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Resisting Power Structure in Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

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Letter of Approval

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Abstract

This research explores the resisting power structures, manifested against the multifaceted backdrop of the Dominican Republic's tumultuous political past and the intricate struggles of its diaspora in the United States. It offers a comprehensive examination of these dynamics, delving into the narrative's rich tapestry of oppression, romance, and the enduring human spirit. The research highlights how characters such as Oscar, Lola, and Beli grapple with personal and familial constraints, reflecting broader themes of identity, resilience, and historical trauma and it also navigates complex webs of power influenced by colonialism, patriarchy, and cultural norms. By incorporating Spanglish and intertextual references, Diaz's narrative underscores the hybridity of Dominican-American identity and offers a critique of monolithic cultural narratives. This thesis synthesizes character analysis, historical context, and narrative strategy to provide a nuanced interpretation of the novel's thematic complexity, emphasizing its significance in contemporary discussions of diaspora, identity, and cultural resistance. The theoretical framework is grounded in the principles of New Historicism, drawing on the insights of Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt, and Hayden White. Foucault's concepts of power and discourse, Greenblatt's cultural poetics, and White's theory of historical emplotment collectively provide a comprehensive lens to analyze the interplay between literature, history, and power structures. By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, the thesis reveals how Diaz's novel challenges and reflects dominant ideologies, offering a nuanced understanding of the socio-political landscape and individual agency.

Keywords: Colonialism, Diaspora, Identity, Oppression, Power Dynamics, Resistance

This thesis attempts to examine the intricate interplay of power and resistance in Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. While Diaz's composition stands as a

testament to his literary prowess, it also provides a profound exploration of power structures and the numerous expressions of resistance against the power in different ways. Set against the vivid backdrop of the Dominican Republic's tumultuous political past, shaped prominently by the Trujillo dictatorship, the narrative uniquely positions readers at the intersection of personal aspirations and larger historical forces. For instance, Beli, Oscar's mother, suffers at the hands of Trujillo's secret police due to her romantic entanglement with a member of the Trujillato. Her tragic past, marked by brutality under the regime, establishes the dark shadow of the Dominican Republic's political history that hangs over the characters

This research explores different power dynamics reflected in global events, such as the geopolitical issues of the Vietnam War, the assassination of JFK, and the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship. In the novel, Diaz presents a small-scale version of these larger dynamics. Additionally, this thesis inspects various forms of resistance within the socio-cultural and historical context of the Dominican Republic.

While analyzing *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, this study places particular emphasis on the character of Oscar de Leon. Oscar's characterization as a "ghetto nerd" differs from established Dominican and American masculine paradigms. Despite societal mockery and alienation, his interests become a manifestation of resistance against dominant cultural narratives. His weight and physical appearance further compound his alienation, often making him the subject of derision, yet also emphasizing his resistance to conform. Through Oscar's personal experiences, including his desperate efforts to find love in the Dominican Republic and his tragic, brutal confrontation with the local police captain, this research aims to unpack how Diaz masterfully interlaces individual challenges with broader historical power dynamics, particularly in the shadow of the oppressive Trujillo regime. The novel's portrayal of Oscar's ultimate fate, reminiscent of the hardships faced by his own family during Trujillo's rule, stands as a testament to the cyclical nature of oppression,

thereby offering insights into the complex intersections of personal agency and systemic influences.

Throughout the novel, the novelist uses Spanish terms, slang, and colloquialisms without always providing direct translations. Examples include phrases like "doble cara" or references to cultural elements like "platanos" or "'fuku'." This seamless blend showcases characters who navigate between two linguistic worlds, much like they navigate between two cultural identities. Use of Spanglish serves various narrative and stylistic purposes, it undeniably acts as a form of resistance against linguistic and cultural homogenization. It stands as a testament to the hybrid identities of many Dominican Americans and underscores the complexity of their experiences.

An emblematic symbol that recurs throughout the novel is the "'fuku'," a dark and haunting curse believed to shadow Oscar's lineage. This curse, with its roots embedded deeply in the brutal era of Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo, becomes a powerful metaphor for the enduring legacies of colonialism and dictatorship. Such a legacy is vividly encapsulated when Beli, Oscar's mother, faces a life-threatening altercation with Trujillo's minions—a harrowing reminder of the high cost of defying entrenched power structures.

Yet, resistance in Diaz's narrative manifests in varied and often unexpected ways. Oscar, his voracious appetite for science fiction and fantasy for instance can be seen when he mentions his reverence for works like "Akira" and "Watchmen," titles not typically associated with Dominican masculinity. This passion serves not merely as an escape from his reality but as a bold act of defiance against societal expectations. His heavyset physique and "ghetto nerd" demeanor, at odds with the Dominican ideal of hyper-masculinity, further highlight his resistance against conforming to societal molds.

Similarly, Lola's resistance is evident through her actions and choices. When she recalls her teenage years, Lola mentions, "I want to cut my hair I'd dropped two dress sizes,

and I'd turned into the kind of girl who listened to punk rock reflects her transformative personal journey and departure from conventional Dominican female roles" (58-59).

Moreover, her quest to discover her family's concealed history, especially when she retraces her mother's steps in the Dominican Republic, underscores her relentless pursuit to resist a fate defined by the "fuku" and to reclaim her family's narrative.

Yunior's pivotal role is also worth noting. As the primary narrator, he frequently punctuates the story with interjections like, "For those of you who missed your mandatory two seconds of Dominican history," (2) drawing readers into the rich and often dark history of the Dominican Republic. These annotations serve both as a lens into the nation's tumultuous past and a critique of its continuing power imbalances. By regularly reminding readers of the influence of Trujillo, whom he refers to as the "Failed Cattle Thief" or "Fuckface," Yunior underscores the omnipresence and enduring impact of the Trujillo era on the characters' lives.

In weaving together these intricate threads—Oscar's challenges, Lola's rebellion, the weight of the "fuku", and the omnipresent shadow of the Trujillo era—this thesis aspires to present *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* as a rich mosaic. A mosaic that captures the relentless tug-of-war between power and resistance and the profound role of narratives as both shackles of domination and keys to emancipation.

