



# Hyperboles: The Rhetoric of Excess in Baroque Literature and Thought (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature)

By Christopher D. Johnson

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This book offers a detailed, comparatist defense of hyperbole in the Baroque period. Focusing on Spanish and Mexican lyric (Góngora, Quevedo, and Sor Juana), English drama (*King Lear* and translations of Seneca), and French philosophy (Descartes and Pascal), Christopher Johnson reads Baroque hyperbole as a sophisticated, often sublime, frequently satiric means of making sense of worlds and selves in crisis and transformation. Grounding his readings of hyperbole in the history of rhetoric and literary imitation, Johnson traces how rhetorical excess acquires specific cultural, political, aesthetic, and epistemological value. *Hyperboles* also engages more recent critiques of hyperbolic thought (Wittgenstein, Derrida, and Cavell), as it argues that hyperbole is the primary engine of a poetics and metaphysics of immanence.

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*By Christopher D. Johnson*

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

"The result of Johnson's exploration of his topic is to make us aware that what is fundamentally at stake in hyperbole is not merely the uses and fortunes of a particular figure of speech but the nature of language, of imaginative conception, and so of thought as a whole." -- *Renaissance Quarterly*

#### **About the Author**

Christopher D. Johnson is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University.

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