

## White America Then and Now through Anne Sexton's *Transformations*: A Close Reading

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**Abstract:** *This article examines Anne Sexton's transformations of Grimm's Fairy Tales in her eponymous poem collection from 1971 with which the American poet makes a harsh commentary on White America of the times. Through a close reading of selected tales, I will establish a relationship between the situation then and now, which underscores the relevance of Sexton's unexpected ferocious critique of white American culture and attack on a certain former political figure – Harry S. Truman. Given that Sexton was already a well-known confessional poet, Transformations seemed to signal a change of voice – from the personal to the impersonal, but as Sexton herself argued, the poems (tales) in the collection were as personal as anything else she had written. Adopting this perspective, the article claims that Sexton has succeeded in making important comments on the epoch, which have not lost their relevance, while holding on to her tried and true confessional mode. Thus, through autofiction she managed to create a significant document for her times which has remained in cultural memory as a point of reference, a mirror against which we can see the progress we have made within the framework of the tales' universalia.*

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