

Inheritance

by Hannie Rayson



Section 1.

A Perspective on *Inheritance*

In *Inheritance*, Hanie Rayson has created a view of the world that stretches beyond the narrow bounds of its Mallee setting and into the murky depths of the Australian psyche. As sisters Dibs Hamilton and Girlie Delaney prepare for their eightieth birthday celebrations, we are shown a world that is far from idyllic. There are the obvious strains and stresses of living in rural Australia at the beginning of a new millennium with the legacy of depression, drought and the associated drift from country to city. Add to this the difficulties few families are immune from: sibling rivalry, jealousy, greed, unforgiven grievances from years past and the general tensions that arise from a group of disparate people thrown into close proximity with one another. But this is not exclusively a 'domestic' drama. Rayson sees herself as a 'political' writer¹, and at least a portion of this play attempts to explore what it is that might account for the rise of an ultra-conservative political party in a so-called enlightened era. Linking all these concerns is the notion of 'inheritance': not just 'who gets the farm' but 'who gets the nation'.

One of the difficulties of using a factual setting and period for a piece of writing, particularly if this is within the lived memory of the audience, is that there is a tendency to want everything about the piece to be factually accurate. And whilst there is a general air of accuracy about the events in the play, we must never forget that we are watching a work of fiction. Interestingly, one aspect of the play's structure that both supports this and works against it is the way in which characters speak directly to the audience. Felix introduces Julia and tells us that she regularly 'takes on this passive-aggressive tone when [she] wants [him] to come up to Allandale with her' (p.4). Girlie does the same soon after when she comments on Dibs' gardening strategies that ignore Girlie's advice. 'Doesn't take a jot of notice' she complains to the audience (p.5). Whilst these comments might reflect something true about the character referred to, they are equally revealing about the speaker and the relationship between the two.

This style, too, has a notable effect on the audience. Far from fitting into the model embraced by Bertolt Brecht, leading to the so-called 'alienation theory', Rayson's technique is to draw the audience in, making us co-conspirators in the drama. Perhaps this increases our understanding, but it leads too, to a rather disturbing 'cosiness' so that in the end, there is an alienation of sorts. This play was commissioned by the Melbourne Theatre Company and the audience will be, by and large, a city one made up of the 'gullible lefties' and 'bleeding hearts' to whom William refers. There is, therefore, an air of 'preaching to the converted' – an easy way to get unquestioning acceptance of the views being promulgated.

The central motif of the play is 'inheritance' and in its complexity it touches on a great deal more than how to satisfy fairly the claims of the next generation when it comes to dividing the property on the death of the parents. It is true that it is this concern that was the driving force of the play from its inception, but notions of inheritance stretch far beyond the family ownership of broadacre properties. We see the line of ownership of Allandale, the family farm, carried from Dibs' and Girlie's grandmother, Jessie Allan, down through Norm Myrtle and Farley Hamilton (when he married Dibs). The unspoken expectation is that the farm will be inherited by another of that family. But

¹ Hannie Rayson, 'Theatre of Engagement', *The Bulletin*, 13 November, 2002

the family has been blighted by the wider inheritance conferred by life in the Mallee: poor seasons represented by the mouse plague, lack of sustainability of the sheep industry, the cost of scratching a living and the need to look for work outside farming to make ends meet. So the legacy has been corrupted by another legacy, and that is one of helplessness, despair, debt and depression leading in two cases to self-destruction.

Dibs foreshadows this in likening Lyle to Norm, but Rayson goes further when she has Nugget first inherit and then lose the farm when Dibs rips up Farley's revised will. The tragedy here is that Nugget, as representative of his race, has already been disinherited. The irony is that both he and his parents have realised that for farmers to survive in the modern world, they need to do things differently – in a way that might be represented in the diploma from Longerenong. Yet even that is not enough to protect him when the 'race card' is played.

So who 'wins' in all of this? The terrible truth is that it is probably Maureen Delaney; yet she is the most unsatisfying of all of the characters. She simply occupies a 'position', her mouth filled with clichés that get the cheapest of all reactions from the audience. She has a role to play in that it is through her that Rayson's concerns about the inheritance of the farm in these days of family break-up and divorce settlements are taken to the fullness of awful conclusion. The farm might be facing changes, but to be removed entirely from the family by a 'cause' that was to prove so fleeting, in itself compounds the horror.

It is possible, of course, that one family could encompass so many socially challenging lifestyles: a farmer who hovers on the brink of dementia; a gay son; a daughter who has divorced her gay husband and is now pregnant to one of her Indian lovers; the educated Aboriginal son of a white farmer from a liaison with an Aboriginal worker at his sister-in-law's hotel; a politician of Hansonesque proportions; an alcoholic optimist and a 'very Christian woman'. Families are complex combinations of complex people. Nevertheless, one cannot completely escape the disturbing suspicion that the play is being used, at times, as a vehicle to carry a hotch-potch of undeveloped ideas on a range of marginalised groups. Despite such reservations, Rayson does explore some character traits in reasonable depth.

