further by such documents, than by a book such as this, into a space of making. Here, I am propelled into a space of performance history and grateful that there have been thinkers such as these.

That said, there are omissions, which the editors openly acknowledge. You might have to look at another book entirely, such as Anne Marsh's *Body and Self* (Oxford, 1993) to find body-generated works such as those of Jill Scott, Jill Orr, Ken Unsworth, Bonita Ely, Derek Kreckler, Jude Walton, Barbara Campbell, Arthur Wicks, and perhaps only *Real Time* (the national bi-monthly arts tabloid by artists about artists, dedicated to experiential analytic writing) to read, for example, about the site-specific improvisatory works of Tess de Quincey/Stuart Lynch and the site-sound physical theatre of Gravity Feed.

Incidentally, I had been excluded from the final publication for very valid reasons: that "this was not a best work" and that "better was yet to come," with which I entirely agreed. The only thing this reflects is that there is an "unnamedable" to do with quality that this book (and perhaps anybody) hesitates to overtly address. If one work is inferior, what is superior in another? I don't think *Performing the Unnameable* ever set out to explain this, but within its own parameters has given us an important record of a series of Australian works which need to be recognised as influential within the last two decades of Australian performance practice.

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*Megan Surmon*

**TAKING PURPLE FOR GRANTED**


*Girls' Talk* celebrates the power that has been afforded young women by their older sisters who chanted and marched and braved the new path. Three cheers for the mothers of the women's movement, for the genesis of feminism and the realisation that being woman is not a dirty word. Neither is being a feminist, according to the young women, aged 8 and over, in this anthology. Feminism is life.

Images, stories, comments and diary entries weave through the book, borrowing heavily from the young adult magazine market for layout
inspiration, enticing you to browse in a way that does not follow any considered order. Overall the book is a lusciously contemporary visual experience. Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli contributes to each section of the anthology, divided into 10 headings including health, relationships, racism, feminism and an editorial, offering reassuring advice and instructional comment. Maria writes directly to the audience in a way that may, to an older reader, be annoying at times, but it is honest girls' talk of the kind parents might often wish they could engage in.

With lumps, bumps and fluids, being a woman can be complicated, but this anthology demystifies much about womanhood by approaching its topics honestly. The editor, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, identifies young women's desire to be unwrapped of cotton wool, to be presented with the truth of what being a woman in modern society can hold. Girls' Talk is playing with the idea that girls talk to each other to find out about the world and the role they play in it. Maria has achieved the feel of a girl-to-girl heart-to-heart.

There are some emotionally gut wrenching moments in Girls' Talk that make you stop and consider your own strength of character. Personal stories of rape, racism, war, violence, AIDS and painful personal choices, meld into a tapestry of life's complexities. If you are like me, and you are a little older than the intended audience for this book, it is a shock to see how these young girls knit with their experience to find peace with their devils and understand how they relate to the situations they find themselves in.

A point worthy of note comes from the section “Love and Sex” which seems to be toxic backwash from earlier struggles. There is a disturbing absence of any sense of fun, any suggestion that sex is great (or can be). This chapter seems more intent on moralising about the dangers of women's sexuality and the connection between love and sex. A conversation between a group of girls runs something like this: “if you loved him and it felt right, then yeah, then it would be okay to go to bed with him.” “Yeah, if you love him.” “If it felt right” (60). It is disappointing to realise that the myth of love and sex as a mutually exclusive couple is still alive and by implication that good and bad girls exist. In another conversation between a different set of girls the flow goes something like this: “The only good thing about a girl having a bad reputation is that she probably gets the guys but then the guys she gets are probably just using her for what they can get” (79). Have these modern girls stopped to wonder if the girl with the tarnished reputation is using the boys for their own satisfaction? The other question to be asked here is whether the girls would associate themselves, assuming they are in possession of good reputations, with the girl of less repute? Are they going to stand by and let her be degraded by the injustice they identify?
This collection is in itself a form of action, recognition that women are still being mistreated and underrepresented. It highlights self-realisation and a rejection of absolute patriarchal consumption, it testifies to the powerful body of knowledge of early feminist thinkers. This is a 90's etiquette book for young ladies. The corsets have gone, the calling cards are extinct and the delightfully placid girl at the ball has been replaced by these gutsy, determined young women. There is something to be learned from this anthology. I learnt I could have done with a book like this to guide and to reassure as puberty kicked its boots in and I was dragged kicking and screaming into adulthood. The reader may also discover that the women's move-ment has considerable obstacles still to overcome and plenty of power to bound over them.