

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer intends to analyze about Oscar's life in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* through the formal elements of the novel, especially character, tragedy and tragic hero. The first step of the analysis describes Oscar's tragedy presented in the novel. The second step of the analysis is explaining the process of the way the tragedy leads Oscar to be tragic hero. In this process of the analysis, the writer takes a look at the formal elements of tragedy and tragic hero which describe from the beginning how the character is created until it changes in the end of the story.

3.1 Tragedy in Oscar Life

This part aims to depict the tragedy in *The Brief wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. The tragedy in this novel was depicted from the story's plot. As stated in the background of study, *The Brief wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* was written by Dominican author Junot Diaz. The story is set in the United States and in the Dominican Republic. The story relates the character experience of being Dominican in both places. *The Brief wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* won Pulitzer price for fiction in 2008.

To support the analysis in this chapter, the theory from Aristotle, *The Mythos of Autumn: Tragedy* will be used as the primary concept. As stated before, the story

Oscar learns in high school Don Bosco Tech, a special school for Catholic children. He is never appreciated there. No one wants to be his friends, no woman wants to date with him. However, Oscar remains good on them, he is silent when they mock or shame him: “High school was Don Bosco Tech, and since Don Bosco Tech was an urban all-boys Catholic school packed to the strakes with a couple hundred insecure hyperactive adolescents, ...” (19)

After graduating from Don Bosco, he was accepted at Rutgers New Brunswick college. Her mother gives him first kiss, his family love him so much, especially his mother and his sister: “In September he headed to Rutgers New Brunswick, his mother gave him a hundred dollars and his first kiss in five years, ...” (49) After graduation, Oscar returned to his home. He becomes a substitute teachers in Don Bosco. Then he becomes a teacher of English and history: “And if he’d thought Don Bosco had been the moronic inferno when he was young—try now that he was older and teaching English and history.” (264) He also begins sending his stories and his novels, but no one is interested. When he has high spirit, he sets up a scientific fiction and fantasia club, but for two weeks there is no student who is interested for joining.

In a burst of enthusiasm he attempted to start a sciencefiction and fantasy club, posted signs up in the halls, and for two Thursdays in a row he sat in his classroom after school, his favorite books laid out in an attractive pattern, listened to the roar of receding footsteps in the halls, the occasional shout of Beam me up! and Nanoo-Nanoo! outside his door; then, after thirty minutes of nothing he collected his

books, locked the room, and walked down those same halls, alone, his footsteps sounding strangely dainty. (265)

As the previous explanation, it describes that Oscar gets good education. Don Bosco Tech, the school for Catholic children. After graduating, he continues his education in Rutgers New Brunswick university. He writes fiction and science books. He has good education is nobility and high status position.

The complication in this story begins when Oscar becomes fatter. Actually Oscar's family especially his mother and his sister, Lola, always gives him the best advice. His mother asked him to change his style, cut his hair, take off the glasses, do exercise, throw porno magazine: "Cut the hair, lose the glasses, exercise. And get rid of those porn magazines." (25) However, Oscar had never really done it. He tries to do exercise, sit up and jogging in the morning, but he just did it for a moment. After watching the other boys with his girl friend, it makes him hopeless. He then goes back to his old habit, eating many foods, reading Penthouse magazine, designing dungeons and pitying himself.

Sound counsel that in the end he did not adopt. He tried a couple of times to exercise, leg lifts, sit-ups, walks around the block in the early morning, that sort of thing, but he would notice how everybody else had a girl but him and would despair, plunging right back into eating, Penthouses, designing dungeons, and self-pity. (25)

In this action, Oscar tries to defeat the curse. He tries to change his style and his behavior. But all of his effort is useless when he meets the other boys dating with their girlfriend. He feels despair and makes his effort failed.

However, during the following week he sees himself in the mirror without flinching. Finally he decided to change his style. He went to the barber shop to cut his hair and shear off his mustache. He also takes off his glasses and buys contact lens with the money he was making at the lumberyard and brush up on his Dominica style.

