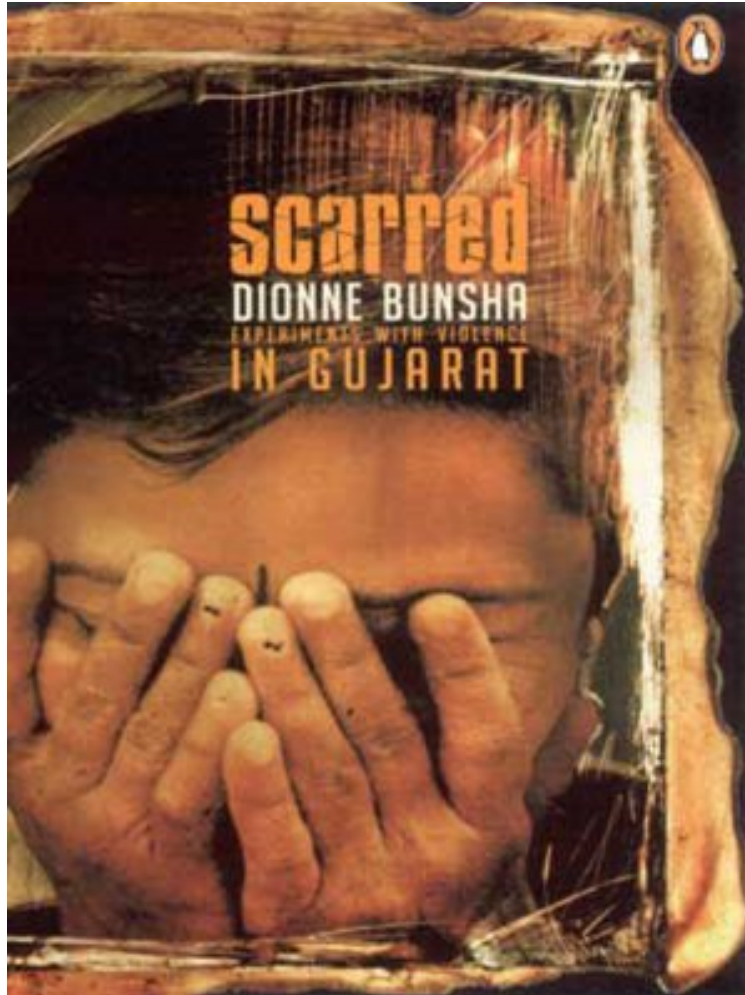


Scarred: Experiments with Violence in Gujarat

Dionne Bunsha

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Dionne Bunsha : Scarred: Experiments with Violence in Gujarat before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Scarred: Experiments with Violence in Gujarat:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Important, but unstructuredBy L. van RooijenOn February 27, 2002, the Sabarmati Express train caught fire in Godhra. In the fire 58 people were killed, including women and children. This incident formed the spark to set off the Hindu population against the Muslims in Gujarat. What followed were three months of rioting and violence against the Muslim residents. Bunsha wrote a book which deals with the run up to the violence, interviews with victims, and the aftermath. Several aspects of the violence in Gujarat become very clear in her book. The police in the best cases did not intervene during the violence and at the worst participated in attacks on the Muslim population. Politicians also played a major role in orchestrating the violence in order to gain more popularity. Furthermore, after the violence state institutes worked together to prevent justice for the victims, withheld

compensation for losses and did nothing to protect the Muslim citizens from new attacks and intimidation. Bunsha successfully demonstrates these features of the Gujarat riots. However, many of the chapters in the book are very unstructured. The chapters are divided into many different sections and there is no transition from one section to the next. This makes for very stop-and-go reading. Also some of the sections are presented in a way that makes for shocking, but ineffective reading. One section contains nothing but bullet-points of quotes from Narendra Modi. Although the quotes themselves are quite shocking, placing them in context would have been more effective. Overall, the importance of the story far outweighs the problems I have with the structure of the book.

Scarred: Experiments with Violence in Gujarat asserts the existence of a much larger politics of violence, and tells the story of a disaster in Hindutvas laboratory which etched deep faults in Gujarats social landscape. While capturing the predicament of the Sabarmati Express survivors, Scarred is an intense, moving portrait of refugees whose lives have been changed forever by the violence that followed. It tells the story of people fighting for justice amidst fear and turmoil, unable to return home. It is also an insightful look into the minds of the perpetrators of this violence, and the world they seek to construct a world where the ghettoization and socio-economic boycott of Muslims have become the norm. What exactly happened in Gujarat in February 2002? Why did the countrys political leaders fiddle while Gandhis Gujarat burned? In this honest and thought-provoking book, Dionne Bunsha tries to answer these and many of the questions that we are still left with.