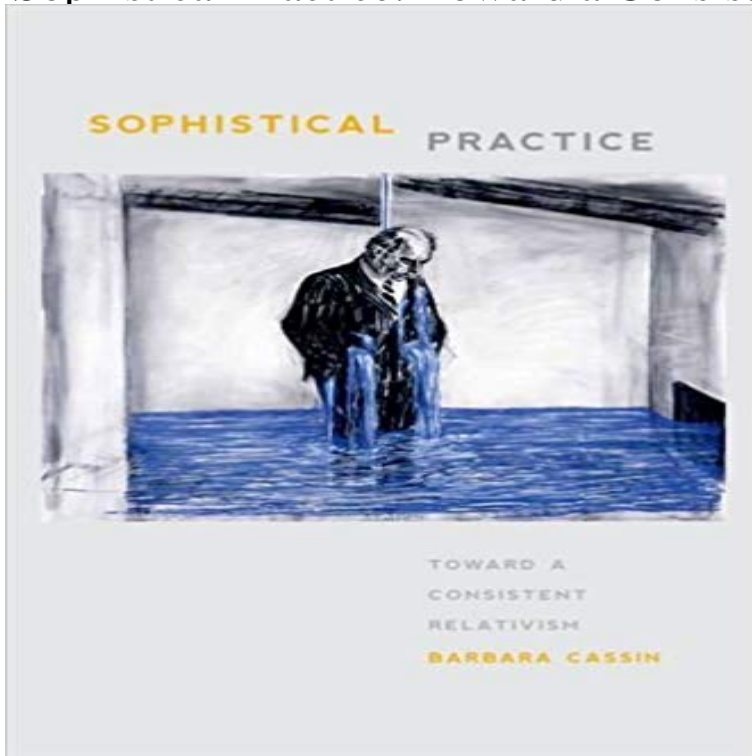


## Sophistical Practice: Toward a Consistent Relativism



Sophistics is the paradigm of a discourse that does things with words. It is not pure rhetoric, as Plato wants us to believe, but it provides an alternative to the philosophical mainstream. A sophistic history of philosophy questions the orthodox philosophical history of philosophy: that of ontology and truth in itself. In this book, we discover unusual Presocratics, wreaking havoc with the fetish of true and false. Their *logoi* perform politics and perform reality. Their sophistic practice can shed crucial light on contemporary events, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, where, to quote Desmond Tutu, words, language, and rhetoric do things, creating things like the new rainbow people. Transitional justice requires a consistent and sustainable relativism: not Truth, but truth for, and enough of the truth for there to be a community. Philosophy itself is about words before it is about concepts. Language manifests itself in reality only as multiplicity; different languages perform different types of worlds; and difficulties of translation are but symptoms of these differences. This desacralized untranslatability undermines and deconstructs the Heideggerian statement that there is a historical language of philosophy that is Greek by essence (being the only language able to say what is) and today is German. *Sophistical Practice* constitutes a major contribution to the debate among philosophical pluralism, unitarism, and pragmatism. It will change how we discuss such words as city, truth, and politics. Philologically and philosophically rethinking the sophistic gesture, relying on performance and translation, it proposes a new paradigm for the human sciences.

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