

# Giles Weaver

By Mark Phillips

J. D. Salinger's fame has ended up as much based on his silence as it is on his published work. Despite the phenomenal success of his only novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, and his collected short stories, fascination with Salinger's self-imposed isolation from both the public eye and the literary scene has gradually overshadowed his writing genius. In an age of publicity and hype, Salinger remains an enigma.

It has been twenty years since readers have had any news of Holden Caulfield or the Glass Family. Instead, the author stays secluded in his New Hampshire home, demanding privacy and understanding. He insists he is still writing, but he considers the possibility of publication an invasion of his privacy.

Salinger began as a short story writer in the 1940s, with work appearing in such magazines as *Esquire*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *New Yorker*. In 1951 he published *The Catcher in the Rye* to both popular and critical acclaim. Negative reviews that decried foul language, monotony and self-absorption were outweighed by critics and fans who found in the novel the voice—and the tone of a voice—of a new generation. *Catcher* went into multiple printings. Young readers idolized “their” generation's writer in an almost cultic way.

However, Salinger grew uneasy in the intensifying limelight. The more popular he became, the less he chose to be seen in public, or even in print. He cited the publicity as a distraction from his work. Hoping to be left alone, he moved from Westport, Connecticut, to an isolated house near Cornish, New Hampshire. In 1953 he granted an interview to a local schoolgirl writing for a nearby small newspaper, the *Claremont Eagle*. He would not speak to the press again until 1974.

In the years following *Catcher's* publication, Salinger released only a handful of stories. Critics and readers grew impatient with his infrequent output. Nor did his themes, gradually more mystic and internalized, provide the charm and chuckles of his earlier stories. His narrative skills remained, but the question arose if he had run out of new things to say. Critic William French wrote that “his later fiction has become increasingly affected,” R. D. Gooden commented, “The old skill—the methods, locutions and mannerisms—is intact, but the matter, never abundant, seems quite to have run out.”

Three of Salinger's books (he has published only four) still sell fairly well today. His last published work, at least under his own name, appeared in the *New Yorker* (“Hapworth 16, 1924”) in 1965.

Even before 1965, John Updike suggested that Salinger's artistic shift toward introspection might lead to silence. Where *The Catcher in the Rye* is picaresque, much of *Franny and Zooey* is confined to a single house; and much of *Raise High the Roofbeam, Carpenters*, and *Seymour, an Introduction* is but a single character's rambling musings. “Hapworth 16, 1924” approaches self-parody, and left apparent silence in its wake.

Salinger's seclusion has, perhaps inevitably, led to several canards and hoaxes. In 1974 thousands of copies of an unauthorized collection of his early short stories were published. Salinger responded to this pirate edition by suing the publisher and the bookstores involved. An unsigned story—“For Rupert—With No Promises”—in the February 1977 issue of *Esquire* was widely reputed to have been written by Salinger. When the publicity reached a fever pitch, the magazine's fiction editor revealed that he was, himself, the story's author.

In 1981 the *New York Times Book Review* reported on a rumor that Salinger was publishing under the name William Wharton. Wharton turned out to be a real author who cherished his privacy almost as much as Salinger himself. The following year

Salinger sued a man named Steven Kunes for attempting to sell a fake Salinger interview.

Through the years people have attempted to speak to Salinger when he goes to collect his mail or to do errands in Cornish; most have been told to go away and leave him alone.

Not unaware of the pitfalls involved in such speculation, it seems to me that there is strong stylistic and circumstantial evidence that in 1970 and 1971 J. D. Salinger may have published two long pieces under the name Giles Weaver in a relatively unknown literary quarterly called the *Phoenix*.

My own interest in Giles Weaver began during a 1978 job interview with the *Phoenix's* co-founder and editor, James Cooney. It was a thrill for me to meet a man who had known and published many of the greatest modern American and European writers. Salinger was a particular interest of mine, and when I mentioned his long silence, Cooney said that his daughter had corresponded with Salinger during her childhood, and that his wife had once met Salinger at the Smith College Library. He said that Salinger had suffered "some type of mental crisis." Then he asked me if I had read Giles Weaver's "Further Notes From the Underground," in the first issue of the revived *Phoenix*. When I got home I read "Further Notes" and was immediately struck by its similarities to the style and philosophy of J. D. Salinger. The "Notes on Contributors" section was no help, describing Giles Weaver only as "the pseudonym for a writer living like a solitary bushman in America's Kalahari." But it seemed to me that Cooney's reference to Giles Weaver had been triggered by our talk about Salinger.

Cooney had mentioned that Salinger had experienced some kind of mental problems, and rumors of bouts of severe depression had, in fact, circulated. Giles Weaver is a man who is familiar with the mental ward of a hospital. It may be entirely coincidental that Salinger is a veteran and the North Hampton Veteran's Hospital would be a convenient place for him to go for treatment.

"Further Notes From the Underground" includes two passages describing incidents that Cooney, in our conversation, had described as occurring between his daughter and his wife and J. D. Salinger.

Weaver writes, "This outburst here was provoked by my contact with (blank) at the Smith College Library where I returned the books. A pleasant encounter for me, if not for her." Cooney, of course, had told me that his wife, Blanche, had met Salinger while she was working at the College Library.

