

## الباحث

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كتابة الشعور: التأثر، والالتباس، والعوالم الداخلية الأنثوية في رواية امينة كين "قلة اللياقة"

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Writing Feeling: Affect, Ambiguity, and Feminine Interiorities in  
Amina Cain's novel ( Indelicacy)

## عنوان البحث

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## ملخص البحث

تركز هذه الدراسة على رواية "قلة اللياقة" (٢٠٢٠) للكاتبة امينة كين من خلال تطبيق منظور «نظرية العاطفة»، مع تركيز خاص على الكيفية التي تستحضر بها الرواية أجواءً وجدانية عبر تقنيات سردية مقتصدة، خافتة، وتجريدية. وتنتظر الدراسة للذاتية الأنثوية لا بوصفها فئة ثابتة أو تعبيرية فقط، بل باعتبارها إمكانية عاطفية متجسدة تتجاوز النماذج التقليدية للتعبير الوجداني. بالاعتماد على القراءة النصية الدقيقة المستندة إلى أعمال بعض المنظرين البارزين مثل لورين بلانت، وسارا احمد، كاثلين ستوارت، ليزا بارسيتير، تناقش الدراسة كيفية تفاعل الرواية وبطلة القصة في الرواية مع العادات المنزلية، والتجربة الجمالية، والرغبة الداخلية. ويؤلى اهتمام خاص لقدرة الالتباس، والسلبية، والتحويلات الوجدانية الدقيقة على زعزعة التوقعات المعيارية المتعلقة بالعاطفة، والفاعلية، والتجسيد الأدبي لتجربة المرأة. وتسهم الدراسة في رفد النقاشات النسوية المعاصرة حول العاطفة، والتجسد، وذاتية السرد بمنظورات نقدية جديدة

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## The Title

Writing Feeling: Affect, Ambiguity, and Feminine Interiorities in Amina Cain's novel ( Indelicacy)

## Summary

This study focuses on Amina Cain's *Indelicacy* (2020) through the prism of "Affect Theory", with particular emphasis on how the novel conjures emotional atmospheres through of minimalist, subdued, and abstract narrative techniques. It theorizes feminine subjectivity not as a fixed or expressive category, but as an incorporated affective potentiality that exceeds traditional examples of emotional articulation. Based on views by prominent theorists such as Lauren Berlant, Sara Ahmed, Kathleen Stewart, and Lisa Baraitser, a close textual reading examines how the narrator of Cain's novel interacts with domestic habits, aesthetic experience, and interior desire. The study also considers how ambivalence, passivity, and small shifts in feeling disrupt the normative expectations of emotion, agency, and the literary embodiment of female experience. It contributes new critical perspectives to contemporary feminist debates concerning affect, embodiment, and narrative subjectivity.

## Introduction

In recent years, American fiction has undergone a shift, marked by a realignment of its core elements and a reevaluation of how reality is presented. At the center of this change lies a new interest in what can be termed as “Affective theory” which is a form of narrative that directly abandons dramatic breadth, explanatory psychologist and resolution towards stillness, ambiguity and a diffuse emotional sense. Affect theory is a developing field of research that is fluidly inter- and intra-disciplinary, that is, it revolves around bodies, spaces, and the forces that bring bodies and spaces alive and in relation to each other as systems of relation and existence. Amina Cain can be seen as a paradigmatic representation of this sensibility with her novel *Indelicacy* (2020). This novel depicts a minimalist prose and a skeleton of a plot that nevertheless charts the unobtrusive rebellion of a woman against the institutions of matrimony, the upper classes, and the silence of home (Egan, 2020).

In addition, Cain’s novel resists the conventions of teleological or action-driven fiction. Rather, it is experiential, and atmospheric, being affective not as legible emotion, but as a zone of sensation and orientation or what Lauren Berlant (2022) refers to as “Affective Atmospheres” (Ali, 2020, p. 103). The reader is introduced to a world of indeterminacy not only of relation to meaning and significance, but of translation between acts and inaction, satisfaction and alienation. This idea necessitates a critical approach that prioritizes non-discursive affective registers, moving beyond conventional literary analysis of discrete emotions as outlined in general affect theory discussions (Berlant, 2017, p. 13)

According to many critics, “The Affect Theory”, especially the form in which it is based on feminist movements, praises what is perceived over the stated, what is latent over the overt. It puts the emphasis on the physical, the aerial, and the delayed as the points of meaning-making (Talkhani, 2024, p. 117). The study makes use of specific theoretical works to support the aim and goal of the study. A special attention will be paid to theoretical ideas of Berlant on issues of affect and the idea of “emotional orientation” to explain the relationship and attachment between objects, places and experiences with us. Such frameworks allow one to interpret the themes of *Indelicacy* as one based as much on what is not articulated or apparent as on what is felt, hovering, or inarticulate (Talkhani, 2024, p. 118).