Amid the overarching themes of power and resistance lies an intricate examination of identity, both personal and collective. The Dominican Republic's historical context serves as more than just a backdrop—it is a vital character that shapes the destinies and desires of Diaz's protagonists. At one level, there is the intensely personal journey of Oscar, who grapples with the duality of his identity. His Dominican heritage, with its deeply ingrained machismo and cultural expectations, often clashes with his individualistic American upbringing and his love for genres that are deemed "unconventional" within his cultural milieu. This conflict reflects the broader struggle of the Dominican diaspora, seeking to find a

balance between their ancestral legacies and the realities of their adopted homeland. Then there's the indomitable Lola, who, in her quest for autonomy, embodies the feminist resistance against a patriarchal society and its oppressive norms. Her journey back to the Dominican Republic isn't just a return to her roots; it's a symbolic act of reclaiming her family's narrative, one that's been distorted by years of political turmoil and personal tragedies. These narratives intersect with the ever-looming specter of the "fuku", a manifestation of the cyclical nature of history and the burdens of past mistakes. It's a reminder that while individuals may strive for personal agency, there are larger, unseen forces—historical, societal, and familial—that continue to exert their influence, shaping decisions and destinies.

There are various researches done in this text after its publication. Moica Hanna discusses the issue of nuanced dynamics, spanning the novel and real-world contexts, with a focus on historical evolution. By amplifying marginalized voices, the research contributes to understanding power and resistance in the modern Dominican socio-cultural fabric. This article shows that how Junot Diaz's novel, through its diverse narrative techniques, challenges and reshapes traditional Dominican narratives, offering a "resistance history" that confronts imposed conformities and silences in both personal and national histories.

Evidently, she contends:

The novel strives for a "resistance history" which acts as an alternative to traditional histories of the Dominican Republic by invoking a multiplicity of narrative modes and genres. By Yuniors seeks to present Dominican history in this way in order to resist the conformity and univocality insisted upon by the national power structure best personified by the figure of the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. This dictatorial version of history perhaps speaks most loudly through the silence it imposes on large swaths of the population in both public and private life. Yuniors struggles with the

silences that pervade both the history of Oscar de Leon's family and that of the Dominican Republic, stories which are consistently intertwined in the text. Yuniors adopts several narrative frames and examines the story from multiple perspectives.

(500)

Expanding on Monica Hanna's perspective, the narrator, Yuniors, emerges not merely as a reteller but a reshaper of Dominican history. This is a calculated act to counter the conformist narratives, epitomized by the Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo. Under Trujillo, a dominant and singular historical narrative silenced many. Yet, Yuniors disrupts this narrative, weaving multiple storylines, genres, and perspectives, showing Oscar de Leon's family history as entwined with the broader Dominican Republic's past. As Hanna notes, Yuniors's techniques present a multifaceted history, reflecting the diverse Dominican populace. Through a blend of narrative techniques, the novel emerges as a defiant response to the suppressive histories endorsed by dictatorial regimes, emphasizing the importance of multiplicity in historical representation.

Similarly, Fremio Sepulveda emphasizes resistance to cultural assimilation typical of many Latino writers like Junnot Diaz. Diaz's choice to weave Spanglish into his prose symbolizes his firm stance against linguistic dominance, representing a fight against the colonial impositions of two dominant languages in the Americas: Spanish and English. This anti-colonial "lucha" or battle showcases his commitment to maintaining linguistic balance and sovereignty amidst the pressures of larger linguistic forces. Sepulveda states:

Diaz's TBWL abounds in literary and cultural references, and merges seemingly incompatible paradigms and artistic forms, from the "low" literary, from comic books and fantasy novels to allusions to Grecian tragedy in order to represent multiple generations of an immigrant Dominican family struggling with the complexities of familial and national struggles, race, language, gender, and psychosocial

development; the novel combines English and Dominican Spanish to represent how many bilingual Latinos express their quotidian lived experience as bicultural subjects.

(17)

In essence, the researcher's analysis shows the intricate blend of cultural and literary references serves as more than just stylistic choices; they become avenues to explore power dynamics and resistance. Diaz's use of varied paradigms, from comic books and fantasy novels to Grecian tragedy, underscores the multi-generational challenges faced by an immigrant Dominican family, revealing layers of both overt and covert resistance against societal, familial, and national constraints. The dual linguistic interplay of English and Dominican Spanish in the novel is emblematic of the broader struggle between dominant and subaltern cultures, reflecting the power dynamics bilingual Latinos navigate daily. Within the novel's narrative, language becomes an act of resistance, a way to assert identity amidst forces of assimilation. As such, TBWL not only captures the essence of the bicultural experience but also offers a profound commentary on the power dynamics inherent in language, culture, and identity, making it a critical text in the study of resistance in contemporary literature.

Likewise, Tim Lanzendörfer highlights the notion of 'fuku' transcends a mere superstitious belief, representing an intangible power that permeates the historical and personal narratives of the Caribbean. He writes:

Implicating 'fuku' in the assassination of John F. Kennedy (1963), America's defeat in Vietnam (1975), and the entirety of the dictatorship of Trujillo, the introduction affirms the reality of 'fuku' in the history of the Dominican Republic. By also noting that Puerto Ricans and Haitians share in the Dominican belief (6), *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* makes fuku the existence of the marvelous and its active involvement in history - a phenomenon ubiquitous in Caribbean history. And even if

the reader does not share such a marvelous interpretation of the past, not to believe, the introduction avers, is "better than fine - it's perfect. Because no matter what you believe, 'fuku' believes in you. (129)

Lanzendorfer's interpretation shows the concept of 'fuku' emerges as a powerful symbol of the enduring colonial power dynamics that have shaped the Caribbean. Rooted in the region's early colonial past, fuku's tangible presence in subsequent generations underscores the lingering effects of historical oppression. The narrative's linking of 'fuku' to significant global events, such as JFK's assassination and America's Vietnam defeat, suggests the global reach of these localized power dynamics. Additionally, the shared belief in 'fuku' among Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Haitians highlights a collective Caribbean experience of external control and oppression. However, the assertion that "'fuku' believes in you" offers a hint of empowerment, suggesting that individuals, despite being subjected to larger forces, still possess agency and significance in the grand tapestry of history.