For instance, she manages to demonstrate with conviction that self-interest drives all of the characters in their quest for recognition in the estate, although some of the motivations appear more acceptable than others. For Lyle and his family, bankruptcy is a real and looming threat. Lyle's mother, Girlie, argues that she has as much right to the land as Dibs and more than Farley. In comparison with this, Julia's and William's claims seem negligible and greedy. Nugget appears to have the best claim on every level, but one thing Rayson does particularly well is to allow us to see the intricacy of Dibs' claim that he is 'not family'. In the end, Nugget's inheritance is to carry the 'sin of his father' and of all other men like his father who betrayed their marriage vows with Aboriginal women.

Ultimately, although we feel for Nugget's predicament, there is a sense that he is well equipped to cope with adversity. William and Julia would, no doubt, feel justifiably enraged and hurt by their mother's rejection of their claims in favour of Lyle, but we are told that Julia is 'adaptable' and William also has managed well without the farm up to now. But what about Girlie and Dibs? Girlie seems to have an incorrigible belief in the possibility of luck even if she has little evidence of its likelihood. Dibs, on the other hand, has lived a life of duty.

She never wanted the farm in the first place; she has lived all her married life with a man inextricably damaged by war; she has adopted Nugget, the evidence of his, and by extension her, 'shame'. In conversation with Girlie, she has admitted to not particularly liking William, and we see in her conversations with Julia that she does not have a great deal of faith in her daughter. When Girlie offers her a luxury holiday, she is at her lowest ebb and it is tempting to see her as susceptible to the flattery of '[Lyle] loves his Aunty Dibs. Always has'. For one brief moment of elation she feels she has done the one thing that will save the farm, but as the sisters return to Allandale, the wheel has turned full circle and two other 'little girls in blue' are finding **their** father hanging in the barn. Rayson seems to be suggesting that like the toss of the coin that started the sisters on their respective paths, it is all about chance, luck and fate and there is nothing anyone can do to control what we will all eventually inherit.

Section 2. Questions to Consider

Prologue

1. Why does Rayson choose to start the play with a scene in 1934 with Dibs and Girlie singing?
2. What do the lyrics of the song tell us about the play?

Act 1

1. Why does Rayson choose to have characters address the audience directly?
2. What picture is painted in the play of life in country Victoria?
3. What is the function of the appearance of Norm and the young Girlie and Dibs?
4. What views of the land are explored in this first Act of the play?
5. What examples are there in the play of prejudice and discrimination?
6. Explain Lyle's resentment towards the Hamiltons.
7. What plan does William have for his parents?
8. What do we learn of Girlie and Dibs' parents and the choices and decisions they made?
9. Explain the attitude of Lyle to Nugget. Is this shared by others?

Act 2

1. What issues does Maureen identify as being priorities in the Mallee?
2. What does the revelation about Nugget's parentage add to the complexity of the plot?
3. What view does Felix articulate about Nugget's entitlement to the farm?
4. What motivates Dibs to give Allandale to Lyle?
5. What does the final scene and the epilogue suggest about the key theme of "Inheritance"?
6. In your view, what are 5 key themes in this play?
7. Which character do you feel the most sympathy for and why?
8. Which character do you feel the least sympathy for and why?
9. What is your assessment of the play as a whole?

Setting

1. To what extent do the events in the play rely on its being set in a rural area. Could it have been re-set in the city with similar results?
2. Although the majority of the play takes place either at Allandale or at the Delaneys' home on the outskirts of Rushton, other settings are used. What/where are these locations and what significance do they have to the gradual unfolding of the drama?
3. Hannie Rayson seems to want to link political position with geographical locale. How do the concerns of the country lead to the political attitudes that arise in the play? Does she make the similar assumptions about the city?
4. For Girlie, the city is a place to avoid, but for the younger generation it is somewhere to aspire to. What do the city and country mean for each of the characters in the play?
5. In many ways, the setting and the themes and issues of the play are indivisible from one another. What does Rayson hope to achieve by setting much of the drama in the kitchens of the two families? Is this a successful way of conveying her concerns?

Structure

1. In what ways are Young Dibs and Young Girlie Myrtle similar to Brianna and Ashleigh Delaney? What about Lyle and Norm?
2. Hannie Rayson uses flashbacks to show the cyclical and repetitive nature of life. Is there anything in these that suggests that the events at the end of the play should have been predicted?
3. The large number of short scenes allows each person a space in which to voice his or her own position on the various issues explored. Does this make it easier for us to adopt an individual position free from the prejudices of the writer herself?
4. *Inheritance* is divided into two acts, the first preceded by a Prologue and the second succeeded by an Epilogue. What role does each of these divisions play in the unfolding and resolving of the drama?
5. There are occasions when one or other of the characters addresses the audience directly. What effect does this have on the way we see the play, the characters and the issues they confront?

Character

1. Who do you believe is the main character – the 'star' if you like – in the play? What makes this character more significant than the others?
2. We are told that Farley is a 'tyrant'. To what extent is he responsible for the way things turn out in the play?
3. As characters, are Maureen Delaney and Nugget Hamilton simply two-dimensional

representatives of particular positions or do they serve a more complex purpose?

4. With the toss of a coin, Girlie gains 'freedom'. How have her circumstances changed by the end of the play? Is she still 'free' in the way she was when the coin was tossed?
5. Girlie tells Dibs that the difference 'between being a good farmer and a bad one [is] three weeks. All in the timing'. Is it timing that leads to Lyle Delaney's downfall?

