

# GLOSSARY FOR TOMKINS' AFFECT, SCRIPT, AND HUMAN BEING THEORIES

## INTRODUCTION

As with so many great thinkers, Tomkins uses familiar words, but in often idiosyncratic ways, and therein lies one strength of his discourse. Refreshed language refreshes learning and understanding. As people new to Tomkins seek to come to terms with his theoretical models, one powerful tool for learning is the direct application of his terminology. To use a language is to understand a language, assuming one is conscientious and methodical and thoughtful in the application. This glossary is offered, then, as a practical tool for readers to confirm, cross-reference, and double check Tomkins' vocabulary. The obvious shortcoming to such a glossary is that any discipline-specific terminology is utterly dependent on the context of use. One can never isolate a term and achieve full understanding. To achieve real insight into Tomkins' ideas, the student must become a dedicated reader of all four volumes of *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (at the very least).

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AIC</i>	<i>Affect Imagery Consciousness</i> , four volumes
DM	“Script Theory: Differential Magnification of Affects” (1978)
<i>EA</i>	<i>Exploring Affect</i>
ST	“Script Theory” (1987)
SMM	“Scripting the Macho Man: Hypermasculine Socialization and Enculturation,” by Silvan Tomkins and Donald Mosher
<i>S&amp;P</i>	<i>Shame and Pride</i> , by Donald Nathanson

**Abstractness**

(of the affect system):

One of three major characteristics (with generality and urgency) of affect functionality, affect lends its amplifying power to any mnemonic, motoric, perceptive, or cognitive response that it may recruit or prompt (*EA* 53). Because the affects have no absolute connection to any triggering source, or are abstract, they can lend their power universally: “The affect system is therefore the primary motivational system because without its amplification, nothing else matters—and with its amplification, anything else *can* matter. It thus combines *urgency* and *generality*. It lends its power to memory, to perception, to thought, and to action no less than to the drives” (“DM” 202).

**Address:**

The neurological “location” of a memory; it is not a place in the brain *per se*, but more akin to a repeatable pattern of neural firing. Neuroplasticians would call this a “brain-map”: “Neurons that fire together, wire together” (Doidge 63). (That catch phrase is often credited to Donald Hebb, but according to Doidge, it was coined by Carla Shatz.)

**Affect:**

Universal, biochemical, neurophysiological mechanisms and processes evolved to amplify their triggers. Affect is the “biological portion

- of emotion" (*SCP* 49). Tomkins names nine "affects": interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, surprise-startle, distress-anguish, anger-rage, fear-terror, disgust, dissmell, and shame-humiliation. Important: these latter three labels are more accurately understood not as affects but as drive auxiliaries (disgust, dissmell) and an affect auxiliary (shame-humiliation). The hyphen is used to indicate a range potential for each affect, from mild to extreme. Affect is also multifaceted: "At the neurological level, affect is correlated with density of neural firing. At the behavioral level, affect is primarily facial response and secondarily bodily and visceral response. At the phenomenological level, affect may be considered a motive" (Izard and Tomkins, "Affect and Behavior" 88).
- Affect auxiliary**  
(auxiliary affect): Shame-humiliation is the "innate *affect auxiliary* response and a specific inhibitor of continuing interest and enjoyment" (*EA* 84). As such, shame is evoked only when other affects, as defined, are activated or triggered. See also drive auxiliary.
- Afferent nerves:** Of the neural pathways, afferent nerves transfer information inward to the central assembly. Compare with efferent nerves.
- Amplification:** Of the affect, drive, and pain mechanisms, it indicates increase or decrease in gain of any signal source. So, increased amplification makes a report "louder" or more salient at the central assembly. Donald Mosher puts it this way: "amplification makes object [value] 'more so'" ("Glossary" 128).
- Analogue:** One of four major categories (with powers, signs, symbols) of affect constructs that are cognitive transformations, the analogue-affect construct "is one in which a state of affairs that is sufficiently similar to that which activates an affect or sufficiently similar to the affect itself, directly activates the affect" (*AIC* 2: 69); this

includes what Freud meant by symbolism. Affect analogues carry a negative bias or valence, and such “analogic constructions become the major mechanism whereby a negative affect scene is endlessly encountered and endlessly defeats the individual when the ratio of positive to negative affect becomes predominantly negative” (“DM” 230).

Analogue is also used by Tomkins to represent one of two ways of thinking: analogues and variants. Analogue refers to an “imagined relationships between shared dimensions” (230) as exemplified by the notion that “ping and pong” might descriptively align with mouse and elephant, respectively, and metaphorically. See also variants, which emphasize difference.