Spent a week looking at himself in the mirror, turning every which way, taking stock, not flinching, and decided at last to be like Roberto Durán: No más. That Sunday he went to Chucho's and had the barber shave his Puerto Rican 'fro off. (Wait a minute, Chucho's partner said. You're Dominican?) Oscar lost the mustache next, and then the glasses, bought contacts with the money he was making at the lumberyard and tried to polish up what remained of his Dominicanness, ... (30)

That summer his mother sent Oscar and Lola to Santo Domingo, at this time he did not refuse like he used to in the past: "That summer his mother sent him and his sister to Santo Domingo, and this time he didn't fight it like he had in the recent past." (30) He has changed. He really wants to be an author. At the summer, he writes two books about a young man fighting mutants at the end of the world. Although he

always hears about the family curse thousand times, he is never incorporating it into his fiction.

He wrote two books that summer about a young man fighting mutants at the end of the world (neither of them survive). Took crazy amounts of field notes too, names of things he intended to later adapt for science-fictional and fantastic purposes. (Heard about the family curse for like the thousandth time but strangely enough didn't think it worth incorporating into his fiction ... (32)

The quotation describes that Oscar has really changed his physical. To entertain himself he tries to write some fiction books. He changes his behavior from reading novel to write the fiction book. By writing fiction book, it can make him get more spirit.

After Oscar comes back to Paterson, he hung out and saw movies with Al and Miggs, his close friends. But their friendship is not as good as before Oscar went to Santo Domingo. Oscar listened to their messages on the machine and hold himself to meet them. He just meet them once or twice in a week. Formerly, when his friend hurt him or betray his reliance, Oscar is never angry because of fear of loneliness, but not this time.

In the old days when his so-called friends would hurt him or drag his trust through the mud he always crawled voluntarily back into the abuse, out of fear

3.1.2.1 Beginning

In this story, Oscar as a main character makes a mistake when he is doing affair with Maritza. At that time, Oscar seems to be in his golden age. There are many girls who want to be his girlfriend because many girls loved him. He dates with Maritza and Olga at the same time. Maritza is a beautiful long haired girl and she roles as the antagonist in the novel. On the other hand, Olga is an ugly, dirty girl and has no relatives in her life. She is poor and often drinks beer, thus Oscar's mother complains her bad behavior.

It truly was a Golden Age for Oscar, one that reached its apotheosis in the fall of his seventh year, when he had two little girlfriends at the same time, his first and only ménage à trois. With Maritza Chacón and Olga Polanco. (13)

Because Oscar at that time has good charisma and inner beauty, there are many girls who want to be his girlfriend. Generally, someone who is loved by many people has good characteristic and good physical feature. In this story, Oscar has it all, thus he is loved by many girls.

But this two-timing relation does not run well because Maritza wants Oscar to choose her or Olga. After thinking, Oscar chooses Maritza to become his girlfriend. He breaks Olga up on the playground and Maritza was at his side. Olga had cried but he had not been moved and just said: "No be a baby". (15)

He broke up with Olga the following day on the playground, Maritza at his side, and how Olga had cried! Shaking like a rag in her hand-me-downs and in the shoes that were four sizes too big! Snots pouring out her nose and everything!
(15)

Many years later, Oscar could not resist the guilty feeling when he saw Olga become overweight girl: “In later years, after he and Olga had both turned into overweight freaks, “ (15) It is harder for him when Maritza finally betrays him. He saw Maritza holding hands with Nelson Prado. They pass in front of Oscar but Maritza could not smile at him. Instead she said she wanted to get married to Helson. Oscar felt very hurt. He was crying.

