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Abstract

Psychoanalytic literary theory provides the framework to observe that Dr. Henry Wu was as twisted and vicious as his velociraptors. His arrogance and pride does not allow for him to accept that his work failed. He had spent years trying to perfect *his* dinosaurs and his control over them. This leads him to make all of the dinosaurs' lysine-dependent and all-female. His failure comes from producing breeding dinosaurs that were replicating at recently untold numbers. His narcissism first appears during this scene as his arrogance and inability to accept another's stand point come to light. He staunchly upholds that there is no possible way for the velociraptors to be reproducing. His inability to accept and how quickly he becomes defensive towards this idea, are rooted in the shame this would bring him. Consequently, this 'failure' provided him the validation he needed to feel immense pride in his work. His mentality is revealed after he has witnessed many deaths by these creatures. His pride comes from his narcissism and deep-seeded need for recognition. The darker side of this discovery shows that he also possessed an unwavering god-complex. He upholds his beliefs that he is infallible and morally superior to ethics and the laws of nature. Leading him to become distracted him in a dangerous situation, marveling at his own accomplishments. Eventually this decision causes Dr. Wu to run to his death, at the claws of his prized creations. His death held true to the author's belief in only giving characters that were twisted in their mentality towards the horrific disaster, an equally twisted end to their story. This decision showed that when men try to imitate God, the earthly restrictions that bind them will always drag them back down to Earth.

When men imitate God, can their consciousness and personality expand, or will their downfall come from the creatures they created? Through the application of the Psychoanalytic Literary Theory, a psychoanalysis will be performed on the character Dr. Henry Wu from Jurassic Park. Psychoanalytic Literary Theory provides a comprehensive framework to properly examine the facets of his psychological complex. For this examination, Dr. Wu's internal thoughts and external actions will be analyzed, specifically when he found out the velociraptors were reproducing. The additional scene that will be examined is when Dr. Wu is killed by the same creations he felt pride in. This psychoanalysis will primarily focus on the following facets of Dr. Wu's mental state, his: narcissism, superiority/god complex, and his hidden mindset towards the disaster.

Science is always pushing to boundaries of what is known. This curiosity has led us through the centuries, and allowed us to evolve as a species. Humans may be the apex predator in today's era, however, this was not always the case. 235 million years ago to 66 million years ago, the earth was ruled by giants of another kind, dinosaurs (Tennant, 2018). These creatures came in many different sizes. Dinosaurs have captured the worlds' attention, especially with every new discovery made.

Michael Crichton, the author of Jurassic Park, sought to capture this wonder, but also wanted to provide a warning to the dangers of the mixing of species. Dinosaurs may seem like wonderful creatures, however, if we were to live at the same time as them, the human species would no longer be the apex predator on earth. Jurassic Park is set in the year of 1993, and introduces many ethical questions towards genetic engineering in science. Placing the park on a remote island off the coast of Costa Rica.

The leading scientist that Crichton uses to present this conundrum is Dr. Henry Wu.

Dr. Wu is the epitome of a mad scientist hidden behind a polished exterior. Dr. Wu continues to push the bounds of science, without a second thought towards what he is actually producing or creating. His actions produce one of the most famous quotes from the movie-adaptation,



Dr. Henry Wu played by BD Wong in 1993 movie.

Jurassic Park 1993, stated by the character Ian Malcolm, “Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not

they could that they didn’t stop to think if they should” (Spielberg et al, 1993).



Crichton opens the story in the prologue with a tone of suspense. The location is remote in the Costa Rican jungle, and by the end of the chapter a man is dead after uttering the word, “raptor” (Crichton, 6). He was very intentional with how he chose to open the story. The setting was in a remote health clinic that was currently helping a laboring mother deliver her baby. This rapidly changed when militarized men barge in with an injured man. Crichton chooses this as his introduction to prep the audience for what was to come next.



Crichton leads the audience through multiple different settings and scenarios leading them into the eccentric mindset of Chaos Theory. From the introduction of the idea of a park that housed creatures of genetic-engineering, as they were originally portrayed, control was strictly sought after but never obtained.



Raptor footprints drawn by Olivia Moore.

When resurrected ancient beasts join the world of today, malformations appear not only in the creations but in the surrounding environment, as well.

