

Breaking the Mirror: Anne Sexton's Poetic Self-Construction: Selected Poems

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Abstract

This study analyses Anne Sexton's poetry using Linda Hutcheon's theory of narcissism, as presented in "Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox". Hutcheon's concept of narrative narcissism, highlighting self-referentiality, self-awareness, and the indistinction between the text and the author, provides an insightful framework for examining Sexton's confessional style. However, this paper examines how Sexton's poems interact with the self as subject and object, revealing the contradictions of narcissism inherent in her work. Sexton's poetry often intertwines personal tragedy with extensive creative contemplation, using self-exposure to examine her identity and poetic production mechanics. The conflict between autobiography and metafiction in Sexton's poetry reflects Hutcheon's claim that narcissistic writings emphasise their own creation while highlighting identity's precariousness. Hence, this study illustrates how Sexton's interplay of vulnerability, exhibitionism, and self-aware literary approaches reflects Hutcheon's notion of narrative narcissism, situating the poet's confessional voice as both profoundly personal and meta-literary in nature. Moreover, this paper seeks to provide a literary viewpoint on Sexton's examination of the self while expanding Hutcheon's theoretical framework to include a poetry medium.

Keywords: Anne Sexton, Narcissism, The Double Image, For John, Who Begs Me Not to Enquire Further

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1.1 Introduction

Narcissistic poetry, marked by its introspective emphasis and self-referential motifs, engages readers in the intimate realms of poets who often contemplate their identities and feelings (Rohankar, 2015). Critics have observed that this genre has considerable variability in execution, spanning from deep self-exploration to works that may verge on extreme self-absorption. Some contend that while narcissistic poetry provides significant insights into the human psyche and the intricacies of contemporary life, it may also result in alienation if the poet's voice eclipses more universal topics. The equilibrium between self-exploration and universal resonance is a pivotal topic among literary critics, who argue whether such poetry facilitates a connection with readers or accidentally alienates them inside the poet's own story (Ferrara, 2019). The evolving genre incites significant discussions over the individual's role in art and how personal experiences may clarify or obfuscate communal realities.

Therefore, Anne Sexton was an influential American poet known for her intensely personal, confessional style. Much of her poetry explores "themes of suicide, death, and loneliness to indicate the mental illness that had infected her from her childhood" (Sameer & Ali, 2022, p. 7). Her work often reflects her hardships, especially her challenges with mental health and her experiences in psychiatric treatment (Otal Torres, 2018). Sexton's poetry often conflates the personal with the universal, using her own experiences to illuminate broader human issues and contesting conventional societal conventions and expectations of women in mid-20th-century America. Therefore, this study examines chosen poems to illuminate Ann Sexton's narcissistic experiences as mirrored in her poetry, applying Linda Hutcheon's narcissistic theory.

2.1 Literature Review

This section presents the notion of narcissism and highlights chosen works examining the philosophy and poetry of Ann Sexton from many perspectives.

The word narcissistic denotes an excessive preoccupation with or adoration for oneself and one's physical appearance or self-image. It may also denote conduct marked by egocentrism and an absence of empathy for others. Narcissism, in psychiatric settings, is often linked to Narcissistic

Personality Disorder (NPD), characterised by grandiosity, a need for praise, and a compromised self-concept (Miller, Widiger, & Campbell, 2010).

The term "narcissistic" originates from the fable of Narcissus, a character in Greek mythology who became enamoured with his own reflection in a body of water, eventually resulting in his downfall (Grenyer, 2013). The word emerged in psychological discourse in the early 20th century, notably via Sigmund Freud's article "On Narcissism" (1914), which examined self-love and its ramifications for human psychology. It has progressively developed to include many behaviours and characteristics linked to self-obsession (Fonagy, 2018).

2.2 Brief Summary of Ann Sexton and Background

Anne Sexton, originally named Anne Gray Harvey, was born in Newton, Massachusetts, on November 9, 1928. She enrolled in boarding school at Rogers Hall in Lowell, Massachusetts, where she began composing poems. She enrolled at Garland Junior College for one year and wed Alfred Muller Sexton II at nineteen. Sexton and her spouse resided in San Francisco before returning to Massachusetts for the birth of their first daughter, Linda Gray Sexton, in 1953 (Waters, 2015).

