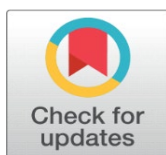
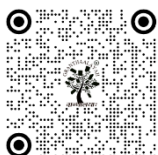


# REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ENCOUNTERING WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION IN AMÉLIE NOTHOMB'S NOVELS

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## ABSTRACT

Discrimination is an unequal treatment of individuals belonging to a minority group on the basis of an illegitimate criterion. In labor relations, stereotypes take the form of unfavorable cognitive biases that keep out productive workers belonging to minority groups, promote inter-society among members of the majority group and undermine the free market. In this sense, the costs of discrimination are not only social, but also economic, since they adversely affect national growth.

It also takes into consideration the indicators linked to the discriminatory situation women face in the labor market, in particular the type of contract, verbal and physical harassment, freedom of choice of work, compensation, women's salary progression after maternity, insurance and unionization, dismissal due to maternity, access to responsibility, vocational training, etc. Discrimination must therefore be tackled, not only in the labor market, but also in other sectors of society. This being the case, the professional sector, in the broadest sense of the term, is a strategic entry point for combating discrimination, not only in employment and occupation, but also in other sectors. This study Focus on the works of Amélie Nothomb who is Belgian originated Francophone writer. She is apparently addressing the problems faced by women in workplace discrimination such as dishonor, humiliation and integration failures occur at working place in the work of Amélie Nothomb. This study highlights these discriminations that how she addressed these problems in her writing.

**Keywords:** Women, Workplace, Discrimination, Amélie, French, Francophone Literature

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Champagne. L defined "Torture" as unfair treatment of individuals belonging to a minority group on the basis of an illegitimate criterion. In working relationship, stereotypes take the form of unfavorable cognitive bias that keep productive workers out of the workforce belonging to minority groups, promote intermingling of members of the majority group and are harmful to the free market. In this sense, the impacts of discrimination are not only in social, but also in economic, since they have negative impact on national growth. Drissi Meryem et al. are also suggest to take into consideration that the indicators associated to the discriminatory situation faced by women in the labor market, mainly, the type of contract, verbal and physical harassment, freedom to choose your job, compensation, changes in women's

pay after maternity leave, insurance and unionization, dismissal due to maternity, access to responsibility, vocational training, etc. According to Manuela Tomei, discrimination must therefore be addressed, not only in the labor market, but also in other sectors of the company. With this in mind, in the broadest sense of the term, the professional sector is a strategic entry point for fighting against the discrimination, not only in employment and job, but also in other sectors.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Carcillo, Stéphane addressed a summary of all forms of discrimination in the labor market: gender, age, ethnic origin, religious beliefs or physical appearance. It presents the methods to detect them as well as the policies to fight against them, before emphasizing the social impact of these discriminations. Doytcheva, Milena spoken about several surveys conducted since the year 2000 in the field of French policies to fight against the discrimination and for diversity in the workplace, she addressed in her work based on the comparison of their implementation with those of other European countries, United States and Canada. It highlights particularly the vagueness of the concept of diversity and the concealment of ethnic categories. Barth, Isabelle has mentioned her study that analysis of the link between the representation of women in French company and gender inequalities: an overview of inequality and situation of women in the job world (discrimination, sexism, French rule); causes of this inequality (maternity, family life); schemes put in place in the companies to move towards greater professional equality. A study of gender relations in companies; gender inequalities benchmarks in France; conviction of a company for sexual discrimination against a female employee; effects of part-time work schemes; The World Bank group's gender and equality strategy; presence of women and market capitalization. Becuwe, Audrey, et al. mentioned that the contribution of Community law with its complex system for fighting against the discrimination is considerable in the field of equal treatment. It was the one who laid the foundations for a remarkable new approach to both the grounds for discrimination and the methods of proof. In some countries, including Germany and the UK – Great Britain, the idea of an interdisciplinary approach to discrimination in the workplace from a sociological and legal point of view, is enabling progress to be made in worker protection. It can refer to this approach as intersectionality, refers to a transdisciplinary theory. It develops the idea that multiple discrimination can exist, and that it can be punished. Does the current European legal framework make it possible to remedy multiple and intersectional discrimination in employment? How is this situation dealt with in European countries?

