
PERSONALITY PROCESSES AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Studies in Script Theory: I. Adult Analogs of a Childhood Nuclear Scene

Rae Carlson

Livingston College, Rutgers—The State University

Tomkins' recent formulation of script theory was proposed as a major development in the field of personality psychology. The theory offers a radically new conceptualization of personality structure, dynamics, and development that seems capable of unifying and extending basic knowledge of personality. A case study examined one aspect of Tomkins' theory by using script-theoretic principles to trace the growth of an early childhood experience into a "nuclear script" governing much of the thought, feeling, and action of a normal adult over 30 years later. More general implications of the theory for personality research are sketched briefly.

The birth of a powerful new theory is a genuinely blessed event in the field of personality psychology. For the past quarter-century, the field has been in a state of fragmentation and disarray. Lacking any unifying theoretical framework, investigators turned to comparing theories, to methodological criticism, or to preoccupation with particular personality variables. The person seemed lost to personality research; lost, too, was the sense of excitement and potential discovery that lies at the heart of any field.

The publication of Tomkins' (1979) script theory was therefore a development of major importance. The theory offered a radically new way of conceptualizing individual personality structure, development, and dynamics—a vision of personality that is consistent with an emerging zeitgeist.¹ Importantly, the theory provided a systematic approach linking the individual's experience with basic psychological processes on one hand and

with sociohistorical forces on the other. Building on his earlier theoretical and empirical work on affects (Tomkins, 1962, 1963a), cognition (Tomkins, 1971), and ideology (Tomkins, 1963b, 1965), Tomkins presents a model of the person as a playwright (and producer, casting-director, hero, and critic), constructing his/her personal world from the earliest weeks of life.

Exploration and testing of Tomkins' theory will command much attention in the years ahead. The present article explores only one aspect of the theory, the development of a nuclear script through the process of analog formation. It employs a particular method, the intensive study of a single case in which principles of script theory are used in tracing the import of a childhood experience for the thoughts, feelings, and actions of a normal adult over 30 years later. The aims of the study are twofold: to demonstrate the power of a script-theoretic formulation in organizing extremely diverse

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Requests for reprints should be sent to Rae Carlson, Department of Psychology, Livingston College, Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903.

¹ The theory deals with issues posed in recent contextualist, dialectical, interactional, and transactional alternatives to linear, causal models. Such metatheoretical issues, however, are not treated in the present article.

case material and to suggest this formulation's implications for future research.

A full explication of Tomkins' (1979) script theory is beyond the scope of the present article. Here the approach to script theory is through consideration of a key problem for any personality theory: How are we to account for the "hold" of childhood events on the experience and behavior of the adult?

Most theories agree on two propositions: that childhood experience gives shape and direction to character development and that dynamically significant events can occur only in the present. Explanatory principles range from the drives, structures, and defenses of psychoanalytic theory through the reinforcement histories of social-learning theory, the conditions of worth emphasized in self-theory, and the nature of cognitive development proposed in cognitive-developmental theories.

Although such theories have provided useful frameworks for understanding personality development in general, they have largely failed to deal with one or another of three crucial issues: the *activity* of the individual in selecting and transmuted early experience, the *particularity* of the individual case, and the *diversity* of personality structures. Tomkins' theory promises to deal with all of these issues in a systematic fashion.

This article is organized in four parts. First is a capsule formulation of major aspects of Tomkins' (1979) script theory. The second section presents the nature of the case material and the interpretation of a significant early memory. An examination of evidence that the early memory has been elaborated as a "nuclear script" controlling much of the subject's adult life follows. Finally, the implications of the case study are discussed in terms of theoretically significant problems for future research.

Overview of Tomkins' Script Theory

"Script" formulations of human experience and "dramaturgical" models have become popular in recent years but actually encompass several different approaches.²

Tomkins' theory focuses on the *individual's* construction of particular scripts, in contrast to more familiar notions of universal or socially shared expectations of what leads to what. Such social scripts may, but need not, become important in an individual life. An oversimplified summary of the major assumptions concerning personality structure, dynamics, and development follows.