Similarly, Fremio Sepulveda further in his article *Coding the Immigrant Experience: Race, Gender and the Figure of the Dictator in Junot Diaz's "Oscar Wao"* highlights Diaz's portrayal of Rafael Trujillo highlights the severe imbalance of power in the Dominican Republic. As Trujillo ruled with stark brutality, it underscores the suppression of the general public. Through this lens, we can better understand the broader themes of societal control and the inherent resistance against such dominant forces. Beli's physical scars, Diaz captures a manifestation of the very power dynamics my research seeks to unravel. These scars, while personal to Beli, are emblematic of the broader societal trauma under the Trujillo regime. Their presence serves as a constant, tangible reminder of how individual experiences are invariably intertwined with larger oppressive forces. He mentions; "Coding the Immigrant Experience: Race, Gender and the Figure of the Dictator in Junot Diaz's *"Oscar Wao"* "Beli's physical scars represent, at the most intimate level, the brutality of Trujillo's regime and serve

as indelible bodily proof of her unresolved experience of trauma”(31). Beli's physical scars not only personify her personal traumatic experiences but also symbolize the larger oppressive power dynamics of Trujillo's regime. These scars act as a constant reminder of the atrocities committed by those in power, bearing witness to the history of resistance and survival against authoritarian brutality. In a broader context, they exemplify how personal sufferings under oppressive regimes are emblematic of societal trauma, where the individual body becomes a landscape reflecting the larger political and historical conflicts. Diaz shows how personal pain can reflect the larger problems in society. So, her scars remind us of the challenges many faces when moving to a new place, dealing with race issues, gender differences, and harsh rulers.

Diaz's detailed portrayal of Trujillo provides a pivotal exploration of autocratic dominance. The image of Trujillo as both a merciless dictator and a figure of vanity elucidates the intersection of personal ego and authoritarian rule. His treatment of the Dominican Republic as a personal "plantation" epitomizes the height of oppressive power dynamics, a core theme of my research. Diaz Writes:

For those of you who missed your mandatory two seconds to Dominican history: Trujillo, one of the twentieth century's most infamous dictators, ruled the Dominican Republic between 1930 and 1961 with an implacable ruthless brutality. A portly, sadistic, pig-eyed mulato who bleached his skin, wore platform shoes, and had a fondness for Napoleon-era haberdashery, Trujillo (also known as El Jefe, the Failed Cattle Thief, and Fuckface) came to control nearly every aspect of the DR's political, cultural, social, and economic life through a potent (and familiar) mixture of violence, intimidation, massacre, rape, co-optation, and terror; treated the country like it was a plantation and he was the master. (2)

This statement offers a nuanced lens into the depths of authoritarian dominance. Trujillo's portrayal, enriched by both his political tyranny and his personal vanities like skin bleaching, reveals the intersection of personal ego with oppressive rule. The contrasting labels, from "El Jefe" to "Fuckface," encapsulate the duality of esteem and covert resistance that such figures inspire. Crucially, likening Trujillo's governance to a master of a "plantation" underscores the epitome of oppressive dynamics, transforming citizens into mere assets. Within my literature review's context, this depiction becomes pivotal, showing how individual narratives can embody broader societal power struggles, turning abstract concepts of power and resistance into tangible character-driven experiences.

Jennifer Harford Vargas argues, Diaz's use of the 'fukü' effectively underscores centuries of domination in the Americas, from colonization and slavery to Trujillo's dictatorship. This curse symbolizes enduring legacies of oppression, connecting past to present. Through Yuniór's narrative, Diaz not only highlights these interwoven histories but also suggests resistance as a counterforce. By weaving together past atrocities with present challenges, the narrative reveals the resilience possible through shared memory and collective action. He argues, "... domination in the Americas, which scholars have termed the coloniality of power. The 'fukü' ... establishes a transamerican community through ... imagined identification across forms of domination ... Yuniór imagines a way out of this New World curse ... positing resistance to the 'fukü' as the novel's other central governing politic" (9-10). This excerpt explores the intricate symbolism of the 'fukü', positioning it as a manifestation of historical oppressions—colonization, slavery, and the erasure of indigenous identities—in the Americas. Drawing parallels between these long-standing power dynamics and Trujillo's dictatorial reign, the narrative underscores the persistent and evolving nature of domination. The 'fukü' emerges not merely as a localized curse but as a broader emblem of colonial legacies and their enduring impacts, tying together different epochs and spaces

marred by subjugation. Within this framework, Yuniór's narrative acts both as an illumination of these intertwined histories and as a form of resistance, hinting at the possibility of transcending such oppressive legacies through collective memory and unity.

Jennifer Harford Vargas on the other hand, reveals the complex interplay between power dynamics and resistance within the novel by exploring the symbolic representations of the "fukü" and the "zafa," which provides a deeper understanding of Junot Díaz's narrative strategies, enriching our interpretation of the novel. In this regard, Vargas points out:

Yuniór takes a complex history of power hierarchies with dire structural, material physical, and psychic effects and metaphorizes it as the fukü; by creating a narrative encapsulation of oppressive power, he creates a way to respond through another metaphor: the zafa. The novel thus stages a conflict between the fukü and the zafa, between domination and resistance. The two underlying symbolic organizing principles embody the dual signification of dictating as dominating (the fukü) and dictating as recounting or writing back(the zafa). (10)

Vargas's analysis shows Yuniór's narrative strategy of metaphorizing the complex history of power hierarchies into the symbolic representations of the "fukü" and the "zafa" serves as a profound exploration of power dynamics and resistance. The "fukü" embodies the oppressive forces that shape the characters' lives, representing the structural, material, physical, and psychic effects of domination. Conversely, the "zafa" symbolizes a response to this oppression, offering a means of resistance and defiance against the entrenched power structures. Through this conflict between the "fukü" and the "zafa," the novel presents a nuanced examination of domination and resistance, highlighting the dual significance of dictating as both dominating and as recounting or writing back. This analysis underscores the complexity of power dynamics within the narrative, revealing how individuals navigate and

challenge oppressive systems while also reflecting broader societal struggles for agency and liberation.

Rachel Norman argues about Diaz's deliberate incorporation of linguistic indexes typically perceived as inferior to Mainstream American English dialect. By doing so, Diaz prompts readers to confront their own notions of linguistic relativism and the socio-cultural implications of the 'insider' versus 'outsider' dynamics prevalent in contemporary American discourse. He points out; “By incorporating linguistic indexes often seen as inferior to Mainstream American English dialect¹ into a predominantly Anglophone text, Diaz challenges his readers to consider their own linguistic relativism, and the categories of “insider” and “outsider” as they are marked by contemporary American discourse”(34). Diaz's deliberate incorporation of linguistic elements traditionally viewed as inferior to Mainstream American English dialects serves as a provocative challenge to readers by seamlessly integrating Spanish terms, slang, and colloquialisms into a narrative primarily composed in English. This deliberate linguistic hybridity disrupts established notions of language hierarchy and identity, blurring the distinctions between "insider" and "outsider" within contemporary American discourse. Through this linguistic subversion, Diaz invites readers to reconsider prevailing power dynamics and societal structures, encouraging a critical examination of how language both shapes and reflects perceptions of belonging, cultural authenticity, and agency.