**Analogue amplifier:**

Of affect system, the “affect amplifies by increasing the urgency of anything with which it is co-assembled.... Affect thereby either makes good things better or bad things worse by conjointly simulating its activator in its profile of neural firing and by adding a special analogic quality that is intensely rewarding or punishing” (*EA* 53). But, “[h]ow can one response of our body amplify another response? It does this by being similar to that response—but also different. It is an analog amplifier. The affect mechanism is like the pain mechanism in this respect. If we cut our hand, saw it bleeding, but had no innate pain receptors, we would know we had done something which needed repair, but there would be no urgency to it.... The pain receptors have evolved to make us hurt and care about injury and disease.... Affect, therefore, by being analogous in the quality of the feelings from its specific receptors, as well as in its profile of activation, maintenance, and decay, amplifies and extends the duration and impact of whatever triggers the affect.... A world experienced without any

- affect would be a pallid, meaningless world. We would know *that* things happen, but we could not care whether they did or not" (EA 88).
- Anger-rage:** A negative affect involving a very high, non-optimal steady-state density of neural firing. Anger is an "instrumental" affect because it "makes things happen." Facial expression features: frown, clenched jaw, eyes narrowed, and red face (EA 219).
- Anguish:** The upper end of the negative affect distress-anguish, this involves a very high, steady-state, non-optimal density of neural firing but at a lower level than anger-rage. Distress can be tolerated by an organism for a much longer duration than anger-rage, but anguish indicates intense, deep suffering. Facial expression features: cry, arched eyebrows, mouth down, tears, and rhythmic sobbing (EA 218).
- Anxiety:** A steady-state, free-floating, and *objectless* (see object below) mode of the affect fear.
- "As if" scene:** A variant of habitual scenes, "as if" scenes are controlled by "small programs for processing information with relatively simple strategies" (EA 320), which are easily adapted to a range of contingencies. For example, most people learn "to cross streets with minimal ideation, perceptual scanning, and affect. We act *as if* we were afraid but we do not, in fact, experience fear once we have learned how to cope successfully with such contingencies" ("DM" 213, emphasis added).
- Biopsychosocial matrix:** The person is as much a construct and product of and at the intersection of the biological, psychological, and social spheres as also a producer of the matrix.
- Central assembly:** In constant flux, never fixed, this is the (metaphorical) site of consciousness. As a cognition-combine of structure, process, and product, this transmuting mechanism, which changes neural

messages into conscious reports, or imagery, admits or excludes perceptual, motoric, and memory messages based on the relative density of firing against competing messages at any given moment. The central assembly has no specific, physical location in the brain but is an amalgam of processes.

**Coassembly:**

A constructive process within the central assembly such that a moment in the present is “embedded in the intersect between the past and the future” (*EA* 318). Coassembly is the mechanism of “psychological magnification, the phenomenon of connecting one affect-laden scene with another affect-laden scene. Through memory, thought, and imagination, scenes experienced before can be co-assembled with scenes presently experienced, together with scenes which are anticipated in the future” (*EA* 318). Coassembly and magnification are primary in script construction. Scripts, then, which involve the partially dependent, partially independent, and partially interdependent processes and products of the affect *and* cognitive (imagery) systems, ensure two key results: “Cognitions coassembled with affects become hot and urgent. Affects coassembled with cognitions become better informed and smarter” (*AIC* 4: 7).

**Cognition:**

A structural mechanism with the power to transform information. Importantly, Tomkins designates cognition as a structure as much as the more typically defined process.

**Compression  
(-expansion):**

Refers to the ability to act “automatically” from the rules of any skill (physical, mental, behavioural) such that awareness is not explicitly necessary to the process, as in “practice makes perfect.” The professional athlete, for example, has more compressed skill-related information than the beginner, and therefore can accomplish maximum

- efficiency and efficacy, or expansion of skill, with minimal explicit cognitive effort. Script “rules’ may be so overlearned and skilled, via compression, that their presence becomes visible even to the individual herself [or himself] only by their effects” (*EA* 368).
- Consciousness:** Consciousness is “a unique type of duplication by which some aspects of the world reveal themselves to another part of the same world” (*AIC* 4: 115). Not simply the state of wakefulness, nor “arousal” or “activation,” but a mechanism that reports affect-driven imagery within the central assembly (*AIC* 4: 353). We are, for example, conscious while sleep dreaming. “In summary, consciousness is not wakefulness, and wakefulness is not consciousness. Nor is wakefulness a level of amplification, nor a level of affective arousal. Consciousness, wakefulness, amplification, and affect are maintained by independent mechanisms that are interdependent to the extent to which they constitute an overlapping central assembly. The empirical correlations between the states subserved by these mechanisms are a consequence of the frequency with which these partially independent mechanisms do in fact enter into the combined assemblies” (*AIC* 4: 322).
- Contempt:** A “learned composite of anger and dismissal” (*EA* 394) that aims to hurt, reject, and degrade another person. Often used in extremely hierarchical relationships, the one with the power judges the other as not only weak but deserving of abuse, both meriting and asking for it. Facial expression features: sneer, or “unilateral lifting of one side of the upper lip” (*AIC* 3: 20).
- Correlation:** Of affect system, indicates mnemonic connections due to affect. Nathanson puts it well: “Whatever triggered the affect now becomes linked in memory with whatever followed it.

