



Gandhi 1914-1948: The Years That Changed the World

Ramachandra Guha

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Gandhi lived one of the great 20th-century lives. He inspired and enraged, challenged and delighted many million men and women around the world. He lived almost entirely in the shadow of the British Raj, which for much of his life seemed a permanent fact, but which he did more than anyone else to destroy, using revolutionary and inspirational tactics. In a world defined by violence on a scale never imagined before and by ferocious Fascist and Communist dictatorship, he was armed with nothing more than his arguments and example.

This magnificent book tells the story of Gandhi's life, from his departure from South Africa to his assassination in 1948. It is a book with a Tolstoyan sweep, both allowing us to see Gandhi as he was understood by his contemporaries and the vast, unbelievably varied Indian societies and landscapes which he travelled through and changed beyond measure. Drawing on many new sources and animated by its author's wonderful sense of drama and politics, the publication of *Gandhi* is a major event.

Gandhi 1914-1948: The Years That Changed the World Details

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Himanshu Khurana says

One of the greatest sins Gandhi has been held accountable for in recent years is for either being a rank hypocrite or inconsistent at best, most particularly with respect to his views on caste and untouchability. However, in Gandhi's own words lies his vindication, "My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth." And rightly so, he grew drastically from his avowed belief in 'varnashramdharma' and abhorrence of inter-marriage to one including abhorrence of the former's evil and religiously advocating the latter. That's the kind of man Mahatma Gandhi was, an inveterate votary of compromise and dialogue between creed, caste, custom and community.

This book, titled Gandhi: the years that changed the world 1914-1918, is a sequel to Ramachandra Guha's book Gandhi Before India, which rather documented the initial years of Gandhi, studies in England, struggles in South Africa and culminating with his arrival in India in January 1915. Therefore, this book picks up from his launching into the Indian national movement under the political stewardship of Gokhale. Tracing out his beginning with the travels undertaken across the country to make himself aware of the conditions of the masses, the book then skilfully traverses his ventures into the peasants and worker movements. It is shown how he transformed the Indian national movement into mass movement and consequently the Indian National Congress into a truly mass-based party. The entire rigmarole of the freedom movement with its divisiveness, his ventures into social reform, his personal experiments and the ever-swinging pendulum between mass struggle and parleys with the rulers, all of it is explained in excruciating detail.

The widespread variety of sources which the author has referred truly makes this book a comprehensive retelling of the story of the Mahatma. Most salient is the influence and impact Gandhi made on several writers/intellectuals/clerics/activists across the world spanning the Americas, Africa and most certainly Asia. You could hate him or love him, but you could not ignore him. His influence counts as all the more striking considering that he never held public office and presided over the INC only once in 1924. Gandhi was the single most important representative of most of the Indian people for over two decades and became a global symbol of peace, harmony, non-violence and environmental sustainability against the forces of oppression and depredation.

Though the book is majestic and grand in the scale of its purpose and its size, it seems to me severely lacking in depth and erudition. There is a limited attempt at placing the events surrounding Gandhi's personal and public life in the larger ideological and philosophical context. There is a whole tome of Gandhian thought which is being seriously worked upon by academics and thinkers and sadly, the recounting of this debate is sorely missed in this massive tome. Further as Faisal Devji the noted writer on Gandhi commented in his review of this book, it is in someways intended to appeal to western audiences. Not to say that the aspects of his interactions with rest of the world aren't refreshing and insightful, but there is certainly an overemphasis. Further, the author has a strong penchant for assumptions and hunches which almost lead to wishful thinking particularly with respect to his relationship with Sarladevi Chaudhrani. The author admittedly is obsessed with this episode in the life of the avowedly celibate Gandhi dramatically interspersed with an encounter of romantic infatuation with the niece of the great bard Tagore.

Further, there are certain objections I have with the some of the judgments the author has made. Undoubtedly

Jinnah may have been the most important leader of the Muslims of India but his leadership was only authenticated by the enfranchised Muslims (electorate comprised only 14% of the adult population). His leadership was undisputed in seats with separate electorates but this can't be said of the Unreserved seats with sizeable muslim populations and also about the mass of 'unenfranchised' muslims of India. Also Lord Mountbatten has been portrayed as neutral and fair, even sympathetic to the well-being of the sub-continent. It must be put on the record that Mountbatten was no saint and he readily played both sides against each other and hastened the partition of India in the furtherance of time-tested imperialist machinations of 'Divide and Rule.'

Gandhi has been the only leader ever whose personal life is of as much interest as his public life. His fascinations and obsessions with celibacy, vegetarianism, village renewal, spinning are well-known because these were as important to him in the goal of 'swaraj' as was political independence. His strange experiment at testing the strength of his 'brahmcharya' including his grand-niece Manu Gandhi has given Gandhi's detractors much fodder for his denigration. The author has recounted this episode with excellent research and while rightly frowning upon the incident, has tried to investigate the reasons that underlay this great folly which Gandhi pursued vehemently despite caution to the contrary. We must however recognise at least in hindsight that Gandhi was a patriarchal man and not a divine being. He had his excellent qualities but also his egregious failings.

To sum up, Gandhi was a saint/mahatma but not a recluse in the sense that he didn't withdraw himself from public life to steer the soul-force but infact was very much involved in both the political and the personal development of Indians. Guha has summarised the legacy of Gandhi for our time with his final words - "Beyond satyagraha, interfaith harmony, environmental responsibility, the ending of British Empire, and the delegitimising of untouchability, the practice of, and the largely successful quest for, truth may be Gandhi's most remarkable achievement." Now is the time more than ever to refurbish and revive his legacy for the troubled times we live in.

Revanth Ukkalam says

Woop. Over 900 pages in four days. That was one heck of a marathon. In this book we recognise the obsessive Gandhiite in Guha. He tries to cram too much into the perfect-sized paragraphs of this book. But certainly 900 pages were not sufficient for him. His natural flair in writing seemed to mellow a little as a consequence. Nehru and Patel for instance are not as marked out as we would want them to be. We must appreciate Guha for trying ceaselessly to paint a close-to-life portrait of Gandhi, despite his open admiration for the personality. And there certainly are some highlights that make this book different from some of Gandhi's other biographies - the consistent pursuit of Saraladevi Chaudhurani character, his relation with Mahadev Desai, Gandhi on the world stage; and oh, not to forget that there is an entire chapter on Gandhi's sexual experiment at Noakhali.