The novel makes an inquiry into the institutional frameworks such as marriage, patriarchy, and class as they do not only inscribe themselves on the body but

also enter the affective repertoire of everyday life. Using an anonymous protagonist, *Indelicacy* depicts the story of a transition of a woman between reticence and expression, ritual and rupture (Harlin, 2020). This woman lacks the ability or desire to talk louder, name herself, or to demonstrate emotional visibility which is associated with the ideas of Judith Butler “the ungrievable subject”. Butler regards the ungrievable life as one that does not fit within the normative discourses in which the subjects of grievability are constructed (Butler, 2016). Such a rejection is the kind of a feminist opposition: subjective opacity, incompleteness, muffled survival. Cain's particular portrayal in *Indelicacy* offers a distinct theoretical contribution by illustrating how this “ungrievability” manifests not through explicit marginalization, but through a deliberate, internal aesthetic of subjective opacity, incompleteness, muffled survival (Pottinger, 2024).

The fact that the narrator tends to the quietness and observation does not imply that the author depicts her passivity or disempowerment, but conversely, it affirms the redefinition of the agency. What she desires to write, to take a stroll in galleries, and to escape marriage is not just aesthetic and personal, but extremely political too (Ouweland, 2025). In such a way, the novel presents an aesthetic ethics and investment in how slowness, ambiguity, and interiority may destabilize normative economies of emotion and meaning (Sheehi, 2024, p. 212).

This study investigates how Cain's *Indelicacy* enacts an affective feminism, that is, poetics of resistance in terms of slowness, indirection, and sensory attunement. By shedding light on these processes, the novel makes the reader understand what it means to write feeling and what it means in a more ultimate sense, to feel by writing.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study conducts with a triangulated theoretical framework which is the “Affect Theory”, feminist literary criticism, and narrative notions of temporality to study Cain's novel. By contrast, affect, is understood as a pre-reflective embodied intensity that cannot be captured or cognitively processed, it is at the same time independent of logical progression and the literal form of a conventional narrative closure (Sünter, 2022, p. 272) . Amina Cain's stylistics operate within a register of affects, characterized by mood, silence, and delay. The author uses these elements to create a temporal and sensual field where subjectivity detaches from teleological progress.

A central theoretical premise is derived from Sara Ahmed's (2023) notion of "emotional orientations," which positions emotions not as interior states but as relational, directional forces that align or dis-align bodies with normative cultural spaces (Pottinger, 2024). Cain's novel *Indelicacy* displays the breakthrough insights into this concept by demonstrating how a protagonist's subtle, internal 'orientations' manifest profound dis-alignments with normative cultural spaces, even without overt action or declaration. The novel uniquely captures how minute shifts in feeling, rather than grand gestures, reconfigure the subject's relationship to power structures.

The work of Lauren Berlant (2022) on "Cruel Optimism" also used by the author clarify the ambiguity of the desires of the heroine, because all her actions and thoughts are also anchored in the nihilistic vision of being free, achieving artistic realization, possessing and controlling oneself (Berlant, 2022). Cain's narrative provides an interpretation of cruel optimism by depicting desires that are both 'anchored' in domestic ideals and perpetually deferred through the same domestic and aesthetic structures that promise fulfillment, creating unstable portrayal of precarious female agency rendered unstable rather than empowered. The novel's focus on the internal 'nihilistic vision', offers a unique literary lens on the theory, demonstrating how this attachment to compromising life worlds operates at a deeply psychological and affective level.

