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# Broadly Reflexive Hyperbole

## Abstract

### Introduction

This talk updates an ongoing project concerning certain ways that statements of form "X is Y" (and variants) can be interpreted. It summarizes but goes beyond Author (in press). I had previously claimed that such statements can be interpreted in two particular hyperbolic ways: as conveying a notably high degree of likeness between X and Y (acting differently from standard metaphorical interpretation), or saying that part X of Y plays a notably important role within Y (going beyond part/whole metonymy).

### Main Argument

I now show that these types of hyperbole are just two special cases of a wide-ranging phenomenon of "broadly reflexive hyperbole". This rests uniformly on a special property of some relationships, namely "broad reflexivity". Likeness is unusual in being strictly reflexive-*any* entity is like itself to a *maximum* degree (so X=Y can hyperbolically convey high likeness)-but some other relationships are reflexive in a broader, more relaxed way, where a maximum degree is not required-merely a very high degree-and "any" is loosened to "most, under normal conditions". Broadened reflexivity is enough to warrant exploitation in "X is Y" statements, which are then classed as exhibiting broadly reflexive hyperbole. For example, "John is Batman" can be a broadly-reflexively hyperbolic way of saying that John strongly identifies with Batman, because normally people identify with themselves perfectly. The talk will cover additional types of case addressed inadequately, if at all, in Author (in press), such as "I am England, and England is me" [Noel Coward], which requires further examination of epitomization relationships, combinations of relationships, and X,Y-order effects.

### Conclusion / Take-Home Message

A variety of apparently disparate ways of interpreting "X is Y" are unified, where furthermore the unification in terms of a wide-ranging type of hyperbole that deserves extensive examination in its own right.

**Keywords:** hyperbole, reflexivity of relationships, loose use of extreme cases