



Rhetoric on the Margins of Modernity: Vico, Condillac, Monboddo (Rhetorical Philosophy and Theory)

Catherine L Hobbs

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Changes in English studies today, particularly the rise of cultural studies, have forced reexaminations of historical genealogies. Three complex figures whose places are currently being reassessed include the Neapolitan Giambattista Vico (1668 –1744), the Frenchman Etienne de Condillac (1714 –1780), and the Scotsman James Burnet(t), Lord Monboddo (1714 –1799) in our histories of communication, linguistics, English studies, and now rhetoric.

In *Rhetoric on the Margins of Modernity: Vico, Condillac, Monboddo*, Catherine L. Hobbs focuses primarily on these three key figures in whose work rhetoric and linguistics intertwine as they respond to emerging attitudes and values of science and philosophy in the eighteenth century. Through her examination of works of Vico, Condillac, Monboddo and other marginal figures, Hobbs presents a different and more nuanced view of the transformation of rhetoric from classical to modern.

In order to redefine each figure's position, Hobbs brings together the histories of linguistics, literature, rhetoric, and communication, rather than leaving them isolated in separate disciplines. She examines each figure's theory of language origin and development as it has motivated their rhetorical theories. The result is *Rhetoric on the Margins of Modernity: Vico, Condillac, Monboddo*, an original and significant account of the formation of modern rhetoric.

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