Ankit says

Who is the Gandhi you know? A freedom fighter who led India to independence or the pioneer satyagrahi who fought the British Imperialism or the social reformer or the eccentric religious truth seeker who, at times, conducted strange experiments or someone who is hated by both the radicals and the reactionaries alike on each side of religious, caste, and ideological divide because he had reformist zeal but his approach

was essentially incrementalist. All these render a mythical stature to Gandhi in popular imagination world over. But the fog of celebration or revilement (in current times, there's no dearth of it), Gandhi the human, is often forgotten - the human with some super-human abilities and some very human weaknesses, the human who erred in judgement at times but who is also driven by a conviction of beliefs founded in "truth". This humanness of Gandhi is well balanced in Ramchandra Guha's new biography with the great deeds, thoughts, and impact of the great man.

Sweeping in its scope, the second volume of Guha's biography of Gandhi is meticulously researched and masterfully crafted. While the focus, of course, is on Gandhi, any examination of his life is incomplete without understanding his adversaries, his lieutenants, his followers, his domestic and global admirers, his family, and the larger milieu in which the weakening great imperial power is trying to hold on to its crown jewel in the backdrop of major global upheavals with world wars and realignment of powers. Carrying on from where Guha left in his first volume i.e. when Gandhi left South Africa for India in 1915, this book chronicles thirty or so most important years of Gandhi's life in India. These three decades were also the most important in the modern history of India, and the world as well.

Gandhi's work in India began when Europe was engulfed in the bloodiest war till date fought over nationalist frenzy which took over the entire continent. In India too, the nationalist sentiments were on the rise, but Indian nationalists of the time wanted greater rights for Indians in the British constitutional framework and hence there was no mass confrontation. Gandhi also started in the same vein of greater rights for Indians and despite his commitment to non-violence backed Indian support for British war effort in the hope to get in return the greater rights from the British masters. He begun in India with first understanding the country through extensive traveling and then with 3 localized satyagrahas with reasonable success. Then with protests against Rowlatt act and for Khilafat, he took to the national stage taking over the congress, expanding it to the masses and launching the first non-cooperation movement. It was successful but had to be suspended soon on account of violence by protesters in Chauri Chaura. However, this movement saw great strides made towards Hindu-Muslim unity with Gandhi and Ali brothers coming together. At the same time Gandhi also built an ashram in Ahmedabad to be run on his principles of self-reliance, equality, simplicity, and spiritual life in search of truth. He was traveling all over the country at a frenzied pace, editing newspapers, writing articles, managing huge amount of correspondence, while leading the political struggle and expanding his spiritual existence.

At this time, recovering from the torments of the violence and large-scale destruction of industrial warfare, in the aftermath of the Great war, the world also started taking interest in the methods of this non-violent agitator. The method of appealing to better human nature of the oppressors by shaming them through suffering of self because of the unjust and violent oppression was gaining currency. Peace and non-violence were started to be considered as the alternatives to violent means of seeking justice. Gandhi became quite popular in the West for his methods, and also because of his unique, if not eccentric, approach to life itself.

From there-on he led agitations, negotiations with the British government, campaigns against untouchability and for the Hindu-Muslim unity, guiding congress, his own spiritual experiments in and from his ashrams, jails, and on roads through the country. Most times he was successful while failing at others. Admired and respected by most but also hated and reviled by others like religious hardliners, radicals, revolutionaries, imperialists, he advanced in his life. Eventually, he succeeded in leading India to its freedom. However, in another important object of his life, and not for the want of efforts from him, he failed to keep Hindus and Muslims united resulting in the catastrophic partition of the sub-continent. But even towards the end of his life he fought the powers of madness of religious bigotry and violence successfully with his humane weapons of peace, non-violence and satyagraha. He considered his fasts in Calcutta and Delhi to stop communal violence as the greatest of his life. With his death at the hands of Hindu hardliner, the violence

finally subsided in the country.

Gandhi did not go into a forgotten corner of history after his death. In fact, he became even more popular across the world. He inspired millions to give up arms and instead to use non-violence to win over the oppressions. Leaders like Martin Luther King, Mandela and many more have built on his legacy to win struggles for their people.

Today humanity once again, it seems, is at a critical juncture in its history with imminent climate breakdown in the wake of avaricious consumerism, huge inequalities, breakdown of older societal structures, rise of religious fundamentalism, rise of extreme right-wing hardliners (not only in the developing world) who are fond of violence and selective persecution of minorities. In fact, India itself is governed by the right-wing party which is considered by many as the ideological descendants of Godse (Gandhi's killer) and his organization Hindu Mahasabha. Increasing persecution of minorities, suppression of dissent, increasing culture of mob violence, winning elections at any cost with disregard of constitutional morality, systematic undermining of democratic institutions, etc are some of the features of current government apparatus in India. The decay is not an immediate consequence of current government but the rot has slowly crept in over the years.

Even though Gandhi is celebrated in public, a large part of population is not sure about his message and methods, if they are not outright hostile to it. In this larger context, this is the time to rediscover Gandhi. Guha's nuanced work on Gandhi's life in this biography helps us in starting on that path – you get to know the great man intimately, understand his message and philosophy, and almost feel the passage of that critical time in history. Even for the casual reader just interested in knowing Gandhi – this is a great book. In my list, it replaces Ian Kershaw's work on Hitler to become my favorite biography.

Krista says

“On Gandhi: Don't ever forget, that we were not lead by a saint with his head in clouds, but by a master tactician with his feet on the ground.”? Shashi Tharoor

"I and others may be revolutionaries but we are disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, directly or indirectly, nothing more nothing less." Ho Chi Minh

“Gandhi was inevitable. If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought and acted, inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore Gandhi at our own risk.” — Martin Luther King Jr.

How can people with such different personalities and moral views all praise Gandhi? How can Ho Chi Minh murderer of nearly 3 billion people and MLK Jr. who believed in peaceful protest both honor and respect Gandhi?

Ramachandra Guha is a serious Gandhi biographer. He has split the biography into 2 parts and either can be read independently as Gandhi basically led two lives, one in South African and one on his return to India. Gandhi 1914-1948: The Years That Changed the World, deals with his life after returning to India.

