

“Video et Taceo”: Elizabeth I and the Rhetoric of Counsel

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Although one of her mottoes, “semper eadem,” seems to claim a fundamental unity of character, Queen Elizabeth I nevertheless presents us with an array of poses and personae. A number of critics have shown how some of these stances represent strategies through which she upheld her status and power.¹ One group of critics, including Arthur Marotti, Louis Adrian Montrose, and Stephen Greenblatt, have explored how she manipulated and was manipulated by complex Petrarchan and pastoral paradigms, and how she and her courtiers used these traditions as sources for mediating symbols through which they both asserted power and mystified its origins.² Similarly, Daniel Javitch and Frank Whigham have stressed the rhetorical tools and tropes provided for power struggles at court by courtesy books such as Castiglione’s *The Courtier*.³

Elizabeth’s use of Petrarchan, pastoral, and courtly idioms, however, does not provide a full account of her strategies of power. In the first place, these symbols were most fully elaborated by male courtiers and writers and not by Elizabeth herself, and may tell us more about how men wanted to see her than about how she saw or presented herself. Such an approach stresses her most “feminized” roles, the marginal, seemingly powerless personae she assumed in order to mask her power and which her male subjects employed in order to manage the idea of a powerful woman. Historians of these strategies tend to present an Elizabeth who is, paradoxically, a passive symbol of power surrounded by active, scheming courtiers but who nevertheless embodies symbolically the absolute authority of a patriarchal state.⁴

I would like to explore Elizabeth’s use of another symbolic system, that of political counsel, in order to show how she asserted and protected her authoritative involvement in the making of public

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policy. Unlike Petrarchan, pastoral, and courtly guises, the stance of educated advisor was one which she herself assumed in her speeches and writings, but in which her male contemporaries avoided depicting her. When her male subjects made use of this system of counsel, they attempted to assert their right, according to humanist paradigms of counsel, to give advice to her, and she responded with a variety of strategies which used their expectations about her role to subvert the system. As a result, unlike courtly paradigms which tended to freeze the queen in a static and symbolic posture removed from the actual operations of government, the system of advice-giving allowed her to assume an array of active roles—from patriarchal advisor to silent and obedient woman—within the political system, helping her to define her relation to her councillors, to Parliament, to her subjects, and to her fellow monarchs.

Recently, several critics have stressed the fact that Elizabeth denigrated her “female” weakness, asserting instead the masculine or androgynous authority of her divine “body politic.”⁵ For Allison Heisch, this strategy points to Elizabeth’s status as “honorary male” who reaffirmed, rather than subverted, the patriarchal system.⁶ I believe, however, that Elizabeth’s use of the paradigm of advice-giving reveals a woman who was less completely bound by male structures than some critics have argued. Although she necessarily operated within the all-pervasive patriarchal system of her time, she used the tropes of counsel to exploit one aspect of that system against itself. The authoritative stance of advisor was, in the sixteenth century, almost always imagined as male, although its expressions and gestures were not explicitly gender-specific. Thus, Elizabeth could use its stratagems to assume in her own person an authority usually associated with men. Conversely, she could employ apparent complicity with patriarchy to mask stubborn resistance to it.

Another of Elizabeth’s mottoes—“*video et taceo*”—expresses her ambiguous place in the advice-giving system with complex subtlety.⁷ The first half of her motto, “*video*,” implies silent judgment, the informed consideration of a person who must, and can, advise herself. The choice of “*video*” rather than “*audio*” indicates that she intends to make up her own mind on the basis of observation rather than to accept blindly her advisors’ spoken counsel. “*Taceo*,” however, implies that as queen, she will maintain the silence thought suitable for a woman in an age when women were relentlessly advised to remain “chaste, silent, and obedient.”⁸ As a whole, the motto displays the delicate balancing act between assertion and abnegation of authority upon which Elizabeth relied.