What had hurt, however, was when Maritza dumped him. Monday after he'd fed Olga to the dogs he arrived at the bus stop with his beloved Planet of the Apes lunch box only to discover beautiful Maritza holding hands with butt-ugly Nelson Pardo. Nelson Pardo who looked like Chaka from Land of the Lost ! Nelson Pardo who was so stupid he thought themoon was a stain that God had forgotten to clean. (16)

This quotation gives an explanation that Oscar undergoes the encroachment in this phase. This is evident when Maritza left her with another boy. The consequence of it, Oscar gets depression. As Frye's statement that Oscar's mistakes make “fall”, this mistake is often unconscious. (219) When Oscar takes decision to leave Olga and

army—Ana told him during one of their trips to the Yaohan Mall. His sudden appearance, and Ana’s joy over it, shattered the hopes Oscar had cultivated.” (41)

It shows that at the beginning, Oscar does not know about Anna’s boyfriend. Oscar has big wish that Anna also loves him. But when Anna’s boyfriend comes, suddenly all of the wishes are gone. However, Oscar still defeats for his love. He believes that he can make Anna become his girlfriend. He loves Anna very much. Every Dominican family has stories about crazy love and Oscar’s family was not different, started from his grandmother, mother, sister, and now Oscar gets his turn.

Everything then changed quickly. Anna is seldom at home. It makes Oscar always left a message on her answering machine: “Things changed quickly. First off, Ana stopped being home all the time, and Oscar found himself stacking messages on her machine.” (41) After that, Anna meets him again and everything seems to be fine. But the next day she will do the same thing: “She always got back to him after a couple of days, and was pleasant about it, but still.” (42) Then Anna cancels their appointment on Friday three times. Anna just meets Oscar on Sunday after coming from the church. When Anna picks him up, Anna invites him to see the skyline of Manhattan on the Boulevard East.

Then she canceled three Fridays in a row and he had to settle for the clearly reduced berth of Sunday after church. She’d pick him up and they’d drive out to

Boulevard East and park and together they'd stare out over the Manhattan skyline. (42)

In this quotation, it describes that Oscar falls down when Anna comes back to Manny. Oscar knows that Anna has relationship with Manny. It makes Oscar's expectation down. Though Oscar knows about it, he still loves Anna and he still fights for his love. Oscar's sister has reminded him to avoid Anna, because it will make him down, but Oscar never listens to his sister. Lola, Oscar's sister, knows that Anna already has a boyfriend. She asks Oscar to avoid Anna for a while, but Oscar does not care the advise. He even gets a chance to meet Manny. He meets Manny outside Anna's house.: "So she has a boyfriend? Lola asked him suddenly. Yes, he said. You should back off for a little while." (43)

One day Anna comes to Oscar's house with bruised face and broken blouse. Oscar gives advise to Anna to break Manny, but Anna refuses, she loves him so much: "And one day she arrived at Oscar's house with a bruise on her face and with her blouse torn, ..." (44) One night also Oscar hears Anna's crying on the telephone about Manny's violence treatment. Oscar then hung up and goes to the church to eliminate the desperation: "He got so bad that one desperate night, after listening to Ana sobbing to him on the phone about Manny's latest bullshit, he said, I have to go to church now, and put down the phone, ..." (46)

In this quotation above, Oscar knows that his expectation is mistaken. He knows that he cannot get Anna to be his girlfriend. Whatever he did, Anna still chooses Manny. He tries to forget Anna. He knows that his expectation to beat the fuku is mistaken. Whatever he did, his fuku keeps ruling his life and prevents him to have a true love.

On June, Oscar graduates from Don Bosco (Oscar's senior high school). Lola is very happy, her face is very radiant. On September, Oscar goes to Rutgers New Brunswick (name of college): "In September he headed to Rutgers New Brunswick,..." (49) Oscar thinks that in the college he can get a free life, be autonomous and optimism that he will find someone who likes him. Unfortunately his hope does not come true. Seeing his black skin and his afro hair, white students do not believe that he is a Dominican. After a party, Oscar gets much bad treatment from the white students, there are no girls who look at him, he feels that his optimism faded.

The white kids looked at his black skin and his afro and treated him with inhuman cheeriness. The kids of color, upon hearing him speak and seeing him move his body, shook their heads. You're not Dominican. And he said, over and over again, But I am. Soy dominicano. Dominicano soy. After a spate of parties that led to nothing but being threatened by some drunk whiteboys, and dozens of classes where not a single girl looked at him, he felt the optimism wane. (49)

This quotation implies that Oscar has expectation to get better life. In the college, he thinks that if he can get friend or girlfriend, it will change his life and help him to lost his depression. Unfortunately, no one wants to become his friend, no girls want to become his girlfriend. Thus, this action describes that his expectation to get better life is mistaken.