The Weaver log also includes the text of a letter dated seven days after the initial submission to the *Phoenix*, in which Weaver writes, "You have no idea how terribly pleased I was to get a letter from you . . . I am so pleased you still keep my creations." Surely Cooney's daughter would have kept the letters from the author of *The Catcher in the Rye*; and wouldn't she have written to tell him so if she learned that he was now to be appearing in her father's magazine? Further evidence suggests the Weaver piece is more than just the ramblings (and rantings) of an unknown writer. Cooney literally stopped the presses to include "Further Notes" as soon as it arrived. In fact, to make room for Weaver he dropped the opening installment of the novel, *Love and Time*, which he co-authored with his wife Blanche.

Cooney was known (and in some places cordially disliked) as an opinionated and heavy-handed editor, yet he states in his introduction to "Further Notes" that no editing was done, and indeed even the obvious misspellings and grammatical errors were left untouched—to the point that some of "Further Notes" verges on gibberish. Cooney would never have made such a commitment to a piece he was not sure was something special. Whoever Giles Weaver may or may not be, Cooney gave him V.I.P. treatment.

Anyone who has read *Nine Stories* will recognize Giles Weaver's attitude toward a child: "Also I designed and built a good three-foot diameter overshot waterwheel with the not inconsiderable help of an eleven-year old genius."

Anyone who has read *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters* and *Seymour, An Introduction* will recognize this stylistic maneuver: "This here isn't meant to be a

definitive analysis of our situation and if anybody pleases themselves to publish it as such I will be pleased to render onto them a knuckle sandwich right into the kisser not via a typewriter but with my fist, so to speak due to the fact of the matter—which is to say, I find bloodshed a form of communication.”

And anyone who has read *Franny and Zooey* will recognize the philosophy of this Weaver passage: “But it is no matter, I live for neither my own benefit nor yours nor anyone else, other than God himself. And I am sure that God is pleased with the great magnanimity of my spirit on His Behalf, considering how difficult He is: when I put my head out the window of my top floor to have a word with Him, He’s not there. Later I find He was sitting in the middle of my room at the time—and said nothing.”

Weaver describes the Vietnam era Establishment and the anti-war protesters as “the kookie Kooks and the kookie Anti-kooks.”

Weaver’s “Further Notes From the Underground” expresses Salinger’s Zen-Christian philosophy, his fascination with death and suicide, his loathing of psychology (he refers to “the sick green psych majors, unlimbering learned tricks on distressed men and women . . .”), his alienation and his peculiar locution.

There are also curious biographic parallels between Salinger and Weaver. Both reside in and travel around in New England; both have lived at one time in New York City. Weaver mentions the Connecticut River, which flows very close to Salinger’s home. Giles Weaver seems to be about Salinger’s age, and he, too, is Jewish or at least spends time on a Jewish commune.

Weaver twice reveals that although he is a writer and is well-read, he did not major in English or earn a college degree—neither did Salinger. Weaver seems to be separated from a woman close to him—at the same time published reports had Salinger divorced by his wife Claire.

Weaver talks about writing and painting quite regularly, but he never mentions the need to sell any of his work. In fact, when one art dealer in New York pressed him to show his work, Weaver’s response “blew his ears out.” There aren’t many plausible reasons why an unknown artist living in New England would refuse to show his work in a New York gallery—never mind why such a person would even receive such an offer. Weaver’s attitude jibes nicely with Salinger’s opinion of publishing his work. As he told the *New York Times*, “Publishing is a terrible invasion of my privacy . . . I love to write. But I write just for myself and for my own pleasure.”

Despite his reluctance to sell his art and his apparent lack of employment, Weaver owns a car, rents rooms and houses and travels frequently. Does Giles Weaver live off the continuing royalties of J. D. Salinger?

Cooney’s *Phoenix* would have provided an ideal opportunity for Salinger to publish his work. Giles Weaver wrote in his initial submission, “I am comforted by the sense and sentiment of the *Phoenix*.” Perhaps, too, Salinger was comforted by the symbol of the phoenix: recreation amidst destruction. The *Phoenix* combined an iconoclastic tradition and a solid reputation in some literary circles. Cooney was known as a firebrand who enjoyed tweaking the noses of sententious academics and literati alike—a quality with which Salinger could surely empathize. Cooney is also the kind of man Salinger could count on to protect his identity and be faithful to his wishes to be left alone.

Robert Lewis, editor of the *North Dakota Quarterly* and director of Graduate Studies in English at the University of North Dakota, finds the Salinger/Weaver case “pretty convincing—it hangs together fairly well.” He points out Salinger has a penchant for giving his characters thematic names—for instance, a seer named Seymour, a sensitive, fragile family surnamed Glass, and a Holden that holds things in. Thus, “Giles Weaver” could be a typically Salingerian pseudonym because he uses guile to weave his tales—and maybe even his persona. Salinger scholar Professor James Lundquist agrees that the circumstantial evidence makes some connection seem likely. “If it were merely work of a patient in a local V.A. hospital, why would Cooney have bothered to include it in the *Phoenix* at all?” Lundquist notes, however, that “editors of

little magazines have been known to print some pretty strange stuff for some pretty weird reasons.”

When I first questioned James Cooney about the possibility of Salinger’s involvement with the Weaver log, he refused to discuss it. Spurred by Cooney’s reluctance to speak with me about the mystery, I decided to write directly to Salinger, questioning him about Giles Weaver. I never received a response from Salinger, but very soon afterwards the Cooneys decided to tell me that Giles Weaver was a patient in a local veteran’s hospital who had “no interest in Salinger,” and was a man “too strange to be Salinger.” They denied knowing Salinger and added that Weaver had “disappeared from the area” and couldn’t be located. They had no explanation for the unaccustomed V.I.P. treatment Weaver’s material had received.

