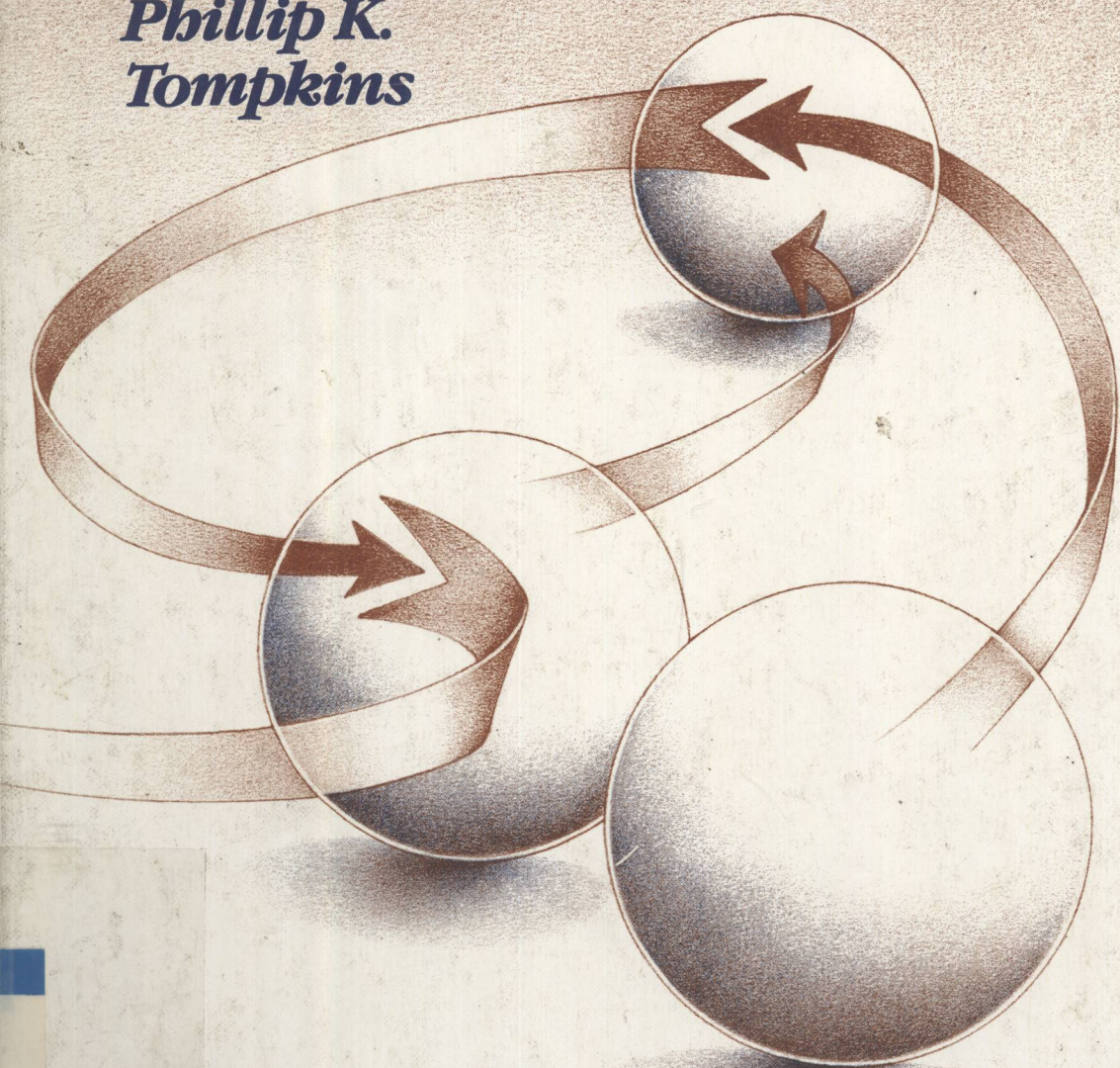


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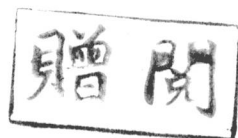
*An Introduction to
Rhetoric and
Communication*

***Phillip K.
Tompkins***



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PHILLIP K. TOMPKINS, *Purdue University*

***Communication
as Action***

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In memory of
J. Richard McNally
and H. Bruce Kendall,
gentlemen, scholars,
colleagues, friends

P R E F A C E

Although I have read many prefaces, I had to go back to the dictionary to find out what the word means. “A saying beforehand,” “a prayer of thanksgiving,” “a preliminary statement by the author or editor of a book, setting forth its purposes and scope, expressing acknowledgment of assistance from others, etc.” are several of the definitions I found in the dictionary.

For the reader, a *pre-face* could be the small part of the book to be read before facing the rest of it. Let me tell you, the reader, what you face in the rest of this book. Perhaps the best way of beginning is to relate how the book came into existence.

The book grew out of lectures I gave in a course, “RCO 100,” at the State University of New York at Albany. The course was offered for freshmen (although many sophomores, juniors, and seniors elected it) and had two objectives: first, to give students an introduction to rhetoric and communication in all its scenes or settings; second, to prepare students for applied courses in public speaking and interpersonal and group communication, as well as for advanced courses in rhetorical and communication theory. The course enrolled between 200 and 500 students per semester for nearly ten years.

The organization of the book is as follows. There are three main parts, each of which contains three chapters. Part One is called Foundations of Rhetoric and Communication. Chapter 1 sets the stage by examining the word *human*, the fundamental element in all the succeeding observations. This particular definition was inspired by Kenneth Burke. The reader is challenged to accept it, reject it, or modify it; in any case he or she should hold some definition before trying to understand human communication. Chapters 2 and 3, which give an account of the history of rhetoric and define basic terms, offer additional foundation for our study. Part Two moves on to the Micro-Communication Settings of dyad, triad, and small groups. In chapter 4 we

look at approaches to dyadic, or two-person, communication; these ideas are enlarged in chapters 5 and 6 with discussions of three-person and group communication. Part Three makes the transition to Macro-Communication Settings. Chapter 7 explores the interactions within and between organizations, those yet broader and more structured groups. This chapter includes two case studies from my own research: Kent State University and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. From such management and hierarchy we turn, in chapter 8, to the communication of social movements, groups formed to seek reform or revolution. Finally, chapter 9 examines that realm engendered in our modern world—mass communication.

Enough of summary. How should the book be read? It can be read as the text in an introductory course on rhetoric and communication. Because of the practical instruction in these chapters and the exercises at the end of all the chapters, the book can also be used for the same kind of course in which students meet periodically in smaller groups for graded practice in public speaking or interpersonal and group communication. Moreover, it can be used as a text for courses in any communication area, including organizational communication, particularly when the instructor wishes the student to see the ramifications of human communication on both smaller and larger structures.

This book has been structured so that each chapter is tied to each other in numerous ways by a number of basic concepts. Although the subjects of some of the chapters have previously been developed in isolation, I have sought to relate them to each other in conceptual ways. In that connection I acknowledge with humility that this book owes much to Kenneth Burke and Talcott Parsons, two of the truly great thinkers of the twentieth century (as well as to thinkers of earlier ages such as Aristotle and Cicero).

I wish to thank Jesse G. Delia, Roger L. Garrett, Gerry Philipsen, Barbara G. Rosenthal, and Kenneth Williams for reviewing the manuscript of this book and providing numerous valuable suggestions.

At last, my secular "prayer of thanksgiving" to Elaine V. B. Tompkins, who suggested much, typed all, and without whom there would be no examples about Emily.

Phillip K. Tompkins

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P A R T

One

***Foundations of
Rhetoric and
Communication***