I

The purpose of humanist educational reform in England, according to its architects Desiderius Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, Sir Thomas Elyot, and Roger Ascham, was to train young men in the serious moral purpose and copious Latin style that they needed to become authoritative advisors and public servants.⁹ To these theorists of education, the two goals, moral probity and Latin fluency, were intimately related and to be achieved by the same means. Their educational programs were designed to turn the student into a wise advisor, a type of grave councillor exemplified in classical antiquity by Cato the Elder, in the sixteenth century most notably by Lord Burghley, and parodied by Shakespeare in the character of Polonius. Such a man would “bring forth good fruit” in the form of advice to his prince and to younger men, and in a prose style, in Latin and English, filled with authoritative sayings.¹⁰

Theories of how education in the classics could develop the wisdom, ethics, and prose style that such a figure would need were often accompanied by discussions, such as those found in More’s *Utopia* and Starkey’s *Dialogue*, of the obligations and problems involved in trying to give wise advice to the prince. Such an advisor asserted his authority through various rhetorical gestures; a copious style studded with learned and moral sayings and exempla taken from classical and religious works, and the assumption of a grave and serious demeanor. Princes were urged to accept the advice offered by such men, and to shun the more palatable advice offered by sycophantic flatterers. This system provided places for both providers and recipients of advice, and despite recent emphasis on the importance of Italianate models of courtly behavior, the humanist paradigm had a place in the semiotics of power at the Elizabethan court as long as men like Burghley were alive.¹¹

Elementary education in England during this period was largely designed to teach boys to assert the proper kind of authority rhetorically, both in Latin and English. Women were excluded from power partly, as several scholars have shown, by being denied access to training in this code of authority.¹² In the rare cases when they received an education, women were taught to be familiar with Christian writings and to be chaste, silent, and obedient; many educated women found only religious outlets for their learning.¹³ Without training in the rhetorical gestures of authority and without a sanctioned role as public advisors, women were effectively denied a place in the system of political counsel.

Nevertheless, historians agree that Elizabeth was, in fact, intimately involved in the making of political decisions.¹⁴ To be sure,

she did establish power and manipulate her courtiers by playing courtly games, but she also met with her council, corresponded with fellow monarchs, addressed parliament, and made decisions as part of her exercise of power. In these contexts, she often used gestures and strategies belonging to the system of counsel, defining herself with reference to the humanist ideal of authoritative statesman. She was able to use these strategies because she had been educated to do so, and her use of the system of council reveals the extent to which humanist education could empower a woman who was given the chance to exercise that power.

Unlike most women, Elizabeth received, at the hands of William Grindal, John Cheke, and especially Roger Ascham, the full humanist education.¹⁵ She may have benefitted from the humanist concern that a prince, in particular, should be properly educated. Several letters written by Ascham reveal that Elizabeth was trained, as other women were not, in the use of rhetoric to assert authority.

She remained proud of her learning throughout her life, and realized the importance of displaying her education as a way of legitimizing her claim to power. She differs most sharply from other educated women of the period, and even from her fellow monarchs Mary Tudor and Mary Queen of Scots, by presuming to deliver public addresses. Her parliamentary speeches represent just the sort of authoritative, public discourse for which humanist education prepared men and in which women were not supposed to participate. She even, on several occasions, delivered public speeches in Latin, breaking womanly silence in the most exclusive language of male authority. And, as we shall see, she did not hesitate to use these speeches and her private letters to assume the role of advisor.

She also shows, in several letters, that she was familiar with the topoi of princely attitudes toward advice: as early as 1581, she urges the Duke of Anjou to be cautious in accepting advice and encourages one of his advisors to “give him good advice, and be bold, preferring his good to the desire of pleasing him.”¹⁶ She advises her cousin James VI of Scotland in a letter of 1592 that “if my counsels had as well been followed as they were truly meant, your subjects had now better known their King, and you no more need of further justice”; similarly, in 1593, she warns him against the “Siren’s songs” of bad counsel: “May enough of God’s reason befall you to resist so destroying advice.”¹⁷

