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The Ancient Aesthetics of Deception

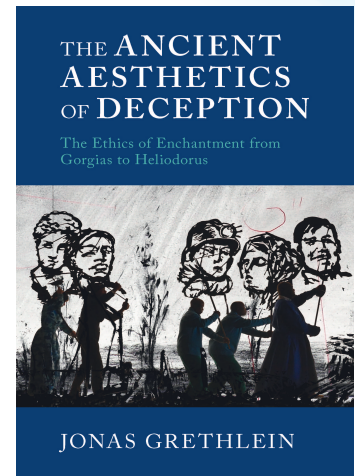
The Ethics of Enchantment from Gorgias to Heliodorus

Jonas Grethlein

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The concept of *mimesis* has dominated reflection on the nature and role, in Greek literature, of representation. Jonas Grethlein, in his ambitious new book, takes this reflection a step further. He argues that, beyond *mimesis*, there was an important but unacknowledged strand of reflection focused instead on the nuanced idea of *apatē* (often translated into English as 'deceit'), oscillating between notions of 'deception' and 'aesthetic illusion'. Many authors from Gorgias and Plato to Philo, Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria used this key concept to entwine aesthetics with ethics. In creatively exploring the various reconfigurations of *apatē*, and placing these in their socio-historical contexts, the book offers a bold new history of ancient aesthetics. It also explores the present significance of the aesthetics of deception, unlocking the potential of ancient reflection for current debates on the ethical dimension of representation. It will appeal to scholars in classics and literary theory alike.

1. Gorgias and the justice of tragic *apatē*; 2. The circulation and significance of *apatē* in the Classical era; 3. The dramatic entanglement of aesthetic illusion with deceit in Sophocles' *Electra*; 4. Immersion and corruption in Plato's *Republic*; 5. The void of Hellenistic criticism; 6. The appeal and challenge of *apatē* in Imperial criticism: Plutarch's *De audiendis poetis*; 7. Lucian and the spell of philosophy; 8. How to read ekphrasis: *Tabula Cebetis*; 9. Christian polemics against idolatry: Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus*; 10. The aesthetics of deception reconfigured in Heliodorus' *Ethiopica*; 11. From deep-fake to psychotherapy: The aesthetics of deception today.



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