

Cristina Nistor
Polytechnic University of Bucharest

HOW TO TRANSLATE DURABLE SCIENCE INTO TRANSIENT FICTION: THE CASE OF A. S. BYATT'S MORPHO EUGENIA

Keywords: Byatt, durable scientific ideas, creative translation, transient postmodern text

Abstract: Charles Darwin's 1859 book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, represents, for us, the crux in understanding life mechanisms and the evolution of man. Supporting his theory on scientific facts, Darwin replaces the old creationist view with an idea that has proven its durability: natural selection. Man is no longer the creation of God, but the result of natural evolution. Antonia Susan Byatt, who has earned the reputation of a 'postmodern Victorian', has shown a vivid interest in science in general, and biology, mathematics and genetics in particular. In fact, in her 1992 novella *Morpho Eugenia*, Byatt goes back in time and, starting from Darwin's idea of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, performs a difficult operation: that of revaluing Victorianism from the (rather curious) point of view of British postmodernism. .

My paper tries to discuss Byatt's novella *Morpho Eugenia* from a double perspective. On the one hand, it analyzes the Darwinian ideas of the origins and evolution of species, as they appear to the Victorian characters in the novella. The focus of the fabulas in the novella is on mating rituals in bees and ants, as compared to those in humans. On the other hand, the paper gives a demonstration of how durable scientific ideas can be creatively translated into a fictional text, without spoiling any of its fun. In *Morpho Eugenia*, the sound scientific ideas lend the transient postmodern text a sense of durability and a new lease of life.