Giles Weaver’s true identity will probably remain a mystery for some time, but a reflection in his log may be a most telling clue: “Maybe ghost writing is within the capacity of my ego if not my know-how.” Has the ghostly eminence of Cornish, New Hampshire, been appearing among us as a ghost writer for these many years?

Giles Weaver writes in painful questioning of why he lives and creates, and of his attempts to compromise personal with societal values. If Giles Weaver is J. D. Salinger, then somewhere between the *New Yorker* and nirvana, in the vicinity of the *Phoenix* and the phoenix, may be the artistic reflection of a personal, if precarious, coming to terms.

*Mark Phillips is a lecturer in the English Department at State University of New York at Alfred. He has published numerous stories and essays in literary quarterlies.*

### The Flight of the Phoenix

The *Phoenix* was founded in 1938 at an artist’s commune in Woodstock, New York. A pacifist quarterly, the *Phoenix* introduced American readers to several writers whose work was often too unknown—or too controversial—to be published elsewhere.

James Cooney, the *Phoenix*’s feisty, brilliant editor, was in many ways a man ahead of his time. He had spent much of his bohemian youth on the road, wandering across America. At one point in his travels he lived at D. H. Lawrence’s commune in New Mexico. Although Lawrence was already dead, his influence—and his affinity for phoenixes—was strong on the young wanderer. Cooney met Lawrence’s charismatic widow Frieda and writers like Aldous Huxley, who helped him to point toward a literary life.

Cooney and his wife Blanche became the heart and soul of the *Phoenix*. They were the first to publish Henry Miller’s work in the United States. Cooney went on to invite Miller, with whom he shared an avid interest in Lawrence, to be the *Phoenix*’s European editor.

Excerpts from the *Diary* of Anaïs Nin, one of Miller’s mistresses, appeared in the *Phoenix* nearly thirty years before it began to be published in the U.S. Kay Boyle’s haunting *Big Fiddle* and Jean Giono’s anti-war *Refusal to Obey* were printed in their entirety, as were Hervey White’s travel diaries. Poets animating the pages of the early *Phoenix* included Robert (Symmes) Duncan, Raynor Heppenstall, Derek Savage, Thomas McGrath, J. C. Crews and William Everson (Brother Antonius).

Every issue from 1938 through 1940 contained essays by D. H. Lawrence—“the voice that evoked the *Phoenix*” as Cooney called him.

The *Phoenix* published until 1940, when the fall of France sounded the death knell for most pacifist writing and the chaos of World War Two had hopelessly dispersed the magazine’s international readers and contributors.

Thirty years later, in 1970, as the Vietnam War spread to Cambodia, the *Phoenix* rose again. Cooney wrote an ad (below) announcing the return (the same ad Giles Weaver saw in the Massachusetts Review):

*Musings of a Social Soph*

ANNOUNCING THE REAPPEARANCE OF  
THE PHOENIX

*The Phoenix* last appeared in Autumn 1940. Since then the suffering of this country has deepened. Freedom withers. Tyranny flourishes. Joy, gone underground, is led forth with a queerly frantic air at festivals taking place while far-off flashes of napalm transform remote peasant villages into instant crematoriums.

*The Phoenix* is appearing again to offer itself as a medium of communion for those who keep faith in mankind and Creation: a Promethean faith. Manuscripts are invited: completed novels, portions of novels in progress, stories, poems, diaries, letters, wood-blocks & line drawings. Publication will be quarterly and the first new issue is now in progress. Subscription rate is \$7.00 a year. Single issues: \$2.00. A pamphlet relating the past history of *The Phoenix* is available on request.

Little magazines are always announcing themselves. They come and they go. *The Phoenix* first appeared on the scene in Spring 1938. Through its pages Henry Miller had his writings published for the first time in the United States. Among other contributors were Anaïs Nin, Robert Duncan, Kay Boyle, William Everson, Thomas McGrath, Derek Savage, Kiedrich Rhys, Jean Giono, Raynor Heppenstall, and D. H. Lawrence. A two-volume facsimile edition of the entire original file of issues, long out of print, is now available in a handsome hard-cover set priced at \$55.00.

*The Phoenix* will resume where it left off. Opposing war. Refusing obeisance to tyranny. Rejecting violence as a way to freedom. Welcoming voices of affirmation, intercession, and reconciliation. Receptive to reports from the demonic underworld of irrational consciousness where the healing alchemy of reconciliations must transpire. If you are interested, write to:

THE PHOENIX  
Morning Star Farm West Whately  
RFD Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039

The revived *Phoenix* was to flap along for another fourteen years, expressing anti-war sentiment and “alternative” opinion and fiction in keeping with its original outlook.

Recently, James Cooney suffered a debilitating stroke, leaving Blanche Cooney as the last embodiment of the *Phoenix*’s soaring spirit. She is assembling a history of the magazine and is presiding over the sale of its archives by the Smith College Library.