Although having vowed to change his lifestyle, Oscar still loves his scientific books, still eats a lot, still does not do exercise, continues to use big words and has no friends except his sister: “Despite swearing early on to change his nerdy ways, he continued to eat, continued not to exercise, continued to use flash words, and after a couple semesters without any friends but his sister, “ (50) He joins gaming enthusiasts. The meeting is hold in the lower classes and all of the member is men: “he joined the university’s resident geek organization, RU Gamers, which met in the classrooms beneath Frelinghuysen and boasted an entirely male membership.” (50)

In that sentence, it explains that Oscar’s expectation to defeat the fuku is mistaken. Though he promises himself to change his style and his bad habits, because of his depression, he returns to his previous lifestyle.

Toward those descriptions, it may assume that Oscar’s expectation to defeat the fuku, then to change his life is mistaken, that the expectation will be reversed from what he had hope. Though he wants to beat the fuku, but he is a dominican. He cannot beat it. He is not able to free himself.

In the next day, Oscar passes Ybon in front of her house, Ybon greets him using English. Ybon opens the gate and let him come into her home. They talk a lot of things, everything. Ybon is a woman who is very unique. She is fussy, makes all of men feel relaxed when near her: “Ybón was an odd odd bird. She might have been talkative, the sort of easygoing woman a brother can relax around, ...” (281)

This quotations gives evidence that Oscar is in love. His mother and his grandmother do not like it, because Ybon is a prostitute. Moreover his mother will find a better girl than Ybon. But as usual, Oscar does not care about anything that is said by his family. He still loves Ybon.

His mother and his abuela met him at the door; excuse the stereotype, but both had their hair in rolos and couldn't believe his *sinvergüencería*. Do you know that woman's a PUTA? Do you know she bought that house CULEANDO? (282)

In the morning Oscar walks to Ybon house. A red jeep parks outside, A Policia Nacional Plate. He sees Ybon making out with a man. Oscar just stands in front of Ybon's house: “The next day at one he pulled on a clean chacabana and strolled over to her house. (Well, he sort of trotted.) A red Jeep was parked outside, nose to nose with her Pathfinder. A Policía Nacional plate.” (284) his expectations are down.

Though it does no make Oscar feels curred. The next day he is still back to Ybon's home, he hides his devastation: “trying not to sound as miserable as he felt.” (284)

When Oscar comes to Ybon's house for three times, Ybon returns to drink double scotch, she shows her personal photograph: “Ybón doubled up on the scotches again

and then took down her photo albums from the closet and showed him all the pictures of herself, ..." (286) Oscar feels intoxicated, he stops writing and go to Ybon's home everyday: "How lovesick he became! He stopped writing and began to go over to her house nearly every day, ..." (286)

This quotation gives an explanation that Oscar knows that Ybon has boyfriend. Although he fells down, he still goes back to Ybon. Moreover, Oscar stops writing, in his mind is just Ybon. Every day Oscar meets Ybon. They talk about everything and it makes Oscar believes that Ybon has the same feeling with him. Ybon tells him about her two sons, Sterling and Perfecto, who live in their grandparent's home in Puerto Rico. Ybon just sees them only on holidays: "Ybón told him about her two sons, Sterling and Perfecto, who lived with their grandparents in Puerto Rico, whom she saw only on holidays." (287) She also talks to him about her Dominican boyfriend, the Capitain, and her foreign boyfriend; the Italian, The German and the Canadian, who visit her in different months: "She told him about her Dominican boyfriend, the capitán, and her foreign boyfriends: the Italian, the German, and the Canadian, the three benditos, how they each visited her on different months." (287)