After her second daughter was born in 1955 (Crowther, 2021), Sexton was urged by her physician to cultivate her passion for poetry, which she had nurtured throughout high school. In the autumn of 1957, she joined writing organisations in Boston, where she met several authors, including Maine Kumin, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath. She released her first two publications, *To Bedlam and Part Way Back* (1960) and *All My Pretty Ones* (1962), via Houghton Mifflin (Kennedy, 2017).

In 1965, Sexton was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in London. She then went on to win the 1967 Pulitzer Prize in poetry for her third collection, *Live or Die* (Houghton Mifflin, 1966)(Pérez, 2013). In total, Sexton published nine volumes of poetry during her lifetime, including *Love Poems* (Houghton Mifflin, 1969), *The Book of Folly* (Houghton Mifflin, 1973) and *The Awful Rowing Toward God* (Houghton Mifflin, 1975)(Rowell, 2019). She also authored several children's books with Maxine Kumin (Fenglin, 2020).

Additionally, Sexton was awarded several prestigious literary honours, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the 1967 Shelley Memorial Prize, the 1962 Levinson Prize, and the Frost Fellowship for the Bread Loaf Writers Conference. She was an educator at Boston University and Colgate University (Alsaeed, 2013). Sexton received several esteemed literary accolades, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the 1967 Shelley Memorial Prize, the 1962 Levinson Prize, and the Frost Fellowship for the Bread Loaf Writers Conference. She was an instructor at Boston University and Colgate University (Otal Torres, 2018).

However, numerous poets in the 19th and 20th centuries had a markedly heightened poetic style, including Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Anne Sexton. These poets possess a certain quality in their intellect that sets them apart from others. They are human beings like us; nevertheless, what trait differentiates them from us? The underlying principle of their poetic inventiveness is referred to as:

"Creativity", so what is creativity? And can this concept be taught? The answers to these questions can be understood if we know the definition of creativity and its origin. The word creativity does not carry the divine meaning of creation. Plato did not believe in the art of creativity; in his article "*Creativity in Plato's state*", Arthur Wheeler explains that according to Plato, "poets are merely imitators, not creators" (Wheeler, 1969, p. 249)

2.3 Selected Works about Narcissism

This section sheds light on the scholars' study of narcissism in their works:

Fonagy (2018) examines the issue of narcissism in contemporary Canadian literature via significant works by Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, and Robert Kroetsch. It examines how, within the framework of the Canadian identity crisis, their works integrated parts of the Narcissus myth that contributed to the signifying structures of modern literature. His inquiry aims to examine how the myth of "Narcissus" affects the selection and portrayal of symbols, images, and characters in modern Canadian literature. The study reveals that the issue of "self-realisation" in Canadian society is not solely dependent on interpersonal relationships; Canadians can address their psychological issues, restore their mental equilibrium, and achieve their identity only by understanding the truth about themselves and

the reality of others. Keywords: Narcissism, Identity Crisis, Narcissus Myth, Canadian Literature, Self-Realization, Individuality, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Robert Kroetsch.

Another study by Lehman (2013) analyses the modern poetry landscape; Lehman addresses themes of self-representation and intimacy in his articles. Lehman asserts that contemporary poets explore self-referentiality, scrutinising the equilibrium between individual expression and universal motifs. Lehman recognises the appeal of narcissistic poetry, which enables poets to explore their identities and experiences; however, he also expresses concern over the risk of self-absorption eclipsing broader relationships.

Moreover, Lehman often emphasises the significance of art and form in his comments, contending that successful poetry may be contemplative and approachable. By examining many poets' works, he illustrates how self-exploration may enhance the reading experience when it aligns with shared human feelings and cultural settings. Lehman's findings enhance the comprehension of narcissism's role in modern poetry, highlighting its intricacy and the continuous interaction between the individual and the community in literary expression.

DuPlessis (2006) is also recognised for her feminist interpretations of poetry. DuPlessis often analyses the self-referential characteristics of modern works, especially those authored by female poets. DuPlessis explores topics of identity, self-representation, and the dynamics of narcissism in poetry. She analyses how modern poets, especially women, traverse self-examination and personal stories in their compositions. DuPlessis examines the possible drawbacks of narcissistic poetry, highlighting how an excessive preoccupation with the ego may result in alienation or disconnection from broader societal concerns.

Simultaneously, she acknowledges that personal experience may be a potent lens for examining broader topics, including gender, power, and cultural context. Her studies underscore the need to reconcile self-exploration with an awareness of communal experiences, urging poets to contextualise their work within a broader social framework. DuPlessis's discoveries substantially enhance the conversation on narcissistic poetry, promoting a sophisticated comprehension of how personal tales may augment, rather than diminish, meaningful connections in literature.

