

Book Review

Title: *The Difference that Disability Makes*

Author: Rod Michalko

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Reviewer: Steven E. Brown

The author, who is legally blind, describes how he perceived lack of sight, both as a child developing vision problems, and as an adult, living with blindness and teaching sociology. Michalko is well-known for his explorations of this territory, and of his life with his guide dog, Smokie, to whom this book is dedicated *in memoriam*.

I have not read Michalko's other books, but I did recently read *Disability, Self, and Society* (Toronto, University of Toronto, 2003), by his partner, Tanya Titchkosky. This is relevant because some of the same scenarios, for instance, the one with which this book opens, are described by each other, but with their varying perspectives. So while I was familiar with the story leading off the book, I was not familiar with his particular perspective. That distinction between the views of two people gets at a lot of Michalko's interests.

The author describes his book as an interrogation of the process of "identity formation and the social and political significance of our stepping into our identities" (page 5).

The Difference that Disability Makes clearly inspects how disability impacts Michalko's life and studies. Some of it will seem familiar to those who have been studying disability for a few years and some of it will raise new questions. Since identity seems to be American society's most pertinent topic of current debate, it is well worth exploring this book to see how a thoughtful surveyor of this terrain moves along his journey.