## 3. DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Analysis of Woman encountered with workplace discrimination in the novel of “Stupeur et Tremblement (ST)”

## 4. WOMAN ENCOUNTERED WITH VERBAL VIOLENCE

In the workplace, Amélie's situation recovers. Fubuki does not give any other work to Amélie, which is far from disappointing the narrator, who is delighted by this. An uneasy peace is created between the two women. However, two weeks later, Mr. Omochi comes and is rumbling into the account section. The narrator describes:

« Il s'arrêta au milieu de la pièce et cria, d'une voix d'ogre réclamant son déjeuner: - Fubuki-san !» (ST: 116)

“He stopped in the middle of room and shouted, with an ogre voice demanding his lunch: - Fubuki-san!”

Instead of calling Nippon into his office as he usually does, the vice president decides to publicly scold her so that she will be humiliated. Watching, stunned, Mr. Omochi is pouring out his gall in a “hail of cries that never ended” (ST: 119), Amélie is struck by the idea that “[I]n truth, he was trying to rape Miss Mori.” (ST: 119) She added:

« Cette explication était tellement juste que je vis ployer le corps de ma supérieure. Elle était pourtant une dure, un monument de fierté: si son physique cédait, c'était la preuve qu'elle subissait un assaut d'ordre sexuel. » (ST: 120)

“This explanation was so accurate that I saw the body of my superior. She was a tough lady, a monument to pride: if her physique gave way, it was proof that she was being sexually assaulted.”

It occurs, again, that the verbal violence of Mr. Omochi appears metaphorically in the form of physical aggression and that orality is once again confused with genitality in nothombian world. An eternity later, when the «monster» finally tires of his toy, Miss Mori, paralyzed, runs away from pain and misery to the bathroom. Amélie, who naively believes that she will be able to comfort her, is closely following her superior. (ST: 125) Now, when Fubuki becomes aware of this

intrusion, she is convinced that Amélie seeks to consume her shame until the end by watching her cry, she who had been able to protect what was left of honor by hiding her tears. Her fury is boundless and none of Amélie's explanations make her mind change. Rincy and George (2026)

## 5. WOMAN ENCOUNTERED WITH DOWNFALL

From the next day, Miss Mori takes the Belgian employee to the shower room on the forty-fourth floor where she teaches her, with an Olympian serenity, that she will now perform the function of "a restroom attendant", also called bathroom, lavatory, toilet, or washroom attendant or cleaner for both ladies and gentlemen. [8] Amélie will be responsible for renewing the paper supplies in the cabinets and replacing the hand-wiping roll once it has become completely soiled. The narrator adds:

«Le clou fut atteint quand la belle créature empoigna délicatement la brosse à chiottes pour m'expliquer, avec beaucoup de sérieux, quel en était le mode d'emploi.» (ST: 130)

"The highlight came when the beautiful creature gently grasped the toilet brush and explained, in all seriousness, how to use it."

As a result, Amélie realized the extent of her decline. In her distress, she recalls her past aspirations

Petite, je voulais devenir Dieu. [...] Adulte, je me résolus à être moins mégalomane et à travailler comme interprète dans une société japonaise. Hélas, c'était trop bien pour moi et je dus descendre un échelon pour devenir comptable. Mais il n'y avait pas de frein à ma foudroyante chute sociale. Je fus donc mutée au poste de rien du tout. Malheureusement - j'aurais dû m'en douter -, rien du tout, c'était encore trop bien pour moi. Et ce fut alors que je reçus mon affectation ultime : nettoyeuse de chiottes. (ST: 131-132)

As a child, I wanted to become God. [...] As an adult, I resolved to be less megalomaniacal and work as an interpreter for a Japanese company. Unfortunately, it was too good for me and I had to go down a step to become an accountant. But there was no stopping my fast social fall. So I was transferred to a position of nothing at all. Unfortunately - I should have guessed - nothing at all, it was still too good for me. And it was then that I received my ultimate assignment: toilet cleaner.