Themes

1. Is Maureen right when she says that the land belongs to those who work it?
2. In the end, nobody inherits anything. Do you agree?
3. We think of prejudice most often in association with race and colour. However, *Inheritance* sees prejudice lurking in many other areas of our lives. What prejudices are explored and what effect do these have on the way the people in the play behave?
4. 'Doing one's duty' is often seen as a positive way to live one's life. Does this play endorse such a view?
5. 'All the characters in *Inheritance* believe that being members of the family will protect their interests. In fact, it is 'family' that destroys them'. To what extent do you agree?

Section 3. Running sheet and structure of text

PROLOGUE Dec. 1934. Young Dibs and Young Girlie sing 'Two little Girls in Blue'

ACT ONE, Scene One: The families prepare for the 80th birthdays of twins, Dibs Hamilton and Girlie Delaney. Julia's car breaks down on the Berriwillock Road.

Scene Two: The Hamilton's farm. Girlie and Dibs are disappointed in their children.

Scene Three: At the Delaneys', Lyle unveils his birthday gift for his mother, a converted ride-on lawnmower to compensate for her lack of mobility, a result of childhood polio.

Scene Four: The Hamilton's kitchen. William arrives.

Scene Five: The Berriwillock Road. Julia reminisces over the sexual fixations of the town's youth when she was young and the games these led to.

Scene Six: Girlie rides her new motor. She and Lyle talk about alcohol for the party.

Scene Seven: The Hamilton's kitchen. Farley's attitude to William's sexuality. The mouse plague is bad. Dibs wants to ask Nugget to get Julia and Felix.

Scene Eight: Lyle and Nugget in the paddock. Lyle tries to persuade Nugget to go halves in the cost of a seeder. Nugget refuses.

Scene Nine: The Berriwillock Road. Julia accuses Felix's generation of being soft. She tells Felix she's pregnant.

Scene Ten: The main street of Rushton. Maureen and Girlie are buying food for the party. They express a general intolerance of lifestyles even faintly 'alternative'.

Scene Eleven: The Hamiltons' kitchen. William thinks Farley needs full-time care. He wants to sell the farm to finance future ventures. Nugget goes to get Julia & Felix.

Scene Twelve: The Delaneys'. Ashleigh finds a small suitcase. She puts on a Father Christmas beard and hat. Girlie loses her temper and snatches it away.

Scene Thirteen: Berriwillock Road. Nugget arrives and warns Julia about William's regular visits to the farm and his fear of a possible sale of the farm.

Scene Fourteen: The Hamiltons' kitchen. William and Farley argue. William recalls Farley snatching money away from him when he thought it was being wasted.

Scene Fifteen: The Delaneys'. Lyle looks at farm machinery brochure. Maureen talks of their lack of money. Brianna arrives to say the pigeons are sick.

Scene Sixteen: The Hamiltons'. William prepares food. Flash back to Dibs and Norm and the desperation of his times as a farmer. Dibs sees Norm's similarity to Lyle Delaney.

Scene Seventeen: Lyle and Brianna fly the pigeons.

Scene Eighteen: The Delaneys'. Ashleigh dreams of Melbourne. Girlie's hatred of it dates from the onset of her polio. Brianna and Lyle wait for pigeons. Flash back to Norm, Girlie and pigeons. Brianna asks why Norm hanged himself.

Scene Nineteen: The Delaneys' kitchen. Ashleigh tells Lyle she's heard that Dibs is selling the farm. Maureen is told the news. William arrives and Maureen confronts him. **Scene Twenty:** The Delaneys'. Girlie reminisces on Norm's death. Flash back (1934) to Norm finding 'lucky' coins for Dibs and Girlie. He talks of duty and freedom. The young girls find Norm hanging in the barn wearing a Father Christmas suit.

Scene Twenty-one: The Hamilton's yard. Julia, Felix and Nugget arrive. Farley is confused. William insists that the farm needs to be sold. Julia doesn't agree.

Scene Twenty-two: The Delaney's kitchen. Maureen expresses her fear about the possible selling of the farm. She hints at Nugget's parentage.

Scene Twenty-three: The Hamiltons'. Felix joins Nugget and Farley. Farley fears he is going mad and Nugget promises to look after him.

Scene Twenty-four: Girlie reminisces on Lucky Joe. Flash back to their first meeting.

Scene Twenty-five: The Hamiltons' shed. Lyle wants Nugget to buy the seeder.

Scene Twenty-six: Main Street, Rushton. Girlie and Maureen prepare petition for a rural transaction centre. Julia, William and Felix arrive. Maureen says Dibs is selling the farm. Flash back (1938) to the coin toss that gave Dibs 'duty' and the farm and Girlie 'freedom'. Girlie goes to see Dibs.

Scene Twenty-seven: The Hamiltons' dining room. Family demand information about sale of farm. William talks of his plans. Lyle and Nugget trade words and blows.

Scene Twenty-eight: The Hamiltons'. Nugget and Lyle fight.

ACT TWO, Scene One: Some months later. The Rushton Agricultural and Pastoral Show. Maureen appears as the Independent candidate for Murray.

Scene Two: Farley's coffin is carried in.

Scene Three: The family waits for the minister. Maureen returns to the subject of Nugget's parentage. Felix and Nugget talk about the adoption.

Scene Four: The Hamiltons'. Dibs and Julia sort Farley's wardrobe. Nugget asks for Farley's hat. Julia and Dibs argue over use of the land.