However, the presentation of the problem of affect and narrative ethics by Clare Hemmings (2023) highlights the inability to interpret and resolve the narrative of the story that is central to *Indelicacy*. Hemmings puts into the foreground the feminist politics of narrative opacity the refusal to explain, confess and justify. Cain's *Indelicacy* contributes a new theoretical model to feminist narratology by illustrating an aesthetic and political practice of opacity that goes beyond a mere refusal of disclosure. The narrator of Cain lives in such opacity as an aesthetic and political practice: she is an emotionally present speaker, but one who cannot be known narratively; one who withholds the sorts of psychological description that would be normally required by the central female character in a literary novel (Choi, 2021).

So, these theoretical positions make it possible to read *Indelicacy* as a novel in which affect functions not just thematically, but formally and politically as well. Its atmospheric richness embodies various forms of a feminist counter-violence—a poetics of withdrawal, minor derailment and an embodied ambiguity.

### Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How does Amina Cain's *Indelicacy* mobilize affective registers—such as stillness, hesitation, and withdrawal—to articulate a feminist poetics of resistance?
2. In what ways does the protagonist's relationship to space, solitude, and aesthetic experience contest normative frameworks of gender, domesticity, and class?
3. How does Cain's minimalist narrative form enact affective disruption and temporal suspension?

### Literature Review

The development of “Affect Theory” has introduced an intense change of the interpretive landscape of the study of literature by introducing such strategies that oppose emphasis on discrete manifestations of a particular emotion. Although such transformation has taken place, there is a certain gap in the previous research on the application of “Affect Theory” to texts such as Cain's *Indelicacy* by using extreme minimalism and delicate registers of affect to express feminist politics. This study shows how this novel presents a new challenge and opportunity for affect theory, demanding a carefully balanced treatment of the pre-conscious, bodily aspects of affect in a highly muted narrative context. Critics like Brian Massumi and other feminist theorists have put the pre-conscious; bodily aspects of affect into the foreground of discussion—ways of experiencing that cannot be captured either in staging or in the flow of thought itself (Houen, 2020). This conceptual shift creates a rich land ripe to explore the study of modern fiction where form places an emphasis on atmosphere, mood and frozen time over plot or internalized psychology. One of the main interventions in the theory of affects is the concept of emotional orientation theorized by Sara Ahmed in the seminal essay “Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology” (2006), as well as in “The Cultural Politics of Emotion” (2020). Rather than diagnosing affect as a personalized and interiorized action, Ahmed rearticulates affect as a mediated positioning—or, to be more precise, social status (Ahmed S. , 2006, p. 556). Her model provides an essential point of perspective on the analysis of the establishment of emotional atmospheres of narration and spatial planes (Ahmed A. , 2023).

In her posthumous version of “Cruel Optimism”, Berlant extends this dialectic to highlight a position of precarious agency, through which the subjects strive to hold on to the compromised life under the pretext of its possible fulfillment (Sheehi, 2024, p. 211). Cain's narrative offers a novel embodiment of this

duality by showcasing how the internal, affective experience of domesticity itself becomes the site of both aspiration and constraint, rather than these forces being external. This perspective focusing on the emotional negotiations within a seemingly 'peaceful domesticity' by providing a unique contribution to the literary understanding of "cruel optimism" that Berlant explained in her study.

The relationship between affect and temporality is a rich subject that Lisa Baraitser has addressed especially in her book "Enduring Time" (2017) in which she advances the notion of durational attention as an ethical approach to slowness, pause and delay (Baraitser, 2017). Baraitser's approach enables one to read the form of narrative as something that hosts affective states as opposed to description. Cain's *Indelicacy* advances the understanding of 'durational attention' by demonstrating how narrative form itself can embody this ethical approach to slowness, pause, and delay through a deeply internalized, minimalist aesthetic. The novel offers a unique contribution by transforming textual pauses and observational foci into tangible 'story time' that hosts affective states and distinguishing it from more explicit narrative techniques for representing temporality. In addition, in his study "The Subjugation of Bodies, Gender, and Biopolitics in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*" (2025), Ali Hasan (2025) focuses on the harsh treatment of women in the dominant world of man. Hasan depicts the agony and suffering of the novel's heroine "Firdaus" because of the rigid rules rooted in the cultural and religious norms of the society (Hasan, 2025).

