

What is a minimalist narrative, and what are its characteristic features? How do you identify one? For many critics, minimalist writing is a strictly historical notion – even though they at the same time, like John Barth does in his famous apologetics „A Few Words About Minimalism“, paradoxically enough stress its ubiquitous nature throughout literature of all times. By narrative minimalism the American critic generally means the austere style of the novels and short stories of Raymond Carver, Amy Hempel, Mary Robison, Joan Didion, Ann Beattie. An American literary current of the 1970s mainly, devoted merely to the quotidian, descriptive, often reduced to what can be perceived from the outside of a human character. Thereby: the „dirty realism“ or „K-mart realism“. These derogatory labels tell us that the literary reviewer and critic of today still formulates his terms and judgments out of a hierarchically ordered, traditional presupposition of what a narrative text is and should be, working with a virtual model of balance between „form“ and „content“. Translated into the language of classical narratology: story discourse.