Nevertheless, her relation to the paradigm of educated statesman and advisor was necessarily oblique. In the first place, she was herself the prince, and the traditional system was designed to incorporate the giving of advice by trained men to their monarch. The topoi of

counsel tend to stress the prince's need to avoid flattery and follow good advice, and not to generate such advice himself.¹⁸ More importantly, there was no sanctioned way for female rulers, or, indeed, for women in general to assume this kind of paternal authority. Elizabeth's reliance on alternative images such as mistress or shepherdess reveals the extent to which conventional models of authoritative rule were closed to her. James I felt able, however ineptly, to assert this kind of learned authority through such works as his *Basilikon Doron* and his didactic speeches on the nature of kingship.¹⁹ Elizabeth, however, was more circumspect in her assumption of this role, and was forced constantly to acknowledge her subjects' expectation that she would accept rather than give advice. She used her thorough grounding in the humanist system to formulate strategies for asserting her authority in different situations and before different audiences, often turning audience expectation that she would accept advice into a means of refusing it.

II

When Elizabeth passed through the streets of London on the way to her coronation, her subjects did not hesitate to give her an abundance of advice. At various points along her path, the citizens of London had placed "pageants," each concerned with a particular aspect of good government, offering sententious advice in the form of poems recited by children and in sayings inscribed on the structure itself. An unidentified witness tells us how in each pageant, in addition to the spoken advice, "there were placed in every voide rome of the Pageant, both in Englishe and Latin, such sentences as advaunched the seate of governaunce upholden by Vertue."²⁰

Elizabeth seems to have accepted this torrent of sententious counsel quite graciously. Our witness tells how "ere the Quenes Majestie came wythin hearing of thys Pageaunt, she sent certaine, as also at all the other Pageauntes, to require the People to be silent. For her Majestie was disposed to heare all that shoulde be sayde unto her" (Nichols, 1:44). She is repeatedly described as listening attentively, asking for further explanation, and replying with thanks and promises to heed the proffered advice. She knew that as a young woman, undertaking to rule England when the right of women to succeed to the throne was questioned and criticized on all sides, she should expect to be told what to do.²¹ Clearly, at the beginning of her reign even her lowliest subjects believed that she needed advice and that they had the right, even the duty, to offer it.

Significantly, later in her reign, the public entertainments presented to her avoided this vein of sententious moralizing and

employed instead, extravagant praise based on chivalric, pastoral, and petrarchan modes.²² Elizabeth may have discouraged the courtiers responsible for these entertainments from addressing her in this way, and they may have found courtly modes more easily manipulated in their quest for favor. Nevertheless, the queen tended to respond to flattery as if she had been given advice. Her famous reply to the recorder at Warwick (1572), whose speech consisted of praise of the queen and a history of Warwick, seems to acknowledge and accept non-existent counsel: "Come hither, little Recorder. It was told me that youe wold be afraid to look upon me, or to speak boldly; but you were not so fraid of me as I was of youe; and I now thank you for putting me in mynd of my duety, and that should be in me" (Nichols, 1:315-16).

Certainly at the beginning of her reign Elizabeth seemed to signal that she would preserve womanly silence and rely on the advice of her subjects, especially on that of father figures like Burghley and Sir Nicholas Bacon. Her statement appointing Burghley to serve on her council is instructive:

I give you this charge that you shall be of my privy Council and content to take pains for me and my realm. This judgement I have of you that you will not be corrupted by any manner of gift . . . and that without respect of my private will you will give me that counsel which you think best and if you shall know anything necessary to be declared to me of secrecy you shall show it to myself only. And assure yourself I will not fail to keep taciturnity therein and therefore herewith I charge you.²³

In appointing her chief advisor, Elizabeth was careful to stress his moral authority and her own willingness to keep silent and accept advice. Her choice of Burghley and her careful public maintenance of the appearance that she took his advice were vital strategies for the young queen.