In the beginning of August, Ybon starts to talk about his boyfriend, the capitain, whom is very jealous with Oscar. He wants to meet Oscar: "At the beginning of August, Ybón started mentioning her boyfriend, the capitán, a lot more. Seems he'd heard about Oscar and wanted to meet him. He's really jealous, Ybón said rather weakly." (291) In the middle of August, Oscar finally meets the capitain, but he also

gets his first kiss from Ybon. This night has been late, Ybon lost her consciousness again because of beer: “Ybón had passed out again, ... “ (293)

Based on quotation above, it shows that Oscar begins to get his fall. The Capitan feels jealous when he knows that Oscar always meets Ybon. Oscar meets the Capitan. He will get big problem. Oscar follows Clives by Pathfinder. Suddenly there are two polices in front of them. They let Clives to pass, but stop Oscar and ask him to go out. Oscar is very frightened, but at the same time, Ybon sits and looks at Oscar softly, Ybon begins to kiss Oscar. Oscar is shocked and just silent. The two policemen, Gord and Grundy shine into their car. Behind the policemen there is someone who sees the scene in the car, he is the capitan, Ybon’s boyfriend.

But then he realized that the two plainclothes who had pulled them over—who both looked like they’d been raised on high-G planets, and whom we’ll call Solomon Grundy and Gorilla Grod for simplicity’s sake— were beaming their flashlights into the car. And who was standing behind them, looking in on the scene inside the car with an expression of sheer murder? Why, the capitán of course. Ybón’s boyfriend! (294)

In this quotation describes that Oscar meets a big problem. He meets Grod and Grundy, the capitain’s friends. But at the same time, Oscar gets an amazing things from Ybon, it makes the Capitan more angry. Oscar will get the serious problem because of it. It will make Oscar get his fall. Grod and Grundy drag him out of the

car. Oscar is hit several times. Breath knocked and painful. Grundy and Grod lift him and then push into the car and drive. He tries to jump out, but Grod nudges him hardly: “He tried to jump out of the car but Grod elbowed him so hard that all the fight jumped clean out of him.” (296) Oscar sees the captain drag Ybon of Pathfinder by tufting her hair: “Oscar’s last sight of Ybón? The capitán dragging her out of the Pathfinder cabin by her hair.” (296)

After driving for a long time, finally they stop in the sugar cane fields. Grod and Grundy drag Oscar out of the car. Because their flashlight batteries is dead, they drive back to a colmado for buying batteries and then drive back.

They drove for a long time, and then finally, abruptly, they stopped. At the canefields Messrs. Grod and Grundy pulled Oscar out of the car. They opened the trunk but the batteries were dead in the flashlight so they had to drive back to a colmado, buy the batteries, and then drive back. (297)

The two policemen come back, with the light on, they heard Oscar from the field. They ask him to stop and turn around. He scream for help. Gord hit Oscar’s head hardly with the butt of his pistol, “... Grod struck him once hard in the head with the butt of his pistol.” (298) Oscar for a moment gets his strength, he moves his leg to turn around and run, but the policemen start beating him with their pistols again: “For a second the pain broke the yoke of his fear and he found the strength to move his

legs and was about to turn and run but then they both started whaling on him with their pistols.” (298)

This quotation explains that the hero, Oscar gets his fall. He gets a mistreatment from Grod and Grundy. This moment shows his fall to the deepest calamity. Grod hits Oscar’s head with his pistol. Oscar screams, but his screaming does not stop them, he faints, but it also does not relieve his suffering. They kick his genitals, in order that he regained his consciousness. He tries to crawl to the cane fields, but they drag him back.

He shrieked, but it didn’t stop the beating; he begged, and that didn’t stop it, either; he blacked out, but that was no relief; the niggers kicked him in the nuts and perked him right up! He tried to drag himself into the cane, but they pulled him back! (299)

They take turns hitting him, but sometimes they hit together. Oscar feels that he is being beaten by three people, the faceless man who is in front of colmado that join them.

