equal rights at the same time as criticising Gandhi's lack of negotiation skills in the political arena, his sex experiments and the harsh treatment of his wife and sons. The overall impression this book gave me was of Gandhi's humanness with all its eccentricities/stubbornness as well as his brilliance in using image, popularity and sheer determination to help change politics.

3 areas of interest that the book highlighted for me: 1) That Gandhi's impact on society was motivated by an individual spiritual journey towards self-perfection (one usually finds individual pursuits to be overall self-serving, in this case it wasn't mainly), 2) The idea that there was Muslim-Hindu disunity prior to the British occupation and not because of it (I've heard the argument in reference to other previously colonised countries that the British divided up the workforce in those countries according to race/religion which has resulted in long-lasting tensions between those different groups) 3) That the British would have given independence to

India eventually anyway. (Really?)

My particular version of the book contained several errors where a word had been misplaced/jumbled up. Probably an editorial oversight, but annoying.

Srinivas says

Well, the naked truth seems to be out, at least partially:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-ent...>

I came across a user review of another Jad Adams book on Amazon. I think it was 'The Dynasty' or some such title that deals with the subject of the ruling family of India. The user deplored that the throne is not handed over to the members of the dynastic family, and that they had to fight to grab control of power. The person considered that this fight for power is a great sacrifice that the family made for the nation.

I was shocked to the very core after reading that review. Goes to show the amount of brainwashing that Indians go through.

Iva says

Gandhi is certainly a complex figure and Adams takes on the man's life with vigor and serious research to back up his theories and explanations of his behavior. Gandhi's personal life is analyzed-perhaps over-analyzed by Adams, particularly his obsessions with chastity and fasting as a protest. There are many biographies and memoirs about Gandhi (the book has an extensive bibliography). Family members, as-told-to books, even his own autobiography are available. This is just one view of the man, but wellworth reading. (The American edition has a different subtitle than the British one.)

Archana Amaragandhi says

Unmasking Mahatma to reveal the man behind. The truth made me self-question my learning from Indian history. Were we feed false stories of heroism?

Charles Guyton-Baran says

A very biased book whose conclusions often don't even match up with what the author himself cites. Apparently he's written a conspiracy book arguing that AIDS is not caused by HIV too - which should tell you all you need to know about him. I'm not really sure what he has against the man, but some of it almost comes across as racial hatred, though I really doubt it is such. One example of this in the book is a section where he talks about Gandhi's sex life (so to speak) - and some of the quotes he cites seemingly have zero connection to his conclusions, and he seemingly ignores chronology to draw his conclusions, too - and considers material published ABOUT him decades after his death to be more reliable than primary sources published during his life. Really odd. Not really a history book, more like a hit piece.

Emily says

Had to return it to the library after reading just a bit but I got enough of the idea not to want to continue.

Balaji Srinivasan says

Jad Adams writes a moving but deeply bigoted book. Adams repeatedly insists that Gandhi was a scheming, ambitious man without even a single piece of substantiation. He reads motives where none exist. Of course, Gandhi had his faults -- and not one escapes Adams' judging eye or salacious tongue -- but personal ambition was not one of them. When Adams acknowledges some good in Gandhi, he damns him with faint praise. The fact that Gandhi's greatness comes through despite the vicious slander is what makes the book moving.

Adams religiously notes every bigoted moniker that the English opponents of Gandhi threw at him ("monkey", "bania", "naked beggar"...) and notes how all this is understandable. The most distasteful part of Adams' book is how he excuses gross, racist incidents made by the English rulers of India. He would have us believe that the English would have given Indians independence out of their great benevolence without any insistence on the Indians' part. He excuses willful, racist negligence as being an oversight. Every single Englishman, to Adams, no matter how racist, or how vicious, is well meaning. The death of millions of people in a famine is, for Adams, due to an oversight and "entirely avoidable". I wonder if the same thing couldn't be said about the English occupation itself! Finally, in this series of ugly excuses the worst comes when he almost treats Dyers and the Jallianwala Bagh as an understandable incident. He almost writes as if Dyers was justified and a hero. I am shocked that someone could be so callous when the blood of the massacre has literally not dried even yet.

Despite the overall negative tone of my review, I think the book is still worth reading -- if one can get past getting furious at the underhanded bigotry and the sly mud-slinging. It does show Gandhi as deeply human. Gandhi never pretended to be a saint and indeed, as Adams shows, he was not one; At the very least he was a deeply flawed saint. Adams has certainly done his research and several facts one was probably not aware of earlier come to the fore and help paint a more complete picture of Gandhi. The inspiring thing about knowing Gandhi completely is that one understands that it is possible to transcend one's human limitations and achieve something important if one has the will to do so.

Tom says

If you can see past the obvious anti Gandhi biases then it's a good easy to read book.
