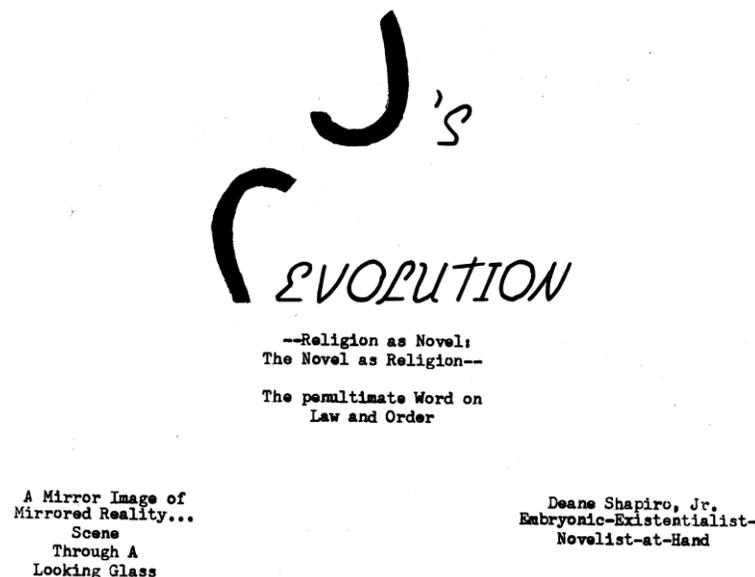
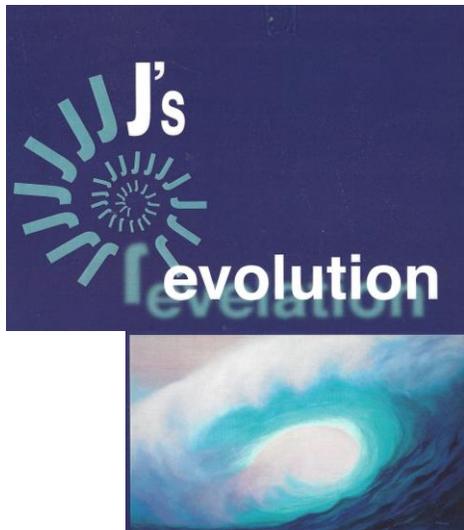


Author's Note (Feb , 5, 2019, at 71+). , Nearly fifty years ago, in 1969-1970, at the age of 21-22. I wrote *J's*, the novel. It's conception began when I was traveling in Israel, just about to graduate from Stanford Universtiy, and having been accepted into Harvard Law School. Relationally, I had just experienced an existential crisis (catalyzed by the ending of a passionate, Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werthe*-type relationship). Professionally, I also began to question my direction. I felt more drawn to Buber's I-Thou efforts to connect with others than to the potentially more adversarial I-It of the law I felt similar to one of Graham Greene's protagonists who, while leading a mundane, unreflective life (the "railroad track of existence") , felt the tracks come apart and the direction of life thrown into turmoil. I took time off and seeking the miraculous: a spiritual quest in Israel to understand my Jewish roots, as well as to trace Jesus' path through the Holy Land. There, I asked, as Kafka's protagonist in the Castle was asked by the gatekeeper, "Who are you?" He replied that he was a land surveyor, just to create an identity. I said to myself, "I'm a writer." And since a writer writes, I began to write a novel about my experiences and challenges, personally, relationally, professionally, and, spiritually. Here is the cover of that novel



That novel was left unseen and unread for thirty-five years on a bookshelf. Then one day, when I was 57, my son, about 22, said "Dad, I want to write an existential novel about a person searching for meaning." I gathered my book off the shelf, dusted it off, and reread it. I thought we could both write novels together, he writing his, me re-writing mine. I wanted to keep the same young man as protagonist. But I realized in the book there were no "wise elders" to whom he could turn for guidance and counsel (if he had even been willing to!). So, in this revised edition (2004-2007 ages 57-60) I evolved a dialogue between the wisdom, experience, and temperance of *J's* older self (and selves) and the freshness of seeing for the first time and impetuous boldness of the younger self.

Rilke once wrote that a true artist should write only one poem, and that poem should be written at the end of one's life. What I seek here is that one final life poem, written as a novel.



Now, a few months before my 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday, as I go through the novel one more time to prepare to place it on my website, I am clear that my intent is to cast J's into the universe as a legacy, a book which might offer a lifeline for readers on their own life journey when they are ready. For some, it may be helpful at the beginning of their journey as a coming of age story, examining the questioning and challenges involved at that stage of life. It may speak to others toward the end of their journey as they try to piece together the wisdom and narrative of a lifetime.....

\* \* \*

Johanna's comment on above....(Feb, 2019 [This is really a marvelously intricate and fascinating archeological look at J's originally and then rewritten. The two covers are so instructive. Love the second cover! Beautiful.. the revolving j's which could also be r's. The picture is also gorgeous. The ideas are insightful and helpful as context. The line "one final life poem, written as a novel" is also lovely. And now, sending it off as a "message in a bottle"...poignant. Job well done.](#)

A note to my kids (approved by mom (Feb , 2019): . Although there may be aspects that originated in real events, this book this is a work of fiction. For example, the book recounts the sexual exploits of youthful Johannes. In real life, your mom was the first woman I ever made love to. (and yes, the bed did break...TMI?! 😊) love love (PS: And I never had a candy apple red corvette---but I did have a 1959 Ford that my Nana gave me, which I loved, and on the back of which I put my motorcycle when mom and I traveled to Northern California!).

J note to kids (On Shabbat Feb 9, 2019 ): I can recommend this book - it is really brilliant! If you want to know more about Dad, even though it is highly fictionalized, read it. You'll learn a lot about his philosophy of life, his literary, philosophical, and religious influences, and his incredibly wonderful and complex mind, so full of twists and turns. Did he mention it is 6 volumes?! But truly - they are worth it.