- In other words, we have a correlation of stimulus and response that is forged by the interposition of an affect program" (*S&P* 70). Thus we have stimulus-affect-response. This interjection of affect between stimulus and response is one of Tomkins' more controversial suggestions.
- Density** (of neural firing): Experienced intensity of neural firing multiplied by the number of neural firings multiplied by time.
- Differential repetition:** One of three functions for script formation, difference evokes affect, and thus scenes are magnified by repetition with a difference, whereas simple repetition typically evokes attenuation. See and compare also indeterminacy and plurideterminacy.
- Disgust:** Connected to hunger and thirst via the mouth and/or stomach, disgust is an auxiliary drive mechanism evolved to prevent and/or reject the intake of contaminating substances. As an affect-mode, however, we sometimes judge scenes *as if* they are bad food. Facial expression features: lower lip pulls down and back, the tongue may protrude (*AIC* 3: 20).
- Dissmell:** An auxiliary drive mechanism tightly connected to disgust, but functioning via the oxygen drive and olfaction. It is an early warning response to a toxic, or "foul-smelling," substance or odour. It was originally labelled contempt by Tomkins before he modified his theory in 1990. "Contempt [dissmell] and disgust appear to be changing more in status from drive-reducing acts to acts that also have a more general motivating and signal function, both to the individual who emits it and to the one who sees it" (*EA* 84). As an affect-mode, we reject and maintain distance from objects (people, things, ideas, etc.) *as if* they smell foul. Facial expression features: upper lip raised, nose crinkled (*AIC* 3: 20)



- Distress-anguish:** A negative affect of high, steady-state, non-optimal density in neural firing but at a lower level than anger-rage. Distress can be tolerated by an organism for a much longer duration than anger-rage. Facial expression features: cry, arched eyebrows, mouth down, tears, rhythmic sobbing (*EA* 218).
- Drives:** The drive mechanisms provide motivational information about place, time, and response—“*where* and *when* to do *what*” (*AIC* 1: 31)—to an organism concerning basic life-sustaining needs. Because they are time and body-place specific, they are inadequate as general motivators.
- Drive auxiliaries:** Connected to the drive needs and relations of gustation and olfaction, disgust and dissmell are also drive auxiliaries because of their affect-like status, particularly inasmuch as they both involve “self-motivating and other-signaling functions of rejection” (Mosher, “Glossary” 122). While the precise mechanism for the transformation of information into the lexicon of emotion may be indeterminate and indeterminable, there appears to be an intrinsic connection between the drive auxiliaries disgust and dissmell, innate mechanisms postulated as evolved to monitor and prevent the intake of toxic substances through the mouth and nose, and the way we express disapproval through and as emotion.
- Duplication:** A transformation process with the specific aim of maintaining and rebuilding an identity: “In order to duplicate a living system, both energy and information transformations are necessary” (*AIC* 1: 7). In biology this is observed as food energy that fuels the organic system while genetic information controls developmental changes. Duplication works similarly within the realm of cognition inasmuch as information from the various subsystems—sensory, mnemonic, action, and so on—is transformed,

- with some information maintained and retained and some information not maintained and retained. So, never total, never exact, duplication is “analogical” because it preserves some but not all aspects of the world in a “non-symbolic, non-conventional manner” (*AIC* 1: 10). For example, then, consciousness “is a unique type of duplication by which some aspects of the world reveal themselves to another part of the same world” (*AIC* 1: 10).
- Efferent nerves:** Of the neural pathways, efferent nerves transfer information outward from the central assembly. Compare with afferent nerves.
- Emotion:** A complex combination of affect and memory that involves an individual’s cumulative experience. According to Nathanson, where “affect is biology, emotion is biography” (*SCP* 50). Where the term affect indicates universals of biology, emotion is more individuated. A curiosity of Tomkins’ writing is how relatively infrequently he uses the word emotion.
- Enjoyment-joy:** An affect activated by a relatively sudden and steep reduction in the density of neural firing and stimulation. This can be triggered equally by release from negative or positive affect. Nathanson suggests that “contentment” better represents the weaker states. Facial expression features: smile, lips widened up and out, smiling eyes (circular wrinkles) (*EA* 218).
- Excitement:** The upper range of the affect interest-excitement. This affect indicates a rapid increase in the density of neural firing but a lower rate than fear and surprise. Facial expression features: eyebrows down, eyes track, look, listen.
- Extrapunitive:** An aggressive reaction to frustration, and often involved in blaming other people and events without clear justification. Contrasts with impunitive and intropunitive. Tomkins takes the term from S. Rosenzweig in H. A. Murray’s *Explorations in Personality*.