In the West we were told that Gandhi was a great man, who did great things, and it was all done with

peaceful protest. That is such a simplistic and naive view. Gandhi 1914-1948: The Years That Changed the World goes in depth to who Gandhi was, what he believed, why he believed it, and his reactions to the world around him. He wasn't loved and idolized by everyone, including his own children. He was idealistic, and sometimes quite hard core in his moral ethos. Did the ends justify the means? India is struggling today with that question. Delve into this book and decide for yourself as you learn who Gandhi truly was.

Raj says

Why do you need another Gandhi biography when you have tens of them? As Mr. Guha points out every generation needs a fresh look at Gandhi as an individual, leader, mentor, or even as an antagonist if you don't agree with him. Gandhi is one symbol, you can be friendly, hate, scream, disagree with many things but still follow his core principles.

Mr. Guha's second volume is not only about Gandhi but the state of India, british administration, actions and counteractions to the freedom movement. This is one biography that concentrates on Gandhi vs Ambedkar and Jinnah extensively and Mr. Guha objectively analyzes everyone's actions.

Two disappointments in this second volume is not covering the salt march and the 1942 'Quit India' movement. I agree Mr. Thomas Weber covered it as a separate book, and regarding the other one, Gandhi was arrested in the early part, it would have been good to provide the movement atleast in a full chapter.

I would be thrilled if he writes about 'Quit India' movement as a book. Another one he should write is a biography about Ambedkar.

Read both the volumes of Mr. Guha's book to understand why Gandhi is still and will be relevant to us.

Angie says

It took me forever and a day to finish this one. It's well written, and though at times I felt as though I was plodding week by week through this man's life, it actually is well curated. There's just so very much information available about Gandhi. But I learned a lot. The author is a big fan and very forgiving of Gandhi's faults, which I more or less expected, since he's clearly devoted his life to this study. Really remarkable undertaking. I'm just not sure I was really in it for this many pages.

I did get a copy from First to Read to review, although it took me way too long to read to get it done on time.

Sahil Pradhan says

Ramachandra Guha's two-part biography of M.K. Gandhi comes to a close this month with the publication of its magisterial conclusion, Gandhi: The Years That Changed The World, 1914-1948 (Penguin-Allen Lane, 1999). The first volume, Gandhi Before India (2014), traced the subject's early life in India and his years in South Africa as a lawyer and activist. In the second part, Guha packs in 1,200-odd pages the story of Gandhi's transformation from a relatively obscure figure to one of the luminaries of the nationalist struggle.

Apart from combing through Gandhi's vast collected works, running to 100 volumes in English, Guha has accessed, for the first time, papers that were in the safekeeping of Pyarelal Nayar, who was personal secretary to Gandhi in his later years. Pyarelal planned to write a biography of his mentor but died in 1982, leaving this stash to his sister, Dr Susheela Nayar, who had been the personal physician to Gandhi. Although she was persuaded to transfer the papers to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in Delhi, she usually withheld permission to public access. After her death, the embargo was lifted, though it took a while for the documents to be put into the public domain.

In this book the author tries to awaken Indians to what Gandhi really was and what we should learn from him. He explains the futility of bashing the West for all our cultural and economical ailments. Instead, he wants Indians to take what is good from the West and leave the rest even citing examples of countries like Japan and Singapore who have not let their culture be affected by the West and have yet managed to emulate them in a number of ways.

Gandhi is for most Indians the ultimate touchstone of moral authority, playing a part in public discourse roughly equivalent to that of Thomas Jefferson in the United States or the Quran in Islamic countries. It is thus hardly surprising that he is quoted on every side of every major debate in India today. What is distinctive about the contemporary invocations of Gandhi, however, is that they are almost always attached to attacks on the West. The strategist hawk and the farmers' leader are at one in this sense too, using Gandhi only to abuse the West. Attacks on the West have, it appears, gathered force with every passing year of India's independence. Forty-eight years after the British departed, the theme of Western domination never strays far from the pages of our newspapers. Right-wing Hindu conservatives who worry about the corrosion of our traditional culture by MTV and its ilk, left-wing nationalists who believe foreign capital will undermine development and increase poverty, mandarins in government who are concerned about the possibility of US political domination in a new unipolar world all believe that a foreign hand is at work, undermining the unity, self-reliance and integrity of India. The colour of this foreign hand is always white, although its precise nationality is sometimes hard to establish.

Indigenism is rampant in India today, as evidenced by the fashion codes of my own tribe, the intellectuals. There was a time when most were Marxists. Today, most of us are multiculturalists. The categories of culture and civilization have replaced the categories of class and capitalism as the prisms by which scholars and social scientists view the world. Where there is scholarship, there is polemic, and nowhere is this shift more clearly marked than in the changing vocabulary of abuse.

Thus, in the golden age of Marxism, a writer once disagreed with was dismissed as a lackey of capitalism or a running dog of imperialism. Now, in the brown epoch of multiculturalism, the offenders are accused of being Eurocentric or of exhibiting cultural arrogance. The class struggle between capitalists and workers has effortlessly been transformed into a 'civilisational' struggle between the West and the Rest.

There is, in this respect, a curious affinity between bitter ideological opponents—and not just in India. In the world of American academics, for instance, Harvard's Samuel Huntington, shouting for the West, and Columbia's Edward Said, screaming for the Rest, both seem to view civilizations as exclusive, oppositional, largely incapable of learning from each other.

Those who think in these broad civilisational terms easily place Gandhi east of Suez, in an ideological and physical sense. Thus, British Tories berate him for not recognizing the superiority of their culture, while Indian indigenists celebrate him for offering what they think is a civilisational alternative to Western domination. Tories and indigenists both fall back on what is perhaps the most famous of Gandhi stories. On a visit to London in 1931, for a conference on determining India's political future, Gandhi was asked by a British journalist what he thought of Western civilization. "I think it would be a good idea," he replied. Beyond this witticism, it might be thought that there is good reason for the indigenists to hope that Gandhi would be on their side. For, in his politics, he worked tirelessly to free his country from foreign rule, in his economics he promoted Swadeshi, hand-spun khadi over Manchester mill-made cotton, and in his ethics he

drew deep nourishment from the Vaishnava traditions of his native Gujarat. It is thus that Indian politicians and intellectuals, fraudulent or otherwise, when looking for an indigenous alternative to Western imperialism, run straight to Gandhi.