Personality Structure

Tomkins' structural theory allows for considerable heterogeneity within personality. The individual possesses a number of scenes and scripts that vary as to their content, importance, and interconnectedness. The basic unit of analysis is the *scene*. A scene is a "happening:" an organized whole that includes persons, place, time, actions, and feelings. The minimal definition of a scene is that it includes at least one affect and one object of that affect. However, scenes of importance in personality study typically include more than these essentials.

A *script* consists of the individual's rules for predicting, interpreting, responding to, and controlling experiences governed by a "family" of related scenes. Through the process of psychological magnification (defined below), affect-laden scenes are co-assembled to give structure and meaning to experience. Initially, scenes determine scripts; over time, script formation so consolidates experience that scripts come to determine scenes.

Scenes and scripts vary as to their significance. "Transient" scenes, however affect laden, do not become interconnected. "Habitual" scenes and scripts, although they may account for much of our behavior, have become so skilled and automatic as to evoke little thought or feeling. Most important for personality study are the limited number of "nuclear scenes" that capture the individual's most urgent and unsolved problems and

² Tomkins' formulation of script theory should not be confused with the scripts of transactional analysis (Harris, 1973) or work in artificial intelligence (Schank & Abelson, 1977). It should also be distinguished from sociological theories emphasizing roles (Sarbin, 1977) or self-presentation (Goffman, 1959).

that continue to grow by recruiting ever more thought, feeling, and action. Nuclear scenes are by no means the only important structures, however. The individual possesses many other scenes and scripts that vary in their scope, intensity, and rates of growth.

Personality Dynamics

The basis of motivation is the affect system, a set of innately given "programs" for the intrinsically rewarding affects of joy and excitement, the intrinsically punishing affects of anger, contempt, disgust, distress, fear, and shame, and a "re-setting" affect of surprise. The generality and flexibility of the affect system is such that affects amplify any experience (whether from drives, thoughts, actions, or feelings) by making it urgent.

Whereas the short-term importance of any experience depends on its amplification by one or more affects, its enduring importance depends on *psychological magnification*. Psychological magnification consists in the interconnection of affect-laden scenes. This is a process of growth whereby a family of scenes is initially established and then expanded through further recruitment of memories, thoughts, actions, and feelings. Magnification does not occur through mere repetition of a scene. Rather, it depends on the perception of both similarity to and difference from experiences captured by the initial and intermediate sets of scenes.

Somewhat different principles are involved in the magnification of scenes/scripts dominated by positive versus negative affects. Positive scenes are characteristically magnified by the production of *variants*, the detection of differences around a stable core. (e.g., one develops a talent by using it in many different ways and settings or a friendship grows through the sharing and rehearsal of diverse experiences.) In contrast, negative affect scenes are typically magnified by the formation of *analogs*, the detection of similarities in different experiences. Analog formation involves a vigilant stance in which new situations are scanned for old dangers and disappointments. The two cognitive

strategies of analog and variant formation have somewhat different consequences. Analogs are more unconscious and typically come to control larger and more remote areas of psychic life. Further, one may develop *anti-analogs*, idealized scenes that capture the "perfect" negation of old dangers and disappointments. Anti-analogs are powerful and specific visions of the good life; as such, they imply more positive, active, and organized coping strategies than are implied in the concept of defense mechanisms.

Personality Development

Personality development is best understood as the formation, growth, or decline of (a) scenes that represent important features of an individual's life and (b) scripts that enable the person to anticipate, respond to, control, or create events in a meaningful fashion. An essential premise of script theory is that personality development is not plotted as a one-way progression from earlier to later constructions of experience. Instead, there is two-way traffic through time. Constructions of the past may be radically changed in the light of later experience; anticipation of the future may color the present and revise the past; old experience may intrude to alter the present. The insistence on such time-free constructions may be the most radical departure from theories that emphasize stages (e.g., psychosexual, psychosocial, cognitive, ego, moral) of development. This is also the strongest link between script theory and views of development in contextualist or dialectical terms.