Most of the time they took turns striking him, but sometimes they got into it together and there were moments Oscar was sure that he was being beaten by three men, not two, that the faceless man from in front of the colmado was joining them. (299)

This quotation describes that Oscar get bad things. Oscar falls to death. Clives, the taxi driver who have smart brains and have courage follows the police quietly: "... Clives the evangelical taxista had had the guts, and the smarts, and yes, the goodness, follow the cops on the sly ... " (299) He does not have a flashlight. For hours he walks the sugar cane field to seek Oscar. Finally he finds Oscar stretched, unconcious and bleeding out of both ears and looking like he will die: "Unconcious and bleeding out of both ears and looking like he was one finger tap away from dead." (300)

Clives is not able to drag Oscar's body in the car alone: "Clives tried his best but he couldn't drag Oscar back to the car alone, so he left him where he was—Just hold on!" (300) Then he left Oscar in the place and immediately seeks for help. He goes to a nearby batey, then takes three porters to help him. They raise Oscar to the backseat. The door is closed, Clives immediately takes off as fast as possible: "... and then they heaved him into the backseat. As soon as the door shut, Clives popped his car into gear and was off. Driving fast in the name of the Lord." (300)

In this quotation, it explains that Oscar still gets his luck. Clives saves him, however Oscar gets bad condition. Oscar suffers a broken nose, fractured cheekbone, the seventh cranial nerve is destroyed, three of his teeth snapp off at the gum and concussion: "Broken nose, shattered zygomatic arch, crushed seventh cranial nerve, three of his teeth snapped off at the gum, concussion." (301) Oscar is unconcious for three days: "He was out for three days." (302)

When he wakes up for the first time and realizes that he is still alive, he is looking for Ybon: “When he first woke up and realized that he was still alive, he asked for Ybón.” (303) The doctor recomens that Oscar is brought home quickly. His mother immediately contacts the airline offices, booking a flight. Oscar opposes all attempts. Oscar gets headaches and his right eye cannot see.

Send him home right now, the doctora said, but for four days Oscar resisted any attempt to pack him up in a plane, which says a lot about this fat kid’s fortitude; he was eating morphine by the handful and his grill was in agony, he had an around-the-clock quadruple migraine and couldn’t see squat out of his right eye; (303)

It shows that Oscar has a crazy love. Though he got bad experiences, he still wants to meet Ybon. He still has big dream with Ybon. But his mother does not give permission. His mother immediately brings Oscar to go home. Oneday while watching his mother to replace his bed sheets, he thinks that the curse on his family he had ever heard in his life is really true. It is the fuku: “One day while watching his mother tear sheets off the beds it dawned on him that the family curse he’d heard about his whole life might actually be true.” (303) It shows that Oscar knows that now he is realizing that fuku exists. He has experienced it. Although with a vengeance he wants to get out, he will not be able, fuku has been attached to his family, and to himself.

nonstop. But Oscar does not intend to go out: “He let himself into his abuela’s house (he still had the key). The capitán showed up an hour later, honked his horn a long time, but Oscar didn’t bother to go out.” (316)

This quotation implies that Oscar never gives up to get his love. He still pursues Ybon. Though his family and Clives stop him, he decides to fight. For seventy days he only does two things, writing and researching. He is also pursuing Ybon. Ybon is frightened. she does not want to meet Oscar. She suffers everytime when see Oscar, but she will suffer more if she does not meet Oscar. Oscar sends a letter to Ybon, Ybon replies his letter at the club or sent by post to his home.

At first it was pure terror for her. She didn’t want nothing to do with him; she wouldn’t speak to him, wouldn’t acknowledge him, and the first time she saw him at the club she was so frightened her legs buckled under her. (317)

Lola flies down to see Oscar, begged him to go home, tell that he and Ybon will die: “What could we do? Lola flew down to see him, begged him to come home, told him that he was only going to get Ybón and himself killed; he listened and then said quietly that she didn’t understand what was at stake.” (319) His mother comes also to pick Oscar, buthe denies her request. No body cannot persuade him.

Two weeks into his Final Voyage his mother arrived, and she came loaded for bear. You’re coming home, right now. He shook his head. I can’t, Mami. She