According to G. Bourdellon, the narrator has to mourn not only her ego ideal, but also her idealized object. Indeed, the divine Miss Mori, kneeling in front of a washbasin in the ladies rest room, is reduced to a "female became toilet attendant." Genitality, hitherto confused with orality for Amélie, seems to combine with anality in the figure of Fubuki whose absolute perfection is spoiled by the possession of a cesspool, an attribute hitherto reserved for the mother-canalization described in *Metaphysics of tubes*. So it was Miss Mori, priestess of the lavatory, who presided over the ceremony during which Amélie was appointed a "Carmelite of conveniences". (ST: 158)

To remain healthy, the young Belgian girl has no choice but to change her references, to reverse her landmarks, which is underlined in the text by a series of antitheses. The narrator comments:

«Par un processus salvateur de mes facultés immunitaires, ce retournement intérieur fut immédiat. Aussitôt, dans ma tête, le sale devint le propre, la honte devint la gloire, le tortionnaire devint la victime et le sordide devint le comique.» (ST: 136)

"Through a process of saving my immune system, this inner transformation was instantaneous. Immediately, in my mind, dirty became clean, shame became glory, the torturer became the victim and the miserable became the comic." »

The bay window, the threshold space that fascinates Amélie, also contributes to this carnival twist on transformation. The narrator comments,

« La fenêtre était la frontière entre la lumière horrible et l'admirable obscurité, entre les cabinets et l'infini, entre l'hygiénique et l'impossible à laver, entre la chasse d'eau et le ciel. » (ST: 186)

"The window was the limit between horrible light and stunning darkness, between cabinets and limitlessness, between the hygienic and the unwashable, between the flush and the sky."

Thus, one of Amélie's favorite activities at Yumimoto is to «throw herself into the view»:

« Je passais des heures debout, le front collé au verre, à jouer à me jeter dans le vide. Je voyais mon corps tomber, je me pénétrais de cette chute jusqu'au vertige. » (ST: 150)

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« [I]'d spend hours standing, my forehead glued to the glass, playing at throwing myself into the void. I'd see my body falling, and I'd get dizzy from the fall."

As she hallucinates her way through the window frame, the narrator-character of *Stupeur et Tremblements* literally jumps through the looking glass into a universe with a different scale of values. In so doing, the young woman reconnects with melancholy fantasies of defenestration that she harbored when she was younger - think here of the night Amélie swings through the attic window in *Métaphysique des tubes*. (MT: 78)

In addition to visualizing herself leaping into the void, Amélie also imagines herself disintegrating as she falls, so much so that

« des lambeaux de son corps dans la ville entière.» (ST: 161)  
"shreds of her body would be found all over the city."

The presence of these fantasies of dispersion, similar to those presented by the narrator of "Sabotage amoureux" dreaming of transforming herself into carnal confetti under enemy fire (SA: 21), reflects to the psyche's strong attraction to the non-living state, to death. Whatever the narrator-character may say, it is influenced that this hectic period of her life, which she says, was punctuated by countless laughs, affected her in a profoundly negative way, with comedy becoming an obligatory defense mechanism against suicidal ideas.

It's clear in Amélie's mind that Fubuki has given her this job in order to force her to resign. But for a Nippon, resigning is tantamount to losing face, which is simply inconceivable. So, in order to subject Amélie suffers the ultimate humiliation, Miss Mori demotes her. However, rather than resign, the young Belgian, still determined to become Japanese, conforms to the customs of the country and accepts her new assignment, even though it's not very glorious. The narrator explains:

« J'avais signé un contrat d'un an. Il expirerait le 7 janvier 1991. Nous étions en juin. Je tiendrais le coup. Je me conduirais comme une Nippone eût fait.» (ST: 133)

I signed a one-year contract. It would expire on January 7, 1991. It was June. I'd stick it out. I would behave as a Nipponese woman would have done."

