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Sommario/riassunto

Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature 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. Recognizing his influence on courtesy literature - the main source for 'civil conversation' - Jennifer Richards uncovers alternative 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.

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