- Fear-terror:** A negative affect evolved as an emergency defensive mechanism involving a steep acceleration and increase in the density of neural stimulation. Fear is the lower end of the range of this defensive response, and though a negative affect as feeling, fear serves the positive function of self-preservation in the face of a perceived threat. The increase in stimulation is higher than interest but lower than surprise-startle. Facial expression features: eyes frozen open, pale, cold, sweaty, facial trembling, with hair erect (*EA* 218).
- Feedback mechanism:** A central efferent (outward) process attempting to duplicate sets of afferent (inward) messages at the central assembly, feedback is the basis for comparison between conscious and unconscious Images and imagery.
- Feeling:** An organism's awareness that an affect has been triggered. As Nathanson explains, the transition from affect to feeling is as from biology to psychology, followed by emotion as biography (*SCP* 50). Basch (1988) accepts Tomkins' understanding of affect as "biological responses to stimulation" beginning at birth, while feeling "comes into being only later, around eighteen to twenty-four months, when the involuntary based affective reaction begins to be related to a concept of the self" (*Understanding Psychotherapy* 78).
- Figure:** The most salient information in a scene, or that which is in the "foreground" of consciousness. Compare with ground.
- Generality (of affect system):** One of the three major characteristics (with abstractness and urgency) of affect functionality, the affect mechanism has no absolute links to any other system but has unlimited "transformability or degrees of freedom. By means of flexibility of co-assembly, the abstract features of affect are made more

particular and concrete, and the more urgent features are made more modulated" (*EA* 54). As Nathanson explains, the "affect system is inherently *general*. It has no built-in links to any other system of the mind or body. . . . Like a wonderful kind of building block, affect can be assembled with any drive, with any voluntary action, with any function of the mind, even with other affects. It is entirely and perfectly general. Using the language of this era, we might say that affect is modular, capable of infinite assembly. There is no inherent limitation on the ways affect can be used by the human" (*S&P* 70). Thus, according to Tomkins, "The affect system is therefore the primary motivational system because without its amplification, nothing else matters—and with its amplification, anything else *can* matter. It thus combines *urgency* and *generality*. It lends its power to memory, to perception, to thought, and to action no less than to the drives" ("DM" 202).

**Ground:** All available but non-salience information in a scene, and so everything happening in the "background" of conscious cognition. Compare with figure.

**Habitual scene:** Such scenes are "subservied by habitual skills, programs which represent much compression of information in such a way that it can be expanded effectively but with minimal consciousness, thought, and affect" (*EA* 319). A highly skilled athlete, musician, or tradesperson are examples, but all people daily exercise habitual talents to some degree. These skills might be "turned up" as specific demands require. For example, skilled athletes have strong habitual skills, but they can raise their "intense vigilance—cognitive, perceptual, affective, and motoric" (213), and memory, as competitions or new contingencies and situations demand. Such scenes do not become magnified for the

very fact that the highly practised scripts are effective and successful.

However, the “paradox is that it is just those achievements which are most solid, which work best, and which continue to work that excite and reward us least. The price of skill is the loss of the experience of value—and of the zest for living” (“DM” 212). Too much skill can thus impoverish affect-aesthetic experience. Too much knowledge-skill, as, for example, a husband and wife’s mutual awareness, can lead to a “valley of perceptual skill” such that they may “become hardly aware of each other” (“DM” 212). Compare with transient scene, and see also “as if” scene.

**Humiliation:**

The more public face in the response range of the affect auxiliary shame-humiliation. Paradoxically, as “an incomplete reduction of interest or joy” (*EA* 84), shame-humiliation is described by Tomkins as a “positive” affect because it is directly involved in want of social affiliation and only activated in the presence of positive affect. However, it feels bad. “Shame” is a personal and internally biased experience; “humiliation” is a more public, external experience. Guilt, shyness, and shame are conceived as identical as affects but differentiated through the socialized perception of cause and consequence: “Shyness is about the strangeness of the other; guilt is about moral transgression; shame is about inferiority” (*EA* 85). Facial expression features: reduction in “facial communication” (*AIC* 2: 119); and physiological indicators include directing the eyes down and away, and blushing, “By dropping his eyes, his eyelids, his head and sometimes the whole upper part of his body, the individual calls a halt to looking at another person, particularly the other person’s face, and to the other person’s looking at him, particular at his face” (120).