“J. D. Salinger – A Hidden Hand?” – Saturday Review, November/December 1985, pp. 39-43

FURTHER

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

*Giles Weaver*

From anonymous notes & an untitled contemporary diary

*Editor's note: One recent morning, while we were in the midst of setting up & printing this Winter 1970 renewal issue of The Phoenix, the mail brought us four separate envelopes, all from the same person with the anonymity of a post-office box address at the nearby town of Northampton. Except for minor deletions & changes involving the author's intricate and meticulous system of pagination which embraces all his letters, notes & pages of his diary, we are printing his typewritten communications exactly as we received them. The author, who has never read any of Dostoevsky's writings, consented to the above title which I proposed. So that audacity is mine, not his. He was only concerned with remaining anonymous, and keeping the names of actual persons and their places of residence concealed. The pages of this issue now given to his writings were to have carried the opening section of an unpublished novel Love and Time, now deferred to our next issue. The extraordinary flow of writing which follows began with the four separate letters of September 22, one of which contained the self-portrait reproduced on the page opposite.*

September 22, 1970

Dear Phoenix,

This is intended to serve as an introduction of myself.

The message on the back of my self-portrait, in a separate envelope with four other drawings, is intended to convey the fact that I am comforted by the sense and sentiment of THE PHOENIX.

The rest of the evidence aims (I guess having aim makes it propaganda) to indicate my addiction to clowning and bad taste.

Any evidence that I did not major in English is truly pure evidence.

Should you assume that I suppose that this kind of an approach has some value, I would not object.

However, as long as I do not injure you in any way, I shall little trouble myself how I impress you.

But I may, perhaps, make some effort to demonstrate that for most practical matters I am more than just rational, I am intensely sane.

If altruism is not sane then I qualify the foregoing paragraph as a bit extravagant.

I comfort myself that crank and crank-like mail does roll right off of THE PHOENIX. You take comfort from the second paragraph.

Thank you for your attention.

May you be blessed with much good health and good spirit.

Love, *Giles Weaver*

Dear Phoenix,

Please find enclosed the following drawings: (all xerox)

1. A rose. It spoke to me.

2. Interplanetary Intercourse, explained on the sheet.

3. I have been informed that this diagram is a reasonably accurate approximation of an existent reality which I had heard about. While involving "material" entities, it is, of course, an entity principally "metaphysical" and "in" an "area" "beyond" our (our?) solar system. I understand that this situation (portrayed on sheet number 3) has remained relatively static for some eight billion years, a very unusual occurrence they say. I was very happy in my inspiration to make a "concrete" sign of a static entity which is occasioning such small alarm throughout the universe. It seems that the whole situation there is quite acceptable to the participants, without exception. Also it receives very minimal criticism from the "independent" objective observers

*Musings of a Social Soph*

who fancy the matter their concern. A fancy which my informant assures me has the blessing of GOD. Indeed his manner of speech tends toward an intimation that is not so much a matter of GOD's *blessing* as it is a matter of HIS *provision*.

4. A girl in white blouse and black shorts, so exciting that I was compelled to ask her. (If I might do her.)

5. My self-portrait. (This is a xerox of paper collage) I hope you are not excessively startled by the portrayal of myself being identical with classic arch-type hero-type. Due to the fact of the matter.

*Giles Weaver*

Dear Phoenix,

One of the letters which I failed to write to you (and I failed to write to you times beyond count since last spring when I found your announcement notice in the Massachusetts Review) -- one of the letters I failed to write to you contained but a single word; that word was of course none other than "shit".

Along about that time, well I mean at the time or any time since that time you did not get the letter from me, you also failed to respond in an appropriate manner. In fact I was not aware that you responded in any manner whatsoever.

What I find so remarkable about this, and not very pleasing to me, is that we came so damn close to this exchange.

I suppose the matter is neither here nor there to the PHOENIX since you are mentioned in a number of places in this new ten volume set, THE GREAT EXCHANGES OF HISTORY, which was published lately -- around the year 2128, I believe. Well, you might imagine how I feel to discover that the editors found no occasion for any mention of Giles Weaver.

Yours truly,  
*Giles Weaver*

Post script. I also found no mention of the NYSE\* in the above mentioned tomes, except for a brief citation of the NYSE as a typical corruption of a fine word.

\* *When asked what these letters signified, the author explained that they stood for the New York Stock Exchange.*

Dear PHOENIX,

I keep a LOG.

It is full of spice and everything nice.

Want an unexpurgated sample?

Too late!

Enclosed are carbons with razor work-over, please be so kind to find pages numbered: 217, 218, 219, 220.

Yours truly,  
*Giles Weaver*

LOG. Sunday 9-20-70 12:40 p.m. Room 34 Warren Hotel. Pleasant, mild day. Much rainy days past week. (Pages 217, 218, 219, 220)

Well, at long last. Thought I would never make it to this LOG. I left Thursday morn after our coffee at Friendly's. Thursday afternoon I began writing everything from A to Z and have continued with not much break until now. A mess in longhand and a mess written only in my head. I don't know if I ever will get it typed up or if it is very important that I do so. Thinking is what is important these days and reading, my reading is suffering bad lately. Last nite I hiked a round trip to the BHR, meeting an aide on the rr tracks and we had a good talk. He spoke of changes to be made in ward . And he spoke of the possibility that the rr tracks might be sold to the adjoining property owners. At the BHR I sat briefly in front of the Chapel, then walked back, my mind totally taken up the entire trip with a flow of essays. Back in Hamp I noted the theatre had Elliot Gould and Candace Bergen in GETTING IT TOGETHER and I suspected a good show and went for \$2. Rarely go to a movie but felt I could use a diversion at that point very well. Show was on the rebel youth theme. Came out of the show feeling sick on inferiority, real bad.