However, in his book "The Body Keeps the Score" (2014), Bessel van der Kolk builds on seminal texts written by Cathy Caruth to explore trauma as being often resistant to linear narration, and instead, trauma can be observed through embodied, non-verbal registers (Bercuci, 2024). Despite the fact that Cain's novel *Indelicacy* does not focus on explicit trauma, the tone range evokes the concept of public feeling of trauma by Ann Cvetkovich (2020), who theorizes trauma as an ambient thing that is embedded in everyday life and is often not discussed in details (Cvetkovich, 2020). Another study by Arah Abdulsahib (2025) entitled "Postcolonial Feminism and Political Injustice in Huda Barakat's *The Tiller of Waters*" discusses how femininity and silence of women in the novel is employed as a tool against the male-dominant world in Beirut. Abdulsahib's novel undermines the patriarchal interpretations of conflict and brings to the fore the ethical burden of female silence through symbolic female presence and feminised image of Beirut (AbdulSahib, 2025, p. 40).

Accordingly, Raed Saad et al. study "Language and Gender in *Riyam wa Kafa* and *Papa Sartre*: A Lakoffian Reading" (2025), studies how colour terms, oaths, and insults are linguistically different in the two texts since the narratives in *Riyam* and *Kafa* are grounded in emotion and intimacy and self-defence whereas in *Papa Sartre* they are used in sarcastic and bodily situations that indicate masculine dominance (Saad & Saadi, 2025, p. 398).

By using these previous studies as a background to this study, the study frames the novel of Cain in line with current feminist literary practices that focus on form, feeling, and form. In addition to this, the relative silence of the novel in the academic criticism also demonstrates the dire need and relevance of this intervention, providing a helpful addition to the continuing debate surrounding the post-2015 fiction in America, feminist minimalism, and politics of affect.

## Discussion

### **Feminine Subjectivity, and the Affective Power of Silence in Amina Cain's *Indelicacy***

Amina Cain is an American writer born in Chicago in 1976. Her literary work is characterized by the mixture of fiction with autobiographical fragments and the essayistic reflection. She is heavily inspired by visual art, phenomenology, and feminist thinking, making writers like Marguerite Duras and Lydia Davis also her prominent literary and dialogic partners (Talkhani, 2024). The aim of her writing is the asceticism of atmosphere and to give moral concern with the life of the interior that are depicted in her writing. Through her novel *Indelicacy*, she became a key figure in the emerging canon of contemporary experimental fiction one that is, focused not on action or revelation, but on stasis, time suspension, and affective susurrations (Cavarero, Thomaidis, & Pinna, 2018, p. 84). Vitória, the main character in the novel, goes to a journey of self-realization which linked totally with how she perceives her environment and how she chooses to either be a partaker or retreat into silence. This involvement with the idea of silence is a non-absence of sound or speech, rather a presence of charges that define her experiences and interactions, which are representative of a complicated feminine subjectivity that cannot be easily defined (Cain, 2020, p. 6).

Cain's novel *Indelicacy* is about a silent yet revolutionary restructuring of the form of narrative and the means of expression of affect. The novel avoids the traditional plot structure and psychological realism, but instead pursues a feminist poetics of affect by means of staged withdrawal, indecisiveness and

slowness (Martin, 2024). This combination represents an original contribution because it presents what is regarded as hidden into an active, self-aware feminist poetics. The 'staged withdrawal' and 'indecisiveness' are not merely character traits but narrative techniques that deliberately resist conventional linear progression, offering a novel framework for understanding agency beyond explicit action.

This section discusses the way in which Cain's formal minimalism undermines normative gendered and classed orders; how institutional, domestic and aesthetic arenas serve ambiguously both as zones of constraint and opportunity (Egan, 2020). The novel can be read in terms of contemporary fiction that values ambiguity and emotional restraint over catharsis or resolution can be informed by using the perspective of "Affect Theory", feminist literary criticism, and critiques of temporality (Alexopoulos, 2020).

At the heart of Cain's aesthetic is a far-reaching inquiry into the rhetoric of feeling not as the cathartic or visible emotion but as what Kathleen Stewart describes as "ambient poetics". In the case of Stewart, this modality sets the privileges of diffuse, sometimes pre-conscious intensities that influence the everyday life which cannot be captured narratively (Riedel, 2019, p. 88). The narrative simplicity of vocabulary that Cain carefully employs rejects psychological exposition to make her attentive to what hovers, floats and envelops the atmosphere of existence.

