

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910827500303321
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Titolo	Anecdotes of Enlightenment : Human Nature from Locke to Wordsworth
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Charlottesville : , : University of Virginia Press, , 2019 ©2019
ISBN	0-8139-4221-7
Descrizione fisica	; 2019
Disciplina	809/.982
Soggetti	Anecdotes--History and criticism European literature--18th century--History and criticism Enlightenment Europe Intellectual life 18th century Europe Civilization 18th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di contenuto	Cover Page -- Title Page -- Copyright Page -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Abbreviations -- Introduction -- ONE. Anecdotal Experiments -- TWO. Hume and the Laws of Anecdote -- THREE. Anecdotes in the Wake of the Endeavour -- FOUR. Anecdotal Poetics in Lyrical Ballads -- Coda -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index.
Sommario/riassunto	"This volume is both a formal study of the anecdote's properties and possibilities and an inquiry into the anecdote's intellectual function in Enlightenment culture. The author contends that anecdotes acted in Enlightenment writing as mediators between the incidents of human life and the laws of human nature, connecting the abstractions of philosophical reflection with lived experience. Successive chapters take a specific genre (the essay), a single writer (David Hume), a historical event (the Endeavour voyage), and a literary project (the Lyrical Ballads) as nets for collecting anecdotes. Each chapter is committed to the particularities of individual anecdotes and the specificities of the uses to which these anecdotes were put. However, the book also outlines a larger historical narrative in which the anecdote moves from a central place in the science of human nature to holding a particular place in poetry, even as the anecdote began to lose its currency in the emerging

