Locke...
approach. The eventual exposure of directness seemed more congruent with the bravado of the book.

The locker room selected was that of an expensive health club replete with services and amenities. Beyond the physical environs, the methodology is never precisely explained; and therefore must be drawn out through careful reading. The author relied heavily upon the support of psychological explanations, therapists, and research which is typically indicative of research that is phenomenological in nature. These trappings give a definite feel of journalistic writing or interpersonal communication rather than an academic or research oriented work.

Techniques employed by the author ranged from less intrusive observation to interviewing. She was inclusive of different perspectives on the issue of body image by engaging people from a wide variety of shapes, sizes, ages and backgrounds. Goldman not only included perspectives of locker room patrons but also those of the predominantly Latina staff who play a consistent role in the locker room environment. She describes the locker room culture as one where women are training to hate their own bodies. The full spectrum of which includes fully clothed staff, and women (large and small) that change in the bathroom stalls to avoid public scrutiny all the way to stark naked and nonchalant. The book delves into the many emotional factors that contribute to divergent self assessments of body image and the etiquette that emerges as its tangible representation. Etiquette is frequently assessed by the author as being commiserate with the feelings of modesty, self loathing, and occasionally self acceptance. For those who have never experienced the female locker room, these assessments can help to provide some amount of clarity and insight of how etiquette behaviors can reflect women’s self regard.

For one chapter the author leaves the health spa locker room and enters that of the junior high and high school. This attempt to broaden the age inclusiveness of the book presented a tenuous situation for the author. At the end of each speaking session there were swarms of girls hoping for the chance to talk to her—either with questions of how to begin the weight loss process (a thought which greatly frustrated Goldman) or wanting to talk about the trauma and cruelty they had already experienced. It begs the questions: is discussion of such topics beneficial for the improvement of adolescent health or is it introducing ideas for pursuing an idealized, and for most unattainable, image portrayed in media?

The author asserts that women often speak of, and to, themselves in ways that would be considered abusive if the same sentiments had passed the lips of their significant other, and that it is time to move on from the place of self loathing. Though not directly stated, the author attempts to move the reader in the direction of self acceptance by concluding the book with a compilation of stories from the older women of the locker room. Older women that, in general, had finally made peace with their physical flaws and some even embraced the inevitable changes of aging. The epilogue is aptly named “Smokin’ in the Girls Room: Time to Throw in the Towel on Hating Our Bodies”. The book ends without drawing many conclusions or recommendations. The reader is left to internalize the stories and personalize their meanings, which is perhaps a more beneficial and lasting method of moving towards self acceptance. The book has a great utility for professionals that work in health, sports, and fitness. It is a work that is culturally aware and allows great insight for anyone seeking to understand the potential experiences of a physically active female. Even as such, the ending was less climactic than one would hope for from a book containing the emotive power of laughter, tears and the deep vulnerability of human experience revealed.