Regenesis: Lawrence and a Re-Evaluation of the Genesis story

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Abstract:
The sterility of twentieth century society fostered nostalgia for the values of the past and a renewed interest in classical mythology. For D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930), myth became one of the most important elements in both his fictional and non-fictional works. Taking well-known examples, he reinterpreted them as an illustration of his own personal vision. This article is limited to a study of three major fictional works: The Rainbow, Women in Love and The Virgin and The Gypsy and attempts to analyse them in the light of the Genesis myth. It hinges on the hypothesis that Lawrence, by condemning orthodox religious beliefs, formulated his own creation myth: his regenesis. He attempted to expose the false ideals of conventional society, which had for centuries destroyed man’s natural intuition, by a re-examination of the Genesis myth. By using an analytical approach, this article aims to answer several provocative questions. Firstly, how far did Lawrence succeed in undermining conventional authority? Secondly, how successful was he in formulating his philosophy of regenesis? Thirdly, to what extent can this philosophy be seen as an answer to the problems of the age?

Keywords: Darwinism, genesis, myth, mythical revival, regenesis

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