This strategy was important because William Cecil, Lord Burghley, most clearly exemplified the style and stance of the humanist statesman-advisor. He was famous in his own time as the preeminent exemplar of this figure, the *pater patriae* who gave wise advice to the queen and to a number of young men whose education he supervised.²⁴ In the collections of precepts which he wrote for each of his sons, as well as in letters to Edward Manners, Earl of Rutland, John Harrington, and others, he exhibits the authority commensurate with his position.²⁵ He seems purposefully to have assumed

this role of wise advisor, and to have manifested it through a sententious and didactic style.²⁶ His letters are full of proffered advice and quoted maxims: “*Durus enim est sermo,*” “*oculos habent et non vident,*” “*Deus dabit meliora,*” “*expecto Dominum, viriliter age, et confortetur cor tuum.*”²⁷

Yet despite the pervasiveness of this style and stance in Burghley’s correspondence, he seems never to have used it in addressing the queen. Although he often complains to others that she will not follow his advice, he does not approach her in an openly didactic manner.²⁸ His letters to her, even when she refuses his counsel, speak with the voice of a humble suppliant:

It may please your most Excellent Majesty—With a sorrowful heart and watery eyes, I your poor servant and most lowly subject, an unworthy Secretary, beseech your Majesty to pardon this my lowly suit, that considering the proceeding in this matter for removing the French out of Scotland doth not content your Majesty, and that I cannot with conscience give any contrary advice, I may, with your Majesty’s favour and clemency, be spared to entermeddle therein.²⁹

She used Burghley to reassure her subjects that she was receiving suitable advice, but did not in practice allow him to approach her as an authoritative advisor. Nevertheless, she allowed Burghley to maintain such a public reputation for judicious advice that William Camden could write: “the Queen was most happy in so great a Councillor and to his wholesome counsels the state of England for ever shall be beholden.”³⁰

As Camden’s remarks indicate, it was important for Elizabeth, especially as a young woman, to appear to receive good advice. On the other hand, as a prince, it was not to her advantage to appear to accept too much of it, especially from powerful male advisors. Through the delicate balancing act of her relationship with Burghley, she was able to assume absolute authority while seeming open to wise counsel.

III

In her own writings, Elizabeth continues to maintain a careful balance between authority and obedience and uses the full range of roles, from patriarchal advisor to silent and obedient woman, which the system of counsel made available to her. Her strategies differ according to her audience, and she is most willing to assert authority openly and without qualification in her letters to fellow monarchs,

occasions when no subject was likely to be threatened by her unorthodox assertion of power.

Her letters to her brother, Edward VI, display an openly sententious authority as they attempt to manifest not only the humanistic education both she and Edward had received but also a sister's concern for her younger brother. In one instance, for example, she lets his request for a picture of her occasion a lesson:

For the face I grant I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present. But though from the grace of the picture the colours may fade by time, may give by weather, may be spited by chance; yet the other, nor Time with his swift wings shal overtake, nor the misty clouds with their lowering may darken, nor Chance with her slippery foot may overthrow.

(Nichols, 1:28)

Later in the same letter, she gives herself advice: "I shall learn to follow this saying of Horace, *Feras non culpes quod vitari non potest*" (Nichols, 1:28).

When she herself becomes queen, her letters to brother and sister monarchs speak with the same authority. Her early letters to James VI of Scotland express their advice even more boldly: "Among your many studies, my dear Brother and Cousin, I would Isocrates' noble lesson were not forgotten, that wills the Emperor his Sovereign to make his words of more account than other men their oaths, as meetest ensigns to show the truest badge of prince's Arms."³¹ She continues to advise him on matters of state, urging, for example, that "slacking of due correction engenders the bold minds for new crimes;" "weed out the weeds lest the best corne fester"; "I find an Old English proverb truly verified 'a feast long looked for is good when it cometh'."³² She sounds much like Burghley in these letters as she combines homely proverbs, learned allusions, and original *sententiae* in a continual stream of political advice. Clearly, when she wanted to, she could make open use of the rhetorical gestures of authority.

