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Evolution Theory in the Image of “an Infant”:

Alfred Tennyson and D. H. Lawrence

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It was 1859 when Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species* and shocked the world. Evolution theory, which had gradually expanded from the late eighteenth century, finally became clear in Darwin's publication. Its impact was so enormous that it also had an influence on literary world. The aim of this paper is to examine the influence of evolution theory in the image of “an infant” by comparing a nineteenth century poet, Alfred Tennyson, and a twentieth century novelist, D. H. Lawrence.

In Memoriam, published by Tennyson in 1850, was the longest elegy in English literature, in which the image of “an infant” was presented. Lawrence, who liked to read Tennyson's poems, often quoted a verse from

In Memoriam, "an infant crying in the night," in his works. The question, however, is there is a difference between the images of "an infant" produced by Tennyson and by Lawrence. Tennyson's "infant" is pure and fragile, while Lawrence's one is just a bother and sometimes cruel. The discussion goes on to search the reason for the difference in these images.

The paper focuses on the concept that their response to evolution theory makes a difference in the image of "an infant." Though both Tennyson and Lawrence criticize the evolution theory, their ways of accepting an idea of "evolution" is different. Tennyson's hidden fascination with "evolution" makes him describe an innocent infant as the most evolved species. On the other hand, Lawrence's "infant crying in the night" reflects his warning against our mind which has become complicated in modern society, forgetting old passion and instinct in the course of evolution. Finally, the paper reveals that the way people accept the idea of "evolution" has changed from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century.