Accordingly, Cain's style of writing shows a kind of slow, careful approach to storytelling. She avoids rushing forward with a strong plot. In this way, her novel *Indelicacy* defies traditional ways of writing that expect characters to be open and honest or for stories to have neat endings (Harlin, 2020, p. 27). In addition to this, Cain supports an idea that Sara Ahmed (2023) called "emotional orientation"—about how people physically and emotionally connect with or push back against social rules, actions, and traditions (Cook, 2023). To understand this point, the main character in the novel "Vitória" starts to seek her own freedom, the emotions of people around her begin to change. This variation is not always noticeable—it shows up in the way she sees and deals with the milieu around her, not in big statements (Ali, 2020, p. 98). The mood of people around her becomes something that moves and changes, reflecting and helping shape her journey. A good example of this is when Vitória thinks about happiness and being alone (Ali, 2020, p. 102). She says:

"Now that I have so much time to myself, I wonder at my times of happiness, why I've been allowed them, even now when I am lonely.

Why I can walk and how even walking, at the right hour, in this temperature or that one, the lights just coming on, or the sky lightening, I am able to love it. How much I am a person.” (Cain, 2020, p. 21)

This quote shows the sensitive emotional mood that Cain creates, where even loneliness has a sense of appreciation and self-awareness, showing how deeply Vitória connects with her inner thoughts and the world around her. According to Baraitser, the state of being stuck, waiting, care, and in-between, shapes the state of how women regard themselves in a dominant world by men (Harlin, 2020, p. 28). Cain's narrator lives in exactly this kind of time: caught between being alone and feeling disconnected like a state of in-between: being there and fading away.

However, Baraitser (2017) argues that hesitation can also serve the role of care, in a perverse sense: a rejection to go along with the neoliberal demands of being productive or having a self-consistent with it. An example is a speaker of Cain, who remains in an unsettled or undeclared affective state, thus complicating the masculinist code by which the capacity to take an irreversible action or, a lonely, unmediated speech is seen as the sign of subjectivity. On the same note, it is interesting how Vitoria underlines her female subjectivity through devotion to writing. The fact that her husband tried to reject these artistic struggles by calling it “unnecessary and strange” reveals how the society around is plotting to trap women in the established impression. Against this type of constraints Vitoria decides to live her life as a writer and retire in the patriarchal principle of making the marriage. According to Cain, the constant and permeating matrimonial binding is, in relation to Vitoria, makes the assertion that she is a writer (Cosslett, 2020, p. 3). She says:

“The novel was written very much through a process of looking at and describing art, as well as objects, like clothes and jewelry and furniture, and buildings, and nature, and weather. And it's very much about that development of Vitória as a person and an artist/writer, as you say, through this kind of looking. It is the way in which she makes contact with the world, finds her place in it, and feels alive. Her looking is active, the first part of her writing process. I've always been drawn to the idea of not separating art from life that a person can live creatively, not just in what s/he does, but in how s/he sees. If we really look at things in our own lives, like palm trees and mountains, for example, we see that they, too, can join to form a strong image together. Then something new is created for us, and that can be a backdrop to our lives, like the set of a play” (Cain, 2020, p. 8) .

Although Vitória has little money or social comforts, she finds enjoyment in the simple pleasures of life such as reading books, buying a new pair of brightly coloured stockings or writing about the paintings surrounding her at work. This deep recognition of freedom shows how Vitória's liberation is not just about personal relationships, but it also represented bigger parts of society. Instead of showing emotions to gain power or attention, Cain's narrator lives in a space of private, unclear feelings. Her emotions come out through everyday actions—like cleaning, looking around, sitting, or writing—not as regular chores, but as a way to face the difficulties around her (Brazell, 2021).

