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Edward Comor, ed. *Media, Structures, and Power: The Robert E. Babe Collection.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. xxii + 436 pp. $85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8020-9860-3; $37.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8020-9576-3.

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As a discipline, communication is still relatively young in Canada. University communication programs are less than twenty years old, formed theoretically by drafting scholars into the fold: Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, and Dallas Smythe, among many. This first generation naturally didn't know their work would find a central place one day in Canadian communication classes. Now, as programs near adulthood, the discipline is finally developing a second generation that has been a part of these university programs and that has mapped out the field with important research. A vital member of this next generation is Robert Babe.

A new reader by University of Toronto Press, *Media, Structures, and Power: The Robert E. Babe Collection*, brings together Babe's most important writing on communication policy, economics and communication, political economy, communication theory, new media, and the environment. Babe's varied career interests organize the book, edited by Edward A. Comor, into four main sections: "Media, Information, and Critique of Economics"; "Communications History and Policy"; "Canadian Communication Thought"; and "Cultural Ecology and the Political Economy of Knowledge."

Those familiar with Babe's work will find nothing new from him here; the reader instead serves as a revisiting and a celebration of his extensive and wide-ranging communication research over nearly forty years. The articles present a history of the field but also have direct relevance for current communication issues. What's new is a number of chapters from Babe's colleagues–Comor, Sandra Braman, Robin Mansell, Paul Heyer, Hanno Hardt–that set up the purpose of the book and each section of Babe's writing. All accomplished scholars in their own rights, they contribute effective contextualization of each of the focus areas. Together they provide maps to help to think about Babe's work in the greater context of the discipline (Heyer's contribution in particular takes Babe's communication history work in new directions). Rounding out the book are two short essays by Babe's close friends and colleagues, Warren J. Samuels and James Winter. Additionally, reflections by Babe and his colleagues add a personal dimension to the book.

Those unfamiliar with Babe's work will discover a scholar who has, over the course of a long career, worked to shed light on power imbalances in society rooted in economic and policy structures that condition and limit human communication. Babe's career began with a focus on critiquing mainstream economic theory, bringing communication–ignored or assumed at the time–into the economic equation. Babe then examined communication policy (having worked himself for the Canadian government), showing how policy towards communication industries changed over time to fail public interests. Babe's writings emphasized the dangers of the commodification of information in the era of the global marketplace, which undermined Canadian products and also encouraged the underfunding of organizations that promote non-commodity cultural relations in the public sphere.

Furthermore, the book includes selections from Babe's attempts to define the communication discipline in Canada. There is a chapter on Marshall McLuhan from Babe's key text *Canadian Communication Thought: Ten Foundational Writers* (2000), a book that presented ten people who he argued represented the country's foundational theorists. Finally, the reader includes some of Babe's writing on communication and the environment, where he applies the ideas of the first generation, particularly Harold Innis, to current issues.

The reader shows that, throughout all of his work, Babe explains concepts clearly, which is not easy, con-

sidering the complexity of the economic and communication theory he employs. Students today know well the "hazing ritual" in first-year communication classes of being required to read Innis's difficult writing on the staples or timing-binding theory. Babe presents Innis's ideas clearly without reducing complexity–in this way Babe resembles James Carey, another important communication scholar who could describe the complex effects of the telegraph in an approachable style.

Media, Structures, and Power: the Robert E. Babe Collection is essential reading for communication, economics, culture, and history scholars looking to understand the essential place of the communication in Canadian history, policy, and society. The book also cements Babe's place in the canon of Canadian communication thought, a canon that he's worked so hard to define in his long career.

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