This study distinguishes itself from prior researches, which predominantly focused on the novel's ethical, figurative, rhetorical, satirical, and narrowly contextual facets. This research embarks on a journey distinct from prevailing analyses of text. In the realm of academic exploration surrounding, many studies have delved into its rich thematic elements and narrative style. However, my research carves a distinctive path. While prior investigations have predominantly approached the novel's power dynamics and resistance

themes in isolation or in broader socio-political contexts, my research uniquely synthesizes these two threads, examining their intricate interplay and mutual influence within the narrative. By concurrently investigating power dynamics and resistance, this research aims to unveil the multifaceted layers of Diaz's storytelling that might remain obscured when analyzed separately. This integrated analysis offers a fresh lens to perceive how individual struggles are intertwined with broader historical and socio-political forces, making this research a noble contribution to the scholarly discourse surrounding Diaz's seminal work. Utilizing a new historicist lens along with Foucauldian notion of power, this research examines the very core of how narratives shape, reflect, and resist power structures. Through a critical examination of Diaz's juxtaposition of personal and national histories and his fusion of diverse literary forms, this study aims to unearth the deeper layers of discourse, challenging dominant historical and societal portrayals.

New historicism emphasizes the interplay between literature and historical context, rejecting the idea of texts as autonomous entities and instead viewing them as products of their time and culture. It seeks to understand how social structures, power and cultural practices shape literary texts, and conversely, how literature reflects and reinforces prevailing ideologies and power relations. Through this lens, literary works are seen as sites of contestation where different voices and perspectives intersect, allowing for the exploration of marginalized narratives and the complexities of historical interpretation.

By situating the text within its historical context, we can uncover the ways in which the text reflects broader societal tensions and power struggles. Through close analysis of the text's language, imagery, and narrative structure, the researcher can elucidate the ways in which the characters navigate and resist dominant power structures, shedding light on themes of agency, identity, and social change. Ultimately, by applying New historicist principles to literary analysis, we can gain a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between

literature, history, and power dynamics, enriching our appreciation of both the text and the historical context in which it was produced.

Building upon the provided point of departure and utilizing the lens of New Historicism, this research digs out the power dynamics and resistance in Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. New Historicism, as a literary theory, emphasizes the interplay between literature and the historical context in which it was produced. By situating the novel within its socio-political milieu, we can uncover the ways in which personal narratives intersect with larger historical narratives, shedding light on the complexities of power and resistance. Key theorists in this approach are Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt, and Hayden White. Here's how we can integrate their ideas with appropriate quotes and references from the novel.

Michel Foucault states, "Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (93). In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, power is not static but rather dynamic and contingent upon social and historical contexts. Characters navigate a complex web of power relations shaped by factors such as colonialism, patriarchy, and cultural hegemony. For example, Beli's experiences as a young woman in the Dominican Republic are shaped by the oppressive structures of Trujillo's regime, while Oscar's struggles as a Dominican-American reflect the intersections of race, ethnicity, and class in American society.

Hyden White's perspective in New Historicism resonates deeply with the principles, which seeks to understand literary texts within the context of their historical and cultural milieu. He mentions, "History wishes to make true statements about the real world, not an imaginary or illusory world" (25). It shows that history's main goal is to find and understand true facts about past events and how they affected society. This idea aligns with the core

principles of New Historicism, which emphasize the importance of seeing literature in its historical context. According to this approach, texts are seen as reflections of the time they were written, showing the social, political, and cultural conditions of that period. In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Diaz weaves together a tapestry of historical events, both local and global, to underscore the interconnectedness of individual lives with larger socio-political forces. Beyond the Trujillo dictatorship, Diaz delves into the repercussions of the American occupation of the Dominican Republic, illustrating how foreign intervention shapes the characters' perceptions of power dynamics. Furthermore, he incorporates broader cultural and political upheavals of the 20th century, such as the rise of American influence in the Caribbean region and the Dominican diaspora experience in the United States. Within this broader historical framework, Diaz subtly references the Vietnam War era and the presidency of John F. Kennedy, using these global events to reflect the cultural and political turbulence of the times. By interweaving personal narratives with these historical events, Diaz emphasizes how the past reverberates through generations, informing individual identities and collective struggles against systemic oppression. Through this intricate layering of history and personal experience, Diaz illuminates how historical events shape identity and agency, ultimately contributing to the novel's thematic exploration of power dynamics and resistance.

Foucault's concept of power as pervasive and distributed throughout society, rather than centralized, is particularly relevant. He emphasizes how power operates through discourse and institutions, shaping not only individual actions but also collective identities. He states that "Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds onto or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations"(94). In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, we see power operating through various institutions and discourses, such as the Trujillo

regime in the Dominican Republic and the American cultural hegemony. Trujillo's dictatorship not only controls the political landscape but also influences cultural norms and individual behavior, perpetuating a cycle of oppression and resistance.

Foucault's idea that power is not something acquired or held onto but rather exercised from multiple points resonates with the novel's portrayal of power. Power in the novel is not confined to government institutions or formal structures but is dispersed throughout society, operating through personal relationships, cultural practices, and historical legacies. For example, Yuniors wields power over Oscar and others through his narrative control and manipulation of their stories. He shapes the perception of events and characters, influencing how they are understood and remembered. This reflects Foucault's notion of power operating in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations, where individuals like Yuniors exercise power in subtle and often hidden ways. Furthermore, power in the novel is often masked, making it difficult for characters to recognize and resist its influence. Patriarchal norms, for instance, dictate the roles and expectations of men and women, constraining characters like Lola and Oscar in their pursuit of autonomy and self-expression.

By applying Foucault's insights on power to *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, we gain a deeper understanding of the complex power dynamics at play in the novel. These dynamics shape the characters' experiences and interactions, highlighting the ways in which power operates in society and the challenges of resistance in the face of entrenched power structures.

Greenblatt's notion of cultural poetics emphasizes how literary texts both reflect and contest the dominant ideologies of their time. He encourages scholars to examine the "social energy" embedded in literature and the ways in which texts negotiate power dynamics. He argues, "...the work of art is a product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions

and practices of society”(12). New Historicism assumes that every work is embedded in the historical and cultural conditions of its time and cannot be divorced from them. The novel is deeply embedded in the historical and cultural context of the Dominican Republic, reflecting the legacy of Trujillo's dictatorship and its impact on subsequent generations. Through characters like Oscar and Lola, who resist societal expectations and forge their own identities, Diaz challenges the hegemonic narratives of Dominican masculinity and femininity.