2.4 Most Important Selected Works about Ann Sexton

This section discussed Anne Sexton's literary works from different scholars' points of view:

Wagner-Martin (2015) examined Anne Sexton in her book "A History of the American Women: 1950 to the Present," providing a comprehensive analysis of the life and oeuvre of the renowned poet Anne Sexton. She asserts that the biography explores Sexton's turbulent personal background, including her battles with mental illness, her time in psychiatric institutions, and her evolution into poetry as a means of treatment and self-expression.

Additionally, Wagner-Martin analyses how Sexton's personal experiences impacted her writing, especially her confessional approach, which openly addresses mortality, identity, and femininity. The biography situates Sexton's oeuvre within the broader 20th-century literary milieu, emphasising her connections with other poets and her contribution to the feminist movement. Wagner-Martin's meticulous study and analysis elucidate the complexity of Sexton's character and her creative accomplishments, positioning her as a central figure in American poetry. The biography underscores the relationship between Sexton's personal experiences and her creative production, thoroughly comprehending her legacy.

Another study by Nadezhda (2018) who conducted a study titled "The Confessional Poetry of Anne Sexton: The Narrative of Personal Experience as a Search for Identity" focused on the poetic legacy of the American poetess of the 1960s and 1970s, Anne Sexton, particularly her inaugural poetry collection, "To Bedlam and Part Way Back." Nadezhda posits that Ann Sexton is conventionally situated within the canon of confessional poetry, often characterised as narrative and autobiographical, delving into previously forbidden personal issues. The study topic investigates the interplay between confessional poetry as a textual form and the author's identity. Particular emphasis is placed on the poetic techniques employed in subject representation, the formation of self-image within the context of interactions with external figures, literary foundations, the evolution of the author's voice, and self-representation in confessional poetry as it engages with other poetic traditions. The translation of Sexton's literary writings into Russian, which have not been previously translated, is a distinct component of the work.

Moreover, Putri and Yustisiana (2017) conducted a paper entitled "Hypocrisy as Perceived through Metaphor in Anne Sexton's 'Ghosts'." The research sought to elucidate two primary objectives: first, to delineate the metaphoric expressions related to hypocrisy, and second, to uncover the topic of bitterness within the poem. Furthermore, their analysis employs the concepts of meaning, figures of speech, metaphor, theme, and bitterness. This study used two methodologies: the structural approach and the formalist approach. The analytical approach used in this study is the descriptive-qualitative technique. The methodology used for data collection in this study was library research. The research revealed three hypocrisies shown via metaphor in the poem on women, men, and children. Furthermore, the three metaphors embodied the poem's overarching subject, bitterness.

According to the above section 2.3/ 2.4, this study's objective diverges from previous research since it concentrates on analysing chosen poems by Ann Sexton via Hutcheon's narcissistic theory.

2.5 An Overview of the theory

Linda Hutcheon's narcissistic theory, especially concerning literature and narrative, examines how self-referentiality and self-focus establish a multifaceted interaction among the author, the text, and the reader. Hutcheon thinks that narcissistic components within a work often mirror the author's worries and identities, elucidating the complexities of self-representation (Hutcheon, 2014).

Hutcheon asserts that self-referentiality may fulfil several roles: it can criticise conventional narrative structures, question the concept of authenticity, and include the reader in a more profound discourse on identity and perception. By analysing the literature's reflection on individual and social identities, she contends that narcissism in art may reveal extensive cultural concerns while concurrently confounding the reader's comprehension of the self and the other (Ibid).

Hutcheon's work promotes a sophisticated comprehension of how narcissistic elements in literature illuminate individual viewpoints and prompt readers to contemplate their own identities and the influence of narratives on their self-perception and worldview (Ibid). This study

examines the chosen poems of Ann Sexton through the lens of Hutcheon's narcissistic theory.

3.1 Results/ Findings

This section presents an analysis of two poems by Anne Sexton to illustrate the narcissistic style in her poetry, using Linda Hutcheon's narcissistic theory. The first poem selected by the researcher for analysis is:

"The Double Image"

I remember we named you Joyce
so we could call you Joy.
You came like an awkward guest
that first time, all wrapped and moist
and strange at my heavy breast.
I needed you. I didn't want a boy,
only a girl, a small milky mouse
of a girl, already loved, already loud in the house
of herself. We named you Joy.
I, who was never quite sure
about being a girl, needed another
life, another image to remind me.
And this was my worst guilt; you could not cure
nor soothe it. I made you to find me.

