

# Analysis and review of the play electricidad by luis alfaro

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On September 29th the School of theatre and music presented Luis Alfaro's most recent play *Electricidad*. *Electricidad* was directed by Marcela Muñoz at the UIC Theatre.

*Electricidad* is a story based around a young woman in her early twenties living in East Los Angeles. Her neighborhood consists of families of Latino immigrants that they call cholos who speak a mixture of Spanish and English. The cholos in this neighborhood are raised to be tough and be loyal to the gang that their families have been in for many years. *Electricidad* is mourning the death of her father, who was the king cholo of East Los Angeles, in the front yard of her house which is made into a sanctuary covered in candles, pictures and offerings. Her father was murdered by her mother and *Electricidad* is planning vengeance on her for what she has done to her father.

Throughout the play there is a chorus of three older ladies that live in the neighborhood who are dressed in house dresses while sweeping around the yard while also creating commentary on everything that happens. While *Electricidad* is mourning in the yard her Abuela comes by every day to give her food and water. Her Abuela is a key character in this play because she tries to convince *Electricidad* from getting vengeance on her mother by teaching her forgiveness. *Electricidad* brother Orestes has come back from Las Vegas where he was sent and carries out *Electricidad*'s revenge and stabs their mother.

In *Electricidad* the language has a mixture of soliloquies, dialogues and monologues. The author also has a lot of Spanish slang in the play which

makes the play more realistic as well as funny. There is plenty of Spanglish spoken throughout the play which is how you know that they are in a Latino neighborhood. They also resort to what they call the cholo ways in which I believe is the street slang. There is a numerous amount of long speeches by the main character so that we can get to know her. There are also short segments of humor demonstrated by Electricidad's brother. Luis Alfaro uses vivid imagery that helps you feel what the characters are trying to portray. There was a chorus in the beginning foreshadowing the play as well as throughout the play. The chorus is there creating commentary and also getting us ready for what's to come.

Electricidad has three themes throughout the play which are fate, vengeance, and forgiveness. The first theme is demonstrated throughout all the characters because they all talk about how they were born into the cholo lifestyle and that's how life was. Vengeance is what Electricidad wants on her mother and the only reason she keeps the body of her father in front of the house. Abuela wanted everyone to understand loyalty and that meant that no one kills the mother. In the play Electricidad's mom is said to have killed Electricidad's father because he sexually assaulted her when she was thirteen. The character who played Abuela tried to teach forgiveness and how that would not make them feel better. Another point in the play in which forgiveness is spoken is when Electricidad's sister Ifigenia comes back from her convent and tries to help people turn their lives over to God. When that fails she pays respect to her father and return to her convent. She felt as though she did not belong there, and the convent was her new calling. This

leads me to the last theme which is fate. Fate is demonstrated throughout the play in a numerous amount of ways. The main way is their way of living, the characters in this play are cholos and have been brought up this way. Luis Alfaro wrote *Electricidad* because she wanted to bring light to Latino neighborhoods. This showed a community of people all living to protect their families name. This relates to today's age where people in certain communities will protect each other. These communities will also watch and take care of each other's children. The community truly care about each other and the people in it, but they also can get very protective and this may lead to violence. In my community people have watched over me when I was younger as well as take care of me while my mom was away. Neighborhood impact lives in one way or another. Although family ties might be weak in *Electricidad*, but the neighborhood does look out for each other. In the play the chorus helped *Electricidad* clean her body and cleanse her mind of her father's death. This is an example of their fate, they acknowledge their differences, but they still come together to help one another.

One major spectacle element that stood out to me was the costumes that they wore. The reason it helped me understand their backgrounds and what kind of people they are. The chorus wore housedresses and it told me how their personality might be throughout the play. Their costumes told me about their social status in the world as well. In the play they called themselves cholos, which is a slang that refers to being a lower-class Mexican. The costumes are khakis, sleeveless tee-shirts, and a long flannel shirt. One cholo named Niño actually talked about driving a low rider which is

what they are known for having. The designer did a great job representing the aspect of these characters in their costumes. She understood what each character needed in their costumes to be interpreted. Even the changes in costumes showed how they were going to be as a character later in the play. One actor that is playing a major role that stuck out to me is Ifigenia because she demonstrates that you are able to reroute your fate and be something different than what everyone else expects of you.

You should see this play because it can give you some insight into the Latino culture. It also is very informative as well as entertaining. The play helps demonstrate what it is like to want to get vengeance and also wanting to forgive those who have done wrong to you.