**Ideo-affective posture:**

“[A]ny *loosely organized* set of feelings and *ideas about feelings*” (EA 111).

**Ideo-affective resonance:**

When loosely organized beliefs and feelings are engaged by an ideology, ideo-affective postures are similar enough to an ideological posture to reinforce and strengthen one another, and thus they resonate.

**Ideological posture:**

“[A]ny *highly organized* and articulate set of *ideas about anything*” (EA 111). All people have ideo-affective postures, but all people do not achieve organized ideological postures.

**Ideology:**

Defined by Tomkins as “any organized set of ideas about which human beings are at once most articulate and most passionate, and for which there is no evidence and about which they are least certain” (EA 111). He uses the word ideology in a specifically restricted sense. When ideas become “firmly established and incorporated into the fabric of a science or [are] tested and found wanting, they cease to constitute an ideology in the sense in which we are using the term. At the growing edge of the frontier of all sciences there necessarily is a maximum of uncertainty, and what is lacking in evidence is filled by passion and faith, and hatred and scorn for the disbelievers.... Ideology appears in many domains, but it is found in its purest form in those controversies which are centuries old, and which have never ceased to find true believers, whether the issue is joined in mathematics or in aesthetics or in politics” (EA 111).

**Image:**

A desired future report in consciousness, Image is the centrally generated blueprint for, and which controls, the primary feedback mechanism that projects a *possibility* and attempts to realize, or duplicate, it. There are four General Images, or “life-goals”: maxi-

- mize positive affect, minimize negative affect, minimize affect inhibition, and maximize power in the first three (i.e. maximize ability to generate any general Image). Note the use of the uppercase "I" in this context and in contrast with the lowercase in "imagery."
- Imagery:** Afferent sensory and memory messages made conscious, imagery is "created by decomposition and synthesis of sensory and stored messages" (*AIC* 4: 14) within the central assembly. In Tomkins' conception, imagery is not "pictographic," though that can be included as a special case, but better understood as "neural patterns," or "brain-maps" as investigators of neuroplasticity might call it. "Cognition" is the power to transform information, and Tomkins designates the imagery, or neural patterns, of cognition as a structure as much as the more typically defined process. Note the difference between the uppercase Image and lowercase imagery.
- Impunitive:** To take a resigned attitude toward frustration and often involving neither the blaming of other people nor events unreasonably. Compare with extrapunitive and intropunitive. Tomkins takes the terms from S. Rosenzweig in H. A. Murray's *Explorations in Personality*.
- Indeterminacy:** One of three functions for script formation, cause and effect and the future are indeterminate because the effects of any experience can never be determined until the future happens such that an experience is either magnified (in Tomkins' sense) or attenuated. See and compare also differential repetition and plurideterminacy.
- Interest-excitement:** A positive affect involving an increase in the density of neural stimulation but a lower rate than fear and surprise. Interest represents the lower end of the range potential and excitement the high end. Facial expression features: eyebrows down, eyes track, look, listen.

**Instrumental:** Something doable, a skill, whether conscious and/or unconscious.

**Intropunitive:** An unreasonable attitude of responsibility for frustration, often involving blaming oneself. Compare with extrapunitive and impunitive. Tomkins takes the terms from S. Rosenzweig in H. A. Murray's *Explorations in Personality*.

**Joy:** The upper end of the range of enjoyment-joy, this affect is activated by a relatively sudden and steep reduction in the density of neural firing and stimulation. Joy can be triggered equally by release from negative or positive affect.

**Limited channel capacity:** Within and as a function of the central assembly, not a selection process but a "restricting condition" (*AIC* 4: 307) on how much information can enter into the central assembly at any given moment because an organism cannot be, and therefore is not, free to become aware of all available information in a given scene due to the risk of "overload."

**Magnification:** As the basis of script formation, it coassembles (connects) one affect-laden scene with another affect-laden scene and advantageously orders biased, amplified information. Thus, Tomkins defines magnification as "the advantage ratio of the simplicity of ordering information to the power of ordered information times its affect density" ("ST" 151); thus:

$$\text{Magnification Advantage} = \frac{\left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Power of Ordered} \\ \text{Information} \times \text{Affect} \\ \text{Density} \end{array} \right)}{\begin{array}{c} \text{Simplicity of} \\ \text{Ordering} \\ \text{Information} \end{array}}$$

Or, as Donald Mosher puts it, "magnification makes object [value] 'more so through time'" ("Glossary" 128). See also amplification.



