

PLEASE PRINT

PAGE 1

REPRODUCTION ORDER FORM



Columbia University | Rare Book & Manuscript Library
Butler Library, 6th Floor | 535 West 114th Street | New York, NY 10027
Voice: 212-854-5590 | Fax: 212-854-1365
rbml@columbia.edu

Send to: Aaron Gilbreath

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: prowlinggilamonster@gmail.com

Oral History
Permission? _____

Date: June 02, 2017

Total Pages: 3

Order Charges: _____

Postage: _____

Total Charge: _____

Cash _____ Credit Card _____ Check No. _____

Univ. Account: _____

Date Completed: _____

Completed by: _____

Pick up photocopies Mail photocopies
 Email PDF copies

NOTICE: WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the marking of photocopies or other reproduction of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions qualified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or other reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or other reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that use may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a reproduction order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve a violation of copyright law.

I have read the copyright warning and believe that my request falls within "fair use" as defined by the copyright law. I further agree to request permission (and pay any fees) of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library if I plan to publish, broadcast, or otherwise disseminate any material held by the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Item No.	Collection Name or Interviewee	Box or Volume No.	Folder No.	Description/Folder Title/Project Name	Date of Item	Number of Pages to be Copied
1	Millen Brand Papers	1		"Why I Write"		3
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
Please use continuation sheet for additional items					Total Pages	3

R&CAP

Gould, Joe

1934-35

WHY I WRITE

written by Joe Gould for
Jay du Von
June, 1934

I write book reviews for my black coffee and cigarettes. I am conscientious in this because it would hurt my magnum opus if I were otherwise. I have created a new literary form. I have written some things that will last as long as the English language. Nevertheless I have had a hard time to get work because of the fact that America absorbs not only its own crudity but that of the rest of the world. We have, therefore, all sorts of misfits as literary editors, dessicated old maids from Delaware, peasants from Chicago and Pittsburg, with a lower cultural level than a Hottentot, and pushcart careerists, all of them alike only in having an inferiority complex toward New England.

For fifteen years I have been at work on a history of my times from oral sources. I use only material from my own experience and observation and from the first-hand spoken narratives of others. I define history as anything which illustrates human nature. I am making an attempt to get as much material as possible to illustrate the normal life of everyday people. In this respect I am doing for my day something similar to what was done by Pepys and Boswell.

It seems to me obvious that the average person is just as much history as the ruler or the celebrity. He also illustrates the social forces of heredity and environment. If one were to pick anyone up at random and study him intensely enough in all the ramifications of his life, we would get the whole story of man. Every human being is to some degree exploited and to some degree an exploiter. Every peasant has some royal and noble blood. Even the

mightiest emperor* ultimately descends from some lonely source. I have lived among primitive people and personally feel that I prefer a descent from those who but recently came from the comparative freedom of the jungle to that of the civilized blood which is the symbol of serfdom from time immemorial. In my chapter on Social Position, printed in the Broom, I stated that one of my ancestors was the first colonial governor of Connecticut and that the other was a bond-servant. I said that I did not want to be proud of descent from one unless I could be equally proud of those ancestors "who lived lives of modest toil and were first nowhere except upon the field of battle, as of those knights, kings and emperors who also had to live that I might be." I said that "if I were not big enough to belong to all humanity, I wanted to think of myself as belonging to the masses rather than the classes."

There is a lot of ballyhoo about a classless society but I already live in one, and it is implicit in my work. Most of the oral history is intended for posthumous publication, as I have preserved some details of daily life which will increase in value as time goes on, and I do not wish to publish any details which will hurt those now living.

Although by following my personal bent, I have created some work of lasting value to others, I write for myself and my impulse to express life in terms of my own experience and observation is so strong that I would write if I were the last survivor of the human race, and if no other eye were to see my manuscript, what I have done would still add to human dignity.

People with a justifiable inferiority complex toward E. E. Cummings quite naturally call themselves proletarian writers. Unfortunately, the present fad for class-consciousness is hooey, because

people are automatically human all the time, and individual most of the time, and any effort toward making them primarily racial, or sectarian or insectarian like bees or ants, which make a separate use of workers, is futile. Individualism rightly understood is the only creed, because a real individualist desires that complete self-sufficiency that does not exploit others. It is possible to have a social conscience and to fight injustices without believing that Karl Marx was the only son of God and the Virgin Mary Baker Eddy. Envy of others is responsible for all exploitation such as was responsible for the cheap commercialism of the Scottsboro case, which will probably condemn those innocent boys to death, because a group of shyster lawyers saw in their peril an opportunity for cheap exhibitionism, and for appealing to the inferiority complex of half-educated pants-pressers.

The Scottsboro boys may die, accused of acting sexily,

But they made lots of money for Mr. John Wexley.