Vitória begins to reject the idea that her voice as a writer is not taken seriously because she's a woman. She remembers her husband thought that women "could not write," by saying "he didn't believe I could" (Cain, 2020, p. 9). Despite that fact that she has a comfortable life with nice clothes, jewelry, and social standing, she will "die if I can't write" (Cain, 2020, p. 9). This quote strongly depicts her control over her own creativity, by going beyond traditional expectations. Vitória clearly refuses the usual path of getting married and instead chooses writing, saying, "I don't care if I marry... I want to write" (Cain, 2020, p. 10). She regards marriage as something that gets in the way, not something that gives her happiness. For her, writing is what defines who she is. Her choice matches what Lauren Berlant (2025) calls a feminist refusal of "cruel optimism"—sticking to things like marriage she regards to be promising but actually limit what you really want (Berlant, 2025, p. 9). She declares that:

I wanted to write about paintings, but I wasn't seen as someone who could say something interesting about art. I wasn't seen as someone who could say anything at all and then publish it. When I went with my husband to the museum, I felt I should be cleaning that place. I was used to that work and maybe it is my destiny. Before meeting my husband, I had mopped the floors of those galleries, over and over. I had scrubbed the walls until my palms were rough and dry (Cain, 2020, p. 10).

This passage shows that Vitória knows she is not treated as others despite the fact that the people around her are educated and liberated. In addition to this, the fact that her husband is rich and has time for leisure, his assumptions stop her from achieving her goals (Raj, 2023, p. 197). The idea of cleaning—mopping floors, scrubbing walls—reveals how her work was once ignored but now it depicts her feeling out of place. She becomes a writer who has what Sara

Ahmed (2023) would call an “Emotional Orientation”—by changing how someone takes up space in a place that used to exclude them (Raj, 2023, p. 197). Accordingly, Cain also employs “silence” as a theme in the novel to reveal the inner struggle that Vitória lives with by depicting her behaviors with others in terms of speech and reaction. Adriana Cavarero (2018) explains that for women, “voice is not just about talking—it’s about telling their own story” (Cavarero, Thomaidis, & Pinna, 2018, p. 85). On the contrary, silence here is a way to resist, a choice not to speak in systems that do not recognize them. The idea of silence here is also like what Hélène Cixous calls “écriture féminine”—which means a kind of writing that comes from the body, is hard to understand, and feels broken up. Cain’s story resembles this idea because Vitória’s silence becomes a way to reveal her deep feelings, not just emptiness. Cain’s novel also deals with time which has a link with “silence” that moves slowly beyond her emotional feelings (Vachhani, 2019, p. 19). Vitoria explains to her employer that “I tried to speak to my old employer even more coldly than he had spoken to me, but he was a tough match. ‘How unpleasing you are,’ I said” “Like a tooth that hasn’t been brushed in years and is growing hair on it.” (Cain, 2020, p. 31)

Here, Cain creates what Lisa Baraitser (2017) calls a “sense of delay and endurance”—one that shows a feminine way of dealing with time and power (Baraitser, 2017, p. 154). Vitória’s sensitivity to the tension around her shows how daily struggles can affect her psychological state and would fill her with fear, waiting, and feelings that are not resolved. This kind of anxious state is sometimes eased by working and looking around. Vitória explains her feelings about walking “every morning and night” as Fall turns into winter. Every door she passes has “its own suggestion or promise” that means she has memories in every corner and place (Cain, 2020, p. 32). This kind of attention to the world around is what Ahmed (2006) calls “affective atmospheres”—moods that move between people and places, shaping how we move and live in such environment (Preece, Rodner, & Rojas-Gaviria., 2022, p. 366). Cain’s writing really uncovers the physical spaces that match Vitória’s inner world. The city streets feel almost such as “a tropical escape” in her mind. She says:

I would walk around the city feeling as if I were on an island. Some tropical place. Wearing a light blouse, a light skirt, my hair pulled back from my face or in a loose bun. Through the park, along the busy streets,

the river, and then the lake, which was so large it looked more like an ocean... The spikes that rose out of me (Cain, 2020, p. 40).

This quote describes a peculiarly compelling space of belonging, where the tropics serve as an emotional hold in the inner world of the protagonist and the cactus with its thorns and thorns as an instrument of defense and at the same time, offering the possibility of nurture. The narrative arc provides an active process of hermeneutics to be had, as the textual near is almost at its end when Vitoria swings between interior reflection, affective contradiction, and calculated interpersonal handling. This kind of oscillation, expressed through the repetitive gestures of self-protection and the calmness of reserved emotions, is an instance of the logic of what Sara Ahmed (2023) imagines to evaluate as "affective economies", the spread of the emotional labor defining the subjective process of self-formation (Soaita, 2023, p. 5).