Let's not forget that Amélie's determination to complete her contract is no doubt just as much linked to her desire to postpone her wedding, which, we recall, is to be celebrated as soon as she leaves Yumimoto.

When Amélie decides to stay with the company, the dishonor of her new profession falls on her superior, who is solely responsible for her schedule. (ST: 138)

Quickly aware of Amélie's special status, some employees, led by Mr. Tenshi, decide to boycott the forty-fourth floor toilets. By taking the elevator to the forty-third, they lose valuable time. The narrator explains:

« Au Japon, cela s'appelle du sabotage : l'un des plus graves crimes nippons, si odieux qu'on utilise le mot français, car il faut être étranger pour imaginer pareille bassesse. » (ST: 143)

"In Japan, this is called sabotage: one of the most serious of Japanese crimes, so odious that we use the French word, because you'd have to be a foreigner to imagine such baseness.

The employees of the forty-fourth soon divide into two camps: the boycotters, who defend the right to a critical mind, and the others, whose submission to authority is such that they don't care if strangers are humiliated. Far from going unnoticed, Amélie's situation is at the root of a major ideological controversy within the Yumimoto Company, giving Fubuki's leadership an inglorious air.

## 6. WOMAN ENCOUNTERED WITH HUMILIATION

Outraged by this turnaround, Fubuki becomes

« plus enragée que jamais de se rendre aux commodités. Elle entreprit même d'aller s'y brosser les dents deux fois par jour: on n'imagine pas les conséquences bénéfiques de sa haine sur son hygiène bucco-dentaire. » (ST : 143)

"more enraged than ever to go to the toilet. She even undertook to brush her teeth twice a day: you can't imagine the beneficial effects of her hatred on her oral hygiene."

Faced with this relentlessness, the narrator wonders:

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« Son besoin de m'humilier était-il si démesuré? Et s'il en était ainsi, quelle pouvait donc être la nature véritable de ses sentiments à mon égard ? » (ST: 168)

"Was her need to humiliate me so overwhelming? And if so, what could be the true nature of his feelings towards me? "

According to G. Bourdellon, Fubuki's diligence betrays her arousal and proves the existence of her sadomasochistic contract with Amélie.

Note that while Fubuki settles into the role of executioner at this point, Amélie soon definitively adopts the role of victim. The psychoanalyst suggests that the narrator-character finds self-sacrificial pleasure in this torturous relationship, which is why she doesn't end it by resigning. In this perspective, Amélie, who seems to enjoy her condition, maintains:

«Fubuki n'exerçait sa cruauté qu'envers moi. Ce devait être un privilège. Je décidai d'y voir une élection. » (ST : 159)

"Fubuki was only cruel to me. It must have been a privilege. I decided to see it as an election."

As Yumimoto employs only four women, Amélie and Miss Mari are the only ones to frequent the ladies' toilets on the forty-fourth floor. These soon become a "Racinian enclosed space", a claustrum where, several times a day, a "new episode in a raging brawl of passion" takes place. (ST: 144) In this hygienic setting, Amélie and Fubuki engage in an anal power play. I believe that, under the effect of a repetition compulsion, the two women confront each other in this asymmetrical relationship in order to reproduce the ambivalent maternal attachment of early life, at the root of Amélie's melancholy.

For a time, the narrator is content to contemplate the woman who sent her to the galleys, denying, in a carnivalesque reversal, dishonorable aspect of her position. She states:

« Fubuki croyait me déranger alors qu'au contraire j'étais ravie d'avoir de si nombreuses occasions d'admirer sa beauté orageuse en ce gynécée qui nous était particulier. » (ST: 144)

"Fubuki thought she was upsetting me when, on the contrary, I was delighted to have so many opportunities to admire her stormy beauty in this particular gynaecium of ours."

