(the family is the usual metaphor), then immigrants stand in a different relation to it. Instead of being assimilable, that is, organically digestible into the whole, they add to discourses on nationhood. These additions are invariably critiques of existing discourses, both anglo-celtic and expected migrant discourses. In particular these literatures work to deconstruct the monolingualism which is mythically at the centre of Australian nationhood; a myth with which english as a discipline has often been in collusion.

One of the ways in which literature is framed is through reception. Gunew is careful to include some reviews of ethnic minority writing, to show how the dominant culture attempts to deal with or dismiss it. One of the reviews of Rosa Cappiello's *Oh Lucky Country* (1984) praises Cappiello's anger as a starting point but then admonishingly proclaims

> One can only hope that she not only maintains her rage, but now sets about learning something — anything would do — of the novelist's craft. (Macklin, 1985 qtd. 95)

Not only is the book constructed as incompetent, but is already framed as a piece of confessional migrant writing, realist and first person, a frame which is limited and misleading at best.

The second half of Gunew's book is involved in reading the works of Cappiello, Antigone Kefala, Ania Walwicz and Anna Couani. These readings, utilising motions of interpellation and subjectivity and more general feminist and psychoanalytic theories are insightful and interesting. Gunew illustrates that there is a psychic investment in myths of nationality and identity and that ethnic minority writing plays a key role in the alteration of what have been the limited characteristics of these myths. *Framing Marginality* and *Framing and Interpretation* serve as an introduction to the concept and practice of framing for student and teacher alike. Both are valuable for those interested in cultural and literary studies.

Alexander Leggatt

... AND ALL IS SEMBLATIVE A WOMAN'S PART

Penny Gay, *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. Xii + 208pp.

In the proliferation of new, or newly developed, approaches to Shakespeare in the last fifteen years two of the most valuable have been performance history and feminist criticism. At first they had little to say to each other; but more recently they have

come together, to their mutual benefit. Theatre history, which can be simply a cataloguing of who did what, is given focus and urgency by feminist concerns; an awareness of performance grounds feminist thinking in the practical realities of text and theatre. The value of this combination is exemplified in Penny Gay's excellent study of five Shakespearean comedies in performance at Stratford-upon-Avon since the end of the Second World War. Though her subtitle focuses on the women of the plays, and so to some degree does her discussion, it is an important part of her argument that the women take part in what she calls "the circulation of desire among all the characters" (15). She does not isolate the principal female characters or the actresses who play them, but sees them in the total context of the play and the production. She is particularly concerned with the way the female characters challenge conventional notions of femininity, and with the degree to which the actresses who play them have conveyed that disruption in their own performances.

The Royal Shakespeare Company (it has had that title only since the early 60s, but it is convenient to use it for the whole period) has been dominated by men, who hold the positions of power and who have directed most of the productions. This puts a special responsibility on the actresses to be creatively unruly. They have not all risen to the challenge: it is sharply revealing to learn that in 1955 Vivien Leigh appeared for her curtain call as Viola dressed in an evening gown with jewels and a tiara. But many of them have. In 1985 Juliet Stevenson, playing Rosalind in *As You Like It*, objected to the production's conventional ending as inappropriate to the questioning quality of the play. The director, Adrian Noble, initially disagreed, but later in the run the ending was re-worked to make it more open. On the other hand, in 1978 Paola Dionisotti, playing Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, found herself sidelined and frustrated as the perspectives of Petruchio and the Duke became the dominant ones. I saw both productions, and was bothered by the lacklustre quality of Dionisotti's acting, so at odds with her striking stage presence; Gay's account offers a clue as to what went wrong. Struggles for dominance among actors, and between actors and directors, are part of theatre; but in cases like these the issues go beyond artistic effect to the nature of the social and political statement the production is going to make. Behind that in turn lies the nature of the institution that is making the statement, an issue on which Gay focuses with particular urgency.

The plays she discusses are *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, taken in that order. If there is a logic in this order I missed it — or rather I didn't miss it. A linear argument developing from play to play (early to late, light to dark) could

easily have been a trap. As it is the discussions are free-standing and interchangeable, and each is allowed to make its own statement. The main pattern is one of social change through history. In the '40s and '50s productions were elegant entertainments for a weary postwar world, raising no awkward problems; in the '60s and '70s productions reflected a new, questioning mood in society, and picked up the celebratory energy of the sexual revolution; then, with the onset of Thatcherism, gloom set in. (It is to the RSC's credit that they didn't greet the '80s with delight, even if the price was a series of depressing productions. On my last visit in 1994 the gloom seemed to be lifting, and I saw the prettiest production of *Henry V* I've ever seen; I can't say I was cheered by it.)