Scene Five: The Delaneys' backyard. Girlie and Brianna tell Maureen that the house is being repossessed by the bank. Maureen leaves to claim 'what's ours'.

Scene Six: The Hamiltons' bedroom. William finds the revised will. Dibs rips it up. Nugget comes in to find the will Farley has told him about.

Scene Seven: Julia openly discusses Farley's paternity of Nugget.

Scene Eight: The Delaneys move in with the Hamiltons.

Scene Nine: In the kitchen. Dibs tells William that she cannot turn her sister away.

Scene Ten: Farley's bedroom. Brianna and Ashleigh blame Lyle for the situation.

Scene Eleven: The kitchen. Felix is horrified by local attitudes to Aborigines. Maureen scorns his political correctness.

Scene Twelve: Dibs tells Girlie the truth about Nugget's adoption and the revised will.

Scene Thirteen: Nugget 'hears' Farley explain his reasons for not revealing the truth.

Scene Fourteen: Lyle fires his rifle into the night as he yells his anger and distress.

Scene Fifteen: The Grand Hotel, Mildura. Dibs and Girlie talk about their families.

Scene Sixteen: The Hamiltons' woolshed. Felix comforts Brianna and Lyle enters. He misinterprets the situation. Lyle whips Felix. Maureen rescues him.

Scene Seventeen: The Grand Hotel. The sisters see Lyle as the farmer in the family.

Scene Eighteen: The Hamiltons'. Lyle drives tractor through the window of the bank.

Scene Nineteen: Main Street, Mildura. Dibs transfers deeds of farm to Lyle.

Scene Twenty: Brianna and Ashleigh find Lyle hanging in the woolshed.

EPILOGUE

Nugget and Felix watch the television interview that confirms Maureen's win as the Independent Member for Murray. She has sold the farm to finance her career.

Section 4. Characters

Dibs Hamilton (including Young Dibs)

At the start of the play Dibs and her twin sister, Girlie Delaney, are turning 80. It is this birthday that is the catalyst for bringing all the main characters together at the family farm, Allandale. The Hamilton half of the family seem to have led more privileged lives than the Delaneys, the family of Dibs' sister. We learn during the play that the farm has passed to Dibs on the toss of a coin. At the time, this was seen as the less 'lucky' alternative, the acceptance of 'duty' over adventure. Dibs has been enjoying life as a nurse in Melbourne and was keen to return to that life. But the twins' father, Norm Myrtle, commits suicide and one of the girls must remain at the farm to continue its management and look after their mother. When Dibs marries her 'handsome airman', Farley Hamilton, he moves to the farm as well and they embark upon what turns out to be a prosperous time together. Dibs is instrumental in making sure that her mother treats Girlie fairly by giving her ten thousand pounds for the purchase of a pub. At the time, this seemed the better part of the deal, but with time, the farm's value has outstripped that of the pub, and the family lobbying for a part of it increases.

1. What prompts Dibs to transfer the farm to Lyle Delaney? Is it simply a matter of keeping the land out of Nugget's hands or is some deeper motivation at work?
2. Do you believe Dibs would support Maureen Delaney's brand of politics? What evidence from the play supports your answer?
3. We do not see the reaction of Dibs and Girlie to Lyle's death. Either write a journal entry for Dibs outlining her feelings at this time, or write another short scene for the play in which to demonstrate her response.

Girlie Delaney (including Young Girlie)

Girlie's history and fortunes are closely tied to what we have seen of those of her twin sister Dibs. Hers, however, are quite literally, the opposite side of the coin: the kangaroo that symbolised 'freedom' against the king's head of 'duty' that gave her sister the farm.

1. What is Girlie's motivation for inviting Dibs on the holiday to Mildura?
2. Is Girlie right? Should the situation of the farm return to its 'pre-toss-of-the-coin' status so that it remains in the family? Does her family have equal rights to the farm with the Hamiltons?
3. The order of these notes suggests that Girlie is second in importance to Dibs. Is this an accurate assessment?

Lyle Delaney

Lyle is the forty-eight-year-old only child of Girlie and 'Lucky Joe' Delaney. He is also the only one of the natural grandchildren of Norm Myrtle who has taken to the land. The irony is that his parents were publicans and not on the land, and so Lyle and his wife, Maureen, and their two daughters live with his mother on the outskirts of the small town of Rushton. Lyle sees himself as a farmer, however. He is particularly angered by Nugget Hamilton's influence at Allandale; partly because Nugget is

Aboriginal and also because he has a Diploma in Agriculture. As Lyle says to Dibs, 'No-one can teach you to be a farmer. It's either in you or it isn't' (p.45). The antagonism between Lyle and Nugget is only just beneath the surface for much of the play, and reaches a climax when word gets out that Dibs is thinking of selling the farm. We learn later that Lyle has gone ahead with the purchase of a seeder despite Nugget's refusal to share the cost, claiming that Nugget has 'welched' on the deal.

1. Compare what we know of Norm Myrtle and Lyle Delaney. Is Lyle's life and death simply a case of history repeating itself?
2. Is Girlie right when she says that Lyle 'just needs a little help from Lady Luck'? Would things have been different if he had lived to take ownership of Allandale?
3. What is Rayson saying about the 'older order' of farmers, those who were born to it rather than educated for it? (This question would be a useful one for Nugget as well and the two could be compared in order to establish the message Rayson might be trying to convey).