The last stanza further exemplifies the dual imagery referenced in the title. The speaker ultimately distinguishes between the "I" and "You" in the first stanza. Rather than the mother, the daughter now defines the speaker's identity. The daughter compensates for her shortcomings: "I, who was never quite sure / about being a girl, needed another / life, another image to remind me" (207-209). The "image" represents the daughter produced by the speaker to affirm her identity, akin to the mother who generated the speaker and then crafted a portrait of her in a vain endeavour to preserve her existence.

This culminates in the ultimate conclusion: "And this was my worst guilt; you could not cure / nor soothe it. I made you to find me" (210-211). Therefore, Sexton's mention of creation pertains not to biological formation

but to the literary production informed by her experience. Therefore, as per Hutcheon, in what is referred to as a narcissistic narrative:

"The linguistic self-reflexiveness or even self-generation of the text are forms of resistance to the act of reading, shifting attention to the semantic, syntactic, and often also phonetic texture of the words which actually serve to structure as well as constitute the work. This centripetal pull, however, does *not* cut the reader off from what has here been called 'vital' of life experience."

(Hutcheon,
2014, p.
119)

In conclusion, the speaker in the poem exhibits maturity and self-awareness. The verses in the poem are imbued with emotional intensity. The speaker recounts her estrangement from her daughter due to her mental illness, conveyed via a tense atmosphere characterised by jagged lines and odd rhyme schemes and meters. Moreover, the portrayal of self is evident in Sexton's use of language, tone, and specifics to unveil the individual she intends to disclose. Thus, she portrays a "persona" in her poetry using the first-person pronoun, serving as a facade behind which she conceals herself. Hence, Sexton's poem is a means of expressing herself without being exposed as a poet. Furthermore, "the facts of the poet's life are presented in an evidentiary manner (Waters, 2015, p. 4)".

Therefore, she has a profound connection with her inner self, evident in the many subjects explored in her poetry, including familial relationships and the quest for identity, as shown in "The Double Image," along with the notion of poetry as a vehicle for pleasing others. These themes reveal the poet's genuine nature, who was accused of narcissism. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to state that Sexton's confessional writing has increasingly resembled her narcissistic prose.

In another poem, "For John, Who Begs Me Not to Enquire Further," the dynamic between the speaker and the reader elucidates the reciprocal relationship that unveils the text's ultimate significance, or, as Hutcheon describes it, the narcissistic text. "For John" conveys a profound intention to communicate directly with significant individuals in the speaker's life to

explain her actions. Furthermore, Sexton acknowledges that her perspective is confined to the restricted journal of her thoughts, attributing this constraint to her unwillingness to "tap her own head. She verses:

If I tried
to give you something else,
something outside of myself,
you would not know
that the worst of anyone
can be, finally,
an accident of hope. (10-16)

John, the figure referenced by Sexton in the poem, may be unaware that the most detrimental aspects of an individual might stem from a miscalculation of optimism. This communication is crucial in a world where all perceived reality is experiential. The poetry implies that personal experiences may be communicated.

At first it was private.
Then it was more than myself;
it was you, or your house
or your kitchen. (21-24)

Sexton is at ease sharing her experiences with the audience: "There ought to be something special / for someone / in this kind of hope" (35-37). Revisiting a traumatic event for the readers to engage in the transformation of a private ordeal into a public narrative is another hallmark of confessional poetry that Sexton employs to derive significance from her existence and to understand her inner self.

For Sexton, courage is always one of the best qualities a poet should have. To her, courage is the most essential ingredient. The speaker in "For John" The hysteric confronts the master to elicit information.

In "For John," A fractured mirror, a glass bowl, and allusions to Narcissus's pool all signify the subjective narcissism that Sexton used to delineate the self: "the cracked mirror / or my own selfish death" (7-8). The speaker gazes into the mirror and articulates her observations. The poem illustrates the shared obligation of both the speaker and the reader in interpreting the message. The sequential reflections reveal the many symptoms of self-distrust. The topic is inaccurately depicted, providing just a partial

representation. The speaker gazes into the mirror for extended durations, and the poem is replete with imagery pertaining to the self, self-admiration, idealisation, and subjective gratification.

