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Nicholas Brown

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Abstract

This article integrates three lines of enquiry through a study of Australian economics in the inter-war years. The first relates to the 'systems of dispersion' surrounding the formation of economic enquiry in the Australian context of state interventionism and developmentalism. The second explores the forms of professionalism through which that knowledge was brought into practice, especially with reference to the education of economists drawn into wartime government in the 1940s. The third strand more tentatively proposes a critical perspective on the emergence of 'economic rationalism' in public policy in the 1980s by historicizing the values seen to be inherent in the culture and practice of welfarist economics, and particularly by assessing aspects of the relation between micro-economic and macro-economic models of state intervention with reference to the impact of Keynesian theory in the late 1930s.

Keywords: citizenship; economics; government; neo-liberalism; professionalism.

Australianism, professionalism and the Keynesian crusade

The 'locust strike' of 'economic rationalism' in Canberra – as one influential account has termed the Australian variant of the ascendant neo-liberal challenge to a welfarist orthodoxy (Pusey 1991) – has given a new salience to the customary interpretation of the history of Australian economics and economic thought. In the process, a consensus has been forged between the self-image of an earlier generation of Australian economists, with their origins in the 1920s and 1930s, and a contemporary regrouping of left-liberal critics who vehemently, vigilantly (but largely unsuccessfully, from their own perspective) combat the erosion of 'values' into mere 'technique' in the shaping of Australian public policy. Three interrelated themes dominate this customary interpretation as it is worked into contemporary engagement. First, in the inter-war years and into the period of war and reconstruction in the 1940s a pronounced 'Australianism', a

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consolidating professionalism, and an almost precocious, certainly triumphant Keynesianism shaped an impressive disciplinary orthodoxy in Australian economics centring on state intervention and social welfare commitments. Second, this orthodoxy is seen to have endured, albeit with some anticipatory chiselling from econometrics-for-its-own-sake ('mathematical exhibitionism' – Butlin 1966: 514) until the 1970s. Third, by then intimations of the neo-liberal plague were evident, with its opposing emphases on the primacy of the market, individualistic enterprise and private choice. Much is bound up in the synthesis of these three themes – as an historical explanation, a way of conceptualizing the emergence of bodies of knowledge, as a touchstone in current debate, and as an appraisal of the paths through which general trends in economics have been inflected into the Australian context.

The purpose of this article is to reassess some aspects of this synthesis, and of the antitheses which have been constructed around it. Through this reassessment it might be possible to generate a more effective response to the rationalities of the market and the 'private sphere', those central aberrations attributed to contemporary neo-liberalism, than the defences of welfarism which move rather too neatly from heroic disciplinary integrity to tragic ideological capture. Many of the issues canvassed here have already been raised in discussions of other national economies – most particularly by Miller and Rose in their analysis of British and European developments (Miller and Rose 1990). By building a more localized account around an assessment of these three themes, this article both offers a case study of another national economy and indicates some additional historical connections in understanding the 'systems of dispersion' surrounding the formation of strategies of government via economic expertise. The objective of what follows is not to engage with the evaluative or qualitative dimension of the combat between the advocates of 'social' or 'public' economics and those of 'market' or 'private' enterprise, and certainly not to debate this issue *within* economic theory or practice. It is instead to pose some questions about the relevant contexts, and the broader cultural and institutional interdependencies, which need to be considered before the confrontations of theories or ideologies can be taken as self-evident.

But, first, what is entailed by these three themes, and what connections might they suggest with the larger contexts in which bodies of knowledge are constituted and made operational? According to the customary account, Australian economics acquired an identity in the 1920s and 1930s as an enquiry shaped around institutions and practices which were then – and largely continued to be until the 1980s – distinctive to Australian social policy: a state system of industrial arbitration and wage fixing; an extensive pattern of public enterprise and regulation in infrastructure and service provision; and comprehensive protectionism (Groenewegen and McFarlane 1990: chs 6, 10). By the inter-war years there might have been a residual aspect to some of these hallmarks of 'colonial socialism', each with their origins in nineteenth-century concerns with maintaining a relatively high standard of living in a small, recently settled, racially exclusive society, dependent on distant markets (Butlin, Barnard and Pincus