No matter how society had once imagined these creatures to be, now some were being portrayed as ferocious beasts ready to kill at any moment. The most vicious of the genetically-engineered creatures within Jurassic Park were the velociraptors. When Dr. Wu genetically-engineered the



Velociraptors by Tavo Montanez

velociraptors, he made them enzyme-dependent and all female. However, when trying to replicate the original dinosaurs that once lived, this was not fully possible with the fragmented DNA Dr. Wu was having to reconstruct (Crichton, 124). This lead Wu to fill in the gaps in the genome of the dinosaurs, with the DNA of living creatures from that time.

One lesson learned by modern dog breeders, is that some breeds do not mix well (Purina Editorial Team, 2022). The same was true for the creatures that Dr. Wu was able to create. What led a man like Dr. Wu to want to push the boundaries of not only science but ethics too? To analyze Dr. Wu's psychology, Psychoanalytic Literary Theory will be integral to perform this analysis. This theory provides the framework for this analysis by "applying psychoanalysis to an author or main character, analyzing the unconscious or hidden meanings through language and symbols in media" (Poetry Foundation, n.d.). When Wu started his career as a freshly graduated scientist, John Hammond, the owner of Jurassic Park, was able to snare him into his world of entertainment.

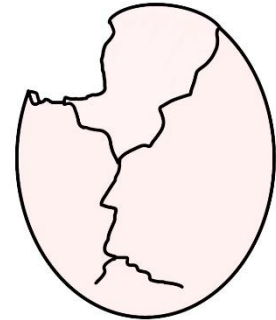
During this time, "Wu desperately wanted to make his mark," making him more likely to take ethical and scientific risks that tests boundaries of interspecies relationships (Crichton, 125). This line was the first indication that Dr. Wu, at the very least, expressed traits of narcissism. He did not want to go the traditional research route. Primarily, due to the amount of red tape that has

to be traversed, and the money required to fund his experiments. For Wu, the primary emotions that fuel his narcissism are his pride and shame (Linus, 2021).

Leading to the first instance his narcissism flairs in the novel, is when he finds out that the velociraptors are reproducing. When esteemed archeologist Alan Grant and his group stumble upon hatched velociraptor eggs within the park, Dr. Wu does not believe them. At first, he is truly adamant that this is not a plausible occurrence, “Look, the fact remains, all the animals are female. They can’t breed” (Crichton, 169). He only begins to believe that there could be a possibility that the raptors were reproducing, when Grant questioned about what species were used to

fill in the raptors genome. The first part of the previous sentence was worded this way due to the progress of the Wu’s thoughts during this event, not wanting to believe the evidence.

Furthermore, Dr. Wu was confident in his science, and the partial fact that the animals were all female to prove his case. Narcissists do not like to be questioned on their work or words, and will staunchly uphold their view till the end. During this scene, his actions are derived from his narcissistic traits such as: assertiveness, beliefs of personal greatness, feelings of superiority, arrogance, quarrelsome, and exploitative (Grapsas, Brummelman, Back, and Denissen, 2019). His assertiveness, arrogance, and quarrelsome nature are the three traits of his narcissism that were most prevalent during this scene. Dr. Grant, the man who found and identified the velociraptor eggs, is an archeologist and scientist that is an esteemed expert in his field. Dr. Grant has previously unearthed real velociraptor nests from the original dinosaurs that once



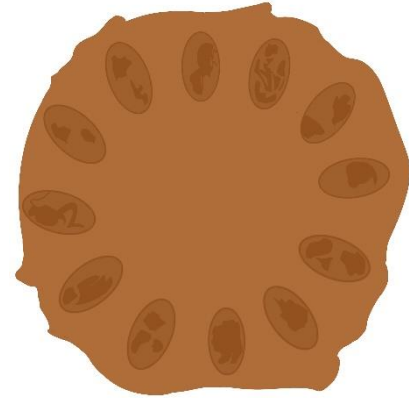
Velociraptor egg
drawn by Olivia
Moore.

walked the earth. Even with this in mind, Wu still did not want to accept this theory, primarily since it was not Dr. Wu that presented the evidence himself.