The concluding words of the lines suggest self-absorption, such as "mind," "mirror," "myself," and "private" (CP 34-35), reflecting narcissism. The reflected surfaces, including mirrors, bowls, glass, windows, and portraits, explicitly demonstrate this concept in "For John," where the mirrored processes are "explicitly thematised (Hutcheon, 2014, p. 23)". Furthermore, in the poem, there is no reflective surface to see: "narcissism is predicted in making a process visible", as suggested by Hutcheon (p.6).

On the other hand, The emphasis on the ego in the opening lines of "For John" is juxtaposed with references to others, including "you," "your," "something outside," "someone," and "anyone" (CP 34-35). The confessional speaker in Sexton's work is only present in line five: "in that narrow diary of my mind," and is after that confronted by the "you," whether it be the explicit John or the implicit reader, whose presence is evident throughout the poem. The poem illustrates the destiny of Narcissus and Echo, as the speaker and John, or the ambiguous reader, remain unsatisfied and unable to transcend the divide between the self and the other.

In addition, John Holmes, Sexton's tutor and poet, who condemned the limited narcissism of her writing. John mentioned in the poem. Thus, the discourse between "I" and "you" is intended to occur between Sexton and Holmes, the inferred author, and the assumed recipient. Holmes accused Sexton of compelling people to listen despite her work neither educating nor benefiting the audience.

Not that it was beautiful,
but that, in the end, there was
a certain sense of order there;
something worth learning
in that narrow diary of my mind,
in the commonplaces of the asylum (1-6)

She quotes his words when she says her poetry should "give something else, / something outside myself" (11-12). To refute Holmes's accusation, Sexton's speaker argues that she offers a "lesson" that is "worth learning"

(4), "special" (35) and outside of herself. The first lines of the poem deny the fact attributed to Narcissus, which is love for his own beauty:

Moreover, Sexton asserts that the significance is not in the aesthetically pleasing item but in the process, the organisation, the interpretation, and the construction of meaning. Hence, she asserts that there is value in acquiring knowledge within the confines of her mind's limited diaries and the shared spaces of the institution. The concept may be exchanged between the speaker and the reader. According to, "[the poem] encourages an active personal response to itself and encourages a space for that response within itself (Hutcheon, 2014, p. 141)"; consequently, it is narcissistic. However, the ambiguity "it" in the first line, which remains unspecified throughout the poem, creates a shared confusion between the speaker and the reader. The mention of "it" emphasises the reader's involvement in the text, transforming the intimate or private into the public sphere. So, the tonal change occurs when the speaker addresses the reader as "you," marking the beginning of her engagement in the conversation.

However, this analysis concludes that "The Double Image" and "For John" by Sexton are contradictory works since they are "narcissistically self-reflexive" and at the same time "focused outward or oriented toward the reader" (Hutcheon, 2014, p. 7). Narcissism is the defining characteristic of the two poems as they are inwardly focused on the speaker and their effect on the audience. The authors have written them to shed light on the confessional nature of these poems rather than the event purportedly inspiring them.

Furthermore, according to narcissists, one must see oneself not in a vacuum but concerning other parts of a greater whole. An "outward-looking gesture" is the best way to describe narcissism. Poems like "The Double Image," "For John," and "An Obsessive Combination" by Sexton seek to establish a relationship between the individual and the external environment. The presence of "I" and "You" in all three poems proves this is essential. Likewise, when the thoughts of the subject (the speaker) and the object (the reader) join forces, it suggests that the confessional process is successful. The speaker and the reader occupy the liminal zone between the speaker and the object world, which is exposed and explored throughout the poem.

3.2 Conclusion

As a result of all this introspection, it is abundantly evident that female poets are pathologically self-absorbed. Self-aware poets are cognizant of the language, tone, and poetic figures they use in their work. Because the reader actively participates in the creative process, the text takes on an egotistical quality as it shapes the reader's imagination.

In "The Double Image", the ego defines itself via the consecutive pictures reflected in the mirror. In the poem, a series of doublings or reflections that are similar to one another are described. Due to the fact that they go from one picture to another, readers become aware of the function they play in deciding the meaning of the text. Since this is the case, the narcissistic text emphasises how the reader interprets it by reflecting or thematising its meaning. Additionally, the reader's function is emphasised in "For John" to highlight the genuine significance of the narcissistic text. As an additional point of interest, Sexton's use of a broken mirror, a glass bowl, and an allusion to Narcissus' pool are all indications of her subjective narcissism in order to identify itself. As the speaker is considered to be beyond the boundaries of the glass, there is also a mixture of the relationship between the self and the other. The conclusion that may be drawn from this is that there are no physical barriers between the public and the private spheres and that the subject world is in harmony with the object world. As a result, it is impossible to identify the self in isolation from the more extraordinary environment when seen from the viewpoint of narcissism. Through the use of language that functions as a prism that reflects fractured pictures, the poem explores the process by which the ego is mirrored in the universe of objects.

