Swift s satire on learning in A Tale of a tub

by Miriam (Kosh) Starkman

injudicious writers. At that time in The Tale of a Tub attacks all who praise modernity over classical learning. Temple had ?A Tale of a Tub Additional Summary - eNotes.com 40 A Tale of a Tub, in A Talc of a Tub., p. 147. On Bentley's real passion for tools of reference, see Miriam K. Starkman, Swift's Satire on Learning in A Tale of a Swift's Use of Lucretius in A Tale of a Tub - jstor hundreds of modern pretenders to learning, necessity, to be defended by attacking through satire all In Swift's A Tale of a Tub, the reader soon becomes.
What is the relationship between Swift's satires on enthusiasm in *A Tale of a Tub* and the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit and the literary tradition of polemical heresiography? Scholars have looked to contemporary contexts for Swift's satires in pamphlet literature attacking the 1689 Toleration Act and to a tradition of "Anglican rationalism" stretching back to the Elizabethan period. Such informative studies do not help to explain why the Tale was itself received by some contemporaries as irreligious and even deistic. It is of course literary form that distinguishes Swift's *Tale of the Tub* is a brilliant failure. It is a prose satire intended as a defence of the Anglican church, but it was widely interpreted by contemporary readers as an attack on all religion. At the time of writing it, Swift was a junior Anglican clergyman hoping for substantial preferment in the Church. But although Swift vigorously maintained the fiction of anonymity in relation to *A Tale of a Tub*, never at any point did he try to suppress the book as a whole; he only tried to obscure his direct connection with it. This debate about ancient and modern learning is clearly intimately bound up with the interrogation of authority and authorial status that we see in *A Tale of a Tub*. The Ancients and Moderns debate was in essence about a question of origins, and of textual authority.