But Amélie soon stops enjoying the cruelty of her torturer. One day, while daydreaming and throwing herself into the view, Amélie is grabbed like a rag doll by Mr. Omochi, who drags her to the men's restroom, shouting in Japanese-American that a cabin is out of paper. The narrator describes:

L'âme en lambeaux, j'allai me réfugier dans les toilettes des dames. Je m'accroupis dans un coin et me mis à pleurer des larmes analphabètes. Comme par hasard, ce fut le moment que choisit Fubuki pour venir se brosser les dents. Dans le miroir, je la vis qui, la bouche mousseuse de dentifrice, me regardait sangloter. Ses yeux jubilaient. L'espace d'un instant, je haïssais ma supérieure au point de souhaiter sa mort. (ST: 153)

With my soul in tatters, I took refuge in the ladies' rest room. I squatted in a corner and began to cry illiterate tears. As luck would have it, this was the moment Fubuki chose to come and brush her teeth. In the mirror, I saw her, her mouth foaming with toothpaste, watching me sobbing. Her eyes were gloating. For a moment, I hated my superior to the point of her dead.

At the end of her contract, Amélie tendered her resignation in the usual way, meeting all her bosses one by one, starting with her immediate superior. The relationship between the two women takes a new turn. During the interview, Miss Mori asks Amélie to admit that she is mentally handicapped with no future. The young Belgian notices that her self-reproaches have the power to warm her superior's cold body with sadistic pleasure. Wanting to bring Miss Mori to the climax of ecstasy, Amélie asks her, as one would address the Emperor in ancient Japanese imperial protocol, i.e. "with stupeur et tremblement", if she would be willing to help with the garbage collection. When Fubuki answers in the affirmative with a little too much enthusiasm, Amélie understands that she has succeeded. (ST : 172) addressing mentally her torturer, the narrator concludes:

« C'est un beau spectacle que ton besoin d'entailler ma peau à coups d'insultes, tu tires à blanc, chère tempête de neige, j'ai refusé que l'on me bande les yeux face à ton peloton d'exécution, car il y a si longtemps que j'attendais de voir du plaisir dans ton regard. » (ST: 170-171)

"It's a beautiful show that your need to slash my skin with insults, you're shooting at nothing, dear snowstorm, I refused to be blindfolded in front of your firing squad, because I have been waiting so long to see the pleasure in your eyes."

In the final analysis, the narrator's jubilation depends not so much on the suffering inflicted on her, as the assault is carried out with "no" bullets, but on the perverse pleasure her superior derives from torturing her. It is thus at the value of her imminent departure and ultimate humiliation, consented to and offered, that Amélie is able to enjoy her position as victim. When she finally manages to make Fubuki smile, as she once wished to warm Elena, Amélie enjoys by proxy, becoming a reflection of her torturer. The shared pleasure creates a game of mirrors in which roles disappear, so that the mother (oral, anal, genital, internal, external, and surrogate) and the melancholy daughter once again merge.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study has addressed the problems encountered by the women in workplace discrimination such as dishonor, humiliation and integration failures occur at working place in the works of Amélie Nothomb. Firstly, it is addressed with woman encountered with verbal violence, secondly downfall and lastly, humiliation. Verbal violence appears metaphorically in the form of physical aggression and that orality is once again disordered with genitility in nothombian world. The Belgian employee to the shower room on the forty-fourth floor where she taught her, with an Olympian serenity, that she had performed the function of "a restroom attendant", also called bathroom, lavatory, toilet, or washroom attendant or cleaner for both ladies and gentlemen. The young Belgian girl had no choice but to change her references, to reverse her landmarks, which has emphasized in the text by a series of antitheses. Whatever the narrator-character might say, it is influenced that this hectic period of her life, which she said, was punctuated by countless laughs, affected her in a profoundly negative way, with comedy becoming an obligatory defended mechanism against suicidal ideas. When Amélie decided to stay with the company, the dishonor of her new profession fell on her superior, who was solely responsible for her schedule. Far from going unnoticed, Amélie's situation was at the root of a major ideological controversy within the Yumimoto Company with an inglorious air.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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