***Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* Chapter 6: Land of the Lost, 1992-1995**

**Answer the following questions on your own paper.**

1. **Reader Response Criticism:** Describe some the **feelings you had as a reader** as you read this chapter. How did you feel when you read about Oscar moving back home to Paterson after college? How about his decision to go to Santo Domingo? His relationship with Ybon? What were some of the thoughts that were going through your head? Choose one part of the chapter to describe in your response. Why do you think you reacted this way? What might your response reveal about you?
2. **Close Reading**: Pick **one** passage that you think is the most important in what we read for today. This might be the quote you chose for your reading log or it may be another part.
   1. Identify the page numbers of the passage. If it’s a short quote, copy it. If it’s a long passage, just identify where it is.
   2. Describe the context for this passage. When is it happening in this chapter? What is it about?
   3. Explain why this is such an important passage. How does it connect to overall themes in the book or character development, etc.?
   4. Choose one critical theory to analyze this quote through. What specific concerns would a theorist working in that critical approach pay attention to when looking at the passage you chose?
3. **Author’s technique** (Syntax): Look at pages 276-279. What do you notice about the writing style here? Particularly pay attention to the syntax (the way sentences are put together). Pay attention to when a sentence begins and ends. Are the sentences cumulative or periodic?\* Once you identify what “interesting” thing Diaz is doing syntactically, consider why he would write this way at this point in the novel? What is the effect on the reader?

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\*Some terms to help you with number 3:

A **cumulative sentence** is one where the main clause comes at the beginning of the sentence, followed by subordinate clauses. Example*: I love to run, feeling the crisp air hit my face, the thud of my shoes on the pavement, the heft of my breaths in and out.*

A **periodic sentence** is one where the main clause of the sentence comes at the end after a succession of subordinate clauses: Example*: Feeling the crisp air hit my face, the thud of my shoes on the pavement, the heft of my breaths in and out, I love to run.*

Famous example of a periodic sentence: *Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"--then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.*

*(Martin Luther King Jr. Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963) – underline added to point out his syntax!*