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**Takeo Iida, *D. H. Lawrence as Anti-rationalist: Mysticism, Animism, and Cosmic Life in his Works*.**

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***Reviewed by Michael Bell***

Takeo Iida's volume, although set out as chapters, is a collection of essays around the interrelated themes indicated in the title. Since most of the essays turn on the interplay of Christian religious sensibility and various older, or "primitive", forms of religious consciousness, the structure of the volume leads to some repetition and diffusion where a continuing argument might have defined central questions more closely. For example, it is said in Chapter 7 that animism is very different in Europe and Mexico, while in Chapter 9 animism is a universal. There is no necessary contradiction here, of course, but the topic calls for clarification and refinement.

The opening essay argues for mystical sources in Lawrence's trope of the sun shining at midnight. It is always useful to trace possible sources of an author's imagery although it is a different question, especially with a highly syncretic writer like Lawrence, to say quite what they then mean in the text. The question of mysticism is delicate in his case since he clearly had a sympathetic interest in intense inner states, and borrowed rhetoric from many sources, yet mysticism as transcendence he might well have resisted. His critique of Will Brangwen's experience in Lincoln Cathedral comes to mind. For the implications of the sun it is worth remembering, too, the great nineteenth-century scientific, thermodynamic interest in the sun as well as the sun worship theories of the anthropologist and linguist Max Müller.

The following essay rereads 'The Ship of Death' and usefully reminds the reader that although we habitually think of it as Lawrence's facing of his own extinction, the poem itself is less specific and can be read as the anticipation of spiritual or

psychological rebirth. Had Lawrence not died when he did might he still have written such a poem and might we then have read it quite differently? This reading opens rather than closes the interpretation.

Lawrence's relation to Christianity is engaged in several of the essays and is focused particularly on *The Escaped Cock* which Professor Iida reads as a story of reconciliation, or balance, between paganism and Christianity. It is not clear how far he intends this to be a challenging re-interpretation of what is usually seen as a radical critique of the Christian story. Something might hinge on how one takes the claim that the critique lies in the ultimate effect on the reader rather than the experiences of the characters, but even so it is a surprising way of understanding the fable. After his encounter with the priestess of Osiris, the man does not return to his mission to conduct it in a new spirit. He leaves it behind. Professor Iida's general drift is made clear, however, in his discussions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Although F. R. Leavis said Lawrence had forgotten the meaning of marriage when he wrote this novel, Iida sees him as revivifying the essential meaning of an institution which he acknowledged to have been "Christianity's great contribution to the life of man" (71). It is perhaps under the sway of this association that Iida thinks of the relation with the priestess as a marriage (107).

Three final essays compare Lawrence with contemporary Japanese authors. These are historically illuminating and it would be helpful to hear more of the contrast between a sexuality formed by the morally committed European notion of marriage derived from Christianity and the aesthetic conception of sexual relations seen in the fiction of Sei Ito. What might Lawrence have made of that, one wonders? Would he have been appalled, or rather fascinated? And, either way, would it reflect most on him or on the Japanese mode of life? The final essay on the Hiroshige-based dust-jacket to Lawrence's *Tortoises* is a splendidly iconic warning about cross-cultural perception.