



Swift, Joyce, and the Flight from Home: Quests of Transcendence and the Sin of Separation (Palgrave Pivot)

G. Douglas Atkins

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Consisting of six essayistic chapters, this book centers on two seminal yet not often associated Irish texts: *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift (1726) and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce (1916). Practicing a comparative way of reading indebted to T.S. Eliot, Atkins traces the patterns of response the protagonists of these works show in leaving home and separating themselves from family and friends. Both Lemuel Gulliver and Stephen Dedalus flee from the messy burdens of ordinary life, seeking a transcendent existence, which Gulliver finds in the Flying or Floating Island, Laputa, whereas Stephen in art. Atkins also shows how Swift and Joyce both stand opposed to their characters, joined in the understanding that an ordinary life and an extra-ordinary one are often inseparable. Thus, *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* can appear as essential critiques of modern misunderstandings.

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