

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9911008422003321
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Titolo	The Age of Criticism : The Late Renaissance in Italy / / Baxter Hathaway
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Ithaca, NY : , : Cornell University Press, , [2019] ©1962
ISBN	9781501743443 1501743449
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource
Soggetti	Italy West European History HISTORY / Europe / Italy Renaixement Llibres electrònics Itàlia
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Preface -- Contents -- Part One: Poetry as Imitation -- 1. The Theory of Imitation in the Renaissance -- 2. Patrizi's Attack on Mimesis -- 3. Instruments, Subjects, and Modes of Imitation -- 4. Were Empedocles and Lucretius poets? -- 5. Is poetic imitation limited to imitation of action? -- 6. Are prose fictions poems? -- 7. Imitation as Idol Making and Particularization -- Part Two: Universals and Particulars -- 8. What a world should be and what it is -- 9. Tasso's Perfect Exemplars -- 10. Truth and Reality -- 11. Universality as Unity -- 12. Penumbra Ideas -- 13. The Grandeur of Generality -- Part Three: A Purgation of Passions -- 14. Catharsis: A New Implement -- 15. Robortelli and Maggi -- 16. The Development of the Opposition -- 17. Consolidations -- 18. Moving by Pathos or Ethos -- 19. Syntheses -- 20. Omnibus Purgations -- Part Four: The Poetic Imagination -- 21. The Revival of Classical Ideas -- 22. Speroni and Tomitano -- 23. Girolamo Fracastoro -- 24. Paduans and Aristotelians -- 25. Platonism, Love, Beauty, and Florence -- 26. Mazzoni's Immediate Predecessors -- 27. Mazzoni and Bulgarini -- 28. Mazzoni on Dreams -- 29. Tasso's

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## Sommario/riassunto

In *The Age of Criticism* five key concepts of the literary criticism synthesized in the late Renaissance in Italy are examined in depth to show how the shape of literary attitudes in the whole modern world was considerably influenced and determined by sixteenth-century Italian philosophers and literary theorists. The five concepts examined are: poetry as imitation; poetry as a concrete-universal; poetry as a purgation; the poetic imagination; and the conflict between poetry as art and poetry as furor. For the sake of emphasizing the unity of the development of literary theory, the concern is almost entirely with the Italian writers of the period between 1540 and 1613, but the ultimate significance of their work lies in their contribution to the development of the culture of the West in modern times. Sperone Speroni, Ludovico Castelvetro, Francesco Patrizi, Giacompo Mazzoni, Torquato Tasso, and Paolo Beni emerge as literary critics of major importance.

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