White's concept of the 'historical emplotment' highlights how historical events are constructed as narratives to convey specific meanings and ideologies. He argues that historians, like literary authors, employ narrative techniques to shape the past according to their present concerns; "The writing of history is always constituted by narrative modes of emplotment" (43). In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Diaz employs a nonlinear narrative structure that disrupts conventional notions of historical continuity. By interweaving personal anecdotes, historical footnotes, and pop culture references, Diaz challenges readers to reconsider their understanding of Dominican history and identity.

In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, power and resistance are deeply intertwined, echoing Foucault's assertion that resistance always exists within power structures. Characters navigate these dynamics, challenging societal norms and oppressive regimes. Resistance, while varied and multifaceted, is never external to power but exists within its strategic field. The novel illustrates the complexities of power relationships and the diverse forms resistance takes, highlighting the resilience of individuals against domination. Foucault further writes:

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no "escaping" it, there is no absolute outside where of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure

law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable;or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat.(95)

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, intricately weaves a narrative that explores the intricate relationship between power dynamics and resistance, echoing Foucault's assertion that resistance is inherent within systems of power. Throughout the novel, characters like Oscar, Lola, and Yunior navigate various manifestations of power, including patriarchy, colonialism, and cultural norms, each shaping their experiences and choices. Despite the omnipresence of power, resistance emerges in diverse forms and contexts. For instance, Oscar's rejection of traditional masculinity and pursuit of love defy societal norms, while Lola's defiance of gender roles asserts her autonomy. Additionally, Yunior's critical interrogation of Dominican history challenges colonial narratives. These acts of resistance, scattered throughout the narrative, underscore the multiplicity of resistances within the broader power network.

Furthermore, Oscar's struggles against the Trujillo regime and his quest for love amidst societal pressures exemplify resistance in the face of oppressive power structures. His refusal to conform to expectations imposed by patriarchy and authoritarian rule showcases the resilience of the individual against entrenched systems of control. Likewise, Lola's defiance of gender norms and her determination to forge her own path demonstrate resistance against societal constraints. Through these characters' experiences, Diaz highlights the complexities of power dynamics and the ways in which individuals resist, negotiate, and challenge dominant structures of power.

Moreover, the novel itself can be seen as an act of resistance against dominant literary and historical narratives. Diaz subverts traditional storytelling conventions and offers a

counter-narrative that challenges mainstream representations of Dominican identity and history. By incorporating elements of magical realism and blending English and Spanish languages, Diaz asserts the cultural richness and complexity of the Dominican experience, resisting homogenizing and marginalizing forces.

The theoretical concepts of Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt, and Hayden White converge in their exploration of how power, culture, and history are constructed and represented, providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing the complex dynamics in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Foucault's notion of power as pervasive, dynamic, and exercised from multiple points aligns with Greenblatt's concept of cultural poetics, which emphasizes how literary texts both reflect and contest dominant ideologies. Foucault's idea that power operates through discourse and societal structures complements Greenblatt's focus on the embeddedness of literature in historical and cultural contexts. This alignment is evident in how Diaz's novel portrays characters navigating power relations shaped by colonialism, patriarchy, and cultural hegemony, reflecting societal norms and resisting them simultaneously. Greenblatt's emphasis on examining the "social energy" within literature mirrors Foucault's exploration of power dynamics, showing how texts serve as sites of ideological struggle and negotiation. Meanwhile, White's theory of historical emplotment, which posits that historical narratives are constructed to convey specific meanings and ideologies, intersects with Foucault's and Greenblatt's ideas by highlighting the narrative techniques used to shape our understanding of history and power. White's assertion that history is always a narrative construction aligns with Foucault's idea of power operating through discourse and Greenblatt's view of literature as deeply embedded in its cultural and historical milieu. In Diaz's novel, the nonlinear narrative structure and the interplay of personal and historical anecdotes challenge conventional historical narratives, embodying

White's concept of historical emplotment while simultaneously reflecting Foucault's notion of dispersed power and Greenblatt's idea of cultural poetics. Together, these theorists provide a multifaceted approach to understanding how *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* engages with the complexities of power, culture, and history, demonstrating how literary texts can both mirror and challenge the power structures and historical narratives that shape our understanding of the world.

By synthesizing the insights of Foucault, Greenblatt, and White within the framework of New Historicism, this research illuminates the power dynamics and resistance strategies at play in Diaz's novel, thereby advancing our understanding of its thematic complexity and socio-political significance.

In the intricate tapestry of Diaz's novel, power dynamics and resistance emerge as central themes, revealing the complex interplay between individuals and the broader socio-political structures that shape their lives. Diaz's narrative weaves together the personal struggles of characters like Oscar, Lola, and Yunior with the overarching historical and cultural forces that exert power over them. Through a meticulous textual analysis, we uncover how power operates as a pervasive force, influencing characters' actions, relationships, and identities.

One of the most compelling aspects of power dynamics in the novel is its multifaceted nature. Power manifests not only through overt structures of authority but also through subtler mechanisms embedded within Dominican society. For instance, patriarchy exerts a profound influence on characters like Lola, constraining her agency and shaping her relationships with men. Similarly, colonial legacies continue to reverberate through the lives of characters, perpetuating systems of oppression and marginalization. However, alongside these structures of power, Diaz also portrays instances of resistance that challenge the status quo and subvert dominant narratives. Characters like Oscar, despite their marginalization and

persecution, demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity, refusing to conform to societal expectations. Through their acts of defiance and self-expression, they carve out spaces of agency and autonomy within the constraints of their circumstances.

A key insight gleaned from the textual analysis is the interconnectedness of power and resistance. As Michel Foucault aptly observes, “power is not a monolithic entity but rather operates through a network of relationships and interactions” (93). Similarly, resistance is not confined to grand acts of rebellion but can take myriad forms, from individual acts of defiance to collective movements for social change.

In Diaz’s novel, the oppressive regime of Rafael Trujillo serves as a formidable backdrop against which power dynamics and resistance are vividly portrayed. Trujillo's dictatorial rule, characterized by violence and coercion, epitomizes the pervasive reach of power in Dominican society. Evidently the novel contends; “For those of you who missed your mandatory two seconds of Dominican history: Trujillo... 1930 and 1961 withTrujillo (also known as El Jefe, the Failed Cattle Thief, and Fuckface) came to control ... he was the master (2). Through the portrayal of Trujillo as a "portly, sadistic" figure with derogatory nicknames like "El Jefe" and "Fuckface," Diaz highlights the dehumanizing effects of his regime and the extent to which power is wielded to subjugate the populace. The depiction of Rafael Trujillo's dictatorship serves as a critical backdrop for understanding power dynamics and resistance within Dominican society. Trujillo's reign, marked by ruthless brutality and absolute control, exemplifies the pervasive reach of power and its oppressive effects on the populace. Through vivid descriptions of Trujillo's despotic rule, characterized by violence, intimidation, and coercion, Diaz highlights the profound impact of authoritarian regimes on individual lives and collective experiences. Trujillo's domination over every aspect of Dominican life reflects a broader pattern of power dynamics in which authority is concentrated in the hands of a single ruler, leaving little room for dissent or resistance.