Nugget Hamilton

Nugget (Neville) Hamilton is the natural son of Norm Myrtle and Joyce, the Aboriginal housemaid at Girlie's and Joe's pub. Nugget's role in the play could be seen to be a token one, in that he represents quite literally the push for Aboriginal land rights in the political arena. In addition, the circumstances of his birth reflect what Julia sees in her father as 'a long line of farmers who've exploited Aboriginal women' (p.77). Nugget's presence within the family and within the wider world of rural Australia also draws a range of traditional anti-Aboriginal comments which, though sounding clichéd, are delivered with such resounding conviction that they shock as much as if heard for the first time. Despite Nugget's superior ability as a farmer, Lyle uses his heritage to cast doubt on the value of his suggestions: 'Nugget's a great bloke and that, but they make hopeless bloody farmers', he tells Dibs (p.45). Even Nugget's name is redolent with racism as Felix points out, but Nugget is as unconcerned about this as everyone else around him.

1. Is Brianna right when she says, 'You are so racist'? To what extent is Nugget a victim of family prejudices? Do these simply reflect those apparent in the general community?
2. Does our opinion of Nugget change when we realise that he has known of Farley's revised will for some time before Farley's death?
3. What will happen to Nugget now? Choose a point some time in the future and work in pairs to create an interview in which Nugget reflects on his time at Allandale and his life since its sale.

Maureen Delaney

If it can be argued that there is more to Nugget Hamilton than just a representative of Aboriginal Land Rights and a character to display some of the prejudices of others: the same cannot be said of Maureen Delaney. Her sole role in the play seems to be that of shining beacon to conservatism at its most extreme. She is Pauline Hanson re-located in Victoria and only thinly disguised by an alter ego. It is true that Rayson allows the odd foray into maternal concerns when Ashleigh appears wearing a dress she deems too short, but this is more of a token than her real place as the 'Mouth of the Mallee'. The irony of this sobriquet is not lost on us as she is indeed a 'mouth'

rather than a 'voice'. She alternately leaps to Lyle's defence claiming that he is being badly treated by the family, and condemns him loudly and harshly – 'What a useless idiot ... I'm married to a hopeless piece of trash' – when he drives them to financial ruin with his unwise farming decisions and reckless borrowing (p.73).

1. Investigate some of the issues raised through the Maureen Delaney character:
 - Aboriginal land Rights and Mabo. (At the time of writing, the Federal Government is revisiting the issue of land in relation to its use by its traditional owners)
 - The rise of One Nation (and its demise). Will it rise again?
 - Rural attitudes to the city and vice versa.

Farley Hamilton

By the time we meet Farley, he is struggling with the early stages of dementia and is only a few months from death. He is bitter and irascible and is clearly disliked by his son, William, whose homosexuality and lack of interest in farming he finds equally distasteful. But he has not always been like this and Dibs allows us to see the effect that the war has had on people like Farley. He also occupies a representative role in the play being the father of an Aboriginal son. Julia sees the relationship with Nugget's mother as being only abuse, but William points out that her view suggests she is stereotyping the relationship. In the imagined conversation between Nugget and Farley, the father tells the son, 'some things are best left unsaid, mate' (p.88) when Nugget angrily accuses him of not telling the truth about his birth thereby disqualifying him from the land he sees as rightfully his. Yet, Farley challenges the stereotype by acknowledging Nugget in his will. This is not enough, of course, when pitted against the hurt and simmering racism of his mother and brother. Farley's behaviour is far-sighted in one sense but foolish and blind in another. In the end, the revised will is destroyed because he has not taken his wife into his confidence. Farley's name might be on the title to the land and he has made a good living out of it, but Dibs has shown her strength over the years and it has been foolish for Farley to overlook this.

1. In Act Two, Scene 13, Farley is given a chance to speak for himself posthumously. Why does Rayson choose to do this and how successful is her strategy?
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Section 5. Key Quotes

<p>“...please put your hands together for our very own ‘Darlings of the Mallee’ - my two favourite girls - the Myrtle Twins.”</p>	<p>“It’s just that it’s your Nanna’s eightieth birthday...”</p>
<p>“It’s a terrible thing when a marriage ends. Mind you, I don’t think Julia tried hard enough.”</p>	<p>“This is going to make all the difference in your life, Mum.”</p>
<p>“She likes old things.”</p>	<p>“Donger won first prize in the faggot races one New Year’s Eve.”</p>
<p>“Gay men are not welcome in Rushton.”</p>	<p>“I’m not planning on leaving this place. I’ll tell you that for nothing. They’ll be carting me outta here with me boots on, when the time comes.”</p>

<p>“Let’s not pretend that he has the capacity to treat his son slightly better than his dogs.”</p>	<p>“You can’t wait for things to come to you, you know. You’ve got to make things happen.”</p>
<p>“Are you going to tell them that it’ll be a little brown baby?”</p>	<p>“Dibs. She’s gone and asked the dogs.”</p>
<p>“They’re thieves, those Greeks!”</p>	<p>“You don’t understand how truly awful it would be for him to leave the farm.”</p>
<p>“If I sell this place, Nugget will be a farmer without a farm.”</p>	<p>“They an make it pretty rough. White teacher living with a blackfella. Even the kids in her class were having a go at her.”</p>