- Match:** Degree of play versus satisfice between media mechanisms: “Match is limited by ‘play’; mismatch is limited by ‘satisficing’” (*AIC* 4: 52). Match, then, deals with how, how well, and when media mechanisms “fit” together given that all systems of an organism are to varying degrees overlapped and intertwined. See also media mechanisms, modularity, satisfice, and optimize.
- Media mechanisms:** Specialized structures and processes for information management, these are assemblies “capable of receiving and sending assemblies of information. Further, the human being as a whole is an assembly of assemblies of media mechanisms and their messages” (*AIC* 4: 24). Though specialized for particular functions, each and every medium mechanism “can receive, translate, transmit, amplify, store, coassemble, send, and transform information as a feedback system” (*AIC* 4: 32). Examples include each of the five senses, memory, motor control and action, pain, drive, affect, neurons and nerves, the central assembly and feedback mechanism, and so on. See also match and modularity.
- Memory:** Aims “to create a unique object,” in contrast with a “conceptual strategy” which aims “to create, ideally, an infinite set of objects” (*EA* 457), and so indicates the difference between specific and general cognitive information. Storage of (at least partial) information is automatic; retrieval is a learned process based on a feedback mechanism, which allows cognitive comparisons, under central control. To be able to “memorize,” therefore, is the ability “to reproduce past experience, to retrieve information, which has been permanently stored without reliance on sensory input” (457). See also “name.”

- Minding:** By producing a verb form in “minding,” Tomkins is affirming that not only is information processing taking place but that a person *both thinks* about *and cares* about what s/he knows. “The human being then is a minding system composed of cognitive and affective subsystems” (*AIC* 4: 10).
- Modularity:** The human organism is a systems construct that permits the many subsystems sufficient degrees of freedom and fit in combination and recombination such that together they accomplish what is unachievable individually: “The principle of modularity permits the ensemble of specialized monadic modules to do something together they could not do as individual media mechanisms” (*AIC* 4: 54). See also match and media mechanisms.
- Mood:** As a persistent state of emotion lasting hours or days, the “self-reproducing characteristic of the affective response” (*AIC* 1: 296) is a primary supporter of mood. A disorder of mood, explains Nathanson, is a failure “to decrease the morbidity of mood” (*S&P* 52), which can be caused by biological “malfunction,” psychological dysfunction, social dysfunction, and/or maladjustment.
- Motive:** A “feedback report of a response which governs processes other than itself to maintain itself, to produce a duplicate of itself or to reduce itself” (*AIC* 1: 42).
- Name:** Related to memory, name is defined as “a message, conscious or unconscious, that is capable of finding, activating, and retrieving a particular trace at a particular address” (*AIC* 4: 140), and represents the target for information retrieval. A name may or may not have an address, and the address may or may not have a name, and a name may be “any *part* of the original message, any *compression* of that message, any *part* of any *compression* of that mes-

- sage, or any *sign*, *symbol*, or *analogue* of that message” (*AIC* 4: 141). A name, then, is “a message that can retrieve information about a specific object stored at a specific address” (*AIC* 2: 445). Name is similar to a search function in a computer where a keyword, a “name,” is used to locate information in memory. In neuroplastic terms, a “name” involves the reassembly of a brain-map, or a neural pattern, because “Neurons that fire together, wire together” (Doidge 63). Mosher says name is “a message sufficient to retrieve a memory from a specific address in a neural store” (“Glossary” 120). Compare name with symbol.
- Object:** Anything triggering an affect-emotion. Object refers to “any psychological entity—be it person, ideology, activity or geographical location” (*AIC* 1: 494) or any “thing” which may or may not be “physical.”
- Optimize:** To fulfil sufficiently the two components in the differential magnification of positive to negative affect to ensure equilibrium and healthy function. Contrast with *satisfice*.
- Percept:** Simply, an object of perception.
- Perception:** Partitioning of the scene into figure and ground.
- Plurideterminacy:** One of three functions for script formation, all experience is determined by multiple, or “plural,” factors. “There is no *single* effect but rather there are *many* effects which change in time...” (“DM” 219). See also differential repetition and indeterminacy.
- Powers:** One of four major categories (with analogues, signs, symbols) of affect constructs that are cognitive transformations, a “power-affect construct is one in which anything deemed instrumental to the activation of an affect is learned to directly activate the affect” (*AIC* 2: 70).