Sometimes Elizabeth addresses advice to her subjects in a similarly bold fashion. She often felt the need to remind parliament of the limits of its authority to advise a prince. By casting such reminders in the form of advice, she is able to disguise the fact that they are commands. At the end of a speech to parliament in 1559, she warns them not to go any further in attempting to tell her what to do; they may urge her to marry, but must not attempt to give "limitation of

place or person." She rises to an uncharacteristic lecture which ends in a saying: "a guerdon constrained and a gift freely given can never agree together" (Neale, 1:49). One of her favorite sayings alludes to the exemplum of the hierarchy of the human body: "A strange thing that the foot should direct the head in so weighty a cause; which cause hath been so diligently weighed by us, for that it toucheth us more than them."³³ With this saying, Elizabeth defines the limits of her subjects' advice-giving, at the same time claiming, as "head," to have "diligently weighed" the situation. By using a commonplace to express her thoughts, she asserts the learned authority of a trained advisor and claims the support of convention for her unconventional claim to male power. By casting a command in the form of sententious advice, she softens, and makes more acceptable, her claim to that power.

Sometimes, in reaction to unwanted counsel from parliament, Elizabeth directly asserts her own learned authority to give advice or in other ways affirms her ties to the humanist learning that was supposed to enable her to do so. Most directly, she occasionally makes full and serious claim to the authority of learning, assuming, if only briefly, the role of humanist statesman. At the end of the session of 1584-85, for example, she reminded parliament: "I am supposed to have many studies, but most philosophical. I must yield this to be true: that I suppose few, that be no professors, have read more. And I need not tell you that I am so simple that I understand not, nor so forgetful that I remember not" (Neale, 2:100). Through such claims of learning and wisdom the queen asserts personal authority and the ability to advise herself.

Upon occasion, Elizabeth demonstrates that she can provide her own counsel through the use of sententious advice addressed to herself. She often uses sayings to show that experience has taught her enough to advise herself on matters about which parliament has offered unwanted advice. In one instance, when parliament mentioned her attack of smallpox as reason to secure succession, she adduces a biblical *sententia* in her reply: "there needs no boding of my bane. I know as well as I did before that I am mortal. I know also that I must seek to discharge myself of that great burthen that God hath laid upon me. For of them to whom much is committed much is required."³⁴ Again, in 1586, she claims the fruits of experience: "I am not so void of judgment as not to see mine own peril; nor yet so ignorant as not to know it were in nature a foolish course to cherish a sword to cut mine own throat" (Neale, 2:127).

When it suits her strategy, however, usually as an excuse for delaying a decision or answer to some unpalatable suggestion, she

will directly abdicate the learned authority which she has on other occasions taken such pains to establish. In a speech in 1563 on marriage, she runs through a repertoire of such tactics to justify her “answer-answerless”:

The weight and greatness of this matter might cause in me being a woman wanting both wit and memory, some fear to speak and bashfulness besides, a thing appropriate to my sex. But yet, the princely seat and kingly throne wherein God (though unworthy) hath constituted me, maketh these two causes to seem little in mine eyes, though grievous perhaps to your ears, and boldeneth me to say somewhat in this matter, which I mean only to touch but not presently to answer. For this so great a demand needeth both great and grave advice.
(Neale, 1:107)

We might note, first of all, the claim that divine right overcomes womanly weakness, a strategy identified by both Heisch and Marcus.³⁵ Heisch says that in this passage, “Elizabeth hid behind her skirts and pointed to heaven” in order to claim divine sanction for her authority. I believe that her strategy here is considerably more complex, playing on the system of counsel in several ways. The opening sentence serves a double purpose—to indicate that she realizes the importance of the matter under consideration and accepts her role as recipient of advice, but also to excuse her avoidance of direct response to the particular advice that parliament has offered. Before denigrating her “wit and memory”—faculties which she stoutly defends in other speeches—she makes the point that she is well able to judge “the weight and greatness of this matter,” and realizes that “so great a demand needeth both great and grave advice.”³⁶ She does not identify the source of this advice, but rather uses her recognition of the need for it as an excuse to avoid responding directly to parliament’s advice. She cannot give them a straight answer until she has had time to consider advice from other sources. In effect, she uses her acknowledged need for advice as an excuse for rejecting it, exploiting her ambiguous position within the system of counsel. In typical fashion, this passage moves purposefully between assertions and abnegations of authority: she claims to recognize the gravity of the situation, yet claims also that as a woman she lacks wit to deal with it; she asserts that her kingly power overrides womanly weakness, then admits that her kingly response may be unwelcome to parliament; she says that she will speak on the matter, then says that she will not answer it. The passage ends with

an ambiguous acknowledgement of the need for advice from some unnamed source. In this passage, Elizabeth's claim that she lacks wisdom serves a specific purpose; to disarm male disapproval of her audacious speech, and to avoid direct refusal of unwanted advice. She uses male expectations about feminine behavior to protect her prerogative to circumvent those expectations.