Was Gandhi, then, a quintessentially Indian, even Hindu, thinker? Karl Marx's most famous disciple, V. I. Lenin, once remarked that his master's thought was a synthesis of German philosophy, British political economy, and French historiography. I rather suspect that a similar inventory of influences would reveal Gandhi's thought to be a distinctively Indian blend of Russian populism (via Leo Tolstoy), American radical democracy (through Henry David Thoreau), and English anti-industrialism (from John Ruskin).

This Hindu mahatma's intellectual debts were most certainly Western in origin. What's more, he said so himself—witness the guide to further reading appended at the end of his best-known work, *Hind Swaraj* (1909): six books by Tolstoy, two each of Thoreau's and Ruskin's, works by Plato, Mazzini, Edward Carpenter and others. The only Indians on the list are Dadabhai Naoroji and Romesh Chander Dutt, who wrote not on the glories of Hindu culture but about the economic effects of British rule in India.

Testimony to Gandhi's cultural broad-mindedness, and his love of many things Western, might be found in his close friendships with Englishmen and South Africans, in his loving engagement with Christianity, or in his concern for the survival of England and English civilization in the darkest days of the Second World War. Some of this is well documented, but I now want to offer as clinching proof a little-known story that has, to my knowledge, never found its way into the Gandhi anthologies and Gandhi biographies.

The dramatis personae are an Indian, Yusuf Meherally, and an American, Bertram D. Wolfe. Both were well known in their day, but seem to have been forgotten in ours. Meherally, was a freedom fighter, founding-member of the Congress Socialist Party, and sometime Mayor of Bombay, and Wolfe, an early, brave and rigorous left – wing critic of Stalinism, the writer of *Three Who Made a Revolution* and other books.

In 1946, Yusuf Meherally was in the United States. He was dying of tuberculosis, and had come to rest from his labours in India. His past ten years had been spent mostly in prison, yet Bertram Wolfe, his host in New York, found his friend in an unusually mellow mood towards the British. On earlier visits, Meherally had been full of righteous indignation about the evils of colonialism, but this time around, he was even willing to offer the British some praise. Wolfe was puzzled at this change, this 180-degree shift in tone and attitude. He asked for an explanation. They are leaving, answered Meherally. Any day now, we will be free. Gandhiji says that now that they are going, we must remember the best of British civilization the rule of law, their sense of fair play, and so on. Remember it, and keep it.

Half a century later, this advice seems as sensible as when it was first offered. I am no partisan of MTV and KFC, but I do know that the best of Western civilization is still on offer, and we are yet to grasp it. The most humane of their governments, say Finland and Norway, treat the poor and women more fairly. The best of their scientists, in Germany and the United States, turn their research to practical consequence for human betterment ours accumulate strings of research papers (many of dubious quality) and chairmanships of committees. Their industrialists donate their surplus money to foundations funding the arts, ours put it away in Swiss bank accounts.

Meanwhile, what is distressing is that those Indians who admire the West do so for the wrong reasons. Many of us prefer Madonna to Ravi Shankar, Danielle Steele to R. K. Narayan, T-shirts to kurtas, Kentucky Fried to tandoori. Professionals warm to the artifacts of a high – consumption lifestyle, the vacuum cleaners and the Peugeot, but ignore Western inventions that are relevant to a society such as ours. No one looks for where we can properly emulate the West that is, in crafting public institutions that capably, consistently, impersonally, serve the society they are part of.

They have law courts where the judges cannot be bought; universities where the teachers take classes and students are not perennially on strike; systems of transportation that are safe and reliable; hospitals where rich and poor alike are served with the same courtesy and promptness. A large, mature democracy, an old, self-renewing culture, this is what India is thought by some to be. Does it not then possess the confidence, the dignity, to take what it wants from the West, and quietly ignore the rest? That, precisely, is what Japan has done, what Singapore has put into practice. Back in the 1940s, Yusuf Meherally and Mahatma Gandhi

knew when it was time to stop talking of 'Western imperialism' and start thinking of what India could borrow from this most powerful and dynamic of modern civilizations. We, who have never seen the inside of a British prison, do not.

For a book of such magisterial volume let me jot down some bold questions from the life of the Mahatma and the book and the answers that the author gives through these 1200 pages.

Gandhi's alignment vis-à-vis the left, right or the centre is never easy to establish. Was he a political pragmatist?

Gandhi was a pragmatist in his politics and is hard to categorise in conventional terms. But he did have strong moral and social concerns: inter-religious harmony, abolition of untouchability, and non-violence in word and deed form the core of his political philosophy. He adapted and changed his views throughout his life. He started movements, called them off, he was always willing to negotiate and begin discussions. His boycotts, too, were based on principles, never against individuals. For instance, he shunned British goods but not British people.

What problems do his ambivalent personality pose for the biographer?

The answer lies in one of the epigraphs at the beginning of the book, where Gandhi says: "I make no hobgoblin of consistency. If I am true to myself from moment to moment, I do not mind all the inconsistencies that may be flung in my face."

The situations of his life changed rapidly, so did his views. If you consider his attitude to caste, you cannot freeze it. Out of carelessness or malevolence, some scholars claim he was a defender of the caste system, which is untrue. In the early 1920s, Gandhi was a defender of an idealised caste system, based on division of labour, though he never supported its hierarchy. From the late 1920s, with his advocacy of inter-dining, inter-marriages, and the right of "untouchable" people to enter temples, he completely rejected the caste system.

For this reason, I have been sceptical of scholars who take Hind Swaraj as a "holy text". Gandhi wrote the book on a ship, in a great hurry, but he modified his views later. As a historian, I have tried to show his evolution, and the importance of studying him within a context.

Gandhi refused to allow the Depressed Classes a separate electorate, which B.R. Ambedkar lobbied for. Did that make Gandhi an idealist-optimist?

Absolutely. He over-estimated the capacity of caste Hindus to rid themselves of their prejudices as also the openness of his own Congress to his radical views on untouchability. Of all his major political colleagues—Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Abul Kalam Azad, Sarojini Naidu, Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani—only C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) understood the importance of his campaign against untouchability.

From 1915 till the end, Gandhi was clear-minded about how obnoxious this practice is, why it ought to go, how it disfigures Hinduism and delegitimises India's demand for independence.

