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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.
