



The Battle of the Books and Other Short Pieces (Essays Book 1)

Jonathan Swift

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The Battle of the Books depicts a literal battle between books in the King's Library, as ideas and authors struggle for supremacy. The "moderns" took the position that the modern age of science and reason was superior to the superstitious and limited world of Greece and Rome. The "ancients," for their part, argued that all that is necessary to be known was still to be found in Virgil, Cicero, Homer, and especially Aristotle. In Swift's satire, he skillfully manages to avoid saying which way victory fell. He portrays the manuscript as having been damaged in places, thus leaving the end of the battle up to the reader.

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