



The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Vivian Gornick papers

1965-2021

MssCol 186136

Processed by Em Longan in 2022.

Summary

Creator: Gornick, Vivian

Title: Vivian Gornick papers

Date: 1965-2021

Size: 3.17 linear feet (8 boxes)

Source: Purchased from Glenn Horowitz Bookseller in June 2022.

Abstract: Vivian Gornick (born 1935) is an American feminist critic, author, and memoirist who is known for her involvement with the second-wave feminist movement while reporting for *The Village Voice*. Her papers, dated 1965 to 2021, detail her writing process and published output after leaving the *Voice*, with an emphasis on her book projects. The collection holds typed and handwritten drafts, research files, reviews, correspondence, and interviews.

Preferred citation: Vivian Gornick papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Em Longan in 2022.

Creator History

Vivian Gornick was born in the Bronx on June 14, 1935. Her parents, both Ukrainian-born Jewish immigrants, were deeply involved in the Communist party. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from City College of New York in 1957, and in 1960 she earned a Master of Arts degree in literature from New York University.

Gornick taught English at the State University of New York at Stony Brook from 1966 to 1967, and Hunter College from 1967 to 1968. Her first published piece was an essay about an evening at the Village Vanguard with LeRoi Jones (later known as Amiri Baraka), Larry Rivers, and Jonas Mekas that she submitted unsolicited to *The Village Voice* in 1965. The paper hired her as a reporter four years later. During her tenure at the paper, she was introduced to, and became heavily involved with, the

second-wave feminist movement. Gornick remained at the *Voice* until 1977.

In addition to the *Voice*, Gornick's writing has also appeared in publications including *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Bookforum*, and *Boston Review*. Her publications and her intellectual approach reflect her experiences as the child of Jewish immigrants; her relationship to and involvement in the feminist movement; and a life steeped in radical labor politics.

Since leaving the *Voice*, Gornick has remained an active freelance essayist and continues to work as a creative writing teacher. She has published eleven books and has written dozens of essays that address the history of women and feminism; the evolution of communism and radical politics in modern America; and the process of lifelong reading and writing.

The Romance of American Communism, published in 1977, was Gornick's first book after leaving the *Voice*. She interviewed one hundred former members of the American Communist Party for the project. A collection of Gornick's work from the previous decade, *Essays in Feminism*, followed in 1978. Other memoirs, biographies, and essay collections include *Women in Science: Portraits from a World in Transition* (1983); *Fierce Attachments: A Memoir* (1987); *Approaching Eye Level* (1996); *The Men in My Life* (2008); *Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life* (2011); and *Unfinished Business: Notes of a Chronic Re-Reader* (2020).

In 2009, *Women in Science* was republished as *Women in Science: Then and Now* by The Feminist Press at City University of New York. *The Romance of American Communism* was reissued by Verso Books in London in 2020.

From 2007 to 2008, Gornick was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. She has also received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Ford Foundation. She served as the Bedell Distinguished Visiting Professor in the University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program in 2015, and was awarded the Windham–Campbell Literature Prize for nonfiction in March 2021. Gornick was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism in 1997, and was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in 2011.

Vivian Gornick currently resides in New York City.

Scope and Content Note

The Vivian Gornick papers, dated 1965 to 2021, illustrate her writing process and wide-ranging literary output after leaving *The Village Voice*. Gornick's papers contain files related to her book projects and short works, which include annotated and emended typescript drafts, notes, research files, proofs, reviews, and both professional and personal correspondence. The collection also holds some interviews and reviews about Gornick and her work. The materials are arranged into four groups: Books, Short Works, Interviews, and Personal Correspondence. Each grouping is arranged chronologically.

The Books files include research notes, rough chapter outlines, interview profiles, reader reports, drafts, and reviews. Some of the titles represented in the collection include *The Romance of American Communism* (1977); *Fierce Attachments: A Memoir* (1987); and *Unfinished Business: Notes of a Chronic Re-Reader* (2020). Drafts related to the 2009 reissue of *Women in Science* and the 2020 reissue of *The Romance of American Communism* are also present.

Short Works include the research notes and annotated drafts of critical essays and book reviews.

Gornick has written for a variety of publications, including *The Los Angeles Times*; *Boston Review*; *The Nation*; and *The New York Review of Books*. Essays of note include "Reawakened Rage" (2017), about the #MeToo movement; "Why Some of Us Thrive in a Crisis" (2020), about the COVID-19 pandemic; and a response to *Down Girl* by Kate Manne, entitled "The Logic of Misogyny" (2016). Also of note is the original typescript of Gornick's first published piece, "The Press of Freedom: An Ofay's Indirect Address to LeRoi Jones," published in *The Village Voice* in 1965. Reviews of books by Lawrence Friedman, James Salter, Mary Norris, and Susie Linfield are included, as are critical essays on the works of Willa Cather, Alfred Hayes, and Simone de Beauvoir.

The Interviews files focus on Gornick as the subject, and illuminate her thoughts on a variety of topics, including feminism, the craft of writing, and the process of self-discipline. The materials are comprised of transcripts; draft manuscripts with annotations and corrections by Gornick; final published pieces; and correspondence between Gornick and interviewers. The interviews appear in *Paris Review*, *The Believer*, and *New Statesman*.

Personal Correspondence consists of incoming social letters from friends and business associates. Some correspondents also discuss contemporary publications by Gornick.

Arrangement: The materials are arranged into four groupings: Books, Short Works, Interviews, and Personal Correspondence, and are presented in chronological order.

Key Terms

Occupations

Authors.
Journalists.

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Autobiographies
Biographies
Correspondence
Essays
Literary criticism
Manuscripts for publication

Geographic Names

Bronx (New York, N.Y.)
New York (N.Y.)

Subjects

Communism -- United States -- History -- 20th century
Feminism
Feminists -- United States
Judaism
Second-wave feminism

Names

Goldman, Emma, 1869-1940
Gornick, Vivian
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 1815-1902
Communist Party of the United States of America

Container List

Books

- b. 1 f. 1-3 *The Romance of American Communism* 1974-1977
- b. 8 f. 1-2
- b. 1 f. 4-5 *Women in Science: Portraits of a World in Transition* 1983
- b. 1 f. 6 *Fierce Attachments: A Memoir* 1987
- b. 2 f. 1
- b. 8 f. 3
- b. 2 f. 2 *Approaching Eye Level* 1996
- b. 2 f. 3-5 *The Solitude of Self: Thinking About Elizabeth Cady Stanton* 2005
- b. 2 f. 6 *The Men in My Life* 2008
- b. 3 f. 1-4 *Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life* 2011
- b. 3 f. 5 *The Odd Woman and the City* 2015
- b. 3 f. 6-7 *Unfinished Business: Notes of a Chronic Re-Reader* 2020
- b. 4 f. 1
- b. 4 f. 2-8 Short Works 1965-2021
- b. 5 f. 1-22 The draft of Gornick's first published piece is located in Box 4, folder 7.
- b. 6 f. 1-18
- b. 8 f. 4
- b. 7 f. 1 Interviews 2014-2015
- b. 7 f. 2 Personal Correspondence 1994-2013