



Affect Imagery Consciousness: Volume II: The Negative Affects

By Silvan S. Tomkins PhD

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Tomkins' magnum opus, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, was published by Springer Publishing Company in four volumes over 30 years. When Tomkins began writing the book in the 1950's, American psychology was dominated by psychoanalytic and behaviorist theories - neither of which placed much importance on the role of basic emotions in everyday human behavior. Tomkins challenged the status quo by developing - over the span of nearly 2,000 pages -- a theory of consciousness and motivation that placed emotion at the core of the human experience. Because so few psychologists were studying emotion at that time, Tomkins drew liberally from other academic disciplines to help formulate his ideas and support his arguments: evolutionary biology, ethology, cybernetics, literature, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and neurophysiology, among others. In the process, Tomkins practically invented the field of "nonverbal behavior" through close observation of emotional expressions in people, including his own infant son. His work was a brilliantly eccentric pastiche of ideas that adhered to no strict disciplinary or ideological boundaries. In time, however, AIC came to prominence through the research of his disciples, notably Paul Ekman and Carroll Izard, who went on to become major researchers in the psychology of emotion. Today, Tomkins's book is influential not just in psychology but in philosophy, sociology, communication studies, even in "affective computing."

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Silvan S. Tomkins (1911-1991) was one of the most influential theorists of 20th-century psychology and is generally considered the founder of modern affective science. He was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied psychology and playwriting as an undergraduate, then philosophy as a graduate student. In 1937, while attending Harvard University on a post-doctoral fellowship, he met Professor Henry A. Murray, the prominent personality theorist and then director of Harvard's Psychological Clinic. Under Murray's influence, Tomkins dedicated his professional career to studying personality, motivation, and emotion. From 1947 until his retirement in the 1975, Tomkins taught at Princeton University, The CUNY Graduate Center, and Rutgers University. According to a paper he published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology in 1981, he claimed that the question that guided his professional career was "what do human beings really want?" In addition to a Career Scientist Award from the National Institute of Mental Health, Tomkins received the Bruno Klopfer Distinguished Contribution Award of the Society for Personality Assessment, The Distinguished Contribution Award from Division 12 of the American Psychological Association (APA), and the Henry A. Murray Award of APA's Division 8. In the August 5, 2002 edition of The New Yorker, Malcolm Gladwell published "The Naked Face" -- an article about Tomkins' influential work on nonverbal behavior and deception. The article was later reproduced in Gladwell's best selling book Blink, which sold over 1 million copies in 2005 and introduced Tomkins' ideas to a new generation of social and behavioral scientists.

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