1982: ch. 2). Yet the costs and (in)efficiencies associated with these practices, and the management of the institutions created to administer them (industrial courts, statutory authorities and so on), provided a formative environment in which economic expertise was first sought out by governments and refined in extensive if *ad hoc* consultation, particularly amid debates over issues of national development and the ideal of achieving ‘self-reliance’ in the 1920s. The state, clearly, was central to these patterns of ‘settled national policy’ (a phrase used in the first extensive report submitted to the Commonwealth government by a panel of economists, a 1929 enquiry into the effect of tariffs). And this centrality contributed a kind of macro-economic gloss to both policy and advice. Certainly, to some overseas observers it seemed that market efficiency and the role of private enterprise were largely disregarded in Australia. Local economists tended to respond either that those observers did not understand the overall pattern or that economic theory, surely, should be adjusted to suit particular circumstances (for example, Benham 1927: 221; Dyason 1928: 115).

Such defences of Australianism are familiar enough in the local literature and, once the Great Depression demanded some questioning of the effectiveness of market-based theories, the success of Australian economists in securing influence with their governments attracted considerable international interest (Goodwin 1974: 226–36). But it is important not to allow this celebratory strain to minimize the ways in which concepts of serving the social or national good through these inter-war interventions are not always the same as equivalent concepts figuring in the later, more sophisticated macro-economic models now threatened by neo-liberalism. Inter-war ‘Australianism’ had, as will be discussed below, a quite specific micro-economic basis, and the relevant indices – the ‘numbers’ – in areas such as the estimation of costs, statistical units, standards of living and the entitlements of citizens, even of ‘the economic’ as a domain of enquiry, are not in a seamless continuum with their post-war equivalents. This contextual specificity needs to be taken into account in explaining the changing alignment of economic knowledge and in constructing evaluative norms against which ‘economic rationalism’ might be assessed.

‘Professionalism’, the second theme of the synthesis, maintains that these inter-war circumstances fostered a perception among Australian economists that they constituted a self-defining and self-regulating community of expertise (Groenewegen and McFarlane 1990: ch. 8; Fleming 1995). Several benchmarks are seen to register this rising professional standing: the founding of the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand in 1925, with the purpose of co-ordinating and representing the work of economists engaging with ‘the peculiar features’ of Australian ‘economic organization’; the Society’s publication of the *Economic Record* as a ‘scientific’ journal commencing at the end of that year; the status of D. B. Copland after 1924 as Australia’s first Professor of Commerce (at the University of Melbourne – an appointment marking a re-orientation from an older teaching of political economy towards a more applied economics); and then the increasing prominence of figures like Copland in securing recognition for the role of ‘economic research and advice’ (Copland 1925: 140, 142). The marked

presence of students of economics among the first university graduates to be specifically recruited into the Australian Commonwealth Public Service towards the end of the 1930s confirms the process. This recruitment in turn launched senior bureaucratic careers which would endure until the 1970s, fostering a particular ethic of 'public service', an ethic which has in its turn come under recent scrutiny from changing concepts of accountability linked to neo-liberalism.

Yet professionalism is not necessarily an historically stable attribute, particularly as it intersects with other knowledge claims, other ways of defining the issues or problems requiring professional ministrations. Further, professionalism is influenced by other concurrent identities of social engagement, for example, that of conscience, or ethics. Nor should we expect to encounter stability even in the deportment and persona seen to be appropriate to a professional: the ways in which expertise is embodied in individualized styles and manners. It is revealing to consider some of these intersecting identities as they conditioned understandings of the nature of economic professionalism, especially since the characteristics recently attributed to economic rationalists – 'eco rats' – build on remarkably personalized typologies to reveal their degeneracy from an idealized, historicized norm. As will be argued below, the nascent professionalism of inter-war and early post-World War II economists existed in relation to other professionalisms – of the bureaucrat, the statistician, the academic, the social worker and so on – with often equally dynamic and reflexive relations to their 'subjects', their 'clients', their responsibilities, their 'reality'.