Furthermore, In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, the notion of power dynamics and resistance is vividly illustrated through the omnipotent fear instilled by the oppressive regime of Rafael Trujillo. Trujillo's despotic rule is portrayed as extending far beyond physical control, penetrating the very thoughts and beliefs of Dominican society. The text contends, "It was believed, even in educated circles, even though a bad thing about Trujillo, fua, a hurricanehorribly. And what about fucking Kennedy? He was the one who green lighted the assassination of Trujillo in 1961, who ordered the CIA to deliver arms to the Island "(3).The belief in the fuku, a curse of unimaginable power wielded by Trujillo, underscores the pervasive fear that permeates the lives of the characters. This fear is not only a reflection of Trujillo's tyrannical control but also serves as a mechanism of social control, suppressing dissent and resistance through the threat of supernatural retribution. Moreover, the belief in the fuku exemplifies the complex interplay between power and belief systems within Dominican culture. Even educated circles are not immune to the influence of Trujillo's power, as evidenced by the widespread acceptance of the fuku as a reality. This highlights the ways in which power operates not only through overt coercion but also through the internalization of dominant ideologies and narratives.

Despite the omnipresent fear generated by the fuku, there are instances of resistance and defiance against Trujillo's regime. The mention of assassination attempts against Trujillo, albeit unsuccessful, demonstrates the persistence of resistance even in the face of overwhelming power. The reference to Kennedy's involvement in plotting Trujillo's assassination further complicates the narrative, suggesting that resistance to oppressive power can take various forms, including covert political maneuvers orchestrated by external actors. Overall, this excerpt from the novel offers a nuanced exploration of power dynamics and resistance, revealing the ways in which oppressive regimes wield control through fear and

belief systems while also highlighting the indomitable spirit of resistance that persists in the face of tyranny.

Diaz brings to light the intricate power dynamics and acts of resistance through the historical event of President Lyndon B. Johnson's illegal invasion of the Dominican Republic. "How about Vietnam? Why do you think the greatest power in the world lost its first war to a Third World country like Vietnam? I mean, Negro, please. It might interest you that just as the U.S. was ramping up its involvement in Vietnam, LBJ launched an illegal invasion of the Dominican Republic (April 28, 1965)" (4). By referencing historical events such as the illegal invasion of the Dominican Republic by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, the novel highlights the complex interplay of power on both a global and local scale. The comparison between the Vietnam War and the Dominican Republic invasion underscores the asymmetrical power dynamics at play, with the United States acting as an imperial force exerting its influence over smaller, Third World nations. The dialogue within the text challenges conventional narratives, urging readers to interrogate dominant discourses and consider alternative perspectives.

Diaz explores the theme of oppression and the quest for autonomy, especially in familial and societal contexts in the novel. He examines the difficulties individuals encounter as they endeavor to assert their independence and liberate themselves from constraining societal norms and expectations. He states; "What it's like to be the perfect Dominican daughter, which is just a nice way of saying a perfect Dominican slave. You don't know what it's like to grow up with a mother who never said a positive thing in her life, ... always tearing you down and splitting your dreams straight down the seams"(56). This sheds light on power dynamics within the context of familial relationships and cultural expectations. Lola reflects on the experience of being the "perfect Dominican daughter," which, in reality, translates to being a "perfect Dominican slave." This statement underscores the oppressive nature of

traditional gender roles and familial expectations, wherein daughters are expected to conform to strict standards set by their parents and society. The portrayal of the mother as constantly critical and unsupportive highlights the power dynamics within the family structure. The mother's behavior, characterized by negativity and suspicion, serves to exert control over her daughter's life and aspirations. By undermining her daughter's confidence and ambitions, she perpetuates a cycle of subjugation and disempowerment. Moreover, Lola's description of her upbringing illuminates the theme of resistance against oppressive forces. Despite the mother's attempts to "tear down" her daughter's dreams, the internal dialogue suggests a defiance against these constraints. Through her introspective reflection, she asserts her agency and challenges the narrative of victimhood imposed upon her by societal expectations.

Overall, the dialogue highlights the intersecting dynamics of power and resistance within the familial and cultural context of the Dominican community. It serves as a poignant commentary on the challenges faced by individuals striving to assert their autonomy and forge their own path amidst oppressive social norms and familial pressures. Through the protagonist's narrative, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* offers a nuanced exploration of power dynamics and resistance within the framework of personal identity and cultural heritage.

Diaz's deliberate refusal to italicize or gloss Spanish words serves as a powerful assertion of linguistic and cultural hybridity, challenging mono-cultural hierarchies and inviting readers into a more inclusive narrative space. By resisting the conventional practice of italicizing or translating Spanish terms, Diaz disrupts the linguistic norms that often privilege English over other languages, thus subverting power dynamics inherent in language hierarchies. Terms like "fuku" and "mangu" are seamlessly integrated into the text, emphasizing the equal importance of both languages in the storytelling process and resisting the erasure of Dominican culture within a predominantly English-speaking literary landscape.

Diaz's insistence on maintaining the integrity of Spanish within the text aligns with his broader goal of creating a narrative that embraces hybridity and resists the imposition of linguistic norms that privilege one culture over another. By refusing to conform to linguistic expectations, Diaz empowers his characters to assert their cultural identities and resist assimilation into dominant cultural norms. Characters seamlessly switch between Spanish and English in their dialogue, reflecting the linguistic fluidity of their identities and challenging monolithic representations of language and culture. Moreover, Diaz's rejection of italics for Spanish words underscores his resistance to the idea of linguistic exclusion and cultural marginalization. By presenting Spanish terms without visual distinction, Diaz validates the linguistic and cultural heritage of his characters and challenges readers to engage with linguistic diversity on equal terms. Terms like "guagua" and "sancocho" are portrayed as integral aspects of the characters' lives and experiences, highlighting the richness and complexity of Dominican culture while resisting attempts to categorize it as "foreign" or "other."

