



Fictio Creditate Veritas---In Saecula Saeculorum (Fiction yields to truth) in an age of ages, forever and ever)

Dr. Maurice Friedman

Swarthmore, Pa.
U. S. A.
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Dear Deane Johannes John Maya Rády Shapiro, Jr., Jes.

I liked your novel very much. It is a virtuoso performance that comes off on the whole remarkably well, especially the technique of the double-time entries, underlined and not. It is exciting and involving. When I had to put it down, I was reluctant to do so. What at the beginning seemed too young and gauche worked itself out well, and, for me at least, the many religious and literary references were well integrated

into the movement of the story itself. I felt

considerable comradeship with you--not only in that you drew me in to the book but also in many points of similarity in our experiences --from the bourgeois Jewish atmosphere that you reacted against (KC for you and Tulsa for me) through the flirtings with Christianity, the stay in Israel, the concern with the real meanings of Judaism, the experiences with Elizabeth, the breaking-out of violence and the recognition of dependency.

I believe you have achieved your subtitle of "The Novel as Religion and Religion as the Novel"--at least for one stretch of your road. I can extrapolate and guess how you got from where you were at the end of it to your present interest in Hinduism and Buddhism. (For me it was the other way round: I was deeply involved in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism before I found my way in any meaningful sense to Judaism.) The rejection of your hated

self, the desire to be free of constant self-involvement and self-preoccupation, the rejection of the God of theism, the attempt to discover meaning in the void, through the absurd (My own progress has led me to what I call in both PROBLEMATIC REBEL & TO DENY OUR NOTHINGNESS the "dialogue with the Absurd.") Because of your success in the novel as religion, you should not dismiss your investment in it as mere attachment to your own creation: it is your own investment and involvement in meaning. But you should recognize too that precisely because meaning was not & could not be found at the end, the book lacks something by way of both artistic & philosophic completion, inevitable I suspect at the stage you were in but you might want to consider now whether you have resources for a more conclusive ending. // I don't care much for the implicit