Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*, **University of California Press, 2013 (pg. 12-14).**

[*Eds: Near the beginning of her Introduction, Schulman recounts presenting at a conference in Hartford, Connecticut for women living with AIDS:*]

"My talk was about the history of the woman with AIDS empowerment movement. I read them a piece I had published twenty-three years before in the Village Voice about women being excluded from experimental drug trials. The article included quotes from interviews with pharmaceutical executives about how 'unreliable' women were, not dependable like 'art professionals'" (their euphemism for gay men)...

When the lights came up, there was a kind of stunned silence. Later, I heard from many women in the audience that they had no idea that any of this had ever happened. They did not know that women had ever been excluded from treatment, they did not know that women couldn't get benefits — and most importantly, they did not know that women exactly like themselves had been leaders and activists forcing government agencies to change their policies... They did not know their own legacy of leadership...

On the way home these images were reeling in my mind. The truth of complexity, empowerment, the agency of the oppressed, replaced by an acceptance of banality, a concept of self based falsely in passivity, an inability to realize one's self as a powerful instigator and agent of profound social change.

What is this process? What is this thing that homogenizes complexity, difference, dynamic dialogic action for change and replaces it with samenesS? With a kind of institutionalization of culture? With a lack of demand on the powers that be? With containment?

My answer to that question always came back to the same concept: gentrification.

First I needed to define my terms. To me, the literal experience of gentrification is a concrete replacement process. 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.

But in the case of my particular question, while literal gentrification was very important to what I was observing, there was also a spiritual gentrification that was affecting people who did not have rights, who were not represented, who did not have power or even consciousness about the reality of their own condition. There was a gentrification of the mind, an internal replacement that alienated people from the concrete process of social and artistic change."

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Vintage Books, 1961 (p. 15).

"In New York's East Harlem there is a housing project with a conspicuous rectangular lawn which became an object of hatred to the project tenants. A social worker frequently at the project was astonished by how often the subject of the lawn came up, usually gratuitously as far as she could see, and how much the tenants despised it and urged that it be done away with. When she asked why, the usual answer was, "What good is it?" or "Who wants it?"

Finally one day a tenant more articulate than the others made this pronouncement: "Nobody cared what we wanted when they built this place. They threw our houses down and pushed us here and pushed our friends somewhere else. We don't even have a place around here to get a cup of coffee or a newspaper even, or borrow fifty cents. Nobody cared what we need. But the big men come and look at that grass and say, 'Isn't it wonderful! Now the poor have everything!'"

The tenant was saying what moralists have said for thousands of years: Handsome is as handsome does. All that glitters is not gold.

She was saying more: There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served..."