**The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao: Questions**

1. According to the Dominican (and Dominican American) cultures that we see, what constitutes masculinity?  How do women factor into men’s notions of masculinity?  How does Oscar transgress against commonly held views of masculinity?  Does Diaz problematize Dominican masculinity? In addition to Oscar, consider Yunior, Trujillo, Abelard and any other characters that are pertinent.  Be able to point to specifics in the text to support your answers.
2. We have discussed femininity throughout the semester.  We see interesting gender dynamics in this text.  How do women in the segments of the Dominican (and Dominican American) cultures represented in the novel define themselves? How would you characterize their relationship with the men in their lives?  What is the socially defined role of women?  Do any of the characters transgress against those that role? How do they view sex and their own sexuality?  Consider La Inca, Beli, Lola, and any other female characters that are relevant.  Be able to point to specifics in the text to support your answers.
3. How does the novel present the colonial legacy of the Dominican Republic?  This is a large question. Consider how it relates to leadership, skin color, and class.  The word diaspora is mentioned throughout the text.  Using context clues, define diaspora  and discuss how is it related to colonialism?  What are the different diasporas that exist within this text?  In what ways do the characters see diaspora as positive and negative?  Be able to point to specifics in the text to support your answers.
4. Acceptance of the supernatural is a theme that runs throughout the text.  This is initially evident through Oscar’s obsession with science fiction and fantasy texts.  What point to do think Diaz is attempting to make through this obsession? (To say it is just an element to emphasize that Oscar is a nerd is a weak surface level argument.)  Supernatural elements are also evident in the Dominican cultural context.  Discuss the significance of Lola as a burjah, *fukú, the mongoose, and the man with no face.*  Be able to point to specifics in the text to support your answers.