<p>“You don’t think the old girl’s gonna leave me high and dry, do you Jules?”</p>	<p>“Good lord. I can see that now. To think that all these years I’ve been skimping so I could send my children to Scotch College.”</p>
<p>“Stop drooling. You’re not in the market for new machinery.”</p>	<p>“We’re going down the toilet and you won’t do a damn thing about it.”</p>
<p>“Because he won’t face facts. He can’t make that farm pay.”</p>	<p>“I trust that zucchini have made an appearance in the Mallee, since I was a child?”</p>
<p>“He’d be laughing away, life of the party, and then he’d get a visit from the black dog.”</p>	<p>“You put in the work and you get your rewards. But you gotta have a bit of faith too”</p>

<p>“Maybe he put in the work and didn’t get the rewards.”</p>	<p>“But it’s our farm.”</p>
<p>“Mate, the land belongs to the people who work it.”</p>	<p>“In the end he just couldn’t hack it. My dad.”</p>
<p>“That’s the hardest lesson in life, I reckon. Accepting how the coin falls and making the best of it.”</p>	<p>“But this bloody farm has been a noose around her neck for sixty years.”</p>
<p>“Nobody in this district has ever found anything at all. And even if you had, you wouldn’t tell the bloody Mabo mob, would you?”</p>	<p>“I’m looking’ out for you. Don’t worry.”</p>

<p>“Bloody boong. Never had to stand on your own two feet, you black bastard.”</p>	<p>“They reckon we’re too small, but we’ll see about that.”</p>
<p>“There was a time when you could’ve put a chook in the National Party and people round here woulda voted for it.”</p>	<p>“We have to make a decision about the farm. My children need to know where they stand.”</p>
<p>“And before you know it, they’ve locked you up in one of those rest homes and some little Asiatic nurse is scrubbing you down with kerosene.”</p>	<p>“He’s made a damn good living out of it. But it is not his land.”</p>
<p>“Nugget has more right to speak in this house than anyone.”</p>	<p>‘This farm stays in the family. It’s a question of blood. Allandale belongs to Lyle.”</p>

<p>“And I’m talking about every Asian, Moslem and Hottentot who come here and refuse to sign up to the Australian Way of Life.”</p>	<p>“We all got trapped into doing things we didn’t want to do.”</p>
<p>“Taking Nugget on. Under the circumstances. You have a remarkable capacity for forgiveness.”</p>	<p>“The land is not Nugget’s to give away.”</p>
<p>“He was a good man, your father. Don’t sling mud at him now.”</p>	<p>“We’re gonna claim what’s ours. That’s what we’re gonna do.”</p>
<p>“This is not Farley’s farm. This is my farm. And I will decide how it’s to be operated from now on. No one gets anything until I say so.”</p>	<p>“You’re not family. I’m sorry. But you’re not.”</p>

<p>“You don’t know what it means to put yourself second. And as a result you seem to have lost the capacity for human charity.”</p>	<p>“He’s a good worker, Nugget. Trouble is, he’s got big ideas.”</p>
<p>“It’s just the extra privileges they get which make people round here mad.”</p>	<p>“But I’m bugged if I’m going to honour his bloody dying wishes. I kept Farley’s secret for thirty-eight years, Girl. I stood by him all that time - and then he goes and does this.”</p>
<p>“A man has to live or die on his own piece of dirt. That’s always been the way, hasn’t it?”</p>	<p>“This is Nugget’s country. His people have already been dispossessed once. He has a spiritual attachment to this place.”</p>
<p>“I can’t wait to tell ‘em. This is the best thing that’s happened to our family for as long as I can remember.”</p>	<p>“Allandale has been in our family for five generations. So of course, it was a hard decision. abut who wouldn’t sell their farm to save their country.”</p>

Section 6. Essay Topics

1. *Inheritance* explores the challenges faced by rural families.
2. Both Norm and Lyle claim that 'life is not fair' and their view is borne out by all of the characters in the play. Do you agree?
3. William tells Julia, 'This is not about what's good for you'.
4. Is there anyone in the play, *Inheritance*, who is not driven by self-interest?
5. Norm tells Young Girlie: 'That's the hardest lesson in life, I reckon. Accepting how the coin falls and making the best of it'.
6. How accurate is this view of the world painted in *Inheritance*?
7. 'A man has to live or die on his own piece of dirt. That's always been the way, hasn't it?' Lyle's beliefs in his right to the land are both the motivation for his life and the reason for his death. Discuss.
8. Is Maureen Delaney the only winner in the play, *Inheritance*?
9. "You can't wait for things to come to you, you know. You've got to make things happen." Is Lyle's opinion vindicated by the end of the play?
- 10.
11. Hannie Rayson's *Inheritance* demonstrates that whilst 'family' is important, it is not so easy to decide what constitutes a family. Discuss.
12. This play demonstrates that education alone cannot solve problems of poverty, intolerance and depression. Discuss.
13. *Inheritance* shows us that misery is destined to repeat itself. Discuss.
14. This play supports the notion that people from the city are just as blind to reality as their country counterparts. Discuss.
15. Hannie Rayson challenges the view that success in life is about luck and 'timing'. Discuss.
16. *Inheritance* shows that we are ultimately governed by the views and values we have developed in childhood and people are rarely ever to change.

