

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910782140603321
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Titolo	The men in my life / / Vivian Gornick
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, Mass., : MIT Press, ©2008
ISBN	0-262-26075-1 0-262-27410-8 1-4356-6284-9
Descrizione fisica	xiii, 194 p
Collana	Boston review book
Disciplina	810.9
Soggetti	American literature - History and criticism - Theory, etc English literature - History and criticism - Theory, etc Authorship - Psychological aspects Social problems in literature Male authors - Appreciation Authorship - Sex differences Literature and society
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	"A Boston Review book."
Nota di contenuto	George Gissing: A neurotic for our times -- H.G. Wells: The beginning of wisdom -- Loren Eiseley: Excavating the self -- Randall Jarrell: Reading to save his life -- Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, and the end of the Jew as metaphor -- Allen Ginsberg: America's holy fool -- Raymond Carver, Andre Dubus, Richard Ford: Tenderhearted men -- James Baldwin and V.S. Naipaul: America made the difference.
Sommario/riassunto	Gornick on V. S. Naipaul, James Baldwin, George Gissing, Randall Jarrell, H. G. Wells, Loren Eiseley, Allen Ginsberg, Hayden Carruth, Saul Bellow, and Philip Roth and the intimate relationship between emotional damage and great literature. Vivian Gornick, one of our finest critics, tackled the theme of love and marriage in her last collection of essays, The End of the Novel of Love, a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. In this new collection, she turns her attention to another large theme in literature: the struggle for the semblance of inner freedom. Great literature, she believes, is not the record of the achievement, but

of the effort. Gornick, who emerged as a major writer during the second-wave feminist movement, came to realize that "ideology alone could not purge one of the pathological self-doubt that seemed every woman's bitter birthright." Or, as Anton Chekhov put it so memorably: "Others made me a slave, but I must squeeze the slave out of myself, drop by drop." Perhaps surprisingly, Gornick found particular inspiration for this challenge in the work of male writers--talented, but locked in perpetual rage, self-doubt, or social exile. From these men--who had infinitely more permission to do and be than women had ever known--she learned what it really meant to wrestle with demons. In the essays collected here, she explores the work of V. S. Naipaul, James Baldwin, George Gissing, Randall Jarrell, H. G. Wells, Loren Eiseley, Allen Ginsberg, Hayden Carruth, Saul Bellow, and Philip Roth. Throughout the book, Gornick is at her best: interpreting the intimate interrelationship of emotional damage, social history, and great literature.

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