- Proaction-retroaction ratio:** In the p-r ratio, proaction refers to “the transformation of new information by stored information,” while retroaction refers to “the transformation of stored information in the light of new information” (*EA* 470). This construct is understood in the context of “psychological aging,” which is here understood as “a progressively diminishing contribution of new information to the transformation of the cumulative pool of stored, internalized information” (*EA* 470), as opposed to biological or social aging within the biopsychosocial matrix.
- Rage:** A negative affect involving an extremely high, non-optimal steady-state density of neural firing. Rage is a dangerously “instrumental” affect because it “makes things happen.” See, for example, Dr. Jonathan Shay’s discussion of “berserk rage” in *Achilles in Vietnam*. Facial expression features: frown, clenched jaw, eyes narrowed, red face (*EA* 219).
- Report:** Any message in conscious form.
- Resonance:** “[T]he mutually amplifying engagement of the ideo-affective posture of a person with the ideology of a subculture” (“SMM” 73). Mosher: “resonance – mutual amplification [of affect-script] through time” (“Glossary” 125).
- Rule:** Within a script, “an algorithm” (“SMM” 78) used for solving a particular problem or for achieving desired goals according to available information in a scene.
- Satisfice:** To fulfil only enough of the differential magnification ratio to function minimally. Contrast with optimize.
- Scene:** A happening with a perceivable beginning and end and the basic element of life. The simplest scene must include at least one affect and one object.

**Scripts:**

The “sets of ordering rules for the interpretation, evaluation, prediction, production, or control of scenes” (*EA* 334). Scripts “are not simply actions or thoughts or memories or percepts or feelings or drives but the rules that generate organized scenes made up of these component functions, their processes, and their products” and are, therefore, “ways of living in the world” (*AIC* 4: 9). Thus, a script does not come into being “unless you take a series of scenes and elect to respond in some way” (*EA* 390). Beginning at birth, “Innate scripts initially activate and organize affects, but it is the learned scripts that generate the dynamic complexity of human experience and motivation,” and thus a script “connects and organizes the information in a family of related scenes through a set of rules for interpreting, responding, defending, and creating similar scenes” (“SMM” 61).

Tomkins explains that affect “is momentary; in general, it is of short duration. That is inherent in the mechanism. Were we dependent upon that all of our life, we would be very impoverished human beings. But we are not impoverished. We are not impoverished because we can bring all of our resources to bear on the scenes we experience, co-assemble them, consider their relationships, and design strategies to deal with them in the future. This I have called a set of rules—compressed rules—and labeled them scripts” (*AIC* 4: 289). Tomkins also makes this clarification: “They are obviously not like movie or play scripts. They are compressed constructions which basically are minitheories that each of us has to generate in order to deal with the regularities and the changes in the world as we live it” (4: 289).

- Shame-humiliation:** The affect auxiliary triggered by an impediment to or incomplete reduction of positive affect. Paradoxically, as “an incomplete reduction of interest or joy” (*EA* 84), Tomkins describes shame-humiliation as a “positive” affect because it is directly involved in want of social affiliation and it is only activated in the presence of positive affect. However, it feels bad. “Shame” is a personal and internally biased experience; “humiliation” is a more public, external experience. Guilt, shyness, and shame are conceived as identical as affects but differentiated through the socialized perception of cause and consequence: “Shyness is about the strangeness of the other; guilt is about moral transgression; shame is about inferiority” (*EA* 85). Facial expression features: reduction in “facial communication” (*AIC* 2: 119), and physiological indicators include directing the eyes down and away, and blushing—“By dropping his eyes, his eyelids, his head and sometimes the whole upper part of his body, the individual calls a halt to looking at another person, particularly the other person’s face, and to the other person’s looking at him, particular at his face” (120).
- Sign:** One of four major categories (with analogues, powers, symbols) of affect constructs that are cognitive transformations, the sign-affect construct “is one in which something which had preceded affect now directly activates the affect” (*AIC* 2: 68).
- Startle:** The upper range of the cognitive “re-set” affect surprise-startle, it is activated by a very sudden and steep acceleration in the density of neural firing.
- Surprise-startle:** A neutral affect involving an acceleration in the density of neural firing, this is a cognitive “re-set” mechanism that allows attention to