To a large extent, our first two themes are mutually reinforcing, and claim much the same historical periodization. With the third theme the focus shifts to the arrival of Keynesian economics at a moment in the later 1930s, and to that generation coming between figures like Copland and the now-dominant economic rationalists. Without buying into an old debate concerning the extent to which Australian economists anticipated some aspects of Keynesian macro-economics (the multiplier theory being the leading claim for Australian prescience), it is clear that many recent graduates and undergraduates of the 1930s were particularly predisposed to 'the Keynesian crusade'. Through it they could up-grade that inherited engagement with an interventionist state by applying Keynesian techniques of counter-cyclical demand management.

R. I. Downing, one of Copland's most successful students, his assistant as Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister from 1941 to 1945, and from 1954 Professor of Economic Research at Melbourne, reflected:

At the end of 1935 I graduated with first-class honours in economics, but with a mind utterly confused as to the causes and cures of the still-continuing, shattering mass unemployment . . . and then . . . came *The General Theory*.
(Downing 1976: 111)

There is a particular resonance to Downing's place in this thematic synthesis: he read an advance copy of *The General Theory* brought to Melbourne by W. B. Reddaway, who came from Cambridge in 1936 on Keynes' recommendation 'since the Australians took heed of economists' advice' (Reddaway 1995: 6). Equally, H.

C. Coombs, Director-General of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction from 1943 to 1949, then Governor of Australia's central bank until 1967 and a leading adviser to both Liberal and Labor governments, recalls a pervasive but amorphous socialism giving way in the latter 1930s as 'the star of Keynes emerged as a focus for youthful enthusiasm and sense of revolt' (Coombs 1970: 41).

Here, then, is the inauguration of the 'Keynesian Crusade' among what is now esteemed the 'Coombs generation' of 'generously reformist' economists in Australian universities and government (Stretton 1987: 202; Pusey 1991: 161). And here is the emergence of what Kenway terms 'the autonomy of macroeconomics' and all it represented in terms of new alignments of economic expertise, new techniques of managing the aggregates of national accounts, and the freeing of politics and policy to investigate the moral and social spaces of the welfare state (Kenway 1994: 8–9, 169–73). Yet this enthusiastic, largely retrospective celebration of Keynesian economics, while it is often taken to be crucial in cementing the gains of Australianism and professionalism, can in fact be seen to have an ambivalent relationship to these first two dimensions of the synthesis. As Tomlinson has argued of the British case, the notion of a 'Keynesian revolution', while useful as a professional investment that presupposes mundane policy to be derived from high theory, obscures the more circumstantially specific contexts and concepts shaping economic policy (Tomlinson 1981).

The present case study supplements this point: the contexts of Australianism and the interdependencies of professionalism did not always easily mesh with Keynesian imperatives. The synthesis is perhaps better seen as the emergence of a new problematic in which the enumerations (the 'numbers') which were an integral dimension of inter-war definitions of the sphere of governance, and the concepts of the legitimate ambit (the 'reality') of professional ministration, were subsumed into the apparatus and ethics of Keynesianism or, at least, its Australian manifestation.

In drawing attention to this process, the point is not to chip away at another aspect of the welfarist orthodoxy by revealing less than altruistic foundations nor to gauge the extent to which, or the success with which, Keynesian theory was 'put into practice' (Whitwell 1986). It is instead to offer an assessment of the ways in which the new rationalities of post-war government, caught up in and negotiated through this inter-war and wartime synthesis, reconfigured the relations between economic knowledge and the subjects and forms of economic and social analysis. As Keynesian economics was inflected into the Australian pattern it did not simply realize or potentize some latent and distinctive inter-war welfarism to be now lamented; instead, it produced new problematics of government which are still – even beneath the relentless swarm of neo-liberalism – being worked through.