How can Indians claim freedom from British rule when they suppress a section of their own society so

ruthlessly? Gandhi's commitment and clarity on this question is indisputable and it's unfortunate that some left-wing ideologues have tried to muddy the waters.

In 1928, Gandhi initially objected to his son Devadas marrying Rajaji's daughter Lakshmi. Was it partly due to concerns of it being an inter-caste marriage?

Gandhi's initial resistance was influenced by several factors, including his fear of further offending conservative Hindus already angry at his campaign against untouchability. His attitude also smacked of moral sanction, given his strong views on brahmacharya (celibacy), and some old-fashioned patriarchy.

Gandhi had also stepped in when his other son, Manilal, wanted to marry a Muslim. He was organising a political campaign to bring Hindus and Muslims on the same platform and worried that if his son married a Muslim girl, Muslims would say Hindus are mixing with them only to capture their girls, which is the reverse of the view the Hindu Right takes today.

Despite Gandhi's towering stature, Ambedkar stands out in the book as a brilliant mind and visionary far ahead of his time.

Without a doubt. When I first read *The Annihilation of Caste* many years ago, I was struck by the sheer clarity of his thinking. It took a great deal of moral courage for Ambedkar, who was at the time a leader of the depressed classes not known much beyond Maharashtra, to stand up to the Mahatma, many years his senior and acknowledged as a messiah all over India.

Was Gandhi's relationship with Rabindranath Tagore's niece Saraladevi Chaudhurani bordering on a platonic love affair, which you write about at length, relatively unknown so far?

There is a lot of material about it in the collected works, which most commentators have treated rather prudishly. I have tried to lay bare the details. For instance, in his diaries, Gandhi notes that he is dreaming of Saraladevi. While I have quoted from several letters of hers, which are available at Sabarmati, the rest that were in the possession of Gandhi's family were burnt by them.

There are also newspaper and archival accounts that speak of their relationship. When Gandhi was arrested for the first time in 1922, for instance, the papers noted that Saraladevi travelled from Lahore to Ahmedabad to be close to him. From these different sources I have tried to piece together a fuller account and be frank in the process. Gandhi was besotted by her and she was also flattered by his attention. It's a human story that needed to be told, without being salacious.

What are the papers in the custody of Pyarelal and Susheela Nayar which you had access to for the first time?

Those papers include hundreds of letters written to Gandhi, government documents, reports from state committees, newspaper clippings of the salt march, and his correspondence with eminent foreigners, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer. These are not only going to be useful to future Gandhi scholars but also to economic historians or to those interested in the development of the Congress as an organisation.

Gandhi had socialist leanings but did not hesitate from taking money from the capitalists. What was the core of his economic model?

Again, over the years, Gandhi moved away from the ideas he wrote about in *Hind Swaraj*, where he

romanticised the rural economy. Through the 1920s and 1930s, he continued putting emphasis on khadi and spinning for several reasons. He wanted to break down the boundary between manual work and mental work, so integral to the caste system.

He believed spinning and weaving were important subsidiary activities in villages that must be revived. But he also cautiously supported industry. He clearly stated he isn't opposed to it so long as it did not impoverish people, provided dignified employment, and was in Indian hands. In that sense, the alliance of Indian capitalists such as G.D. Birla with Gandhi was tactical, even instrumental. It was a clever way to overcome the hold of foreign capitalists.

In contrast, industrialist Jamnalal Bajaj, who gave it all up and went to jail, besides joining the anti-untouchability movement, went a step further.

Following *Gandhi Before India* (2014), noted political historian Guha continues with a massive and much-needed study of his subject's emergence as a world leader.

Gandhi (1869-1948) arrived in India, after living in South Africa, in 1915 and immediately began to agitate for independence, renouncing what he called "violence and anarchy" and building an ashram-based movement of satyagraha, or nonviolent resistance to oppression. His earliest years in India were occupied with forging political alliances, building the case for independence with Annie Besant, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and other like-minded (but quite divergent) activists. As Guha writes, though profoundly influential and now sainted, Gandhi was human, with all the freight that carries. He may have renounced sex in his 30s, but he experimented with temptation late in life; he may have wished he'd been celibate before siring difficult heirs, only one of whom, he said, "had been born to compensate me for the dissatisfaction I feel from my other three sons." The author portrays Gandhi as a masterful politician intent on a number of reforms apart from independence, including the dismantling of caste and religious barriers and advancement of gender equality. In his political dealings, he confronted numerous obstacles, including fellow Indians who wished to press for an established religion and the thorny question of whether to support the Allies in their war against the fascist powers in World War II, which afforded Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders a lever by which to insist that Britain relinquish empire in order to battle for democracy. If some of Gandhi's ideas seem old-fashioned today—e.g., his insistence on the village and agrarian pursuits as the bases for a free nation—then many of them are resolutely forward-looking, as when he told a visiting delegation of African-Americans, "it may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of non-violence will be delivered to the world."

Superb. On nearly every page, Guha offers evidence why Gandhi remains relevant in the world 70 years after his death.

Farebi says

Among the many foolish ways in which an author seeks to satisfy his vanity, two are particularly common; and despite being regularly lambasted, they are widely practiced.

The first is the proclivity, among not few writers, to use abstruse words mistaking their grandiloquence with the heft of the ideas themselves which they express. And the second is lengthy-ness. A thick thick book is

more liable to be perceived authoritative on that particular topic.

Though Guha deftly steers away from jargon – his prose is lucid and stimulating; he, however, suffers from the second stupidity. He writes thick books even when a slender one could have sufficed – in fact, might have been more likable in comparison – or maybe when he should have not written the book at all because whatever he was to say had already been said.

After reading a fair lot of his works till date, I am now convinced that Guha is scarcely a formidable thinker. He is incapable of enchanting readers with the originality of his thought, and to the extent that he does enchant, he does it through his highly stimulating narrative skills.

To be sure, it's no mean feat. Being adept in sifting through a litany of details, marshaling them in interesting ways and then presenting the result with a limpid lucidity is indeed appreciable. Therefore he is an outstanding chronicler. His books on Indian history, on cricket, or environment are fantastic because they are histories – biographies of those topics. These books serve as a great starting point for a layman delving into those topics.

