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Reviewed by Edward Jacobs, Old Dominion University

Adopting Richard McKeon's argument for things, thoughts, words, and actions as the four "places of invention and memory," Ulman uses these commonplaces as "generating principles" for a study that provocatively articulates methodological theory, cultural history, and detailed textual analysis. Most elaborately, Ulman uses the four to situate eighteenth-century British "rhetorical" theory in the context of philosophical and grammatical analyses of language, and to analyze three major late-eighteenth-century British rhetoricians: George Campbell, Hugh Blair, and Thomas Sheridan. Ulman's book will provoke debate because it connects the eighteenth-century "problem of language" to contemporary debates between "realists" and "skeptics," and outlines a "pluralistic" methodology for rhetorical studies that would analyze rhetorical theory and practice in terms of how they articulate relations between things, thoughts, words, and actions.

Ulman acknowledges "Kenneth Burke's warning that any terministic screen will inevitably *select* and *deflect* as well as *reflect* whatever reality we describe with it," but he also maintains that "several broad cultural continuities suggest the value of these commonplaces for studying the particular case of Western systems of philosophy and rhetoric." As he applies them in the book, the four concepts do usefully frame some of the fundamental similarities and contrasts between the three major players analyzed in detail. Thus, for example, Ulman points out that late-eighteenth-century British rhetorics share with grammatical and philosophical analyses of language a focus on words as either "signs of thoughts or instruments of communicative action," whereas the nineteenth-century "paradigm shift" toward historical linguistics separated language study from the study of thought and action and inaugurated an inquiry into words "primarily as material artifacts or things" which was not substantively challenged until the advent of twentieth-century skeptical rhetorics.

In the three long chapters at the core of the book, Ulman explores historical and cultural circumstances surrounding each of his chosen texts. As a group, he insists, Campbell, Blair, and Sheridan share the belief that language reflects thought, that "thought" includes all human faculties, and that the rhetorical "art" of using language as an action is an essential and controllable component of cultural progress. But each theorist, he says, "highlights a different alchemic opportunity in the interactions of words with thoughts, things, and actions." Specifically, Campbell's "essentially theoretical art of rhetoric... draws our attention to words as signs of thoughts hidden in the mind" and theorizes rhetoric as the art of "connecting" thought and
language. In contrast, Blair's rhetoric, Ulman says, focuses on "words as things, signs whose material or formal qualities incorporate the cultural and intellectual circumstances of speakers and writers," and is thus "an essentially productive art" that analyzes "language as an object of art produced and appreciated by individuals—and cultures—with advanced knowledge and refined taste." Sheridan's "practical art of rhetoric," says Ulman, calls for renewed attention to orality and theatricality, glorifying "spoken words and their accompanying tones and gestures as actions or enactments of thought, and, more particularly, of emotion."

Ulman's final chapter sees connections, in terms of these principles, between eighteenth-century British rhetorics and late-twentieth-century debates between "realists" and "skeptics." Ulman argues that "the mainstream of rhetorical theory was shifted from the eighteenth-century effort to accommodate Lockean empiricism by reassessing words as things, thoughts, and actions to the twentieth-century's reassessment of things, thoughts, and actions as words. But instead of applying this historical connection in an attempt to resolve the epistemological and ontological questions being asked about the existence and accessibility of things, thoughts, words, and actions, Ulman maintains the methodological focus with which he began, and he insists that such questions are moot for a legitimately "pluralistic" rhetoric, which should address itself to "assessing" how different answers to these questions "yield different arts of discourse." Consequently, he closes by proposing "four principles for analyzing the relations among systems of things, thoughts, words, and actions." As defined by Ulman, these principles are translation (the ordering of one set of relations such that it models selected aspects of other sets of relations); modeling (the creation of new relations by systematic translation); ordering (the response of one system of relations to changes in others); and autonomy (the capacity of one system of relations to resist ordering by others).

Unfortunately, Ulman illustrates his principles without reference to the various eighteenth-century British systems of relations he has described, but (bizarrely) by analogy to wrenches, bolts, and the building of machines. Consequently, Ulman's principles remain vexingly underdeveloped. To some extent, one might make the same complaint about his historiographical and theoretical principles. Ulman's analysis works well for the discursive domains and texts he selects, but the relative homogeneity of his things/thoughts/words/actions corpus becomes ironic in light of his proposal that we "pluralistically" analyze discursive acts in light of the different relations between these terms that they assume. The problem is not so much the focus on Campbell, Blair, and Sheridan, who do nicely represent eighteenth-century British rhetorical theory despite their geographic specificity to Scotland and Ireland. However, the exclusive focus on grammatical and philosophical analyses of language as the main contexts for rhetorical analyses seems impoverished given the elaborate and more culturally central
"rhetorical theories" that during this most volatile period developed around theatrical politicians like Wilkes, in the exchanges between Paine and Burke over the nature of "constitutional" discourse, in the cult of sensibility in literature, and in the accompanying furors in the popular reviews. Ulman's almost exclusive reliance on McKeon and Burke might usefully have been supplemented. Given Ulman's persistent stress on ways that historically-specific relations between his four principles can inventively connect and differentiate discursive practices, one might have expected more than a passing reference to Foucault. In particular, the theory of "the statement" and of "discursive formations" developed in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* could greatly refine Ulman's method for describing different "systems of relations" between thoughts, things, words, and actions. For as Foucault demonstrates here and in *The Order of Things*, the constitution of such discursive objects and the establishment of specific relations between them involves the definition of institutionally particular "subject positions" and "strategies" of use.

Still, one cannot expect Ulman to have included everything, and even the shortcomings of his book will provoke fresh considerations of the possibilities represented by genuinely interdisciplinary scholarship. Ulman's book will be useful and of interest to the growing number of scholars in rhetoric and composition who enjoy grappling with the complex history of language and discourse in the "modern" period.


Reviewed by Richard Leo Enos, Carnegie Mellon University

I strongly recommend *Rhetorical Memory and Delivery* (*RMD*) to readers of *JAC*. This unequivocal endorsement was shaped in a number of ways. Of course, and as I will mention later, there are specific contributions: the unity of the eleven-essay collection, the particular insights of individual contributors, and the resulting synthetic thesis that they all make together. My opinions, however, were also shaped in other, more indirect ways. I found myself eager to read and return to the volume. I found myself recommending particular essays to doctoral students. I found myself recommending the book to my colleagues and discussing it in classes. I found myself eager to write notes not only for this review, but also to save (and thereby preserve) the insights I read. Finally, I must confess that I found myself tempted to start writing this review even before I had finished the book (a temptation I