While Diaz acknowledges that his refusal to italicize or translate Spanish words may partially exclude some readers who do not possess the necessary linguistic indexes, he sees this as a necessary consequence of his commitment to authenticity and cultural integrity. By foregrounding the complexities of language and identity, Diaz invites readers to confront their own assumptions and biases, ultimately enriching their understanding of the multicultural world in which the novel is set and challenging readers to reconsider their perspectives on power, language, and resistance.

Diaz's typographic representation of language in the text serves as a potent tool for challenging mono-cultural hierarchies and fostering a more inclusive and expansive understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity. Through his refusal to italicize or translate Spanish words, Diaz creates a textual space where languages and cultures intersect and

overlap, inviting readers to engage with the complexities of identity and belonging in new and transformative ways, thereby challenging dominant power structures in literature and society.

In the novel Diaz employs a variety of vulgar language, including words like "shit," "asshole," and "motherfucker," as a means of resistance against oppressive forces and societal constraints. Through the strategic use of profanity, Diaz empowers his characters to assert their autonomy, challenge dominant power structures, and resist the limitations imposed upon them. For example, the character Yunior frequently uses words like "shit" and "asshole" in his narration, often directed at oppressive figures or systems. In doing so, Yunior asserts his defiance against the societal norms and expectations that seek to marginalize him. By reclaiming and weaponizing these vulgar words, Yunior asserts his agency and refuses to be silenced or oppressed.

Similarly, the character Beli employs vulgar language as a means of resistance against her own marginalization and oppression. As a young woman growing up in the Dominican Republic, Beli faces discrimination and abuse from both men and societal expectations. However, she defiantly uses words like "motherfucker" to assert her power and autonomy in a patriarchal society that seeks to control and suppress her. Moreover, the pervasive use of vulgar language throughout the novel serves to challenge traditional literary conventions and expectations. Diaz disrupts the polite veneer often associated with literature, opting instead for raw and unfiltered language that reflects the characters' lived experiences. By refusing to sanitize or censor their language, Diaz highlights the authenticity and urgency of their voices, amplifying their resistance against societal constraints.

Furthermore, the use of vulgar language serves as a cathartic release for the characters, allowing them to express their frustrations and anger in the face of oppression.

Through the liberating power of profanity, characters like Yuniór and Beli reclaim control over their narratives and assert their humanity in a world that seeks to dehumanize them. Such contents serve as a potent form of resistance against oppressive forces and societal norms. Through the strategic deployment of profanity, characters assert their autonomy, challenge dominant power structures, and reclaim control over their narratives, ultimately asserting their humanity and resilience in the face of adversity.

Díaz masterfully explores the themes of power dynamics and resistance through the lens of Lola's journey towards autonomy. Through Lola's actions and interactions with her mother, Belicia, Díaz vividly portrays the struggle for agency within familial relationships and societal expectations. Lola's defiance against her mother's control and her courageous acts of rebellion serve as a poignant commentary on the oppressive forces that seek to confine individuals within rigid power structures. She says; "Karen, I want you to cut my hair"(58), Lola's initial assertion of agency and autonomy comes to the fore. By asking Karen to cut her hair, Lola takes a proactive step towards defining her own identity and breaking free from the constraints imposed by her mother. It symbolizes her desire to resist the oppressive expectations placed upon her. Lola states; "The next day my mother threw the wig at me. You're going to wear this. You're going to wear it every day. And if I see you without it on I'm going to kill you! I didn't say a word. I held the wig over the burner"(59). Further highlights the power dynamics at play within Lola and Belicia's relationship. Belicia's attempt to force Lola to wear the wig symbolizes her desire to maintain control and dominance over her daughter. It reflects the oppressive nature of their relationship and the extent to which Belicia seeks to assert her authority through fear and intimidation. Belicia's desperate plea as Lola holds the wig over the burner underscores her fear of losing control over her daughter. The use of the burner as a tool of defiance symbolizes Lola's rejection of her mother's

attempts to manipulate and control her. It represents a pivotal moment of resistance where Lola asserts her agency and refuses to conform to her mother's expectations.

Lola's defiant act of striking her mother's hand symbolizes her resistance against the oppressive authority imposed upon her. It is a moment of empowerment for Lola, as she asserts her autonomy and refuses to be subdued by her mother's violence. "That was when she slapped at me, when I struck her hand and she snatched it back, like I was the fire" (59). This remark captures the physical altercation between Lola and her mother, highlighting the power struggle between them. Lola's action of striking her mother's hand symbolizes her defiance and resistance against her mother's attempts to assert authority through violence. It represents a moment of empowerment for Lola as she stands up to her mother and refuses to be subdued.

Diaz mentions three sisters from Salcedo who resisted Trujillo's oppressive regime, serves as a poignant illustration of power dynamics and resistance on footnote of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, it contends "Patria Mercedes, Minerva Argentina, and Antonia Maria — three beautiful sisters from Salcedo who resisted Trujillo and were murdered for it" (83). These sisters symbolize the defiance of ordinary individuals against authoritarian rule, highlighting the inherent power struggle between oppressive regimes and those who resist them. Their courageous resistance underscores the resilience of the human spirit in the face of oppression and the profound risks associated with challenging oppressive systems. Through their tragic sacrifice, they exemplify the enduring power of resistance and the high stakes involved in acts of defiance against injustice. Their story not only honors their memory but also serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for freedom and justice in the face of tyranny.

Reflecting on the complex web of power dynamics and resistance encapsulated within the narrative, the excerpt unveils the intricate interplay between personal ambition, familial

ties, and political power, underscoring the daunting barriers faced by individuals striving to navigate oppressive systems. Diaz mentions; “It’s true. The Gangster’s wife was — drumroll, please — *Trujillo’s fucking sister!* Did you really think some street punk from Samana was going to reach the upper echelons of the Trujillato on hard work alone? Negro, please — this ain’t a fucking comic book!”(138). The connection between the Gangster and Trujillo's sister unveils a significant power dynamic within the Dominican Republic's political hierarchy, highlighting how familial ties facilitated the rise of individuals within the authoritarian regime. The expletive-laden expression "Negro, please" underscores the incredulity surrounding the idea that someone like the Gangster could ascend to such heights solely through merit or hard work. Instead, it suggests a system where connections and alliances play a pivotal role in determining one's position and influence. From a resistance perspective, this revelation exposes the pervasive reach of Trujillo's regime and the challenges faced by those seeking to resist or challenge it. The sarcastic tone of the narrator's commentary reflects a sense of disillusionment regarding the possibility of effecting meaningful change within such a system. Overall, this passage illuminates the complex power dynamics at play within authoritarian regimes like Trujillo's Dominican Republic and the daunting obstacles faced by those striving to resist its grip.