## *Musings of a Social Soph*

Recovered during the night thinking that I was going to do my thing, stupid or not, and if it made me a living – so be it and all for the sake of my love of \_\_\_\_\_, to hell with whether I am an idiot or not if I could make money. The passionate parts of the movie got at me in my sleep and I woke up and fucked my hands a couple times before morning with good results and comfort nude photos and vivid story writing in my mind -- a composite of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ set in a fictioned NYC and fictioned-up action as very highly satisfying as the memory of the real action which was plenty great itself. Also thought of Caleb Freeman's Metalog: a fictioned-up rewrite of my LOG starting with the day of March when 12 points for philosophizing without going mad came to mind. Set around, say year 2133, at 8 Hedge Place, Rockingstone, Amranon ZIP 08986828. Also includes mental hospital: Ore Valley Rest and former therapy group now become Rockingstone Nature Society. In writing this I am to think of the house now gone which was behind State St. Fruit Store. Etc. etc.

As I was walking back to Hamp last nite through dark Childs Park I had thoughts of this earth actually being purgatory and that after my death I wanted to come back here and work to help others get through the mill and find their true identities. I had, before those thoughts, some thoughts on reality that were so wild I began to come unhinged. Other years I was not able to handle this sort of stuff in my head and I would bog down, sometimes so badly it would set me up for a slide that would finally send me into the BHR in a state of apathy or anger or walking-talking depression.

The movie last nite got me tearing myself up afterward about my cowardliness and my lack of commitment to anything at all beyond taking my ego on a trip. I had some fancy thoughts on this business of committing oneself to some cause of supposed value worthy of self-sacrifice. My fancy thoughts failed to bail me out, they only made me despise myself even more. Somewhere soon after I got home I had the low-minded sinful good health to say to myself that according to my own biased lights I had suffered sufficiently for the day, and knowing full well that to go on with these self-lacerations was the road to hell, I filed the charges to await more concrete powers of reason.

But I am here failing to record my activity of the past week. I failed early in the week because of a hearty sickness of recording my life, suspecting it very much as a stupid pastime.

Last Saturday I went to Brattleboro in a high grade funk to get a change of pace. While there I examined the new library, heard from a youth about the trashing of their free farm in Putney, inquired of rooms in the hotel, looked at rents in the want ads, ate and relaxed at the hotel bar, coveted life in Brattleboro and bugged out for Massachusetts in tremendous conflict over whether first to look at a house for rent in Putney. I barely convinced myself that in spite of my great desire for that part of Vermont, I would get very unhappy, chaotic and apathy-ridden in spite of my nostalgia for that Vermont earth and sky.

So I drove a very pleasant slow drive to the Warwick commune which I found easily and sat on a rock and tried to pull my mind to life and failed. It was, as I finally realized on Monday, the impact of \_\_\_\_\_ upon me when I was in \_\_\_\_\_ last Friday.

Had coffee and two hot dogs in General Store & P.O. at Wendel Depot and sat a long time and enjoyed the company of the woman there plus the guy who was sitting on one of the four fountain stools.

Very pleasant drive to \_\_\_\_\_. Went to \_\_\_\_\_ for the first time since May I believe. came out and hugged me. She had just come back home a week before. Said she was lost for her next action and had been sitting at the kitchen table a week. Her mother was just taking off to son place for the nite to look after the baby, \_\_\_\_\_. She invited me to stay over and left. I stayed over, waking at 1:00 am and drinking whiskey & 7up and reading a 1938 world atlas.

On Sunday we went out to \_\_\_\_\_ for a boat ride on the Connecticut River. \_\_\_\_\_ got real sick at my mention of artists in the Fiske Commune. There were other problems about the boat, etc. After awhile I drove the Buick and \_\_\_\_\_ back to \_\_\_\_\_ and we went in my car to my room at the Warren Hotel. \_\_\_\_\_ still sick. I wanted one of her latest paintings badly and offered her \$120 for it at \$5 per month and she agreed. Now, a week later, it graces my room; a welcome relief from the others on my walls which are my creations. I am still very pleased and regret not at all the price, in spite of the fact that I have finally got myself in an uproar of desire for a nice little solid state TV and a stereophono so I can play records from Forbes Library.

While we drove over to Hamp I spoke of my writing and \_\_\_\_\_ got in more emotional distress. The fact that she is apples and I am potatoes does not reach her emotions. I feel so bad for her, I know what she suffers, though I never got it so painfully as \_\_\_\_\_ does. The fact that it is totally

*Musings of a Social Soph*

irrational in such intensity is beside the point; her fundamental and basic self-esteem is horribly maimed, her emotional reaction of pain, anger and depression is the natural response to any threat of the slightest dilution of whatever sense of her own value she is able to keep scraped together. In her frenzied need to run me down she unavoidably robs authority from my regard for her great but thwarted capacities. When I am around her I must stop living in order to keep her from dying on me. Nevertheless I lost my patience this past week and wrote her a hurtful letter.

So was here awhile and feeling awful and I was failing to be kind. She wanted to go home so drove her back by a round about route which I suspect displeased her.

I don't remember my thoughts and doings of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. There were an awful lot of things I had wanted to write, but they are lost to me now.

Sept. 27, 1970

Dear PHOENIX,

I can't think of a single thing to write here. Bet you appreciate that. I will bet that you can't possibly appreciate it as much as I do. Please find enclosed six carbon sheets from my LOG which have suffered a discreet razor blade: pages 222, 224, 225, 226, 243 and 244.

