

# **Silvan Tomkins' Conceptualization of Humiliation**

© Brian Lynch

Abstract prepared for the 2006 Workshop on Humiliation and Violent Conflict, Columbia University, New York, December 14-15, 2006.

This paper suggests the utility and importance of understanding the biological underpinnings of humiliation. As such it is hoped the paper will serve as a review or short primer on what the author feels is a most important view of the biology of emotion. This view is a view put forth by Silvan S. Tomkins and much of which apparently is being corroborated by current neuropsychological research. It will highlight the emotions of “interest” and “shame” and emphasize their interaction and how one can see “humiliation” as one end of a “shame-humiliation” continuum. Such a “biological” grounding of our mutual interests can only help us more deeply appreciate our commonalities across cultures.

Brian Lynch  
3044 North Laramie  
Chicago, Ill 60641  
773-202-7991