

he contends, must take control of their future. They could do this with a compact. By gaining control of the hydropower revenues produced by the six mainstream dams, the basin states could undertake habitat restoration projects and local water development projects.

While stressing the "federalizing" of the Missouri River, Thorson provides some evidence to show how the basin's states have abdicated their role in managing the river by pursuing their individual interests. Yet he finds more fault with the federal government, portraying federal agencies as acting with a forethought and unity that is rarely the case. He largely attributes the failures of the Pick-Sloan Plan to the federal government without examining what role the states have played.

Another important theme is Thorson's support of both greater economic development and the preservation of the river's ecosystems. He repeatedly complains that the river has been treated as a commodity and not as an ecosystem, but he does not clearly explain how the basin's managers might satisfy environmentalists and entrepreneurs simultaneously.

Anyone who wants to understand the complex issues facing Iowa and the rest of the basin states in managing the Missouri River should read Thorson's book. Anyone evaluating the upper Mississippi River's management and the management of other rivers throughout the country also should read this book.

*Journey into Personhood*, by Ruth Cameron Webb. Foreword by Albert E. Stone. Singular Lives: The Iowa Series in North American Autobiography. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994. xvi, 182 pp. Illustrations. \$12.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY HANLEY E. KANAR, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

The "life as journey" metaphor, commonly used in autobiographies, resonates because it reflects the way we would like our travels, and our lives, to proceed. We hope to progress from clearly identifiable moments of departure to clearly identifiable moments of satisfied emergence, return, and reflection. Some life "travelogues," however, like Ruth Cameron Webb's memoir, defy this pattern. In her life, there has been no dénouement, no moment of satisfied emergence. In *Journey into Personhood*, Webb chronicles her ceaseless struggles and frustrations, as well as many remarkable and sustaining successes, in a body for which every movement and utterance always was, and always will be, constricted by cerebral palsy. From painful vignettes chronicling her earliest consciousness of being perceived as a "spastic" in the 1920s to her current perspective as an isolated older person with a disability, Webb's is a highly personal and experiential narrative meant "to por-

tray the psychological impact of an all-encompassing physical disability on mental and emotional growth" (xix). Her supportive family and reliance on spirituality and the appearance of "spirit guides" along the way help her persevere in a society that even in its kindest moments is wracked by ambivalence about chronic and multiple disability.

Webb was aware from early childhood that her internal identity was at variance with the way she was perceived by the outside world. Her family, though loving, could not shield her from, nor were they themselves immune to, the social pressure caused by Webb's inability to conform to many social and physical standards. They worried about what people thought. Webb constantly felt pressured, especially by her mother, to walk and speak clearly; these were frustratingly impossible objectives for Webb, but deemed necessary for social inclusion. At twelve, Webb entered a boarding school for children with disabilities. She never learned to walk or to speak easily there, but she got her course work done. Against great odds, unceasing and demoralizing institutional and social resistance, and despite almost universal inaccessibility, she eventually reached the objective she began to seek in childhood—a Ph.D. Ultimately, she became self-supporting, found meaningful and important work with mentally retarded people, and won the 1971 Handicapped Iowan of the Year Award. Thus, she fulfilled the key tenet of personhood as she defines it: "integrity, in my own eyes as well as in the eyes of others" (1).

Webb never politicizes disability. Indeed, she never even mentions the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). She does not share her success with other persons with disabilities. Her anger and resentment about discrimination and the demeaning treatment she receives is specific to her own experience. Even in conclusion, she asks "why?" of God instead of asking "why?" of the society that still limits and labels her and people like her. This is an important document, nonetheless. Memoirs of lifelong disability are rare, and unromanticized disability narratives are rarer still. Webb's autobiography provides insight into an American experience that does not "overcome" by idealized revisionism. Yes, she did succeed, but she did not "overcome" cerebral palsy to do it. She did it with cerebral palsy.

*Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*, edited by Mary Hufford. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994. 264 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$37.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PATRICK NUNNALLY, LOUCKS & ASSOCIATES

This is an ambitious book about an ambitious subject. As Mary Hufford's introduction notes, the "central task of cultural conservation is

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