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The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination

Sarah Schulman

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Sarah Schulman : The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination:

17 of 18 people found the following review helpful. No Bones About It -- An Important BookBy James LoughSarah Schulman's recent book, "The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination" is one of the most important books of the year. In it, she confronts the problem of gentrification that is endemic to urban neighborhoods in our liveliest cities. Gentrification effectively turns our creative hubs, teeming with diversity, into bland "suburbs in the

cities," homogenizing people, tastes, and how we interpret our lives. My new book, "This Ain't No Holiday Inn: Down and Out at the Chelsea Hotel 1980-1995" addresses gentrification in its final chapters. But Schulman's book explores gentrification in detail, using the AIDS plague as its central example. The common attitude today is that, "Oh, we took care of AIDS; it's no longer a problem," is a perfect example of how not only our neighborhoods become gentrified, but our very minds become colonized by ignorant attitudes largely propagated by members of the white elite class. Even some gays, more concerned with fitting in than with fighting for their rights, share the attitude. Here's how Schulman defines gentrification: "Physically it is an urban phenomena: the removal of communities of diverse classes, ethnicities, races, sexualities, languages, and points of view from the central neighborhoods of cities, and their replacement by more homogenized groups. With this comes the destruction of culture and relationship, and this destruction has profound consequences for the future lives of cities." "Did you know that Manhattan and San Francisco used to be affordable for young artists, rebels, bohemians, and freaks to move to and find a home with people like themselves? Now only the rich can afford to move there, so they can be with other rich folk like themselves. Tell me with a straight face that this does not dumb down our culture, our arts, and create a bland, conformist complacency that keeps the rich in power and the poor in poverty." 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Superb Book By Bert Ouellette This is one of the best books I've ever read about the death of entire areas of big cities and the death of beautiful cultures. I was recently in New York City and I didn't even recognize the street where I used to live. Saint Vincent's Hospital will now be condos for gentrified folks who only drink lattes at \$5.00 a cup. What happened to Christopher Street? Where are all the beautiful card shops and coffee houses? All I saw were boutiques and Starbucks! Even Times Square is now Disneyland with people dressed up like Hello Kitty and Minnie Mouse and demanding money from gullible tourists for having their picture taken. Is the East Village still alive? I remember this area when it was thriving. I now live in Boston and sadly, the same is happening here. New two bedroom condos now go for a million! Kudos to Sarah Schulman. I am seriously thinking of using this book in one of the classes I teach. Excellent read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Transformative By Avery Cassell I am not an academic, but am a queer writer and an artist. I loved this book and am so glad I bought a hard copy, because I'll be rereading it. I have not read such a transformative nonfiction book since reading Pat Califia's "Public Sex" in 1994. This book is invigorating. There are so many sections that I loved; when she wrote about the dearth of lesbians in literature in chapter six, it was both a knife to the heart and a cry to battle. This book was short enough not to intimidate me with academia, yet just the right length to compel me to buy Schulman's new book, "Conflict is not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility and the Duty of Repair."

In this gripping memoir of the AIDS years (1981-1996), Sarah Schulman recalls how much of the rebellious queer culture, cheap rents, and a vibrant downtown arts movement vanished almost overnight to be replaced by gay conservative spokespeople and mainstream consumerism. Schulman takes us back to her Lower East Side and brings it to life, filling these pages with vivid memories of her avant-garde queer friends and dramatically recreating the early years of the AIDS crisis as experienced by a political insider. Interweaving personal reminiscence with cogent analysis, Schulman details her experience as a witness to the loss of a generation's imagination and the consequences of that loss.

This bracing, powerful, and well-reasoned work reaffirms the author's stature as a distinctive American woman of letters. . . . Highly recommended.