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Sommario/riassunto	At the beginning of the eighteenth century, British theatre saw a shift from what critics now call 'Restoration' to 'sentimental' comedy. Focusing on the career of the Irish dramatist George Farquhar (1678-1707), Heard argues that experimentation was the basis for this change. Farquhar's first play, "Love and a Bottle" (1698) relied on outdated plot devices and character types. By contrast, his final two plays, "The Recruiting Officer" (1706) and "The Beaux Stratagem" (1707) used creative new elements to connect with English audiences. Over ten years, Farquhar and his contemporaries experimented with characters, plot lines, and dialogue in an attempt to woo their audiences. In doing so they initiated a new era in British comedy.