The Nuclear Scene and Its Interpretation *Case Material*

Jane W. was a volunteer participant in a program of personality research that I conducted several years ago (Carlson, 1971). Because of her strong interest in the project, we continued with an informal study over a period of 3 years. From a wealth of data, the present article reports material from autobiography, dreams, and interviews that bear on the growth of one particular nuclear scene. Since I was unfamiliar with Tomkins'

theory at the time of the study, the basic data are free of any expectancy effects.

At the beginning of the study, Jane W. was 37 years old, a faculty member of the humanities division of a community college, the mother of two school-age children, and in the process of divorcing her husband (an aerospace engineer) after a 12-year marriage. She was the first of two daughters born to lower-middle-class parents in a small town in Wyoming. She was the only member of her family or community to have achieved an advanced academic degree.

Although several neurotic trends could be discerned in the case material, Jane W. was essentially a normal and well-functioning person. At the time of the study (the mid-1960s), she was effectively involved in both academic reforms and the civil rights movement in California. Several years earlier, she had undertaken a year of modified psychoanalytic therapy, which she considered unsuccessful. Her participation in the present study had no therapeutic aims or implications, although Jane W. appeared to derive some benefit from her self-study.

The Nuclear Scene: An Early Memory

Even though early memories are widely held to provide significant keys to later experience (Adler, 1927; Foster, 1980), there is no guarantee that any single memory captures a nuclear scene. The "nuclearity" of a scene must be established by a patient sifting evidence for its constellating power and validated by independent evidence that its themes persist as potent, unresolved problems in later life.

From a set of three potentially nuclear scenes given in the case material, this article explores the following early memory:

Four-year-old Janie is playing when she hears her mother cry for help. Running into the hall, she finds her mother lying on the floor in a heap of boxes, having fallen from a makeshift ladder to the attic. Mother asks Janie to call her father. Father arrives, helps mother to her feet, and supports her as they walk to the living room with Janie hovering nearby. Janie hears her father say "Sit here, honey" and promptly perches on the des-

ignated couch. Father angrily yells, "Get out of here!" and pushes Janie away so that her mother may lie down. Janie retreats in confusion, feeling deeply ashamed.

Elaborating this memory in an interview, Jane W. added that she was now "amused" by the childish presumption that only she could be "honey" and the later knowledge that her mother was pregnant at the time, so that the fall from the attic resulted in a miscarriage.

A Script-Theoretic Analysis of the Nuclear Scene

Clearly, this scene is amenable to interpretation in a variety of theoretical contexts. It may be understood as a classic "child's eye" view of the Oedipal drama. Four-year-old Janie, at the height of her wishful attachment to her father, is confronted with a cruel defeat in unconscious rivalry with her mother. From an Adlerian standpoint, the scene represents a punishing confrontation of Janie's inferiority as well as a deficiency in social interest shown by her apparent lack of concern for her mother. In Piagetian terms, the scene illustrates the cognitive egocentrism of the preoperational child, along with the transformation of the memory in the light of later knowledge.

Tomkins' script theory would not deny the possible value of such interpretations but would demand a sharper and more systematic analysis of critical features of the "couch scene" and their potential significance for script formation. From the standpoint of script theory, at least five features of this scene may be identified as potential candidates for psychological magnification. (Whether, or how, the scene might become magnified is initially indeterminate. This is a nuclear scene only because it has become magnified through later experience.) Salient features of the original scene, to be traced in analog formation, include the following:

Good things turn bad. This is the most general formulation of Janie's experience; it is reflected in all of the following more specific analogs.