The pattern itself is predictable; what matters, as is generally the case in theatre history, is the detail with which it is filled in. Here Gay's work is admirable. She draws on reviews, photos, archive tapes, interviews and personal memories. Yet the discussions never feel overloaded; each production is evoked vividly but economically. Her own perspective is always clear (some readers may get tired of hearing middle-aged male reviewers attacked for condescension and pomposity, but really, they do ask for it). At the same time she allows flaws in the pattern; even the earliest productions show that the conservatism of their period could be challenged, and a real breakthrough is all too often followed by a loss of ground on the play's next outing. Vivien Leigh's 1955 Viola may have been safely pretty and feminine, but in 1947 Beatrix Lehmann had been "a strong-chinned, short-haired, modern-looking woman" (19), a sign of what was possible in the innovative and all too brief regime of Barry Jackson. Diana Rigg's 1966 Viola was "a confident active woman who wore breaches with perfect ease" (28). She was part of rough-edged and, it would appear, underappreciated production by Clifford Williams in which the Orsino-Viola scenes were erotically charged. Judi Dench, in John Barton's "Chekhovian" production of 1969, restored conventional vulnerability to the character, making "effective use of the natural catch in her voice" (31). (She did, too; I can still hear it.) The Barton production is an interesting test case for Gay's approach: sensitive and eloquent, it was tremendously attractive, and earned its success. Gay pays due tribute to its quality; at the same time she raises legitimate questions about whether its air of nostalgia and underlying tolerance limited the play, and surrendered ground won by the more hard-edged approach of 1966. In 1974, replacing nostalgia with the spirit of the production's own time, Peter Gill brought the fluid sexuality of the play to the fore: "The young actors' bodies were much in evidence" (36) and at the end "Orsino and Olivia each turned momentarily to the 'wrong' twin" (37). More recent productions have gone for bleakness and alienation, and Viola has suffered accordingly, being by turns

conventionally feminine, grumpy and "perpetually on the point of tears" (45).

Though Margaret Leighton's 1952 Rosalind was free-spirited enough that to some reviewers she seemed not quite English, the breakthrough productions of *As You Like It* seem to have occurred in 1961 and 1973; the first featured Vanessa Redgrave's natural, independent, Rosalind, a performance that coincided with Redgrave's emergence as a political activist. Michael Elliott's production took a serious, critical view of the pastoral world. In the second the director, for once, was a woman, Buzz Goodbody, whose *Hair*-inspired production was an antidote to the National Theatre's antiseptic all-male version. Eileen Atkins was an uninhibitedly sexual Rosalind, a lead followed by Susan Fleetwood and her Orlando, John Bowe, in 1980. That production, by Terry Hands, ended with "a riotous fertility feast" celebrating "a vision of an England, and an uncomplicated sexuality, that were about to disappear" (75). (Was 1980 the last good year?) Viola's decline has been matched by Rosalind's: Juliet Stevenson (1985), superb actress though she is, lost the humour; Sophie Thompson (1989) was reduced to mere clowning.

Gay's analysis is at its sharpest in her chapter on *The Taming of the Shrew.* It shows, in effect, the ways the play itself has been tamed, as directors try to make it acceptable by turning it into a rollicking farce or a sentimental view of a picturesque past. Actresses, including Yvonne Mitchell in 1953 and Barbara Jefford in 1954, have resisted. Critics praised Mitchell for her "tolerant amusement" and "playfulness" but she herself found greatest satisfaction in playing Kate's temper (93). Jefford made that temper more overt. On the other hand, Peggy Ashcroft (1960) submitted, in a way (male) reviewers found quite touching, to Peter O'Toole's charismatic Petruchio, and in 1967 Janet Suzman and Michael Williams were just having fun. Michael Bogdanov's 1978 production calls forth one of Gay's most interesting discussions. Bogdanov tried for once to make the play *un*acceptable, drawing out its cruelty in a way some viewers found unbearable. But the effect was confused by the fact that (typically for this director) the production was also remarkably funny; and as it developed the inventive clowning of Jonathan Pryce's Petruchio drew the audience to his side in a way that sabotaged the original intention. Another case of cross-purposes occurred in 1987, when Jonathan Miller, as director, saw Petruchio as a therapist curing Kate of a modern neurosis in a realistically-conceived seventeenth-century world while the actress, Fiona Shaw, saw her problem as social rather than psychological, and gave the character "a dignity and intelligence that Miller's simplistic 'unloved child' would have lacked" (118). Gay concludes that this play still awaits "a radically feminist director — perhaps even a woman" to rise to its political challenge (119). As

a small symptom of the problem it presents, I offer the fact that, like Gay, I have slipped into calling the central character Kate. That is Petruchio's nickname for her; her first show of will in their opening encounter is to insist, unsuccessfully, on being called Katharine. Petruchio's perspective is hard to dislodge.

