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“Violence and Internal Conflict in Today’s Theater:
Angélica Liddell’s *The House of Force*”

Angelica Liddell, one of the most promising playwrights of the twenty-first century, is the author of *La casa de la fuerza* (The House of Force). This is a play that takes up the lyricism and the expressiveness of language to end the supremacy of the image in order to impinge upon a consciousness dulled by visual excess. The key is the combination of the word and image to attain discursive depth.

Language cannot cause physical pain, but it can both provoke violent internal conflict and also address such violence. It can generate in the spectator a problem that is intrinsically violent, in parallel to the feelings portrayed by a play’s characters. This is a surrogate mode of experiencing violence, achieved through the use of both dialectics and emotion. Language is what can make the audience perceive a rational conflict in their very being, without distancing them from it; But language cannot express the physical pain caused by rape, physical punishment, or murder. The playwright must therefore make the spectator feel the violence by combining several techniques. Liddell uses all the elements of her play with one goal: to create a conflict in the spectator.

Angelica Liddell in *La casa de la fuerza* presents a new theatrical paradigm in which violence is ever-present, with critical purpose. The author set out to provoke an emotional catharsis, not in terms of the moral purpose presupposed by Aristotelian theatre, but through the experience of a virtual reality that is associated with the theatre of Artaud. The risk is that this may not happen: “catharsis” is contingent and will depend on the spectator who manages to extract reason from emotion. Liddell poses an aggressive catharsis that can lead to internal conflict within the audience, so long as they do not simply turn away in disgust.