



Swift's Satires on Modernism: Battlegrounds of Reading and Writing

G. Douglas Atkins

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Swift's Satires on Modernism: Battlegrounds of Reading and Writing G. Douglas Atkins More than three centuries since their first publication, Jonathan Swift's A Tale of a Tub, 'The Battle of the Books, 'The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit,' and An Argument against Abolishing Christianity remain striking, prescient, and still-relevant challenges to Modern commitments to inwardness, reflection, and spiritualism. In this lively and engaging study - grounded in the intellectual and historical currents of Swift's time, with an eye on the implications for the present day - G. Douglas Atkins brings forty-plus years of scholarly and critical experience to bear on some of the greatest satires ever written. The study reveals new contexts for understanding Swift's satires, including post-Reformation reading practices and the development of the modern personal essay. This book revisits, from fresh perspectives, the late seventeenth-century version of the perennial warfare between Ancients and Moderns, then often instanced as 'the battle of the books.'



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