This vision, in turn, is epitomized in the church scene, where the same tension exists between collective performance of rituals and the mostly individual mental interactions of the protagonist. She says:

As I listened to the choir, I found myself thinking about my husband; I didn't know what I should do. I didn't want to have sex with him anymore, nor did I want to have a child. How could I stay married to him? I didn't want to go back to having no money either, to cleaning the museum, but I couldn't stay where I was forever (Cain, 2020, p. 90).

The text of the passage is replaced by an entirely interior, two-tone dialogue, the one which combines intellectual thought process and emotional appeal. This composition relates to what can be referred to as "the ordinary of affect" by Kathleen Stewart when an everyday event has a hint of vestigial anxiety about personal problems and financial pressure (Pomerantz, 2022, p. 1878). The meditations of Vitoria unite her emotional investments with her economic need towards her husband, as well as the physical and emotional distances that trends through their relationship, thus preoccupying the enmeshment of material and affective issues.

The plan to extort her husband to abandon her, possibly to Solange, redeems her relational circles in the form of a written hypothesis. The story progresses in a concise but doubtful manner, pointing to the sense of both adherence by the author to strategic intervention and awkwardness (Pomerantz, 2022, p. 1879). She says: "I had this idea, forgive me if it was a stupid one, that you might want

him. If it's true, I think we could figure out a way for you to have him" (Cain, 2020, p. 92).

This idea goes against the usual way people think about breaking up a marriage, which is often seen as a clear moral choice. Instead, Vitória sees the situation like a story element, treating Solange not as an enemy but as someone working together with her to change how power works at home. The tricky part is that when Solange says "no", which makes Vitória lose her grip on things (Brake, 2012). The outcome of this refusal is obvious through the everyday struggle and conflict at the home. She says:

Solange and I were more at odds around each other than we'd ever been; we had finally crossed a line. I had crossed it[...]. She slammed cupboard doors, put plates and saucers down roughly on the counters. I felt she might break them (Cain, 2020, p. 94).

The kitchen is used as a space of affective transference where somatic expression of unexplained resentment is managed in the form of bodily mannerisms and material objects. In this sense, Ahmed (2023) explains that the emotions will not be confined to the subject alone; instead they have been bonded to objects and human bodies as well. This monotony of banging cupboards and heaving dishes around can, therefore, be construed as the weight of a broken proposal. The spaces within a nation, thus, are rearranged not to spawn closeness but instead, in order to maintain animosity (Brake, 2012). In the last lines of the novel, the reader could see that Vitória finds peace and she will live alone with her books and writing. She says:

Who am I if I'm not writing? I'm a person in a dance class, then I'm walking next to a dump. I listen to music, write my own name in my notebook, winter charging toward me. For things do charge, you must feel that too[...]. Still in the process of becoming, the soul makes room. (Cain, 2020, p. 98)

In the end, Vitória's feelings on how everything unfolded prove that the novel does not simply give mere explanations, but, it emphasizes on a kind of inner experience about dealing with uncertainty, discomfort, and trying new ways of living in a dominant world. The end of the novel makes the reader think about writing, like Vitória's life, which is something about shaping things without needing everything to be settled. So, the novel is about making choices in the space between what is planned and what has just happened.

## Conclusion

The novel of Amina Cain's *Indelicacy* is regarded as a quiet but powerful addition to modern American fiction, especially in the way it depicts the emotional and feminist trends that have shaped literature since 2015. The novel adopts the plain style, thoughtful format and minimalism to defy old notions of trauma, definite resolution and expression of oneself. Instead, it is about uncertainty, ambiguity and paying attention to the daily aspects. The main character is not named, but feels very real emotionally. She does not seek a clear ending or personal release. Instead, she stays in a constant state of change—where feelings come before words and inner life is not meant to be shown off.

The repetition of the acts performed by the narrator such as dusting, walking, gazing and writing, does not mean that they are habits; rather these, repetitive acts are affective in creating an ethics of care and politics of rejection. Her silence does not appear as her absence, but as an active refusal of the dictates of articulation and productivity and emotional openness.

The study develops the hypothesis that the minimalism in the narrative of Cain cannot be interpreted as a lack but as a premeditated effect of affective thickening. This stylistic minimalism aligns with a feminist politics of opacity, which refuses the demand to be legible, revealed, or to perform emotion.

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