Seduction and betrayal. A more specific

formulation of the general theme is that Janie felt seduced ("Sit here, honey") and then betrayed ("Get out of here!") by her father. Should this aspect of the scene become magnified, one would expect Jane W.'s later experience to reflect acute sensitivity to the untrustworthiness of otherwise powerful and benign men. By the principle of "recasting," Jane might also attempt mastery of this early traumatic situation by becoming seductive and betraying to others.

Disorientation in space. In spatial terms, this scene is highly disorienting. Janie is invited to be in one place and then angrily dismissed. Where is she supposed to be? How is she to know? Should this aspect of the scene become magnified, one would expect to find spatial concerns—somewhat independent of interpersonal context—prominent in later experience.

Affects: Shame and anger. Janie's early memory clearly signals her sense of humiliation. If shame becomes magnified, her later experience should reveal vulnerability to real or imagined rebuff or exclusion. Moreover, Jane's conceptions of interactions may become dominated by a theme of humiliation. She may develop a concept of herself as shameworthy and/or be ready to feel contempt for unworthy others.

More conjectural is the interpretation that Janie may have experienced anger toward her betraying father. Certainly anger was not reported in this early memory, so it may be either inconsequential or deeply repressed. However, later materials should be scanned for evidence of anger toward disappointing protectors.

Action: Withdrawal and inhibition. Secondary features of the scene include distancing (Janie retreats in confusion) and inhibition of action. Children rarely have action alternatives in critical scenes with parents, so that a relatively passive early memory may carry no particular diagnostic weight. However, Janie's memory suggests that she was active and then punished for her presumption. Should this feature become magnified, Jane may respond with immobilization or distancing when the nuclear script is activated.

Summary

Major assumptions underlying a script-theoretic interpretation may now be restated. First, in contrast to other theories, no single principle (such as Oedipal conflict, inferiority feelings, or cognitive immaturity) is presumed to account for the power of the couch scene or its later derivatives. Second, features of the original scene are likely to become magnified only if they are co-assembled with later experiences that are both similar to and different from the original experience. It is the growth rather than the existence or mere repetition of traumatic experiences that accounts for their power in later life. Third, a predominantly negative-affect nuclear scene is likely to become magnified through the generation of remote analogs. The more powerful the scene, the more remote should be the analogs, as greater portions of the person's life space become organized by a nuclear script. Fourth, the development of a nuclear script will involve objects, responses, and coping strategies that are not to be found in the basic nuclear scene.

Analog Formation and the Nuclear Script

With the content of Jane W.'s early memory clearly in mind, the next task is to consider evidence for remote analogs of four major features of the couch scene. Several rules of evidence, consistent with premises of script theory, were adopted to mitigate the inevitable circularity of case analyses:

1. Evidence for analog formation should appear in more than one kind of data (interview, memories, dreams, etc.) to insure that method variance does not produce the findings. Ideally, there should be evidence of analogs operating at the various levels of public behavior, private reflection, and in the relatively unconscious realm of dreams.

2. When possible, evidence (from whatever source) should tap different developmental periods to demonstrate the growth of an early nuclear scene.

3. Various combinations of magnified features of the original scene should appear

in the case material to demonstrate the co-assembly of experiences in a family of related scenes. Thus, for example, Jane W.'s spatial disorientation might appear conjoined with a theme of betrayal, with inhibition of action, with the experience of shame, or as an independent factor.

4. To anticipate a possible misunderstanding, absolute consistency throughout the case material is not criterial for establishing the existence of a nuclear script. Magnified features of the original scene should be expected when the nuclear script is dominant but may be absent when it is not.

Seduction and Betrayal

The theme of seduction and betrayal appears in Jane W.'s adult life mainly via the principle of recasting. Recall that the basic unit of analysis is the scene rather than the role. A basic scene may be replayed by a reversal of roles, so that one does *to* the other what one has experienced or suffered *from* the other.³ The following evidence suggests the magnification of this feature:

1. Interview material suggests that Jane W. was perceived as "seductive" by students and colleagues alike and that Jane was oblivious to this. She was surprised to discover that a "cult" of Jane W. disciples had developed among her students. She was baffled that her comradeship with faculty colleagues led to situations in which men assumed that she was interested in a sexual relationship. (This, of course, might reflect masculine assumptions, rather than Jane W.'s "problem.")

