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## RHETORIC AND COURTLINESS IN EARLY MODERN LITERATURE

*Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern England* explores the early modern interest in conversation as a newly identified art. Conversation was widely accepted to have been inspired by the republican philosopher Cicero. Recognising his influence on courtesy literature – the main source for ‘civil conversation’ – Jennifer Richards uncovers new ways of thinking about humanism as a project of linguistic and social reform. She argues that humanists explored styles of conversation to reform the manner of association between male associates; teachers and students, buyers and sellers, and settlers and colonial others. They reconsidered the meaning of ‘honesty’ in social interchange in an attempt to represent the tension between self-interest and social duty. Richards explores the interest in civil conversation among mid-Tudor humanists, John Cheke, Thomas Smith and Roger Ascham, as well as their self-styled successors, Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser.

JENNIFER RICHARDS is Lecturer in English at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. She is the editor, with James Knowles of *Shakespeare's Late Plays: New Readings* (1999) and the author of articles in *Renaissance Quarterly* and *Criticism*.

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JENNIFER RICHARDS

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## *Contents*

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page vi</i>
Introduction	I
1. Types of honesty: civil and domestical conversation	20
2. From rhetoric to conversation: reading for Cicero in <i>The Book of the Courtier</i>	43
3. Honest rivalries: Tudor humanism and linguistic and social reform	65
4. Honest speakers: sociable commerce and civil conversation	87
5. A commonwealth of letters: Harvey and Spenser in dialogue	113
6. A new poet, a new social economy: homosociality in <i>The Shepheardes Calender</i>	139
Conclusion	168
Notes	171
<i>Bibliography</i>	195
<i>Index</i>	208

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