Moreover, this is the scene where Dr. Wu's god complex begins to shine through. A god complex is defined as "a behavioral pattern in which an individual believes them to be infallible, all-powerful, or morally superior" (Souther, 2025). As previously mentioned in Ian Malcolm's quote, Wu and his

team thought they were morally superior to the laws of nature when they brought back dinosaurs (Spielberg, 1993). Why else would a person attempt a feat such as this if they did not see themselves closer to a god? The infallible part of this definition shows through with the previous scene, due to how staunchly he upheld his research when shown other evidence.

What is more, this is not the only scene that Wu's god complex shines through in the novel, it also shows right before his death by the claws of his own creation. After the discovery that there were breeding dinosaurs in the park, untold chaos and destruction break loose. Many lives were lost during the tirade by the dinosaurs, leading the survivors to John Hammond's bungalow as their last line of defense. Dr. Wu is stationed inside the bungalow walking Dr. Grant through the process of turning on the island's generator. Simultaneously, female scientist Dr. Ellie Sattler was distracting the velociraptors outside. During this scene, Wu sits back and watches his creations play with Ellie, and yet he does not see it as such, "Wu stared out the lodge window at the raptors beyond the fence...The behavior of the dinosaurs had always been a minor consideration for Wu. And rightly so: behavior was a second-order effect of DNA, like really control it, except in very crude ways, like making an animal dependent on a dietary substance by



Example of Grant's
archeological find, drawn
by Olivia Moore.

withholding an enzyme...It was a matter of tinkering, the way a modern workman might repair an antique grandfather clock” (Crichton, pg. 333). The morally superior facet of this complex in his psyche is seen by how he views the raptors, as the equivalent of an antique grandfather clock. These creations are the deadliest on this island, and yet he is viewing them as a trivial matter. With Wu watching Ellie buy time, he is a useless observer, too caught up in his own thoughts to pay attention. His thoughts begin to devolve as he watches on, and where the reader finally learns his mentality towards succeeding in creating reproducing dinosaurs, “And though Wu would never admit it, the discovery that the dinosaurs were breeding represented a tremendous validation of this work. A breeding animal was demonstrably effective in a fundamental way; it implied that Wu had put all the pieces together correctly. He had re-created an animal millions of years old, with such precision that the creature could even reproduce itself” (Crichton, 334). This mindset is one that takes pride in this achievement, no matter the loss of life that is caused by these creatures.

Leading to the culmination of his god complex and mentality towards these creatures. A person that believes they are a god, will come to think that they cannot be psychically harmed. Shortly after the discovery of his overall mindset, the limitations of man show through when faced with ferocious creatures. After being alerted that the velociraptors were no longer distracted and liking heading towards Dr. Sattler, Dr. Wu finally tries to act by warning her. This is the mortal decision that Dr. Wu makes, as he does not comprehend that he is also a target for these velociraptors. As he holds the door open, arguing with Sattler, he is “yanked bodily out the door, and Muldoon heard Ellie screaming. Muldoon got to the door and looked out and saw that Wu was lying on his back, his body already torn open by the big claw, and the raptor jerking its head, tugging at Wu’s intestines even though Wu was still alive, still feebly reaching up with his

hands to push the big head away” (Crichton, pg. 334). Wu raced to his own death during this scene because he did not believe that he could ever be harmed with everything he has done to shape nature to his will. He knew of the dozens of the victims whose lives were taken by these beasts, and still did not believe that would occur to him. This is the mentality of a man completely separated from the harms of their own greed because they were not originally harmed by them (Zwart, 2015). The previously mentioned scene, is the most descriptive death by the velociraptors that the author provides to the reader. The decision for this was to show the audience that when men try imitate to god, their earthly restrictions will always drag them back to earth to rot in the consequences.

In any event, this twisted scientist hidden behind a polished exterior, receives an equally twisted end to his story. No matter the grandeur of his pride and arrogance that his narcissism leads him to possess, nor the infallibility or protected nature he believed his god complex should afford him, his own actions lead to his demise. What the genius scientist did not realize was that his detached nature to the disaster, is the reason why he was killed. If he had stayed a worldly man, he could have observed the behavior of the raptors and seen that they were just as unforgiving as him.

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Example of a velociraptor
bite drawn by Olivia

Moore 10

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