2. Several dreams and at least two real-life relationships (interview data) suggest that Jane W. was greatly attracted to "fatherly" married men and felt no sense of posing a threat to their wives. No involvement (real or fantasied) with bachelors or divorced men appears in the case material. Two points are worth comment: (a) The theme of competitive rivalry with the mother (to be expected in an Oedipal interpretation of the couch scene) is totally absent in the case material, and (b) Jane's insensitivity to

the "triangle" implications seems to have been baffling to the men involved.

3. Betrayal appears only inferentially in two aspects of the interview and autobiographical material. As an adult, Jane W. withdrew from two relationships when they became so serious as to involve marriage, and in her adolescent years she was both worried and heartless about "dropping" fellow students (i.e., was the betrayer). In her current relationship, she doubted that she was "really loved" except as a helpful colleague (i.e., anticipated betrayal).

Disorientation in Space

Although spatial incompetence is a stereotypic feature of the feminine role for women of Jane W.'s generation, the case materials suggest that space was extremely problematic for this woman. Sharp differentiation of "safe" (private) and "dangerous" (public/shared) space was prominent, as was her doubtful sense of freedom in movement through space, illustrated by the following episodes:

1. Although Jane W. was a competent driver at the time of the study, she had experienced unusual difficulty in learning to drive. In her first driving lesson from her father, Jane made an error, after which she refused to attempt driving during her adolescent years. Her husband's attempts to teach her to drive were experienced as punishing and fruitless. Jane finally took commercial driving lessons and obtained her first license after age 30. At the time of the study, Jane would not attempt to drive an unfamiliar route or to venture onto the freeways, thus incurring much inconvenience (and unwelcome dependence on others) in meeting the demands of everyday life in southern California. This aspect of her life seems to conjoin the themes of the unreliable father and of spatial disorientation.

2. Space itself is prominent in Jane's dreams. Each of the 30 dream reports is in-

³ The principle of recasting is more general than the psychoanalytic construct of reversal (Loevinger, 1966), although this distinction is not demonstrated in the present case study.

roduced in terms of its location, and shifts in the dream locale are given in detail. Moreover, a surprising number of dreams from various periods of the study are about space. For example, a series of three dreams from a single night involve travel from San Francisco to Los Angeles. In the first dream, she is driving the route in a small car, becomes confused, and changes direction midway; the second dream is of a walking tour in which her map proves unreliable, and she fears being stranded in the mountains at nightfall; in the third dream, she has abandoned her walking tour but becomes disoriented on a passenger train.

3. The distinction between safe and dangerous space appears in more factual interview data. Asked to describe a good experience, Jane recounted an evening in which she and her husband entertained at home. Pressed for a contrast case, she described an unhappy evening at the home of another couple where others were dancing, and she felt "frozen" and alien. (Here, space concerns are conjoined with themes of exclusion and inhibition.) That safe space involves autonomy is further suggested by two contrasting experiences of vacation travel. On a trip to Mexico, Jane felt panic and abandonment when her husband left her on a train while he dealt with a mix-up about tickets. This episode was in sharp contrast to Jane's sense of exhilaration and competence on an independent trip to another (and equally unfamiliar) Latin American city.

Affects: Shame and Anger

Shame was the dominant affect evoked in the original scene, and it is the affect that pervades later case materials. This is particularly striking because Jane W.'s experience of humiliation seems inconsistent with evidence that she was effective and valued in both campus and community matters.⁴ The discrepancy between fact and feeling suggests the operation of a nuclear script.