'... a more or less delicately organised piece of mechanism'

'A nation of statisticians' is a mid-point chapter in Groenewegen and McFarlane's (1990) *History of Australian Economic Thought*. The title registers the

recognition won for economic enquiry in colonial Australia through statistical work and the advancement of economists in State and Commonwealth Bureaux of Census and Statistics. To McFarlane, 'eccentric' interests and 'obsessions' characterized the first colonial statisticians: interests in psychology, lunacy and eugenics, the age-height-weight ratios of an 'Australian type', in speculative land investments, better housing and working conditions and so on (Groenewegen and McFarlane 1990: ch. 5). Yet if statistics is considered as 'the art of reasoning by figures upon things relating to Government' (Shirras 1925: 7), then the emphasis given to 'number' in Australian economics reveals instead an emerging field of intelligibility, with its distinctive notations, procedures of inscription and calculation (Miller and Rose 1990: 5–6). Even the devotion of G. H. Knibbs, the first Commonwealth Statistician, to Greek poetry loses its eccentricity when seen in this light. Knibbs drew on this literature to react against 'unalloyed Hedonism', and to celebrate 'that enlarged conception of Time and Space' coming down from the Greeks. This view of the expanding sphere of moral, spatial and temporal governance was of a piece with Knibbs' espousal of a 'New Malthusianism' in relation to the threat of global over-population and the challenge of 'human desire', and his placement of statistics as an 'instrument' for 'determining in what direction it is wise for the social organism to evolve' in a new settler society (Knibbs 1910a: 6, 7, 1913, 1928: 104).

The alignments of statistical expertise, then, reflect specific governmental interests and priorities. Further, they reflect particular configurations of expertise and of the professional persona appropriate to these fields of intelligibility. Rather than eccentricity, the preoccupations of Australian statisticians find their rationality in the problems confronting 'a settler society'.

Ian Hacking has emphasized the emergence of statistics as a 'moral science' in late nineteenth-century France around issues of deviancy, criminality, suicide, prostitution and divorce (Hacking 1991). For Durkheim, statistical enquiry revealed 'currents of opinion' indicating the ways in which a society and its citizens adapted to change, and the influence of factors such as heredity, race and culture. The French context, in contrast to Australia, was of a modernizing nation, in which new concepts of social solidarity were formulated to comprehend the diffuse networks and alliances created as a result of unprecedented social mobility. The 'mechanical' model of traditional societies, defined within village and extended familial forms, gave way to the indeterminacies of risk and chance in a society seen more in terms of an 'organic' analogy (Lukes 1975: 15, 191–2).

In Britain around the same time statistical enquiry was linked more to an emerging social administration ethic and a professionalism centring on issues of public health, education, unemployment, poor relief and social work. An English text widely used in inter-war undergraduate courses in Australia, A.L. Bowley's (1923) *The Measurement of Social Phenomena*, was still tracing 'modern statistical sociology' back to late nineteenth-century social meliorism. 'Electricity', so Bowley wrote, 'is more subtle than poverty or unemployment, and we should be able to devise scales for the definite measurement of these' (Bowley 1923: 3–10).

Durkheim's British counterpart was probably Karl Pearson, a Cambridge mathematician and advocate of an evolutionary socialism which displaced concepts of the inherent 'rights' of individuals with a classification of social types and a trajectory of social progress. Eugenics was much to the fore in this interpretation, carrying a clear ethic of professionalized intervention – a potent combination which sought, for example, to over-ride the privacies of marriage, favouring instead 'state interference if necessary in the matter of child bearing'. More moderate strains of this thinking were widely influential among figures who influenced inter-war Australian economists. William Beveridge and J. M. Keynes subscribed to an analysis linking population and economic decline, although for Keynes in particular the issue related to the avoidance of economic stagnation rather than social degeneracy – an emphasis which, again in comparison to French equivalents, continued to slant debates on a range of issues, such as models of social welfare provision and family policy, well into the 1940s (MacKenzie 1981; Winter 1990).

