



# Words, Space, and the Audience: The Theatrical Tension between Empiricism and Rationalism

*Michael Y. Bennett*

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## **Words, Space, and the Audience: The Theatrical Tension between Empiricism and Rationalism**

Michael Y. Bennett

In this unique study, Michael Y. Bennett re-reads four influential modern plays alongside their contemporary debates between rationalism and empiricism to show how these monumental achievements were thoroughly a product of their time, but also universal in their epistemological quest to understand the world through a rational and/or empirical model. Bennett contends that these plays directly engage in their contemporary epistemological debates rather than through the lens of a specific philosophy. Besides producing new, insightful readings of heavily-studied plays, the interdisciplinary (historical, philosophical, dramatic, theatrical, and literary) frame Bennett constructs allows him to investigate one of the most fundamental questions of the theatre - how does meaning get made? Bennett suggests that the key to unlocking theatrical meaning is exploring the tension between empirical and rational modes of understanding. The book concludes with an interview with performance artist Coco Fusco.

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