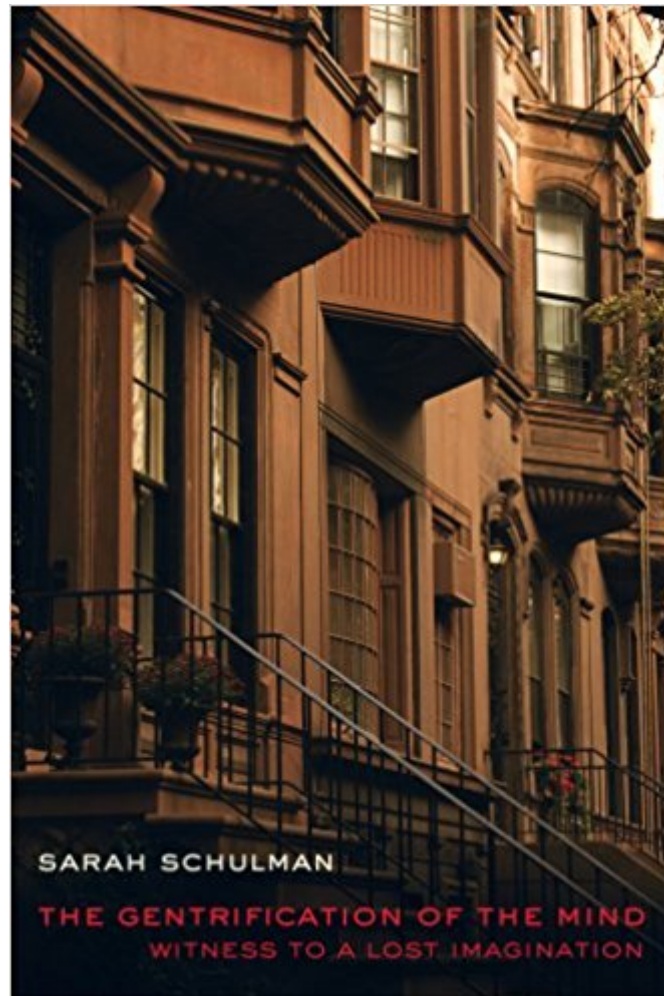




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# The Gentrification Of The Mind: Witness To A Lost Imagination



## Synopsis

In this gripping memoir of the AIDS years (1981&#150;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&#150; its imagination and the consequences of that loss.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

&#150;“This bracing, powerful, and well-reasoned work reaffirms the author&#150;s stature as a distinctive American woman of letters. . . . Highly recommended.&#150; (Richard Drezen Library Journal 2012-03-02)&#150;“The book that&#150;s inspired me more than any other this year is Sarah Schulman&#150;s Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination, a razor-sharp memoir of New York in the heyday of the AIDS crisis.&#150; (Jason King Slate 2012-12-26)&#150;“Teeming with ideas, necessary commentary, refreshing connections and examination of the status quo.&#150; (Lambda Literary 2012-03-13)&#150;“A brilliant critique of contemporary culture. . . . This is the most important book of the year.&#150; (Jeff Miller Cult MTL 2012-12-27)&#150;“Schulman&#150;s personal recollections... are sharp and vivid.&#150; (Gay & Lesbian Review/Worldwide 2012-08-01)&#150;“This is a very good, very sad book about

the aftershock of the AIDS crisis in New York. Schulman is a truly gifted thinker. (Alex Frank Fader Magazine 2012-05-18) "The author, a true woman of letters, makes a persuasive case. (Roberto Friedman Bay Area Reporter 2012-03-15) "This is why the book is so successful and demands our attention: through a focus on the pulse of the queer community (of the 80s), it touches upon the individual condition (of today). (Marcie Bianco Velvetpark 2012-03-20) "A polemic, a passionate, provocative . . . account of disappearance, forgetfulness and untimely death. (Olivia Laing New Statesman 2013-03-07) "No book has rocked my world in recent times more than Sarah Schulman's The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination . . . [it ranks] among the best alternative histories published in the last 50 years. (Don Shewey Culturevulture.net 2012-05-21) "A galvanizing account of the transformation, both external and mental, in New York City life. (Emily Douglas Los Angeles Review Of Books 2012-06-08) "The essence of what Schulman calls gentrification is to pretend that privilege and difference do not exist and that any attempt to remember that they do is mere political correctness rather than facing up to the reality to who does what to whom. To forget these things, is to deceive ourselves and Schulman's harsh, bitter prose is a useful way of waking ourselves up. (Roz Kaveney Times Literary Supplement (TLS) 2012-04-13) "It's a beautifully written screed (not a bad word in my books). . . . Schulman shines when she taps her deep knowledge of the AIDS movement. . . . She can be brilliant. (Susan G. Cole Now 2012-03-08)

"Sarah Schulman, as always, hits the nail on the head. I can't imagine a more insightful probe into gentrification and its inhumane consequences. Everyone needs to read this book." Martin Duberman, author of Stonewall; Sarah Schulman's The Gentrification of the Mind is a bulwark against the collective loss of memory. AIDS, gentrification, the struggle for gay rights, the class war that has driven entire communities of artists, immigrants, and outsiders from the neighborhoods they created; all these things have been erased by the official culture. Schulman's book will make you rage and weep, and then just maybe organize. Luc Sante, author of Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York "Hard-headed, sensitive, and informed, this book will make the confused world of urban redevelopment and gentrification make notably more sense. Schulman has a mind as clear as a bell in evening. You'll be glad you read it. I was." Samuel R. Delany, author of Through the Valley of the Nest of Spiders

Sarah 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."

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.

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."

It is very thought provoking how Schulman connects the AIDS crisis and the death of so many gay men with the gentrification of lower Manhattan. I lived in the EV during the time period discussed in the book and could identify. I knew many of the places and some of the people mentioned. It is still hard to believe how an entire generation of gay men was wiped out. Yet the LGBT community rose to the front lines. We must never forget this period & those we lost. Schulman's book is a strong reminder

Although I don't want to minimize the specific experiences, people and events Schulman writes about in this book, the significance of what she has to say expands beyond it. In particular the chapter on "The Gentrification of Creation" and the discussion about the accountability of power could apply to so many other different situations.

This book is listed as biography, but it's so much more. Sarah Schulman writes about her place and time, then provides insight in to where that has led in terms of the changes to Manhattan in the last quarter century. How did New York City go from bankrupt to thriving? Artistic and bohemian to Trumpish and elite? AIDS.

If you lived in New York in the early 70's, and were involved in the art world in any way, Gentrification of the Mind will stir up memories for you. It was a heady and dangerous time in New York. I recommend this book for anyone touched by the Aids epidemic and the Gentrification of New York.

I was super late to the party on this one. Such a fantastic book!

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