In Australia, however, the issue was not the modernizing of a traditional society or the professionalization of philanthropic modes of social control. It was instead the creation of a new nation – or, in the recurrent phrase of the period, the 'peopling' of a 'new land' (Phillips and Wood 1928: 9). In an intriguing fusion of the mechanical and organic models, in 1925 C. H. Wickens, Knibbs' successor as Commonwealth Statistician, wrote for the first *Economic Record* that:

this collection of people which makes up the population of Australia is not a mere heap of heterogeneous material shot on a dump in the Western Pacific, but is rather a more or less delicately organised piece of mechanism which is capable of great things if due attention is paid to the appropriate balance of its parts, but which may be thrown seriously out of gear by any dislocation of its regular action.

(Wickens 1925: 13)

In this exhortatory mode, statistics located all citizens within an emergent national entity predicated on governmental interventions to secure homogeneity and informed not so much by an emphasis on scales of deviancy and the pressures of social concentration as on formulas of inclusion and exclusion – all influenced by themes of racial unity, geographical uniqueness and demographic dispersion. If early in the nineteenth century those governing an inchoate colonial society had distinguished between the 'great interests of the country' and 'mere population' (Hancock 1947: 57), the large-scale immigrations of the 1850s demanded more exacting ways of knowing the condition of that population. There developed an increasing interest in ascertaining in detail the domestic condition of the people through the census, the data handled where possible by professional compilers, replacing earlier 'musters' conducted by the police (Davidson 1991: 214–17). One of the central projects proposed by the largely amateur economists who formed the Australian Economic Association in Sydney in 1888 was a statistical history of the colonies, focusing on 'our national land policy and the relations between labour and capital' (Butlin 1986: xvii, xxiii).

In contrast to British discussions, by the 1920s Australian students of eugenics were arguing that the differential fertility rates associated with class groupings in Britain might well be irrelevant in Australia, where 'free education, a generous standard of living and relative vertical mobility' could moderate many 'inferiorities' (Agar 1928: 143). Attention was focused on the role of a synthesis of statistics and sociology in a proposed Commonwealth Bureau of Economics which would investigate issues such as absorptive capacity, optimum population size, urban capacity and relevant indices in determining the suitability of white settlement in the tropics (Phillips and Wood 1928: 6–8). Knibbs subscribed fully to the interpretation that the 'new social classification of the population' associated with nineteenth-century industrialization had produced a more fragmented and potentially unequal society. But the professional context for this reflection was his responsibility, in the years before World War I, for assessing the feasibility of extending the 'social laboratory' of Australian public policy, recommending new systems of pension provision and social insurance to the Commonwealth government. These provisions would create new 'rights' among defined sections of the citizenry: the elderly, the invalid, the unemployed and so on. In this connection, Knibbs observed that:

studies in economics and statecraft have revealed with ever increasing clearness the fact that . . . every community is to be regarded as an organism, since the reactions of individuals or groups of individuals upon other individuals or groups, or upon the whole community, are of that intimate character which fully justifies the analogy.

(Knibbs 1910b: 12–13)

If the organic analogy in American economics, by way of contrast, emphasized the unimpeded operations of the market, in Australia it often presupposed the motive force of the state (Goodwin 1966: 325).

Alastair Davidson interprets the expanding range of early statistical enquiry in Australia in terms of the intrusive 'triumph of the State' (Davidson 1991: 214–17). But it is more pertinent to note the ways in which diverse fields of government – of constructing social, civic and personal identities – were specifically ascribed as state responsibilities (Miller and Rose 1992: 174–8). The statistician's survey might register new claims upon the nation's prosperity, particularly as economic debate increasingly encompassed issues of the distribution of income and wealth.

In 1905, R. M. Johnston, the Tasmanian Government Statistician, published calculations relating to old age pensions, advancing the proposition that 'after feeding, sheltering and educating eight children to the age of 15. . . a parent who survived to the age of 65 was owed a notional debt of £2586, equivalent to an annuity of £287' (Davison 1995: 47–8). The determination after 1907 by the Commonwealth Court of Arbitration to set the minimum male wage – the basic wage – to the needs of a family unit living in 'frugal comfort' gave further prominence to the need to know the condition of the population: what it ate, the prices and taxes it paid, how it lived, the expenses it faced in its participation in a 'civilized community'. Certainly, as was the case in Knibbs' reports on welfare

entitlements, there was always the caution that such provision should be administered so as not to erode the 'moral fibre' of enterprise and thrift; and there was close scrutiny of expenditures by individuals 'on various objects the national value of which is questionable' (Knibbs 1910b: 91). Yet, by the time of a 1920 Royal Commission into the extent to which the basic wage continued accurately to register the needs of the family unit, it was deemed necessary to conduct 115 sittings, examine 796 witnesses and to consider '580 exhibits ranging from utensils to the lining of a boy's trousers' (Reiger 1986).