With my best wishes,  
*Giles Weaver*

LOG page 222 Sunday 9-20-70 8:10 pm. room 34 Warren Hotel

I went out at 5pm and up the rr tracks for a badly needed walk. Got two cheeseburgs at Macdonald's and sat near the rr tracks and ate. Walked along the tracks to Coolidge Bridge, then down the road beside the river. Enjoyed it much. Seems like I am doing an awful lot of enjoying life for the first time in my life. Other times what enjoyment I had was uneasy or feverish. Was thinking on my walk about various aspects of my new mental life and stamina, which stamina is as it is mostly because of some abatement of the usual under-current of anxiety. I realized that while my conscious thoughts question much about the reality of God, that I was in fact rather much taking the reality of a God concerned in effect with individuals, I was taking such for granted a good deal of the time it would seem. I attribute this to my habit of late months of thinking that if I were alone then things are not important enough to worry about, but if an immanent action God were a reality, then there is hardly any cause to worry. Of course if there is a real life distressing factor then it is too much to expect any person not to worry some. But lacking a specific grievance one should live in a fair degree of psychic peace and not anticipate distress, provided one is so fortunate as to be free of compulsive morbidity.

Well the upshot of this was, while I was walking, to decide I better take steps to hang onto a good thing and not force the Lord to chastise me or withhold further blessings until I wised up enough to make decent use of them.

LOG Monday 9-21-70 9:50am Warren Hotel.

Foggy and hazy, but bright pleasant morning. I am going to try to type up some stuff as rapidly as I can. This is from last week:

En garde! You self-proclaimed mind healers who devastate the soul!

Nabokov says —

*What? What did you say, you mental health industrialists? You don't care what Nabokov says?!*

Never fear, I am a principled person and I don't persecute my companions in illness.

Last I heard, medicine was an art. If medicine deals with the body and psychology deals with the mind, how is it that psychology fancies itself a *science*? This frightens me. It appears to me as one of the outstanding symptoms of the human race plunging into madness. If medicine is respectable as an art, how is it that psychology is not supremely respectable as an art? Were psychology an art how rich it would be. It would attract artists instead of plumbers. It would draw upon all wisdom without fear or favor. Science, philosophy, literature, religion, geography, geology, and Christmas stockings too, all would instruct psychology were it an art.

Perhaps the discipline called psychology is one more demonstration of how people cut things down to their own size. It seems that the mental health industrialists are driven by insecurity just as much as the rest of us.

*Musings of a Social Soph*

As it is, psychology is an insane, obscene and futile endeavor. It does great violence to reality. It claims to study what is normal and what is abnormal. It claims to study what is rational and what is irrational. It does no such thing, beyond some frivolous surface scratching and an occasional peek-a-boo into an abyss or two. Psychology may be fairly characterized as a dumb brute with a ring in its nose and a chain, being led around by Status Quo in person.

Psychology has no guts and no self-respect. It was in yesteryear that His Worship, Science, remarked to peon psychology, "Sweetie, thy gown is dragging in the claye." Now what kind of man jumps out of his skin for a remark like that? Yet ever since that time psychology devoted itself to — that is to say, confined its activity to — getting its skirts out of the mud of philosophy.

Such philosophic questions as "To what end?" along with any attempts to serve the conscience of men were outlawed. Out of the mud of philosophy into the morass of vanity. Just as a vain person spends his time trying to obscure those aspects of his person which some convention has convinced him are ugly or despicable, so psychology spends its time in manipulating sophistry, hoping that there may be no matter left unattended which might reveal the rich and deep earth of its debt to philosophy which has provided the spiritual geology & geography of psychology's realms.

Someday some psychologist will not remark that he sometimes gets the feeling that human behavior has been influenced more by Emily Dickinson and Madison Square Garden than by principles according to Freud. No, he will make no such remark. He will, at the ripe moment in fashionable psychology, merely stand up on his hind legs and cry; "FRAUD". Then all hail will break loose. HAIL! Hail our savior, he has struck the chains from our minds.

Ten years later it will become fashionable for a psychologist to talk rationally. This will be evidenced by such by phenomena as long learned discourses and discussions on what we might briefly and symbolically here refer to as the proper spelling of Freud. It will be debated with placid deliberation whether Freud might better be spelled as Froyed or frOYEd, Frawed or frAWED, Frewd, Frude, fRUDE, Frud, Fred or fred. There may be a few who will favor "frung" and others more enthused with "frADLER".

(now 1pm. Did much rewrite. See need for more.)

LOG page 226 Monday 9-21-70 1:15pm room 34

Well, I was going to go right through sheets 224 and 225 but I got carried away with rewrite and peripheral nonsense. . That might not be an altogether crazy idea. Someone with an education might get inspired to write it up rationally and respectably. The fact that I would then get no credit does not trouble me. Maybe ghost writing is within the capacity of my ego if not my know-how.

Now I think that I will just go on here with my notes and anything else that comes to mind, whether in last week's writing or not.