The alternation of advice and diffidence found in several of Elizabeth's private letters may clarify the purpose of such tactics and help to place them in relation to some of her other strategies for asserting power. Although her missives to fellow monarchs often offer aphorisms and advice without qualification, those to her subjects rarely do so. She concludes a letter of consolation and advice to Lady Paget on the death of her daughter in this way: "Call to mind, good Kate, how hardly we princes can brook of crossing of our commands; how ireful will the Highest power be (may you be sure) when murmurings shall be made of his pleasingest will? Let Nature therefore not hurt herself, but give place to the giver. Though this lesson be from a silly vicar, yet it is sent from a loving sovereign."³⁷ Here the queen seems to offer sententious advice ("let nature therefore") with the full force of her authority behind it. But she immediately calls herself a "silly vicar" and returns the discourse from the system of counsel to that of love ("a loving sovereign"). She assumes the stance of authoritative advisor, and then undercuts it so that it cannot occasion anxiety. Similarly, she prefaces an extremely sententious letter to Henry Sidney with the disclaimer that had not necessity prevailed, the letter "shuld hardly have cumbered your yees."³⁸ The point here is that even when addressing her subjects, she does not avoid the assertion of her authority to advise, but rather follows the assertion with a softening qualification. In this way, she maintains her conveniently ambiguous place in the system of counsel, both manifesting her authority and taking pains that the manifestation of a powerful woman can occasion no anxiety. Thus, in a passage such as that addressed to Lady Paget, her recourse to the role of loving mistress can only be accurately read in the context of her initial stance as authoritative advisor.

Clearly, then, Elizabeth was extremely aware of humanist ideas about political counsel, and sought quite subtly to position herself with respect to a system of advice-giving. This system provided her with exceptionally flexible tools for the maintenance of power because, unlike courtly paradigms which froze her in a static pose, she could assume a wide array of stances within it. She could use Burghley's public reputation as wise councillor to reassure her

subjects that she was receiving good advice, while refusing, in practice, to accept much of it. When writing poetry or addressing her equals, she could give advice as openly and imperiously as Burghley. She could assume the role of advisor to parliament in order to disguise blunt commands as wise counsel. She could almost simultaneously assert and deny her ability to advise herself in order to deflect outside advice. She was able to pose as a dutiful daughter in order to mask stubborn resistance to parliamentary advice. These assertions and abnegations of authority should not be taken as reflections of her true opinion of herself, but as strategic maneuvers within the complex system of counsel. This system, unlike its courtly fellows, furnished tropes which could represent and defend an active engagement in the formation of policy. And Elizabeth, as a female prince who had received a full humanist education and was influenced by humanist expectations about wise government, needed a way to express her relation to actual decision-making fully as much as she needed a way to express regal power.

Nevertheless, it frequently suited Elizabeth to remain a distant symbolic figure whose relation to policy was obscured. It was often in her best interest to let men see her as they would. As a woman who was, of necessity, chaste (but not too chaste), silent (but not too silent), and obedient (but not too obedient), it was important that she allow herself to be reflected in a number of mirrors chosen by her subjects. Her direct participation in the decisions of government, and her use of the authoritative rhetoric of counsel to defend that participation, however, shows that she did not always see herself in those mirrors. Although she necessarily worked within the patriarchal power structure, she was often able to use it against itself to protect her fragile position. Elizabeth saw quite clearly the dangers which accompanied her exercise of authority, but, despite her motto, did not always remain silent in the face of them. Her skillful use of the humanist rhetoric of authoritative counsel allowed her to break silence and speak the language of authority as a uniquely powerful woman in a man's world.³⁹

NOTES

¹Frances A. Yates, for example, has explored her use of traditions surrounding the classical goddess Astraea and the Virgin Mary to encourage a cult of secular monarchy, in *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), esp. pp. 29-112. See also Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977) for a study of similar iconographic strategies.