Jane's chronic worry (expressed in autobiography and interview data) is that she will be unmasked as the "phony" she feels herself to be. Themes of exclusion and humiliation appear in at least 12 of the 30

dream reports. In dreams, she is repeatedly shamed by her superiors, dismissed by her students, snubbed by social acquaintances, and criticized by her relatives. Moreover, the manifest dream content makes clear that Jane "deserves" such treatment because of her various faults and ineptitudes.

The affect of anger, however, seems to have undergone neither magnification nor repression. Interview data suggest that Jane W. was comfortable with feelings of anger and able to express them appropriately and effectively. She was outspoken in departmental affairs and succeeded in bringing about a number of reforms through a combination of confrontiveness and tact. During the period of the study, Jane's anger was engaged in two political causes: the civil rights movement and the free speech movement on college campuses. She played an active role in both campus and community settings and was dubbed "the smiling tiger" by her students. The case material is not of sufficient depth to establish that repressed anger is *not* a problem, but there is no evidence for the magnification of anger in this nuclear script.

Action: Withdrawal and Inhibition

The case material offers a startling contrast between Jane W.'s activity in contexts that are not governed by the nuclear script and her painful sense of inhibition in personally threatening scenes. During the 3 years of the study, Jane established an impressive record of initiating and carrying through many difficult and complex projects. Far more problematic was her ability to act on her own behalf as shown in the following examples:

1. Autobiographical data (as elaborated in interviews) suggest that Jane was "frozen" at critical moments. For example, when offered a tuition scholarship for her freshman year at a state university, Jane was

⁴ A basis for Jane W.'s sense of exclusion developed in the last year of the study as a consequence of her divorce. Some erosion of her social network occurred as friends felt forced to choose between Jane and her husband for social interaction. The case materials are not sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the theoretically predictable increment in her vulnerability to shame.

unable to write the letter of application that would have ensured the outcome and had to be rescued from her immobilization by her mother and high school principal.

2. Jane's inhibition is much clearer in the realm of physical activity, in which it is also more clearly conjoined with other features of the nuclear scene. Over the years, Jane was unable to master or to enjoy any structured athletic activities. Her only unsatisfactory college grades were in physical education courses. Her many attempts to learn to swim (through formal classes, informal instruction from her husband, and a great deal of fruitless practice in her own pool) were experienced as humiliating failures. Jane was slow to learn social dancing and considered herself inept; yet she reported a few isolated instances of exhilaration when dancing with particularly competent and supportive partners. Far from dismissing the realm of physical activity as trivial, Jane W. exaggerated its importance and was deeply envious of others' proficiency and enjoyment. By way of contrast, Jane greatly enjoyed hiking and backpacking, activities that involved no judgments on her competence, no intrinsic dependence on others, and that offered a welcome sense of moving freely through space. Here are conjoined the themes of inhibition, spatial incompetence, and the mastery of these with a trustworthy other. Anti-analogs are further suggested in Jane's persisting visions of perfect experiences of dance and swimming. (One prediction is that Jane W. probably did not take up jogging during the 1970s. Physical activity for its own sake, or for health's sake, would not answer her need to master action and space in the context of a reliable relationship.)

3. Inhibition of action was not prominent in Jane's dreams, except when secondary to themes of disorientation or exclusion. An interesting exception was a series of three dreams that occurred after a day of overwhelmingly busy and effective action in the political sphere. In three successive dreams, Jane attempts to swim across the shallow end of her pool. In the first dream, her efforts are thwarted by a mountain of detergent suds; in the second dream, the pool is covered with algae; in the third dream, she finds the

pool drained. Jane commented that the dreams suggest that she is destined to be a "loser" in matters that she cares about.

Discussion of Case Material

Principles of script theory were capable of organizing case material that had eluded my earlier attempts to understand Jane W. in the more familiar terms of Freudian or Jungian theory. Different facets of Jane's experience and behavior became meaningful when seen as remote analogs of a nuclear scene in an ever-growing nuclear script. However, the case material as reported here may be misleading in two important respects.

