

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910810720803321
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Titolo	Experimentation on the English stage, 1695-1708 : the career of George Farquhar // by Elizabeth J. Heard
Pubbl/distr/stampa	London ; , New York : , : Routledge, , 2016
ISBN	1-315-64924-1 1-317-30342-3 1-281-24436-8 9786611244361 1-85196-565-3
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (vii, 170 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Disciplina	822.052309
Soggetti	English drama (Comedy) - History and criticism English drama - 18th century - History and criticism English drama - 17th century - History and criticism
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	First published 2008 by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	1. The London theatre world in the 1690s -- 2. Origins of 'Humane Comedy': Farquhar, Congreve, Cibber and Vanbrugh -- 3. Experimentation at the turn of the century -- 4. Successful experimentation: The Recruiting Officer and The Beaux Stratagem -- 5. Farquhar's contributions and the post-1707 theatre -- Conclusion: Farquhar and Anglo-Irish drama.
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 Farquhar's first play, "Love and a Bottle" (1698) relied on outdated plot devices and character types.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.