²See Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes,' and the Pastoral of Power," *ELR* 10 (1980):153-82; "'Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form,'" *ELH* 50 (1983):415-59; and "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representations* 1 (1983):61-94; Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 52-59; and *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 165-69; Arthur F. Marotti, "'Love is not Love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order," *ELH* 49 (1982):398-400.

³See Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), who argues that this Italianate courtly milieu fostered the development of imaginative poetry in sixteenth-century England; and Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), who explores the "rhetorical semiotics" of courtesy through which the ambitious sought to rise and the already privileged sought to impede the ambitious.

⁴Leah Marcus, "Shakespeare's Comic Heroines, Elizabeth I, and the Political Uses of Androgyny," *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1986), p. 148, notes that such recent studies have "frozen her into the ceremonial stasis of an object of worship."

⁵See Marcus, pp. 137-43; and Allison Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I: Parliamentary Rhetoric and the Exercise of Power," *Signs* 1 (1975):31-55, 35; "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy," *Feminist Review* 4 (1980):45-54; and Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (New York: Methuen, 1985), p. 180, who notes that "Elizabeth I, who spoke powerfully, did so most famously to deny her femininity."

⁶Allison Heisch, "Persistence of Patriarchy," p. 45; pp. 53-54.

⁷William Camden, *Remains Concerning Britain* (London, 1870), p. 373, notes that Elizabeth "most commonly" used two mottoes: "'video, taceo' and 'semper eadem,' which she as truly and constantly performed."

⁸See Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640*, (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982), pp. 142-43.

⁹See Desiderius Erasmus, *Literary and Educational Writings 2: De Copia/De Ratione Studii*, ed. Craig R. Thompson, in vol. 24 of *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 28 vols. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1978); and Juan Luis Vives, *De Tradendis Disciplinis*, vol. 6 of *Opera Omnia*, 8 vols. (Benedicti Montfort, 1745; London: Gregg, 1964); Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, ed. Foster Watson (New York: Dutton, 1907); Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster, English Works*, ed. W. A. Wright (1904; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970). For the role of sayings and the commonplace book as a means of combining moral and rhetorical instruction, see my unpublished doctoral dissertation, "Proverbial and Aphoristic Sayings: Sources of Authority in the English Renaissance," Harvard, 1986.

¹⁰Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983), p. 27, associates Cato and Burghley with this stance. On the figure of paternal advisor in literature from ancient Egypt to the English Renaissance, see Rudolph Habenicht, ed., *John Heywood's "A Dialogue of Proverbs"* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1963), p. 9; on the expectation that young men so trained would enter public service, see G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 26-35; on the centrality of the "problem of counsel" in Tudor government, see Arthur Ferguson, *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 162-99.

¹¹On Burghley as humanist advisor and statesman *par excellence*, see Helgerson, pp. 27, 57; and B. W. Beckingsale, *Burghley, Tudor Statesman* (New York: St. Martin's, 1967), pp. 196-97.

¹²On the importance of this educational system in perpetuating male authority, see Walter Ong, "Latin Language Study as Renaissance Puberty Rite," *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 113-41. On the limited nature of female education in the Renaissance, see Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1956); and Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women have a Renaissance?" in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 137-64, 150-52.

¹³See Hull, pp. 142-43. And on women who used their learning for pious ends, see the essays in Margaret Patterson Hannay, ed., *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent: Kent State Univ. Press, 1985).

¹⁴See Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), p. 508, who says that Elizabeth "unflatteringly maintained her unquestioned command of English policy"; and Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I, A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 193, who argues that "there can be no doubt that the main lines of policy reflected her deepest convictions"; and J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth and her Parliaments*, 2 vols. (London: Cape, 1957), 2:418, 439, who concludes that she often opposed her council and parliament, and that her rule was personal.

¹⁵On her education, see J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934), pp. 13-16.

¹⁶G. B. Harrison, ed., *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I*, 2nd edn. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), pp. 147-43.