But for an area where one himself is highly knowledgeable, Guha doesn't bring much value. It is even more so in the field of history - Guha's territory - where the possibility of new information is limited, trapped as the field is within the bounds of immutable times. It becomes then more important to develop theoretical frameworks to be able to contribute to history: an area where Guha is found wanting. He is among the best out there writing on *what* happened, but he is nowhere to be found at the site of *why* that happened.

He is a person of mild disposition who subscribes to humane values, and entertains a starry-eyed appreciation of left-liberal refined postures. He once narrated an anecdote from his student-years at IIM Calcutta. I don't recall the specific details but the substance of it was that when in a class, someone was criticizing Nehru trenchantly, Guha objected him. This objection, as Guha recalled, was not rational because he didn't know how to refute the guy. It was just his intuitive admiration for Nehru. Later on, he would spend his life furnishing details in support of his intuitive outlook.

Now coming to the topic of this book at last: Gandhi. Here is the man who lived a singularly public life, with very little to show for a private existence. He lived amongst people in various Ashrams – jails too – and worked too amid the hustle and bustle of teeming masses. He had cultivated such a public existence by renouncing those material aspects of life which drive people to secrecy: any private interest vis-à-vis the public good, sex, or family – considered in a sense of a close-knit group which is preferred first and foremost. It's not to say that he abandoned his family. No. The wife Kasturba would accompany him till her last breath. His sons were always about. His grandnieces took personal care of him. What he, however, didn't do was privileging family over other people.

In addition to removing external obstacles to public existence, he sacrificed any internal desire for a reserved life at the altar of his ideals. He faithfully held on to the principle of Karma Yoga which preaches liberation through selfless social service. And he was the principled man who would doggedly try to *realize* his ideals.

Moreover, not only his physical life was without much privacy, he regularly published his thoughts too, mostly through his newspapers. And my god, just how much he wrote man! He was such a prolific writer that his collected works run to about a hundred volumes. Much of what he didn't record about himself – but which was open to the public to observe and analyze – was taken care of by his early biographers, or the independence leaders who always swarmed around him.

His life is therefore by now almost exhaustively documented, not leaving much ground to be covered yet.

It's not to say that interesting and unique books on him are not published nowadays. Books have been written analyzing him through a theoretical framework – like psychoanalysis, or a typical day in the Ashram, or application of his methods in other spheres of life, or even books critical of him.

But as far as his life, as he lived it, is to be considered, the possibility of writing anything new is now almost impossible.

This was the state of affairs when Guha decided to write Gandhi's biography. He was in a quandary here: he was good with details which had already been covered, and theorizing is not his forte – which was the only possible way of contributing here.

As we know now, he resolved the conundrum by deciding to write the book – an unwieldy one at that – and sought a sense of novelty by adding as many unnecessary details as was not needed in the first place.

Faisal Devji wrote a fantastic and highly informative review of this book recently. Do read it, and you can skip the book.

Sambasivan says

Intense reading for two days to finish this magnificent part 2 of Gandhi bio. Guha has done a great service to humanity by writing this tome.

For me the new insights were on Mahadev Desai, Ambedkar and some of the Viceroys Gandhi interacted with.

Gandhi had no private life at all. His life is therefore an open book. His quest for truth is legendary and one gets richer by reading about such people.

Njatha Wanjiku says

I was on the check out with Obama's Biography when I saw this book on the shelf. I had just finished reading Martin Luther King's Biography.

MLK was inspired by Gandhi to adopt a non-violent campaign for civil rights. Being the hopeless lover of books I am, I instantly picked it up and started reading it there and then.

Apparently the Collected Works of Gandhi runs more than 90 volumes. During his lifetime, he received and replied to thousands of letters, wrote hundreds of articles and gave advice on diverse topics.

The book is actually the second volume by the author and covers the period from Gandhi's return to India in 1914 to his assassination by a Hindu nationalist in 1948. He went through the remarkable collection as well as hundreds of other documents to produce this monumental biography.

There's way too much written about Gandhi and this book deservedly does justice to the man. How he came to be regarded as the greatest man of the twentieth century becomes evident after going through the more

than 900 pages of his story.

When he returned to India in 1914 after successful campaigns for Indian rights in South Africa, Gandhi identified four areas that he would devote his energies to; delivering India from British rule, forging harmonious relations between India's often disputatious communities, ending the practice of untouchability and developing economic and moral reliance of Indians.

This was by no means a simple journey, along the way he faces stiff opposition from Caste Hindus, the British who are unwilling to let go their largest colony and a host of other characters who enrich the journey. This was his life in India and to which he threw all his energies and those of his close disciples. It is also in pursuit of harmony between the Muslims and Hindus that he met his death in the hands of a Hindu nationalist Nathuram Vinayak Godse.

The book tracks Gandhi's arguments in the the field of politics, social reform, religious relations and self improvement. He faced criticism from characters sometimes with as much commitment and intelligence as his. Some of these are also well explored in the book.

Perhaps the best way to characterise Gandhi was in a eulogy by Italian writer Nichola Chiaromonte," it is indeed difficult to think of any other man in all history for whom Thought and Deed were so utterly inseparable as Gandhi'

This is truly a phenomenal work.

VENKATRAMAN C K says

A wonderful biography of the Mahatma. The book captures the evolution of the Man into the Mahatma. He becomes even greater when compared with the politicians today .. both in India and abroad.

Most of us, born post independence, have grown up with a one dimensional view of Gandhi. We were introduced to him as "Mahatma" who lead the movement and who was rigid in his opinion and worshipped as a saint. This view limits the understanding and evaluation of his personality and contributions . Either we "worship" him or we "criticise" him based on the limited inputs we receive from various sources. However, this book gives us a three dimensional view of the life of Gandhi , the Man who evolved into Gandhi, the Mahatma through his journey and interactions with people from all walks of life both here and abroad. We see how flexible he was but without compromising his core values . He changed his views when convinced and admitted his mistakes publicly . As the author says , he was "consistently inconsistent". He had all the weakness of any human but he was open about it .

The unique thing about him, is his strategic insight that, four aspects of Indian society need to be tackled simultaneously in order to build a true Democratic society - Political freedom , Economic self reliance, Caste Equality and Religious harmony. No other leader before him had this insight. They focused on one or two of the four . He then took the four humongous tasks on fearlessly. Whatever we may say about him, India would not have got her independence without him. More importantly, we would not have survived and thrived without his contribution. He built leaders who carried on his work after him.