Trujillo’s rule over Santo Domingo with absolute power, comparing it to a tyrant controlling his own domain like a private kingdom. He not only isolated the country from the outside world but also acted like he owned everything and everyone, using violence to enforce his authority, even taking women from their husbands. The text contends "Homeboy dominated Santo Domingo like it was his very own private Mordor... he acted like he owned everything and everyone, killed whomever he wanted to kill, sons, brothers, fathers, mothers took women away from their husbands on their wedding nights..."(224-225). This excerpt shows how Trujillo had total control over Santo Domingo, acting like a powerful dictator. It

compares his rule to ruling over Mordor, emphasizing how oppressive and harsh his regime was. The mention of locking the country away from the world and isolating it behind the "Platano Curtain" shows how Trujillo controlled information to suppress any opposition. His behavior, similar to that of a plantation owner, shows how he treated people as his possessions, exploiting and dominating them. Trujillo's violent actions, like killing people and kidnapping women, demonstrate his power and how he could act without consequences.

Trujillo's reign, as rumors of his supernatural abilities perpetuated fear and reinforced his dominance. Diaz states; "Shit was so tight that many people actually believed that Trujillo had supernatural powers! It was whispered that he did not sleep, did not sweat, that he could see, smell, feel events hundreds of miles away, that he was protected by the most evil fuku on the Island"(226). This illustrates the extent of Trujillo's power and control, where his rule was so absolute that rumors of supernatural abilities circulated among the people. These rumors not only served to instill fear but also reinforced Trujillo's dominance by portraying him as beyond mortal reach. Belief in his supernatural prowess contributed to his cult of personality, further solidifying his authority and deterring opposition. The spread of such rumors reflects the population's acceptance of Trujillo's power dynamics, highlighting the pervasive influence of his regime.

Abelard's pragmatic approach to navigating Trujillo's oppressive regime is evident in his belief that laying low and avoiding conflict will eventually lead to a transition to democracy. This illustrates the delicate balance between survival and hope for a better future amidst authoritarian rule. The narrator highlights Abelard's perspective when he states, "The way Abelard saw it — his Trujillo philosophy, if you will — he only had to keep his head down, his mouth shut, his pockets open, his daughters hidden for another decade or two. By then, he prophesied, Trujillo would be dead and the Dominican Republic would be a true democracy"(227). Abelard's approach to surviving under Trujillo's rule was to stay quiet,

avoid trouble, and play along with the system by keeping his pockets open. He hoped that by doing so, he could protect his family until Trujillo's reign ended and democracy returned to the Dominican Republic. This shows how people adapted to the oppressive regime while secretly hoping for change, reflecting a balance between submission and resistance.

Diaz has depicted Abelard's inner turmoil and the psychological impact of living under Trujillo's regime. It underscores the pervasive fear and anxiety experienced by individuals subjected to the regime's brutality, highlighting the resilience and determination to resist oppression. As Diaz writes "He saw his daughters and his wife raped over and over again. He saw his house on fire" (238). Abelard's internal resistance to the oppressive regime. His fearful visions of his daughters and wife being raped and his house being set on fire illustrate the psychological toll of living under Trujillo's dictatorship. Despite being reassured by the SIM officers, Abelard cannot shake off the pervasive fear and anxiety induced by the regime's brutality.

Ultimately the family's return to the Dominican Republic prompts a mix of emotions and reflections, from Belicia's elitism to La Inca's aging. Oscar's observations capture both the beauty and challenges of the country, underscoring the complexities of their experience. Oscar's family travels to the Dominican Republic, where they experience a mix of excitement and discomfort. Belicia, Oscar's mother, appears elitist and critical, while Oscar himself sleeps through much of the flight. Upon arrival, Oscar is struck by the familiarity and changes in the country, from its heat and poverty to its modernization. La Inca, Oscar's grandmother, shows signs of aging, and there's an emotional reunion between her and Belicia. Despite the challenges, Oscar finds beauty in the country and its people, even as his cousin Pedro Pablo expresses frustration with their circumstances (272-275).

Moreover, Trujillo's reign is not merely a historical artifact but a living legacy that continues to shape the characters' lives and interactions in the novel. The lingering effects of

his dictatorship permeate Dominican society, influencing cultural norms, social structures, and individual identities. Characters like Oscar, Lola, and Yunior navigate the remnants of Trujillo's regime, grappling with the legacies of trauma, oppression, and resistance that continue to reverberate through their lives. Finally, the textual analysis of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* offers invaluable insights into the intricate interplay between power dynamics and resistance in the lives of its characters. By exploring the ways in which power operates and how individuals navigate and resist its influence, we gain a richer appreciation of Diaz's masterful storytelling and its broader socio-political implications.

In conclusion, Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* reveals a rich tapestry of power dynamics and resistance that permeate the lives of its characters within the socio-political context of the Dominican Republic. Through meticulous examination of key characters, historical events, and narrative techniques, this analysis has illuminated the intricate interplay between oppressive power structures and acts of defiance and resilience. Diaz's masterful storytelling invites readers into a world where power operates not only through overt structures of authority but also through subtler mechanisms embedded within societal norms and cultural practices. Characters like Oscar, Lola, and Belicia navigate these power dynamics, asserting their agency and challenging dominant narratives despite the formidable obstacles they face.

Moreover, the novel's exploration of historical events such as Trujillo's dictatorship and the illegal invasion of the Dominican Republic by President Lyndon B. Johnson provides a broader understanding of the socio-political context in which power dynamics and resistance unfold. By grounding the narrative in historical realities, Diaz underscores the enduring impact of oppressive regimes on individual lives and collective experiences. Furthermore, Diaz's innovative use of language and narrative techniques serves as acts of resistance against dominant cultural norms and linguistic hierarchies. Through his refusal to

italicize or translate Spanish words and his strategic deployment of vulgar language, Diaz challenges readers to confront their own assumptions and biases while embracing the linguistic and cultural diversity of the narrative.

Ultimately, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* serves as a poignant exploration of the complexities of power and resistance, highlighting the resilience of the human spirit in the face of oppression. By synthesizing insights from character analysis, historical context, and narrative techniques, the text offers a nuanced understanding of the novel's thematic complexity and socio-political significance.

In essence, Diaz's novel reminds us that while power may be pervasive and oppressive, resistance is always possible, even in the most daunting of circumstances. Through acts of defiance and resilience, individuals assert their humanity and strive for liberation, challenging dominant power structures and shaping their own destinies. The novel stands as a testament to the enduring power of resistance and the indomitable spirit of those who dare to defy the existing conditions.

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