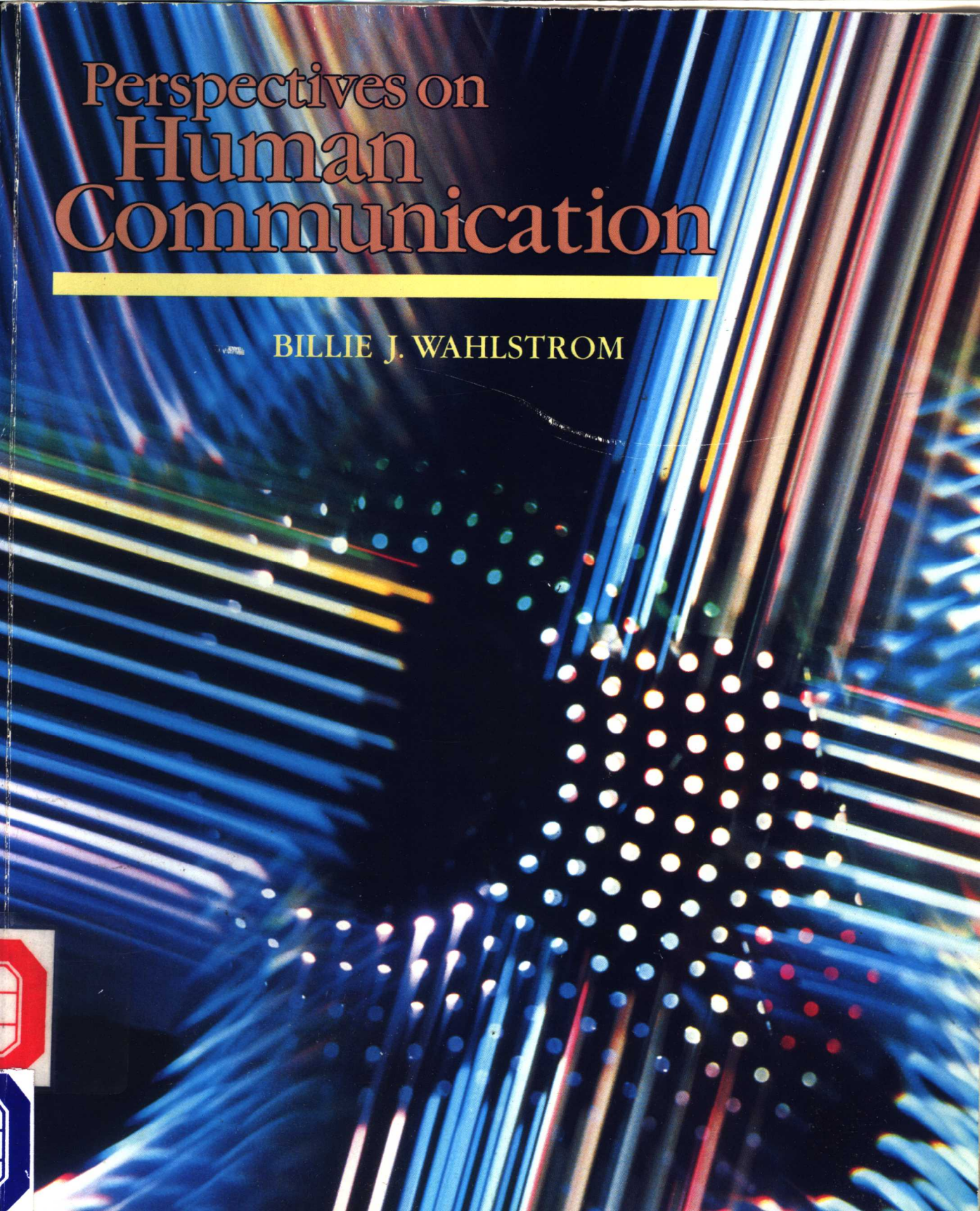
Perspectives on Human Communication

BILLIE J. WAHLSTROM



Perspectives on Human Communication

BILLIE J. WAHLSTROM
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

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Preface

PURPOSE

Perspectives on Human Communication is designed to give you both theoretical and practical insights into communication. How well you do at work, at school, and in your relationships with others depends to a large extent upon what you know about communication as well as on your communication skills. This book is designed to provide you with the background necessary to understand the role communication plays in our lives. And, it will give you some concrete suggestions about what you might do to become a more competent communicator. It will also let you see how rich and diverse the field of communication is and what areas of the discipline you might wish to explore in future communication classes.

ORGANIZATION

Perspectives on Human Communication has three parts. **Part One, The Nature of Human Communication,** deals with communication basics. Chapter 1 begins with basic definitions and models of communication. In chapter 2 you will learn more about the functions communication plays in our individual lives and in our society. The psychology and motivation of human communication are covered in chapter 3. Chapter 4 shows you the wide range of verbal and nonverbal codes human beings use to communicate and explores how communication and culture work together to create meaning and social reality.

Part Two, The Contexts of Communication, looks at the changes which occur in communication as it is used in different contexts. Chapter 5 examines the nature of interpersonal communication and communication's role in the development of interpersonal relationships. Chapter 6 is designed to give you specific suggestions for making yourself a more competent interpersonal communicator. Communication in groups is the focus of chapters 7 and 8. In these chapters you will learn more about the nature of group communication and how individuals function in groups. Chapter 9 focuses on communication within organizations, and it discusses how global issues as well as changes in the work force are likely to affect organizational communication.

Mass communication is the subject of chapters 10 and 11. Chapter 10 examines the nature of mass communication as well as some of its business, technological, and cultural dimensions, and chapter 11 gives special attention to the effects of mass communication on individuals. The last chapter in this

section, chapter 12, deals with ways in which researchers can study mass communication. It is designed to give you some insight into the range of research methodology employed in the study of communication.

Part Three, Human Communication and the Future, looks at how our lives are being affected by the changes occurring in communication technology. These chapters will let you familiarize yourself with the technology as well as how this technology affects us at work and at home. They will also increase your awareness of the problems and political implications that change brings. Chapter 13 focuses on the digital revolution and what that has done to communication technologies. Chapter 14 explores how changes in communication technology affect our daily lives at work and at home. Chapter 15 explores some of the larger issues involving change in communication technology. It focuses on the global as well as legal, ethical, and philosophical issues that we will increasingly be facing.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Several features of this book will make it easier and more helpful for you to use. Key vocabulary is highlighted when it first appears in the text. A comprehensive glossary also provides clear, accessible definitions. Activities are listed at the end of each chapter except the last one, and they are designed either to let you put into practice what you have learned or to allow you to go beyond the text and to do some experimenting on your own. At the end of chapter 15, you will find some suggestions for future research instead of a list of activities. You may want to look these over as you think about what term project you will be working on in your communication class. Also included at the end of each chapter is a selected bibliography to help you do research and to point you toward some additional ideas on the subject we have been exploring. In some cases, the readings are classic texts in the field of communication. In other cases, the selected readings are designed to give you an idea of what current thoughts on a topic might be.

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Billie J. Wahlstrom
University of Minnesota

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