Note 1. I expect there is prehaps in upper echelon psychology a great deal of sanity prevailing over vanity, but in the eyes of such as me it does not appear to reach these psych majors who go for the clinical. They step out of college a sickly green from such a substantial accumulation of encapsulated wisdom that it seems to be quite an adequate barricade for their apprehensive capacities, to the point of quite substantially obstructing their contact with the specific realities of any specific individual, or situation, or the aspects of reality in broad, slow, but positive flux — so static have their minds been made by the demands of ego and security and stacked-in-the-woodshed knowledge. Since there are undoubtedly about 63,7254,133 eleventy-two psychic principles and factors, obviously too many to learn or keep in active contact, it is unfortunate that the training concentrates on the currently fashionable few and fails to prepare the student for the chief necessity of his work: *perceptive capacity*. That is, how to have *insight* not how to *show*. So there they are, the sick green psych majors, unlimbering learned limericks on distressed men and women already victimized by the everyday insanities of our society.

LOG Monday 9-12-70 1:15pm Warren Hotel  
(pages 243 &244)

Sept. 27, 1970

Dear Rachel,

*Musings of a Social Soph*

You can have no idea how terribly pleased and surprised I was to get a letter from you. I am so sorry that you have so much illness and depression. I do hope that you are happy to be back in

I guess my dad is ok. I see that he re-addressed your letter from . I visited him last July while I was staying a week in a nearby Jewish commune in Vermont. In a few days Dad will be eighty-five years old. It was only three or four years ago that he gave up doing heavy work. But he still works a long week, though he tells me that this past year he has taken more interest in sitting around.

Old grey rainy day here today and I love it. I love the fall time especially anyway. It is then that I feel the old days most strongly. What a great kick to hear from you now. Recently I saw scrawled on a wall of the men's room in the Miss Florence Diner: *Nostalgia is not what it used to be*. It sure as hell isn't; it gets better every year.

I am so pleased that you still keep my creations. I still paint and get good results. An art dealer here wanted to show my stuff in NYC, but I have such a nasty temper that I blew his ears out. Glad I did. Have my favorites here on the walls for my pleasure and everybody can go to hell — well, I don't mean you dear. But I am not painting much lately since I got so busy at writing and how I love it. I am my true bitchy self on paper.

Even though I constantly have spells of dead mind and small depressions I am very happy for the first time in my life. One reason for this is that I finally wised up and abandoned the idea of trying to work. So now, instead of blowing my mind with other peoples' ideas on how I ought to live, I just do my thing even if it don't amount to a damn — and if it don't amount to a damn then that gets me right up there running neck and neck with 90% of the world. How does that grab you, Rachel?

But gee, you have to hear about what a hot dog I was last year. Dad gave me his tools and I lived in central Vermont and I was a carpenter and jack-of-all-work. All by myself I did feats such as moving a woodshed 23 feet. Also I designed and built a real good three-foot diameter overshot waterwheel with the not inconsiderable aid of an eleven-year old engineering genius. I rebuilt a barn floor that had caved in under a truck load of hay. I designed and built tables and benches. I straightened up a barn that was collapsing. I dug ditches, built forms and did concrete work. I painted metal roofs and I made bird houses and flower planters. But the fact that other things in life interested me was not well received. How the world loves to murder the aspirations of its children for the sake of trivial or even obscene values. And child I was, once again becoming the abject subject of an irrational and intense sense of myself as being worthless.

The depression that came on me was as intense as I have had. I contemplated with perverse relish the act of suicide in ways that had always been too horrifying for my chicken brain to entertain. The depression lasted for weeks but was curiously sporadic due to various blessed factors of my environment at the time. But some days and some hours — well, you know well enough what it is, though for me it is the poorest kind of consolation to know that you have suffered the same; I wouldn't wish it on my enemies.

How weird my depressions can get. So driven am I at those times for cheerful contact with anyone that those persons I encounter in casual contact, say in the stores, are deluded by my friendly foolishness. They are totally ignorant, with a great healthy will to remain so, of my black hell of perhaps only an hour before and of the fact that within five minutes I will be out on the sidewalk eyeing passing trucks with lust for the liberating contact of their wheels and my body.

But it is no matter, I live for neither my own benefit nor yours nor anyone else, other than God Himself. And I am sure that God is pleased with the great magnanimity of my spirit in His Behalf, considering how difficult He is: when I put my head out of the window of my top floor room to have a word with Him, He's not there. Later I find that He was sitting in the middle of my room at the time — and said nothing. So I sit in the middle of my room far into the waning hours of the night, chancing to catch Him in a glance out the window as He flies near the morning moon.

Love,  
Giles

(To be continued)

*Giles Weaver* is the pseudonym of a writer living like a solitary Bushman in America's Kalahari.

