

Oscar's motivation based on survival as an immigrant family, whereas Gatsby's is based on greed, to get the girl, in addition to being an outsider -> both wandering, trying to fit in. Gatsby can change \$, Oscar can't change ethnicity

S LIFE of OSCAR WAO

t who trembled with fear during British shows like Doctor Who and the difference between a Veritech er, and he used a lot of huge-defatigable and ubiquitous when barely graduate from high school.

abuela's spooky stories... ian in the U.S., who hooked him on reading, the electricity he felt when he touched that first Danny Dunn book? Maybe it was just the zeitgeist (were not the early seventies the dawn of the Nerd Age?) or the fact that for most of his childhood he had absolutely no friends? Or was it something deeper, something ancestral?

Who can say?

What is clear is that being a reader/fanboy (for lack of a better term) helped him get through the rough days of his youth, but it also made him stick out in the mean streets of Paterson even more than he already did. Victimized by the other boys—punches and pushes and wedgies and broken glasses and brand-new books from Scholastic, at a cost of fifty cents each, torn in half before his very eyes. You like books? Now you got two! Har-har! No one, alas, more oppressive than the oppressed. Even his own mother found his preoccupations nutty. Go outside and play! she commanded at least once a day. Portate como un muchacho normal. (Only his sister, a reader too, supporting him. Bringing him books from her own school, which had a better library.)

You really want to know what being an X-Man feels like? Just be a smart bookish boy of color in a contemporary U.S. ghetto. Mamma mia! Like having bat wings or a pair of tentacles growing out of your chest.

Pa' fuera! his mother roared. And out he would go, like a boy condemned, to spend a few hours being tormented by the other boys—Please, I want to stay, he would beg his mother, but she shoved him out—You ain't a woman to be staying in the house—one hour, two, until finally he could slip back inside unnoticed, hiding himself in the upstairs closet, where he'd read by the slat of light that razored in from the cracked door. Eventually, his mother rooting him out again: What in carajo is the matter with you?

(And already on scraps of paper, in his composition books, on the backs of his hands, he was beginning to scribble, nothing serious for now, just rough facsimiles of his favorite stories, no sign yet that these half-assed pastiches were to be his Destiny.)

he was a destiny -> pastiche is a half-assed mitsu mark, conveying falseness + putting on appearances

WAO is out of place, he feels it and he knows it (wince and stare)

most no TV or electricity to plenty of both. only the most extreme scenarios could have he had watched too much Spider-Man, been ang fu movies, listened to too many of his and la Ciguapa? Maybe it was his first library. NOS TO MAKE not thriving, many

Oscar falling in love, what we didn't get to see Gatsby do with Daisy. Gatsby will go for a "die until I get them", but Oscar is more of a "it's better to have loved and lost than to have not loved at all" → Oscar's experience is universal

Oscar's view of love, sex, and relationships are formed under Dominican cultural influence, whereas Gatsby's are based under the "rags to riches" of the American Dream

OSCAR IN LOVE

question to ask - is Oscar's experience Dominican, American, or neither?

And so now every week they headed out to either a movie or the mall. They talked. He learned that her ex-boyfriend, Manny, used to smack the shit out of her, which was a problem, she confessed, because she liked it when guys were a little rough with her in bed; he learned that her father had died in a car accident when she was a young girl in Macorís, and that her new stepfather didn't care two shits about her but that it didn't matter because once she got into Penn State she didn't ever intend to come back home. In turn he showed her some of his writings and told her about the time he'd gotten struck by a car and put in the hospital and about how his tío used to smack the shit out of him in the old days; he even told her about the crush he had on Maritza Chacón and she screamed, Maritza Chacón? I know that cuero! Oh my God, Oscar, I think even my stepfather slept with her!

Oh, they got close all right, but did they ever kiss in her car? Did he ever put his hands up her skirt? Did he ever thumb her clit? Did she ever push up against him and say his name in a

Oscar knows what he wants, but not.

Oscar didn't try to change, setting himself up for failure

with him, now I just iced him out. No more invitations to dinner or a drink. Acted like roommates act when they're beefing. We were polite and stiff, and where before we would jaw about writing and shit, now I didn't have nothing to say to him. Went back to my own life, back to being the ill sucio. Had this crazy burst of toto-energy. Was being spiteful, I guess. He went back to eating pizzas by the eight-slice and throwing himself kamikaze-style at the girls.

The boys, of course, sensed what was up, that I wasn't protecting the gordo anymore, and swarmed.

I like to think it wasn't *too* bad. The boys didn't slap him around or nothing, didn't steal his shit. But I guess it was pretty heartless any way you slice it. You ever eat toto? Melvin would ask, and Oscar would shake his head, answer decently, no mat-

he's Dominican, but he's a nobody. he doesn't fit in.

Probably the only thing you y, Tú no eres nada de dominicano, ppily, I am Dominican, I am. o the hell, I ask you, had ever een he made the mistake of s real proud of his outfit too. th two other writing-section much he looked like that fat im so. You look just like him,

which was bad news for Oscar, because Melvin said, Oscar Wao, *quién es Oscar Wao*, and that was it, all of us started calling him that: Hey, Wao, what you doing? Wao, you want to get your feet off my chair?

And the tragedy? After a couple of weeks dude started *answering* to it.