First, the couch scene was not the only nuclear scene to be elaborated as a nuclear script. At least two other nuclear scripts (which might be labeled *sibling envy* and *salvation fantasy*) could be discerned in the case material, along with several intermediate level scenes/scripts describing Jane W.'s more positive experiences. To test and demonstrate a particular theoretical point, I have necessarily neglected the complexity of Jane W.'s personality.

Second, there is no implication that the events of the couch scene caused later developments in Jane's life. She might well have absorbed, dismissed, and forgotten the events captured in the couch scene. Instead, this has become a nuclear scene precisely *because* it organized and gave meaning to her previously unassembled experiences and provided a framework for interpreting much of her succeeding life experience.

The case materials, as reported here, are incomplete as a demonstration of the processes postulated in Tomkins' theory. We may infer the results of analog formation, but we have not examined the ways in which "differences" have become "similarities" to enlarge the family of scenes governed by a nuclear script. To be fully persuasive, the analysis would have to look at the texture of scenes more closely than space limitations permit.

However, even a partially reported case study may convey the power of a script-the-

oretic formulation and suggest ways in which the theory may illuminate problems in the personality domain. These issues are sketched in the final section of this article.

Implications for Personality Research

Historically, case studies have provided major avenues of theoretical advance in psychology since the work of Ebbinghaus, James, and Freud. However, the power of the case method depends on the demonstration of more general principles that transcend the particular case. Implications of script theory, shown in the case of Jane W., should now be stated in more general terms.

1. A major innovation of Tomkins' theory is the postulation of new units of analysis. Scenes and scripts would replace the more familiar constructs of trait, type, and need/press, self-concept, and so forth.⁵ Analysis of personality in terms of scenes and scripts offers a promising solution to the problems recognized in current interactional, transactional, and dialectical approaches.

2. The concept of psychological magnification provides a solution to the problem of motivation that has hitherto been treated in terms of drives, needs, cognitions, goals, or reinforcements. This formulation recognizes the interrelationships of cognitive and affective processes and thus offers important theoretical guidance in our postcognitive revolution.

3. Tomkins' script theory may provide a unifying framework needed to transcend the dichotomy of idiographic versus nomothetic modes of inquiry. The theory attempts to integrate our knowledge of separate subsystems within the individual (memory, cognition, drive, affect, motoric, etc.) and to suggest how these systems function in individual lives. This provides an important link between the work of the general psychologist and that of the personologist.

4. A major feature of script theory (not demonstrated in the present article but clearly presented in Tomkins, 1979) is that it may provide the basis for a unified social science. Cohorts, societies, cultures, and subcultures may be understood in terms of their dominant and idealized scenes and scripts.

The historian and the cultural analyst, along with the psychologist, are likely to find new insights in the attempt to trace the features of collective experience that become differentially magnified.

5. The scope of Tomkins' script theory encourages several different lines of inquiry. Atwood and Tomkins' (1976) psychobiographical studies of personality theorists demonstrate the application of the theory to the psychology of knowledge. Studies of the socialization of affect (Singer, 1974; Demos, Note 1) suggest its relevance for developmental psychology. The development of elegant methods for representing individuals' conceptions of self and other (Rosenberg, 1977) offers an interesting approach to script-theoretic problems. When the theory is given a more complete and systematic exposition, a host of important and researchable problems will become apparent.

In conclusion, Tomkins' script theory does not imply the abandonment of knowledge and insights generated by more familiar theories. Rather, it suggests a major reorientation of such knowledge by offering an explicit framework for understanding the meaning and the growth of psychological structures. Further development of Tomkins' theory promises the long awaited revitalization of personology.

⁵ To illustrate this point, Jane W. might accurately be characterized as low in traits of self-confidence or motor skill, as an introverted-intuitive type, as displaying needs for achievement and abasement, and as precarious in her self-esteem. But such formulations account for neither the particularity of the nuclear scene and script nor the apparent inconsistency of Jane's behavior in other scenes and scripts.

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