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### The Personality of Scarface

The movie Scarface follows protagonist Tony Montana as he transcends from a destitute refugee to an infamous businessman. This evaluation uses the trait and judgement perspectives to describe the personality of Tony Montana.

Scarface begins with Tony's arrival in Florida as a Cuban refugee. He is denied entry to the United States and placed in a refugee camp, but given entry to the United States in exchange for the assassination of a high-profile Cuban. Tony quickly forays into the life of crime in America and finds rapid success. After an attempted assassination attempt on his life, Tony retaliates against his boss Frank and kills him, thereby assuming his position as head of the organization. However, Tony's success ends when he betrays the trust of a powerful Bolivian drug lord named Sosa. Three years after arriving in America with nothing, Tony is killed in his lavish mansion by Sosa's hitmen and the film concludes.

The trait approach focuses on how the personalities of people differ (Stanzione, Traits Situations Behavior, 3). The Big Five are a set of traits widely regarded to be independent of one another to a good degree. Their assessment is easy and cost-efficient. These traits are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Tony Montana's personality can be described using these five factors, but this description is limited in that there are more specific traits encompassing personality.

Openness is the degree to which one appreciates a variety of experiences (Stanzione, Traits Situations Behavior, 23). People who are very open typically have a diverse set of hobbies and are quick to try new things. Tony Montana exhibits this behavior several times throughout the movie. In the beginning, Frank gives Tony the job of selling cocaine to a gang, and Tony is delighted at the prospect of working for Frank. Tony quickly adapts to his new affluence and purchases new suits and a new car. Tony also takes pleasure in marrying Frank's widowed wife. Tony Montana is a man very open to experience.

Conscientiousness measures a person's organization and consistency. Tony is very determined to stay consistent. Tony mentions he always keeps his word and displays high levels of conscientiousness in the first half of the film. In the gang confrontation, Tony questions the gang members thoroughly and keeps a skeptical watch on his environment. Even after watching his friend die at the hands of a gang member and being threatened with death, Tony would not break his word and tell the gang where he hid his money. However, as Tony became more powerful and abused drugs, he became more self-absorbed and less reliable. In the end, Tony's impulsivity and lack of conscientiousness caused him to betray Sosa. When Tony's mansion was invaded by Sosa's men, he did not keep watch on his camera security system.

Extraversion measures a person's talkativeness and tendency to seek appreciation through the company of others. At first, Tony demonstrated a high level of extraversion. Tony stuck with his friends through the refugee camp, washing dishes in a restaurant, and executing the gang drug deal. Tony attempts to meet new people everywhere he can to garner influence and opportunity. However, as Tony's power and drug abuse mounted, his extraversion

declined. By the end of the film, Tony sat alone and unhappy with no desire to keep the company of others.

Agreeableness is the tendency to accept environmental stimuli. Highly agreeable people will quickly cooperate in interpersonal situations. Tony is not an agreeable character. In his first exchange with Frank, Tony explodes and yells at Frank. Tony refuses to confer the whereabouts of his money to the gang members even under threat of death. Tony refused to kill innocent children as it interfered with his personal philosophy. After this incident Tony spoke with Sosa and concluded the conversation saying, "You want to go to war? We'll take you to war!" His high levels of extraversion and disagreeableness suggest he is narcissistic (Holtzman, 2010).

Neuroticism is characterized by high emotional instability and negative thought patterns. Tony Montana's character initially displays high optimism and a relatively consistent pattern of emotions. For example, he jokes when speaking to border security agents and believes he can be the paradigm of American capitalism. However, as the film progresses Tony becomes more erratic in his behavior and mood. In what he later realized was extremely impulsive, Tony shoots and kills his best friend Manny in a fit of rage.

Personality judgement has a powerful effect on personality. These judgements affect one's life outcomes such as place of work and friends. One's self judgements are self-fulfilling via the expectancy effect (Stanzione, Personality Judgement, 7). For example, a person has high self-esteem if that self judgement is made. Tony Montana is regarded by his peers as an aggressive megalomaniac. Tony judges himself to be this way and thus he is. Tony changes his peers' judgements of him to impress this regard upon them. For example, he explodes at Frank

in their first encounter but later recounts to Manny this was rhetoric to alter Frank's perception of Tony. Later, Tony's wife became angry at him and left the restaurant in which they were eating. This caused Tony to perceive himself negatively, and thus he began repeatedly shouting to the restaurant occupants he is a "bad man." Tony alters the judgments of those around him to match his own self judgements.

Tony's judgements of other's personality influenced his own as well. Tony was very distrustful of people from the beginning of the movie. Tony kept his circle of friends small and trusted them with his security. For example, he washes dishes with his friend Manny and asks when they will make their fortune in America. However, his distrust for people increases as the film progresses. Tony is betrayed by many people throughout the movie, commits felonious crimes, and abuses drugs. These factors contributed to his increased distrust. Tony's distrust of others causes him to ruin his sister's romantic relationships in tandem with his relationship with his sister. Later in the movie, Tony could have had a friend watch his security cameras and detect the preemptive strike by Sosa's gang members. However, Tony had become so paranoid he didn't trust his security with anyone but himself. In addition, he became very unreliable and did not monitor the cameras himself as he had intended. This led to Tony's demise at the hands of Sosa's hit squad.

Scarface paints a vibrant picture of Tony Montana: a Cuban refugee who ascended from nothing to the pinnacle of his own world who by his tragic narcissism destroyed it all. The conclusion to be drawn from Scarface is to aggressively pursue an honest, joyful lifestyle devoid of reckless impulse, drug abuse, or criminal behavior.

Holtzman, N. S., Vazire, S., & Mehl, M. R. (2010). Sounds like a narcissist: Behavioral manifestations of narcissism in everyday life. *Journal of Research in Personality, 44*(4), 478-484. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2010.06.001

Stanzione, C., Ph.D. 2017. *Personality Judgement* [PPT].

Stanzione, C., Ph.D. 2017. *Traits Situations Behavior* [PPT].