

JOURNAL NOTES FROM 1970 NOVEL.

J's
EVOLUTION

--Religion as Novel:
The Novel as Religion--

The penultimate Word on
Law and Order

A Mirror Image of
Mirrored Reality...
Scene
Through A
Looking Glass

Deane Shapiro, Jr.
Embryonic-Existentialist-
Novelist-at-Hand

Comments on the Cover page.

The Title of the Book

J's
EVOLUTION

The **J** in **J's** is turned over (a revolution) to show that the EVOLUTION of **J** is also a revolution. A revolution is a turning over of the established order. True. But his revolution is also a spiral. Leading him to a higher level of understanding through writing about and reflection on each stage. The first word of the book, Beth, is both the name of his love interest, and also the first letter of the Torah, from the word Bereshit, meaning, in the beginning. Each of the five chapters of this novel ends with a word or phrase which connects it to the first page, first word, so that each chapter revolves back to the beginning at the same time it goes forward to the next chapter.

**--Religion as Novel:
The Novel as Religion--**

**The penultimate Word on
Law and Order**

Religion as Novel. This was written to remove the organizational enrustration of religion and to see it afresh. As I later learned from Zen, this is to see the flower the 500th time as you see it the first time. And of course, punster ever, it is also a religious quest on the form of a novel.

Novel as Religion. Again, there are two meanings. First this novel is J's religion, it is his effort to find himself, to find meaning to God, and seek to be God. It is also his effort to break out of the bounds of conventional religion to find the novel, the numinous, the spiritual. He believes that his existetial quest, the search, is one which each person underakes at some level. Sharing his journey is the unique, novel aspect of his religions quest.

The penultimate Word on law and order. The novel is composed of words, seeking the Word. Penultimate is the recognition of the limits of words. The limits of human (and divine) law and order.

**A Mirror Image of
Mirrored Reality...
Scene
Through A
Looking Glass**

A mirrored image of mirrored reality. This is really quite important. It has to do with multiple levels of reflection. It is detailed in image form on p. 31 of the book with a description of a picture of a father praying over a son, both before a totem pole (wisdom, God?) and the ever self-conscious narrator seeing it all. It is the crux of the book at one level—how many levels of reflection are needed to find, discover, create the self: Johannes writing about his self; John reading Johannes' writings (reflections on reflections...).¹

Scene through a looking glass. And of course the pun; The "scenes" are "seen." Well, Alice, this is my attempt to keep a sense of humor and a bit of perspective as we go down the rabbit hole on this mad hatter's wild ride.

¹ I was talking with Johanna, reading this (Jan 25, 2020!). She humorously said, "The reflections continue." She noted that the very act of writing J's in 1970 was a reflection on John reflecting on Johannes, Jes on both of them and the novelist on all of them. Also, the cove page really foreshadows my interest in control...seeking to create order and to be playful about it....a Merry prankster.

We also discussed how the idea of mirroring in this book is quite interesting given my subsequent travels to Asia with Johanna and interest with Zen, where the mirror has an entirely different feel and meaning. It is less of a cognitive reflection, more of am accepting, non-judgmentalness, just "being": No search for self; Zen's empty mirror. Clearly that is a meditative skill Johannes et al did not have, but could have used ☺. The exploration of this novel was to see the utility and limits of reflection if that is the only skill you have to save yourself.

Deane Shapiro, Jr. Embryonic-Existentialist- Novelist-at-Hand

Embryonic, existentialist novelist at hand. This is my effort to create the embryo of self as existentialist, my writing the novel, Dasein, at hand, being present (Heidegger) and of course, the idea/ pun of writing it by (with) hand!

NEXT PAGE:

To J

without whom this novel
would not have been possible

Ah, still several meanings. J of course for Johannes, and also John and , Jes. But could it be more? J for Joie? Was the ambiguity also to serve as a defense? The book was finished while we were living together, and had known each other for fifteen months, but not yet married. Did I really know when I made the dedication that we'd have just celebrated our 50th Anniversary.?!?

NEXT PAGE:

Now, concerning the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ...that day will not come
unless the rebellion comes first, and
the man of lawlessness is revealed, the
son of perdition, who opposes and exalts
himself against every so-called god or
object of worship...

Second Letter to the Thessalonians 2:1-4

In looking back (in 2004) ,I'm surprised that I picked this quote to start the book—a "Christian" quote about an existential rebel by a person born Jewish. Is this saying that J is the rebel, the man of lawlessness—i.e. the lawyer who rebels against every object of worship (self, women, profession, society, money, even God?) Is J pointing the way to Jesus' second coming? (is he thinking of himself as Jesus (Jes), that to which John points the way? A secular Jesus? The existential man whose second coming is his existential leap into existence?

Note from February 5, 2005. I went back and re-read J's from 1970 for the first time in 35 years. I felt grateful to the person who wrote it, and the characters lived within it. I now present the story of Johannes, John, Jes, Maya, Eddy –JME. I feel like I'm delivering the story of a young man, who, in many ways birthed me.

May 5, 2020. The reader may also wish to view the Author's Note written for the revision of this novel. Fifteen years later still. The evolution, and the revolution continues.....