Which brings us to his followers . Their contribution in shaping his philosophies and his moral development has been immense. He would not have become the Mahatma without these men and women who believed in him , not blindly, but with absolute devotion to his cause. Some of the unsung heros around Gandhi like his secretary Mahadev Desai shine through in the book. These followers were not afraid to challenge him , when needed , both in public and private. These include not only Indians but also English and other nationalities.

Truly a Mahatma not in the traditional and spiritual sense but in the sense of an "enlightened" being.

Akshat Jain says

Though I have just finished reading only 20-25% of this Guha's wonderful work to this date, I cannot stop myself to write a "short" review of this another classic.

The prequel to this book, Gandhi before India, basically tells us how this man "grows" in opposing the government and their racial policies against Indians in South Africa. This phase was just a preparatory ground for things to come in India. How Gandhi united Hindus and Muslims by combining his Non-cooperation with Khilafat movement led by Ali Brothers, how he travelled villages to villages from the length and breadth of country, how he picked up reformation of Hinduism by directly attacking the practice of untouchability and how he finally managed to led one of the biggest movements against the British since the revolt of '57. Although, the movement failed to get India the swaraj as promised by Gandhi, it one of the most characteristic of any movement seen against an oppressing government in world. If, we look at the contemporary world with this period, we would unable to comprehend such parallels. On one side, the Great wars, violent revolutions, arms races and other tumultuous events, and on one side, a "spiritual method" against the rulers.

Suman Srivastava says

What a man. What a book. Guha has outdone himself. I thought I knew a lie about Gandhiji, and yet I got so much more. It's a huge book, but engrossing all the way.

Pramod Biligiri says

In the long first half of the 20th Century, when mainstream political practice in the West lagged far behind their own enlightened thought and imperial ambitions still reigned, it is not surprising - in hindsight - that the great powers of the time hadn't realized the harm they could inflict on one another thanks to newly available technological means. It took two World Wars and their associated damage to move past naked imperialism into a new regime. Whenever one reads accounts of that era, those of us who've only seen more peaceful, democratic times may find it hard to comprehend what leaders of the time were thinking when they embarked on some their more foolish ventures.

Being a colony of England, India wasn't immune to these global currents and had to negotiate them while it was simultaneously trying to imbibe the best of these Western ideas into its lived experience. Therefore it's not entirely inappropriate that such a bewildering age threw up an equally bewildering - but great - man like Gandhi. Albert Einstein's famous tribute to him - that generations to come will scarce believe that such as a man as this walked upon the earth - shall remain true because Gandhi had dedicated himself entirely to resolving the great contradictions of his time, in the process devising extremely unorthodox approaches that miraculously seemed apt and had their desired effect. A true sui generis.

Thus, a first step to appreciating Gandhi is to engage with his life and ideas in their full diversity and not try to box him into categories of the 21st Century like politician, academic, activist, spiritual guru and so on. I am happy to report that Guha's new book, "Gandhi - the years that changed the world" succeeds in helping

the reader do that. As Gandhi himself writes somewhere, he wants his life to be viewed as an indivisible whole, and the various problems he applied himself to sprang from his lifelong quest for truth. Gandhi was no static ideologue either, and his positions on issues changed during his long life of political and social activism. Even though the changes were incremental, over fifty-odd years they add up to a dramatic degree. At the same time, Guha is a sensitive historian. So you get to see Gandhi's warts, missteps and mistakes in sufficient detail too.

Which were the problems that animated Gandhi? India's political independence being the most well known, the others were: Hindu-Muslim harmony, the abolition of untouchability, and economic self-reliance (especially at the village level). Gandhi claimed that he wouldn't prize any of these over the other, and thus in this biography you see that he works on all of them throughout his lifetime, often concurrently.

His efforts in the freedom struggle start alongside the First World War, when he joins the Muslims of India in trying to keep the Ottoman Empire intact. By the time the Second World War kicks off thirty years later, Gandhi has become the preeminent leader in this struggle and has launched many political movements in the interim. This part of the book describes well known events like the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the non-cooperation movement, the Dandi march, the Round Table conference(s) in London, the Quit India movement, his repeated imprisonments and so on. His non-violent approach enables great masses of people across the country to participate. Guha adds sufficient context to these events and intersperses them with the other problems Gandhi is working on, so you find a new appreciation for his abilities. But don't mistake this for a record of the overall freedom movement itself, as that'd need to cover far more than just what Gandhi was doing.

What is striking about his political life is how Gandhi keeps his personal relationships with British officials separate from his political differences with them. Another aspect is that he'd always give them sufficient notice of any agitation he planned to undertake. He'd build up anticipation among his supporters and gradually escalate the intensity of his actions until the opponent is forced to react. The Dandi March is a perfect example of this - and of his political acumen in general. Guha's account of how this march came to be is one of the highlights of the book. Where Gandhi damages his relationship with the British irretrievably is, perhaps, the Quit India movement that came at a time when Britain was fighting for its own survival during the Second World War. A contradiction of British ideal and practice that was far too pertinent for Gandhi and other Indian leaders to ignore, but their objections were going to lead to unavoidable tragedy a few years later.

The distressing, tragic event that slowly unfolds is of course, the partition of India along religious lines. One follows this thread with a sense of dread, knowing full well that all of Gandhi's efforts are going to be in vain. How Jinnah managed to muster so much popular support in a relatively brief period is not something Guha explores in depth and would make for fascinating reading. But by the end of the Second World War, it is his party (the Muslim League) which has won most of the seats reserved for Muslims in elections conducted by the British (for the quasi-democratic set up they have created in India). The Congress valiantly claims to represent all Indians, but is rebuffed by both Jinnah and the British - who are probably still smarting from the Quit India movement. Gandhi's desperate pleas to prevent Partition, his long series of one-on-one talks with Jinnah, and then his fasts to bring back communal harmony after rampant violence in Calcutta, Bihar, Punjab and even Delhi make for poignant reading. There are some references to the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha here. They mirrored - and probably exceeded - Jinnah in conceiving India to be for Hindus alone - an idea so repulsive and outlandishly impractical that it shouldn't have survived a minute of rational discussion. A moral exists here for us today: to not take social harmony for granted in a country where religious passions run high and rifts take decades to heal. It took someone with Gandhi's moral authority having to nearly starve himself to death before people came to their senses in the aftermath of

Partition.