\* FURTHER

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

*Giles Weaver*

*\* Continued from our preceding issue.*

Everywhere, Somewhere  
Zip-zip, 000  
Monday July 26, 1971

Dear Phoenix,

This here isn't meant to be a definitive analysis of our situation and if anybody pleases themselves to regard it as such or pleases themselves to publish it as such I will be pleased to render unto them a knuckle sandwich right in the kisser not via typewriter but with my fist, so to speak, so to speak due to the fact of the matter — that is to say, I find bloodshed a form of communication. And speaking of definitive, as anybody knows, reality is that there is only the relatively definitive, which proves that the concept of some human beings as intellectuals is a phony concept because no one uses the word “definitive” except the intellectual which proves that he is an “intellectual” or in rational language a fat-assed-ego slob since no one with brains even recognizes definitive as a word even in the concept of an implied qualifier such as “relative”. Because the very idea of there being anything that even remotely resembles the definitive springs right out of the preposterous, presumptuous, pompous ignorance of the kind that is definitely universal in these people seeking security in the world of their thought processes. And speaking of bloodshed you seem to be impressed with the undesirability of physical bloodshed while I don't even bother about that, being busy as I am with being against psychological bloodshed which is what I am up against. Tyrants will prevail, therefore so will bloodshed, as long as there is any tyrannical mentality around — that is to say any human life of the planet earth type. Which proves that you are not really against bloodshed because you just prefer your tyranny on a universal small scale instead of the more conventional large scale tyrannies. Which reminds me to remark that we imagine we stand on the earth of the United States of America — ah-ha — what imaginations we all have. Where we really stand is on The Constitution of The United States of America and when that is sufficiently eroded by the war between the kookie Kooks and the kookie Anti-Kooks, we won't any of us be standing on any ground at all. Either we will be standing on cell-block concrete or slaving our asses off on the floors of munition mills in support of various non-nuclear extravaganzas that will make the Indo-China debacle look like only the unfortunate preview of coming attractions. Which is to say that I have a minimum of sentiment for those activities which provide the kookie Anti-kook members of the establishment powers with an excuse to fuck-up and screw around with the Supreme Court and with constitutional rights — which brings us back to the aforementioned term — “conventional”. That is where The Phoenix and I have a common bone of sentiment — that is to say, conventional is what we are not. Now in my expert opinion (and if you doubt that I am an expert you invite the wrath of my friend and mentor, God (yes we are together in this) ) (as we earth type humans are so wont to claim) in my expert opinion it was the intention of our founding hard-assed realists to try to protect the unconventional types of people because who knows who is going to be or become or be declared just too-too. And if the too-toos aren't protected then who in hell will be eventually and therefore we were done the blessing by these men of The Constitution of The United States of America. In my expert opinion that is all we have between us and the abyss. We are blessed by the insight of people smart enough to know that what we have here on earth is a bunch of ego-maniacs and other desirable and undesirable near-infinite capacities confined in an extremely finite situation (to make a gross understatement) and therefore creating an apparently permanently fantastically insoluble situation for the best wishes of those so afflicted which is all of us, so we go various schemes to ameliorate the hell of this tough situation — one of them being The Constitution of The United States of America and if I sound like some damn-fool flag waver it is only because we have some little choice in how we wish to be a damn fool and not being a complete damn fool that

## *Musings of a Social Soph*

is how I choose to be a damn fool in a wave or be waved world and it is the only flag we got — flag meaning the whole bit, constitution, land, earth, skies, one's own friends, loves, hates and enemies — just like ass means the whole bit, body, mind, heart and soul.

This outburst I have written here was provoked by my contact with \_\_\_\_\_ at the Smith College Library today when I returned the books. A pleasant encounter for me, if not for her. Unfortunately I am in some state of mania most of the time. I do not feel comfortable in the presence of a maniac, due to the fact, no doubt, that he is primarily concerned with his own vision of reality and with impressing it on the minds of others without real regard to their needs and approach to life. In short, every likelihood of a gross indifference in essentials to the reality that is of core importance to his fellow human. For that is what a maniac is — a person seeking to secure himself by establishing *his* personal core as a universal truth, (therefore I can't be comfortable around The Phoenix) therefore I don't feel people can be comfortable around me, at least not for long, because I fail to suppress my mania — in fact I don't try to suppress it very much anymore because I have found it a hopeless task. Now I like \_\_\_\_\_ and I believe that she likes me, but that doesn't make me a comfortable person for her. In fact I am not comfortable with myself except when I am uncomfortable because I should have made somebody uncomfortable and didn't because I am so uncomfortable when I make people uncomfortable; therefore I am most comfortable alone where I have only to deal with the single discomfort. It would make me comfortable to believe that The Phoenix is not comfortable with this letter. If this letter does not bother you, that does not bother me that it doesn't bother you because I know that you are kidding yourself that it doesn't bother you. I know because I am all of 5 per cent sane, which is far and away more sane than you are. Actually I am the sanest person in the whole world. You aren't really about to accept such a preposterous proposition because if you really were smart enough to recognize that it really is true then you would publish me and become famous for your perceptiveness and audacity in publishing the first truly sane person to ever come on this earth. That is why I claim 5 per cent sanity because it is a well known fact that persons with 6 per cent sanity aren't crazy enough to even go slumming for a weekend on this earth. But I am here and obviously the only eminently rational person present. But to get on with this letter — I recognize that we are not about to tolerate each other's preposterous ideas therefore this must be the letter that I claimed I failed to write to you last year. And now that I have ventilated my ire I might drive up sometime and visit on the condition that you not resort to firearms. Let's be loving unfriends and only bad mouth each other so that we confine ourselves to psychological bloodshed — which is to say, of course, the bloodshed that is for real.

Bye now, old battle axe.  
Love, *Giles*

Pee ess — if you publish this letter and change one damn spelling or punct mark or structure or phrasing you invite the rath of God, being as this is His direct gift of gab to me. Words yet is what I will due to you, if I find a way. Take you to the cleaners in court for horse-shitting me into a greater insanity and trying to make me a pawn in your vendetta. If you want to publish a 245 IQ then publish this facsimily and you will then avoid getting carried away with your conventional ideas of what can appear on the printed page and avoid turning my sense into your nonsense.

Hate, *Giles Weaver*

*Giles Weaver* is the pseudonym of a writer whose self-portrait appeared in our previous issue. We hope he will change his mind and let us continue publishing his contemporary diary.