**Abstract**

Amélie Nothomb’s 1999 novel **Stupeur et Tremblements** portrays the misadventures, misunderstandings and misgivings experienced by a Belgian professional in a large, modern Japanese workplace. This book is read as an autobiographical account of the Japanese experience, and as a satirical critique of Japanese society.

I argue that while the narrator is unable to perform the duty for which she was hired as translator, she acts as an interpreter of Japanese mores. Always and indelibly perceived within the boundaries of Western culture, Japan in the novel is a stylized construct replete with references to Western concepts.

My article sheds light on how the Westernized look on Japan takes place and focuses on several narrative techniques which emphasize and foreground the narrator’s immersion in Western culture, including an *allusion* to **Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland**, *paraphrasis* and injection of meaning, *namedropping* of Western key figures and concepts, and the *eye as metaphor and motif*.

**Key words**

Amélie Nothomb, Fear and Trembling, Japan, the West, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, individualism, interpretation

**Bio-note**

Nurit Buchweitz is associate professor in the department of General and Hebrew Literature at Beit Berl college, Israel. She was chair of the Department between 2008-2013 and since 2015 she is Dean of the Faculty of Society and Culture. Her areas of research are postmodernism – poetics and theory, post-humanism and 21st century writing. Her recent books are **An Officer of Civilization: The Poetics of Michel Houellebecq** (Peter Lang 2015), and **Intimate Relationships in Cinema, Literature and Visual Culture** (Palgrave Macmillan 2017, co-edited volume).

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