In the discussion of *Measure for Measure* the focus is not on Isabella and Angelo — where the issues for a feminist approach are pretty clear — but on the much more difficult relationship of Isabella and the Duke. John Barton's 1970 production opened up the question by having Isabella respond to the Duke's proposal with a silence that audience members had to read for themselves. This also appears to have been the production in which the reviewers finally caught up with Isabella, praising Estelle Kohler's "combination of passion with fierce intelligence" (131) without complaining, as they had of earlier Isabellas, that she was strident. Barry Kyle's 1978 production tried for a romantic relationship between the Duke and Isabella, but didn't really earn it: she was simply part of the story of *his* development. On the other hand, Juliet Stevenson and Daniel Massey, in Adrian Noble's 1983 production, worked out a full relationship between the characters through the way they helped and educated each other. Gay writes with equal sympathy and understanding of this optimistic version, and of Nicholas Hytner's bleak 1987 production, in which Josette Simon's Isabella stood out as an icon of protest against a hopelessly corrupt society.

She is, I sense, less sympathetic to John Gielgud's famous *Much Ado About Nothing,* which ran in various incarnations from 1949 to 1955: "A sense of cosiness and stability underlying the richly elegant style: what more could a war-weary audience want?" (146). The question identifies the likely source of the production's appeal, but its tone implies that they should have wanted much more. (After all, Brecht offered *his* war-weary audience *Mother Courage.)* All the same, I wish I'd seen this production. High comic style is neither easy to achieve nor undemanding of its audience, and there isn't a lot of it about. There is probably more justice in her complaints about the way Douglas Seale (1958) and Michael Langham (1961) reduced the play to a pretty operetta, and she is certainly right to complain — with backup from John Gielgud and Geraldine McEwan — about the persistent habit, exemplified in these two productions, of setting the play in the nineteenth century, where its open passion and bawdy joking seem totally out of place. Trevor Nunn's 1968 production gave the play the youthful sexual energy it needs, to the point of disturbing some middle aged reviewers. After that the play was slapped back into the nineteenth century, with a middle-aged Beatrice and Benedick in 1971, and in 1976 a British Raj production by John Barton

in which Donald Sinden's aggressively funny Benedick and Judi Dench's deeply-felt Beatrice were brilliant individual performances that had no connection with each other. A much better balance was struck in 1980, by Derek Jacobi, who followed a lead initiated but not developed by Gielgud, making Benedick a "new sensitive man" (168) who wouldn't strike conventional male poses, and Sinead Cusack, whose Beatrice was "an emotionally isolated person, using her wit as defence against being hurt" (170).

Much Ado has also had a woman director, Di Trevis, who in 1988 set the play in the 1950s, in an outpost of the vanishing Empire. Gay tries to rescue her production from the critical drubbing it received by appealing to the evidence of the archive videotape. She does her best for it, but having seen the production I would have to agree for once with the reviewers. Whatever Trevis's feelings about the play, the production conveyed a strong dislike of the characters and their society, not earned by working through the relationships but externally imposed by the device of transporting the play to a world that was easy to despise. The result was generalised and externalised, and not clearly related to the comedy of the play or to questions like, what do Beatrice and Benedick want from each other, and why should we care? For all the value of a committed social perspective, you still have to do the work. As Gay's study shows, the production history of these plays at Stratford includes a heartening number of artists who have done just that, opening out the plays through taking the chances the plays themselves offer, challenging the preconceptions of the audiences, and sometimes of the productions themselves. The actresses of the '40s emerge with particular credit here, as do more recent performers like Sinead Cusack, Juliet Stevenson and Susan Fleetwood. But Gay also shows that progress has been anything but steady, and there has been of late some alarming back-sliding. Her book chronicles, with urgency and eloquence, an ongoing struggle.

Elizabeth Perkins

CULTURAL CAPITAL RECLAIMED FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT

Kay Ferres, ed, *The Time to Write: Australian Women Writers 1890–1930*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1993. 280 pp. RRP $17.95. ISBN 0 14 013917 6.
Michael Ackland, *That Shining Band: A Study of Australian Colonial Verse Tradition*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994. 243 pp. RRP $29.95. ISBN 0 7022 2686 6.

These texts add two more to the solidly impressive collection of work by and about nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century writers which has appeared over the last decade,