Section 7. Misc. Material

Pauline Hanson's Maiden Speech to Parliament



"Mr Acting Speaker, in making my first speech in this place, I congratulate you on your election and wish to say how proud I am to be here as the Independent member for Oxley. I come here not as a polished politician but as a woman who has had her fair share of life's knocks.

My view on issues is based on commonsense, and my experience as a mother of four children, as a sole parent, and as a businesswoman running a fish and chip shop. I won the seat of Oxley largely on an issue that has resulted in me being called a racist. That issue related to my comment that Aboriginals received more benefits than non-Aboriginals.

We now have a situation where a type of reverse racism is applied to mainstream Australians by those who promote political correctness and those who control the various taxpayer funded 'industries' that flourish in our society servicing Aboriginals, multiculturalists and a host of other minority groups. In response to my call for equality for all Australians, the most noisy criticism came from the fat cats, bureaucrats and the do-gooders. They screamed the loudest because they stand to lose the most--their power, money and position, all funded by ordinary Australian taxpayers.

Present governments are encouraging separatism in Australia by providing opportunities, land, moneys and facilities available only to Aboriginals. Along with millions of Australians, I am fed up to the back teeth with the inequalities that are being promoted by the government and paid for by the taxpayer under the assumption that Aboriginals are the most disadvantaged people in Australia. I do not believe that the colour of one's skin determines whether you are disadvantaged. As Paul Hasluck said in parliament in October 1955 when he was Minister for Territories:

The distinction I make is this. A social problem is one that concerns the way in which people live together in one society. A racial problem is a problem which confronts two different races who live in two separate societies, even if those societies are side by side. We do not want a society in Australia in which one group enjoy one set of privileges >and another group enjoy another set of privileges.

Has luck's vision was of a single society in which racial emphases were rejected and social issues addressed. I totally agree with him, and so would the majority of Australians.

But, remember, when he gave his speech he was talking about the privileges that white Australians were seen to be enjoying over Aboriginals. Today, 41 years later, I talk about the exact opposite--the privileges Aboriginals enjoy over other Australians. I

have done research on benefits available only to Aboriginals and challenge anyone to tell me how Aboriginals are disadvantaged when they can obtain three and five per cent housing loans denied to non-Aboriginals.

This nation is being divided into black and white, and the present system encourages this. I am fed up with being told, 'This is our land.' Well, where the hell do I go? I was born here, and so were my parents and children. I will work beside anyone and they will be my equal but I draw the line when told I must pay and continue paying for something that happened over 200 years ago. Like most Australians, I worked for my land; no-one gave it to me.

Apart from the \$40 million spent so far since Mabo on native title claims, the government has made available \$1 billion for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders as compensation for land they cannot claim under native title. Bear in mind that the \$40 million spent so far in native title has gone into the pockets of grateful lawyers and consultants. Not one native title has been granted as I speak.

The majority of Aboriginals do not want handouts because they realise that welfare is killing them. This quote says it all: "If you give a man a fish you feed him for a day. If you teach him how to fish you feed him for a lifetime."

Those who feed off the Aboriginal industry do not want to see things changed. Look at the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Members receive \$290 a day sitting allowance and \$320 a day travelling allowance, and most of these people also hold other very well paid positions. No wonder they did not want to resign recently!

Reconciliation is everyone recognising and treating each other as equals, and everyone must be responsible for their own actions. This is why I am calling for ATSIC to be abolished. It is a failed, hypocritical and discriminatory organisation that has failed dismally the people it was meant to serve. It will take more than Senator Herron's surgical skills to correct the terminal mess it is in. Anyone with a criminal record can, and does, hold a position with ATSIC. I cannot hold my position as a politician if I have a criminal record--once again, two sets of rules.

If politicians continue to promote separatism in Australia, they should not continue to hold their seats in this parliament. They are not truly representing all Australians, and I call on the people to throw them out. To survive in peace and harmony, united and strong, we must have one people, one nation, one flag.

The greatest cause of family breakdown is unemployment. This country of ours has the richest mineral deposits in the world and vast rich lands for agriculture and is surrounded by oceans that provide a wealth of seafood, and yet we are \$190 billion in debt with an interest bill that is strangling us.

Youth unemployment between the ages of 15 to 24 runs at 25 per cent and is even higher in my electorate of Oxley. Statistics, by cooking the books, say that Australia's unemployment is at 8.6 per cent, or just under one million people. If we disregard that one hour's work a week classifies a person as employed, then the figure is really between 1.5 million and 1.9 million unemployed. This is a crisis that recent governments have ignored because of a lack of will. We are regarded as a Third World country with First World living conditions. We have one of the highest interest rates in the world, and we owe more money per capita than any other country. All we need is a nail hole in the bottom of the boat and we're sunk.

In real dollar terms, our standard of living has dropped over the past 10 years. In the 1960s, our wages increase ran at three per cent and unemployment at two per cent. Today, not only is there no wage increase, we have gone backwards and unemployment is officially 8.6 per cent. The real figure must be close to 12 to 13 per cent.

I wish to comment briefly on some social and legal problems encountered by many of my constituents-- problems not restricted to just my electorate of Oxley. I refer to the social and family upheaval created by the Family Law Act and the ramifications of that act embodied in the child support scheme. The Family Law Act, which was the child of the disgraceful Senator Lionel Murphy, should be repealed. It has brought death, misery and heartache to countless thousands of Australians. Children are treated like pawns in some crazy game of chess.