¹⁷Harrison, p. 221; 228.

¹⁸Both More's *Utopia* and Starkey's *Dialogue* depict the prince as recipient of advice, for which, see Ferguson, pp. 180-82. On the difficulty of persuading a king to accept virtuous but unwelcome advice, see *Utopia*.

¹⁹See *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. James Craigie, Scottish Text Society, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1944). This treatise addressed to his son resembles the tracts of advice to a son prepared by Burghley (for both sons), Henry Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, and other prominent sixteenth-century fathers. See Louis B. Wright, ed., *Advice to a Son, Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962); and see also Helgerson, p. 27, on the "paternal and governmental authority" of Burghley and Sidney.

²⁰From a pamphlet entitled *The Passage of our most drad Sovereigne Lady Quene Elyzabeth through the Citie of London to Westminster, the daye before her Coronation, Anno 1558-9*, published by Richard Tottel and reprinted in John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols. (London 1823) 1:38-60.

²¹For a particular subject's attempt to advise the queen, as well as an account of treatises questioning the right of women to rule, see Carole Levin, "John Foxe and the Responsibilities of Queenship," in Rose, ed., pp. 113-33.

²²See Yates and Montrose on this. Even as early as the Woodstock entertainments of 1575, the queen was flattered rather than advised. At Wanstead in 1578, the entertainment, written by Sir Philip Sidney, includes a comic schoolmaster who makes a speech filled with inkhorn terms and sayings, and who is called "tedious fool" and banished by a "May-Lady" (Nichols, 2:97)—revealing how far entertainment of the queen had come from moralizing pageants. As we have seen, however, such courtly flattery served to manage the queen as surely as did the offer of counsel.

²³As quoted in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Cape, 1955), p. 119, from P. R. O., s. p. xii¹-7.

²⁴See Beckingsale, pp. 196-97, 199, 245-50; and also Helgerson, pp. 25-27.

²⁵See Wright, ed., *Advice to a Son*.

²⁶See Beckingsale, p. 199, on Burghley's reliance on proverbs and adages.

²⁷Quoted in Read, *Cecil*, p. 312, p. 395; and Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Knopf, 1960), p. 55; and Nichols, 1:346.

²⁸See Read, *Cecil*, p. 171, for a letter to Throgmorton of 7 May 1560, in which Cecil complains: "I have had such a torment herein with the Queen's Majesty" because she refused to take his advice.

²⁹Quoted in Read, *Cecil*, p. 161, from a letter of December 1559.

³⁰William Camden, *Annals*, as cited in Read, *Burghley*, p. 546.

³¹Harrison, p. 159.

³²The first is from a letter of 11 September 1592, as quoted in Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Elizabeth I* (St. Louis: Forum Press, 1980), p. 45; the next on 26 November 1592; the next on 16 April 1590, both quoted in John Bruce, ed., *Letters of Queen Elizabeth and King James VI of Scotland* (London: Camden Society, 1849), pp. 45 and 165.

³³I cite the parliamentary speeches from J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments*, 1:148; see also a letter to Catherine de Medici, 16 October 1567, quoted in Smith, p. 44: "I rejoyce me very much to see that one prince takes to heart the wrongs done to another, having a hatred to that metamorphosis, where the head is removed to the foot, and the heels hold the highest place."

³⁴Neale, 1: 108; again, in reply to a similar request in 1566: "As for my own part, I care not for death; for all men are mortal" (Neale, 1: 149).

³⁵Heisch, "Persistence," p. 45; Marcus, p. 139.

³⁶For her defense of wit and memory, recall her claim that she is not "so simple that I understand not, nor so forgetful that I remember not" (Neale, 2:104).

³⁷Harrison, p. 200, undated letter.

³⁸Nichols, 2:303-304. This letter is interesting for its large number of folk proverbs: "a fole to late bewares, when all the perrel is past"; "if we still advise we shall never do"; "thus are we ever knitting a knot, never tied," etc.

³⁹I would like to thank Emily Bartels, Heather Dubrow, and Naomi Miller for their comments on an earlier version of this essay.