

Joe Gould's Secret

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Le secret de Joe Gould
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from new yorker staff writer and harvard historian jill lepore the dark spellbinding tale of her restless search for the long lost longest book ever written a century old manuscript called the oral history of our time joe gould a madman believed he was the most brilliant historian of the twentieth century so did some of his friends a group of modernist writers and artists that included e e cummings marianne moore william carlos williams john dos passos and ezra pound gould began his life's work before the first world war announcing that he intended to write down nearly everything anyone ever said to him i am trying to preserve as much detail as i can about the normal life of every day people he explained because as a rule history does not deal with such small fry by 1942 when the new yorker published a profile of gould written by the reporter joseph mitchell gould's manuscript had grown to more than nine million words but when gould died in 1957 in a mental hospital the manuscript was nowhere to be found then in 1964 in joe gould's secret a second profile mitchell claimed that the oral history of our time had been all along merely a figment of gould's imagination lepore unpersuaded decided to find out joe gould's teeth is a poe like tale of detection madness and invention digging through archives all over the country lepore unearthed evidence that the oral history of our time did in fact once exist relying on letters scraps and gould's own diaries and notebooks including volumes of his lost manuscript lepore argues that joe gould's real secret had to do with sex and the color line with modernists relationship to the harlem renaissance and above all with gould's terrifying obsession with the african american sculptor augusta savage in ways that even gould himself could not have imagined what gould wrote down really is a history of our time unsettling and ferocious

advertising expenditure data across ten media consumer magazines sunday magazines newspapers outdoor network television spot television syndicated television cable television network radio and national spot radio lists brands alphabetically and shows total ten media expenditures media used parent company and pib classification for each brand also included in this report are industry class totals and rankings of the top 100 companies of the ten media

negli anni quaranta viveva al greenwich village un eccentrico letterato di nome joe gould che si definiva l'ultimo dei bohémians e si presentava piuttosto come un singolare barbone discendente di una delle più antiche famiglie del new england laureato a harvard nel 1911 gould dormiva negli alberghetti da due soldi o negli atelier degli amici e mangiava di rado e quasi sempre a sbafo in qualche sordido locale macilento e ubriacone bazzicava le redazioni delle

riviste letterarie non poteva accettare un impiego fisso spiegava perché questo gli avrebbe impedito di continuare a lavorare alla sua storia orale l inedito più lungo di tutti i tempi costituito a suo dire da migliaia e migliaia di conversazioni ascoltate o orecchiate per strada al ristorante nei dormitori sui treni al parco ovunque la gente si riunisse e parlasse sempre carico di quaderni di scuola sui quali scriveva ininterrottamente gould li affidava man mano a qualche amico perché glieli conservasse si favoleggiava di centinaia di quaderni depositati in armadi uffici soffitte e sottoscala nel 1942 mitchell gli dedicò un profilo sul new yorker il professor gabbiano nel quale descriveva il personaggio la sua mania di imitare i gabbiani e l attesa che si era creata per la sua opera dopo la morte di gould nel 1957 molte persone tra cui mitchell stesso si misero alla ricerca della storia orale nei suoi svariati nascondigli ricerca che diventò un'altra progressione di sbalorditive scoperte finché nel 1964 mitchell decise di raccontare dall'inizio la vera storia del segreto di joe gould un segreto che ci lascerà incantati e silenziosi perché va molto lontano fra le conseguenze minori di tale storia vi sarà anche questa che joe gould ci apparirà come l archetipo e la parodia ultima dello scrittore moderno ma nel frattempo avremo apprezzato l'arte altissima del cronista mitchell vero cantore epico di new york questa città il cui inconscio ci dice un personaggio del libro stava cercando di parlarci attraverso joe gould il professor gabbiano e il segreto di joe gould sono inclusi nel volume *up in the old hotel* apparso a new york nel 1993

portrait d'un marginal qui se dit l'auteur d'une œuvre totale le secret de joe gould se déploie en une extraordinaire quête de vérité et prend la dimension d'une légende moderne joe gould le dernier des bohèmes petit homme joyeux au physique émacié hante les cafétérias les diners les bars les trous à rats de greenwich village il fait la manche couche dehors vêtu de guenilles qu'il porte avec une espèce de désinvolture triste son passé qu'il raconte volontiers en échange d'un verre est troublant il aurait fait harvard aurait été journaliste surtout il se vante d'un secret prétend être l'auteur du plus long manuscrit jamais écrit onze fois plus long que la bible et en perpétuel chantier une histoire orale du monde celle des vingt mille personnes qui se sont confiées à lui joseph mitchell journaliste au new yorker est obsédé par l'idée de le lire et de le faire publier c'est sa propre quête du manuscrit qu'il raconte mais ce manuscrit qui se dérobe sans cesse a-t-il jamais existé l'entreprise de joe gould accumulation d'un hypothétique trésor fondé sur la vie elle-même confine à la folie comme l'obsession de mitchell à la valider plus on s'enfonce dans le secret de joe gould plus ce livre fascine par sa vertigineuse mise en abîme qui est dupe de l'autre qui est le fou littéraire la profondeur des interrogations qu'il fait naître sur les rapports entre la vérité et la fiction la mémoire et l'oubli l'usage de la vie fait de ce texte en lui-même un trésor un livre culte célébré par de grands écrivains rushdie martin amis julian barnes que l'on brûle de faire découvrir

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em 1942 joseph mitchell publicou nas páginas da revista the new yorker o perfil de um literato maltrapilho que vivia perambulando pelo greenwich village o bairro boêmio de nova york o personagem chamava-se joe gould e a reportagem revelava que apesar de viver como um mendigo dormia em pensões baratas albergues e às vezes até na rua preparava uma obra monumental história oral do nosso tempo gould morreu em 1957 e o livro que vinha escrevendo nunca foi encontrado não se sabia então nem mesmo se chegara de fato a existir em 1964 sete anos após a morte de gould e mais de vinte anos após o perfil da the new yorker joseph mitchell escreveu para a mesma revista outro texto sobre o boêmio do village o segredo de joe gould revelando o mistério guardado por tanto tempo depois dessa reportagem histórica o jornalista nunca mais publicou sequer um texto mesmo assim continuou a frequentar a redação diariamente e a receber salário até o fim da vida morreu de câncer em 1996 mitchell era um dos repórteres mais talentosos da the new yorker na revista tinha liberdade absoluta escrevia sobre o que quisesse no prazo que julgasse necessário foi um dos primeiros repórteres a descrever histórias reais com técnicas de ficção era um jornalista atípico que preferia escrever sobre pessoas anônimas e assuntos prosaicos em vez de se ocupar da economia da política ou do mundo das celebridades os últimos trinta anos de sua vida são cercados de mistério não se sabe sobre o que escrevia diariamente na redação da revista e apesar das inúmeras especulações a respeito ignora-se o motivo de seu silêncio a qualidade literária de sua obra porém faz dele um dos mais importantes jornalistas americanos do século xx

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