الخاتمة

نتيجة لكل هذا التأمل الذاتي، من الواضح تمامًا أن الشعراء منغمسات في أنفسهن بشكل مرضي. فالشاعرات الواعيات لذواتهن يدركن اللغة والنبرة والأشكال الشعرية التي يستخدمنها في أعمالهن. ولأن القارئ يشارك بنشاط في العملية الإبداعية، فإن النص يكتسب صفة أنانية حيث يشكل خيال القارئ.

في "الصورة المزدوجة"، يحدد الأنا نفسه من خلال الصور المتتالية المنعكسة في المرآة. في القصيدة، يتم وصف سلسلة من التكرارات أو الانعكاسات المتشابهة مع بعضها البعض. ونظرًا لحقيقة أنهم ينتقلون من صورة إلى أخرى، يصبح القراء على دراية بالوظيفة التي يلعبونها في تحديد

معنى النص. وبما أن هذه هي الحال، فإن النص النرجسي يؤكد على كيفية تفسير القارئ له من خلال عكس معناه أو تحديد موضوعه. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم التأكيد على وظيفة القارئ في "إلى جون" لتسليط الضوء على الأهمية الحقيقية للنص النرجسي. وكنقطة إضافية مثيرة للاهتمام، فإن استخدام سيكستون لمرأة مكسورة ووعاء زجاجي وإشارة إلى بركة نرجس، كلها دلائل على نرجسيتها الذاتية من أجل تحديد هويتها. وبما أن المتحدث يعتبر خارج حدود الزجاج، فهناك أيضاً مزيج من العلاقة بين الذات والآخر. والاستنتاج الذي يمكن استخلاصه من هذا هو أنه لا توجد حواجز مادية بين المجالين العام والخاص وأن العالم الموضوعي في انسجام مع عالم الأشياء. لذلك من المستحيل تحديد الذات بمعزل عن البيئة الأكثر استثنائية عند النظر إليها من وجهة نظر النرجسية. من خلال استخدام اللغة التي تعمل كمنشور يعكس الصور المكسورة، تستكشف القصيدة العملية التي تنعكس بها الأنا في عالم الأشياء.

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كسر المرأة: البناء الذاتي الشعري لأن سيكستون: قصائد مختارة

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الملخص

تحلل هذه الدراسة شعر آن سيكستون باستخدام نظرية ليندا هاتشيون عن النرجسية، كما وردت في "السردي النرجسي: المفارقة الميتافيزيقية". يوفر مفهوم هاتشيون للنرجسية السردية، الذي يسلط الضوء على المرجعية الذاتية، والوعي الذاتي، وعدم التمييز بين النص والمؤلف، إطارًا ثاقبًا لفحص أسلوب سيكستون الاعترافي. تبحث هذه الورقة في كيفية تفاعل قصائد سيكستون مع الذات كموضوع وكائن، وتكشف عن تناقضات النرجسية المتأصلة في عملها. غالبًا ما تتشابك قصائد سيكستون مع المسألة الشخصية والتأمل الإبداعي المكثف، باستخدام التعرض الذاتي لفحص هويتها وآليات الإنتاج الشعري. يعكس الصراع بين السيرة الذاتية والسردي الميتافيزيقي في شعر سيكستون ادعاء هاتشيون بأن الكتابات النرجسية تؤكد على خلقها الخاص بينما تسلط الضوء على هشاشة الهوية. توضح هذه الدراسة كيف يعكس تفاعل سيكستون بين الضعف والاستعراض والنهج الأدبي الواعي للذات مفهوم هتشيون عن النرجسية السردية، مما يضع صوت الشاعر الاعترافي في مكانة شخصية عميقة وأدبية في طبيعته. علاوة على ذلك، تسعى هذه الورقة إلى تقديم وجهة نظر أدبية حول فحص سيكستون للذات مع توسيع الإطار النظري لهتشيون ليشمل وسيطًا شعريًا..

الكلمات المفتاحية: آن سيكستون، النرجسية، الصورة المزدوجة، لجون الذي يتوسل إلى ألا أسأل أكثر