- shift suddenly. Facial expression features: eye-brows up, eyes blink (*EA* 218).
- Symbol:** This term is used by Tomkins in two ways. One relates to conceptual thinking: the “neurological structure which enables the detection of the similarity between members of a class and an indefinite number of new instances of members of a class”; symbol formation is defined as “any learned technique for maximizing the repetitions within a class, and this information is stored at a specific address” (*AIC* 2: 364) by “compressing the non-unique or similar characteristics of a set of objects that maximizes rather than minimizes class membership” (*AIC* 2: 445). Compare with name and memory, which minimize class membership.
- Symbol is also used to designate one of four major categories (with analogues, powers, signs) of affect constructs that are cognitive transformations. The symbol-affect construct “is one in which a linguistic description directly activates affect” (*AIC* 2: 69). “I don’t like you” may activate distress, for example (*AIC* 2: 69). Tomkins explicitly notes that what Freud meant by symbol is different. Freud’s “symbol” would be an analogue-affect construct in Tomkins’ terminology.
- Terror:** A negative affect evolved as an emergency defensive mechanism involving an extremely steep acceleration and increase in the density of neural stimulation. Terror is the high end of the defensive response fear-terror. Though a negative affect as feeling, fear-terror serves the positive function of self-preservation in the face of a perceived threat, but “terror” can be so intense as to immobilize and so undermine self-preservation. Fear-terror indicates an increase in stimulation higher than interest but

- lower than surprise-startle. Facial expression features: eyes frozen open, pale, cold, sweaty, facial trembling, with hair erect (*EA* 218).
- Theory:** In his early writings, Tomkins uses this term to represent what he later calls scripts. All individuals “write” their own theories for any and all aspects of affect-related life in order to maximize explanatory and instrumental power: “After much cumulative experience, information about affects may become organized into what we term ‘theories,’ in much the same way that theories are constructed to account for uniformities in science or in cognition in general. An affect theory is a simplified and powerful summary of a larger set of affect experiences. Such a theory may be about affect in general, or about a particular affect” (*AIC* 2: 230). A theory in this sense is compressed information that may be expanded to account for, explain, and/or integrate variation. A professional athlete, as a physical example, has massively compressed but expandable sport-related information within an active scene compared with a novice.
- Transient scenes:** Affective, meaningful scenes that have no consequence. At first glance, transient scenes seem trivial and insignificant—cutting yourself while shaving, hearing a funny joke, a momentary startle—but the vast, total number of transients in a life may not be insignificant because they may add up to a substantial amount of time in a life. Such scenes are in contrast with scripted responses which are organized by psychological magnification, the process of connecting one affect-laden scene with another affect-laden scene. Compare with habitual scene.
- Translation:** Changes a desired Image report into a functioning motor signal along efferent lines. The word translation involves changing the “language” of cognition into the language of action.



**Transmute:** Changes unconscious messages into reports (conscious messages), as well as sensory (afferent lines) and mnemonic imagery into reports.

**Urgency (of affect system):** One of the three major characteristics (with abstractness and generality) of affect functionality, the affect amplifies the importance of whatever triggered it: “The primary function of affect is urgency via analogic and profile amplification to make one care by feeling” (EA 54). For Tomkins, then, the “affect system is therefore the primary motivational system because without its amplification, nothing else matters—and with its amplification, anything else *can* matter. It thus combines *urgency* and *generality*. It lends its power to memory, to perception, to thought, and to action no less than to the drives” (“DM” 202). See also analogue amplifier.

**Valley of perceptual skill:**

Even if once conscious, the rules of a script do not or may not remain so, because “once any procedure becomes practiced enough to be habitual, we no longer attend to its details. It passes within a *valley of perceptual skill* where it remains unnoticed—outside of consciousness and attentional awareness—until events conspire to heighten its salience once again” (“SMM” 78).

Tomkins: “One of the tragedies of human existence is the loss of amplifying affect in what I have called ‘the valley of perceptual skill.’ Whenever the increase of skill in the compression of information enables the individual to handle a complex set of messages via compressed summaries, then there is a minimal drain on consciousness and the central assembly, since this is normally reserved for the new and problematic messages. Thus, we learn to drive an automobile with minimal

‘attention’ but so, alas, do we learn to interact with our wives and husbands; so too can we barely ‘hear’ a piece of music we have listened to a hundred times. Skill can attenuate consciousness and affect. Indeed, there can *be* no great skill without the coordinated compression and attenuation of conscious information. Not only does such skill cost us appreciation of the other, of nature, and of civilization, but it also produces the paradox that we necessarily value least that which we do best, which we execute as daily rituals (e.g., daily shaving)” (*AIC 3*: 67–68).

**Variable tuning:**

The many media mechanisms comprising the human organism, from physical perceptions to central assemblies to scripts, can be finely or coarsely tuned. For example, vision can be adjusted for near or far perceptions, or consciousness within the central assembly varies in wakeful versus sleeping states, or scripts may be graded on a conscious-unconscious scale depending on relative degrees of magnification.

**Variant:**

A contrast with analogue, affect variants have a relative positive bias. This represents the detecting of change when the core remains the same, as, for example, seeing one person in different clothes.

**Wakefulness:**

The state of being alert. Contrasts with consciousness.

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