The one area where I learnt much was Gandhi's efforts to abolish untouchability. I was not aware that he spent years dedicated exclusively to this task, and travelled around the country giving speeches and raising money for the cause. Again, it's incomprehensible to us today that people of many castes were not even allowed in many prominent Hindu temples (like the one in Madurai or Guruvayur), not allowed to use the same wells and so on. This is also where Gandhi was clearly the reactionary for a better part of his life, the tone always being set by the precocious Ambedkar. The younger leader - and erudite scholar - had experienced first hand the atrocities of being an untouchable and was in a tearing hurry to rid India of it, and was not averse to throwing out Hinduism altogether if it came in the way of his mission. The lifelong battle of political wills between Gandhi and Ambedkar is quite famous (and historically significant), and receives ample treatment in the book. You see Gandhi move from being a defender of the caste system to becoming a paternalistic advocate of change, to finally accepting that there is no reason for Indians to not marry each other citing caste (and religion) as barrier. Whether the primacy he affords to this problem was deserved is something one doesn't know, if one were to view his entire life as a preamble to the 15th of August, 1947 as many of us are wont to do. But for someone in his position - who of course had no idea when the British would actually vacate India - this glaring blot in India's society was not something he could ignore, and there is something so organic and appealing about his approach to the world. While no civilized society should tolerate even a single instance of such a practice, I'd have liked the historian in Guha to provide more data. How widespread was the problem? How many people were classified as untouchables? This would inform the reader about the scale of the problem Gandhi and other social reformers of the time were dealing with. What we do learn is that while Ambedkar was a genuine radical, Gandhi was progressive compared to the bulk of the Hindu establishment, which had no interest in removing this barbaric practice.

Of course, the place where his immersive, organic approach to problem solving found the fullest expression was in the various communes - or "Ashrams" - he created. Having already practiced such communal living in South Africa where he could practice the change that he wanted to preach, he kept pushing his experiments in India further. In these ashrams there was no discrimination on caste, religion or gender. Responsibilities were shared equally. Here Gandhi was always engaged in that other - quaint? - quest, namely village self-reliance. People who lived in the Ashram were required to wear khadi and spin yarn. Gandhi's idea of self sufficient villages that work on the back of cottage industries never made sense to me, and it is a mystery to me why he wasn't disabused of this notion by his numerous friends. Nehru, with his fixation on large scale industry and progress based on science and technology, argued with Gandhi on this, but apparently not enough to talk him out of it I guess. Another intriguing question is how Gandhi managed to maintain the friendship and patronage of big industrialists like G D Birla and Jamnalal Bajaj while being engaged in these experiments. What did they have to say about all this?

It is also in these ashrams that Gandhi keeps trying his dietary experiments, his experiments in alternative medicines etc. Apart from publishing on political and social topics in his long running journals, Gandhi also corresponds with people across the world on all kinds of topics, often giving them advice on specific aspects of their personal lives. Guha takes occasional breaks from larger themes to talk about these, so that we see how unusual this makes him compared to any other political leader of his time.

There are also the bizarre experiments regarding celibacy which would have ended the public life of greater men in today's era (or maybe not?). Guha doesn't shy away from discussing these, but places them in their proper context and significance in the larger scheme of how Gandhi goes about his life. There is a credible account of the one romantic entanglement he got into that nearly threatened his marriage. The woman involved was called Sarala Devi Chaudhurani. She was a well educated relative of Tagore and was married to a journalist in Punjab.

Though the book doesn't make a big deal of it, you can't help notice that Gandhi surrounded himself with people of intellect and industry. Apart from prominent political leaders like Nehru, Rajaji and Patel, in his ashram he had people like C F Andrews, Mahadev Desai, Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay - each of whom probably ranked as a thinker and reformer in their own right. Intellectually he enjoyed engaging with Tagore, and Ambedkar of course forced him to re-examine and change his beliefs. He continued to correspond with the British and European friends he had picked up during his satyagraha-s in South Africa. (Noticeably he did not have any actual African friends, which shows that he was still a racist back then, a fact that doesn't escape him in later life). While you can accuse the political leaders of clinging to him due to his ability to appeal to the masses, these other educated folks had no such agenda and should have altogether made for a lively bunch in spite of all the hardships they had to endure.

With all this going on, something has to give. And invariably that turns out to be Gandhi's personal life. His relationship with Kasturba is shown to be very patriarchal for a good part of their lives, one of his four sons has a falling out with the father and they remain estranged ever after. Even his extremely humble, self-effacing secretary Mahadev Desai is driven to exasperation after an argument and writes, "To be with a saint in heaven is bliss and glory, but to be with a saint on earth is a different story".

This latest book from Guha is a great - and timely - opportunity for all of us to engage with such a "saint". Considering the sheer breadth of his life, it is no surprise that the book runs to over 900 pages. And you will be yearning to follow up on some of its threads after you're done with it. I've often wondered why this long, fascinating period in Indian history hasn't lent itself to a high quality adaptation on screen. The sheer number and variety of characters, the complexity of the intrigue, the scale of challenges and what's at stake at the end of it all would make it a game of thrones like no other we've seen so far. But for now, books like this will have to suffice. To Guha's credit - much like how Gandhi relentlessly refined his techniques over time - his prose has been refined over decades of writing and you will find yourself deep into the book before you realize it. So I highly recommend giving this one a try.

Anuj says

Guha's book serves as a magisterial and highly readable account of Gandhi's years in India and will likely remain the definitive Gandhi biography for many years to come. Guha offers readers a nuanced portrait of Gandhi's personal and social life, contextualizing the latter's achievements in ways that bring out the important contributions made by others, both allies and adversaries, to India's revolutionary struggle for Independence. We learn of the multiple influences on Gandhi's social and political philosophy and the ways in which Gandhi was willing to develop his position on certain matters in light of changing social conditions. Previous biographical accounts of Gandhi have been criticized for their overly hagiographical treatment of their subject; Guha doesn't shy away from legitimate criticism and probes some of Gandhi's more controversial experiments and commitments. This warts-and-all approach provides us with a fuller, more human portrait of Gandhi. Guha's epilogue reflects on Gandhi's contemporary relevance and suggests that the latter's commitment to religious pluralism, eradication of caste oppression, and environmental sustainability means that he has as much to contribute today as he did during India's freedom struggle.