The child support scheme has become unworkable, very unfair and one sided. Custodial parents can often profit handsomely at the expense of a parent paying child support, and in many cases the non-custodial parent simply gives up employment to escape the, in many cases, heavy and punitive financial demands. Governments must give to all those who have hit life's hurdles the chance to rebuild and have a future.

We have lost all our big Australian industries and icons, including Qantas when it sold 25 per cent of its shares and a controlling interest to British Airways. Now this government wants to sell Telstra, a company that made a \$1.2 billion profit last year and will make a \$2 billion profit this year. But, first, they want to sack 54,000 employees to show better profits and share prices. Anyone with business sense knows that you do not sell off your assets especially when they are making money. I may be only 'a fish and chip shop lady', but some of these economists need to get their heads out of the textbooks and get a job in the real world. I would not even let one of them handle my grocery shopping.

Immigration and multiculturalism are issues that this government is trying to address, but for far too long ordinary Australians have been kept out of any debate by the major parties. I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. Between 1984 and 1995, 40 per cent of all migrants coming into this country were of Asian origin. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. Of course, I will be called racist but, if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country. A truly multicultural country can never be strong or united. The world is full of failed and tragic examples, ranging from Ireland to Bosnia to Africa and, closer to home, Papua New Guinea. America and Great Britain are currently paying the price.

Arthur Calwell was a great Australian and Labor leader, and it is a pity that there are not men of his stature sitting on the opposition benches today. Arthur Calwell said:

Japan, India, Burma, Ceylon and every new African nation are fiercely anti-white and anti one another. Do we want or need any of these people here? I am one red-blooded Australian who says no and who speaks for 90% of Australians.

I have no hesitation in echoing the words of Arthur Calwell.

There is light at the end of the tunnel and there are solutions. If this government wants to be fair dinkum, then it must stop kowtowing to financial markets, international organisations, world bankers, investment companies and big business people. The

Howard government must become visionary and be prepared to act, even at the risk of making mistakes.

In this financial year we will be spending at least \$1.5 billion on foreign aid and we cannot be sure that this money will be properly spent, as corruption and mismanagement in many of the recipient countries are legend. Australia must review its membership and funding of the UN, as it is a little like ATSIIC on a grander scale, with huge tax-free American dollar salaries, duty-free luxury cars and diplomatic status.

The World Health Organisation has a lot of its medical experts sitting in Geneva while hospitals in Africa have no drugs and desperate patients are forced to seek medication on the black market. I am going to find out how many treaties we have signed with the UN, have them exposed and then call for their repudiation. The government should cease all foreign aid immediately and apply the savings to generate employment here at home.

Abolishing the policy of multiculturalism will save billions of dollars and allow those from ethnic backgrounds to join mainstream Australia, paving the way to a strong, united country. Immigration must be halted in the short-term so that our dole queues are not added to by, in many cases, unskilled migrants not fluent in the English language. This would be one positive step to rescue many young and older Australians from a predicament which has become a national disgrace and crisis. I must stress at this stage that I do not consider those people from ethnic backgrounds currently living in Australia anything but first-class citizens, provided of course that they give this country their full, undivided loyalty.

The government must be imaginative enough to become involved, in the short-term at least, in job creating projects that will help establish the foundation for a resurgence of national development and enterprise. Such schemes would be the building of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line, new roads and ports, water conservation, reforestation and other sensible and practical environmental projects.

Therefore I call for the introduction of national service for a period of 12 months, compulsory for males and females upon finishing year 12 or reaching 18 years of age. This could be a civil service with a touch of military training, because I do not feel we can go on living in a dream world forever and a day believing that war will never touch our lives again.

The government must do all it can to help reduce interest rates for business. How can we compete with Japan, Germany and Singapore, who enjoy rates of two per cent, 5.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively? Reduced tariffs on foreign goods that compete with local products seem only to cost Australians their jobs. We must look after our own before lining the pockets of overseas countries and investors at the expense of our living standards and future.

Mr Acting Speaker, time is running out. We may have only 10 to 15 years left to turn things around. Because of our resources and our position in the world, we will not have a say because neighbouring countries such as Japan, with 125 million people; China, with 1.2 billion people; India, with 846 million people; Indonesia, with 178 million people; and Malaysia, with 20 million people are well aware of our resources and potential. Wake up, Australia, before it is too late. Australians need and want leaders who can inspire and give hope in difficult times. Now is the time for the Howard government to accept the challenge.

Mr Acting Speaker, everything I have said is relevant to my electorate of Oxley, which is typical of mainstream Australia. I do have concerns for my country and I am going to do my best to speak my mind and stand up for what I believe in. As an independent I am confident that I can look after the needs of the people of Oxley and I will always be guided by their advice. It is refreshing to be able to express my views without having to toe a party line. It has got me into trouble on the odd occasion, but I am not going to stop saying what I think. I consider myself just an ordinary Australian who wants to keep this great country strong and independent, and my greatest desire is to see all Australians treat each other as equals as we travel together towards the new century.

I will fight hard to keep my seat in this place, but that will depend on the people who sent me here. Mr Acting Speaker, I thank you for your attention and trust that you will not think me presumptuous if I dedicate this speech to the people of Oxley and those Australians who have supported me. I salute them all." - Pauline Hanson.