Through these various deployments of number emerged a specific construction of the Australian nation and its population as an object of government. In the commitment to shaping a new nation, the prior, instrumentalist, initiatory role of government was emphasized, and balanced against a citizenry which was not so much pressing in upon the good order of the state, or requiring intervention to be made fit, but which was defined by an allocation of 'the national dividend' (to take the title of a pioneering 1928 study by J.T. Sutcliffe, a senior officer in the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics). The principles informing this allocation had many levels of influence. To take one brief example, they informed the ways in which the *Economic Record* organized the emerging 'science' of Australian economics. The comprehensive indexing categories in the first volumes ranged from Australian National Dividend, Australian Population, Australian Productive Efficiency through to Vitality of White Races in Low Latitudes, Vital Statistics, Wages and Production. In 1926 Wickens was working with the Commonwealth Tax Commissioner on a 'prosperity index' to ascertain 'the Australian individual net income' (Roe 1995: 91). Two years later J. T. Sutcliffe's *National Dividend* – with a preface by Bowley – concluded uncompromisingly: 'for a large percentage of the people the income they received is barely sufficient to provide for maintenance on a moderate standard of life' – adding that, if it were possible to compare the income of 'married men with families' to that of single men, an even greater 'inadequacy' would be revealed (Sutcliffe 1928). In 1929 the Commonwealth Bureau decided to include in the census a question relating to income below £300 per annum, an inquiry conducted nowhere else except New Zealand (Forster and Hazlehurst 1988: 65).

The identities and entitlements consolidated through these statistical interventions clearly have connections to 'the Australian settlement' now seen to be in its demise – that pattern of 'White Australia, Trade Protection, Wage Arbitration, State Paternalism and Imperial Benevolence' (Kelly 1994). To that extent they show the influence of a pervasive 'labourism' in Australian political culture (Beilharz 1994: 36–8), reflected in this instance not so much in a powerful labour movement – industrial and parliamentary – but in the structures of government built around that 'settlement'. Further, they show a local variant or bias in that form of citizenship which Miller and Rose see as characteristic of Britain and Europe in the first half of this century: 'the citizen as a social being whose powers and obligations were articulated in the language of social responsibilities and collective solidarities' (Miller and Rose 1990: 23–4) – here broken down into claims largely negotiated through wage regulation.

Yet this cluster of enquiry around 'number' also needs to be seen in the context of an inflection of the inter-war welfare economics deriving from A. C. Pigou, expressing the conviction that 'states of consciousness' could be known in terms of relative welfare (rather than the descriptive 'satisfactions' associated with post-World War II formulations) and 'brought under the category of greater and less'. Welfare, then, could be evaluated as the distribution of a social net product on the basis of certain functions citizens fulfilled and rights deriving from their roles in work, or motherhood, youth or age (Pigou 1912). The inter-war economic subject was one whose needs were measurable and capable of interpersonal comparison within a *public* space of citizenship – perhaps as one dimension of that 'delicately organised piece of mechanism' Wickens had evoked. This emphasis on *allocative* entitlements within a concept of *economic* distribution can be contrasted to the very different numberings associated with estimates of *aggregate* expenditure and income emerging with an alternative model of welfare economics in the post-war years, in turn centring around a more 'active and individualistic' concept of citizenship (Miller and Rose 1990: 24). The insistence then was that subjective states could not be compared, but that the operations of '*the* economy', now conceived as a largely autonomous entity to be governed in itself, could be regulated to make available the satisfactions individuals might pursue (Little 1957: ch. 6; Emmison 1983). The complexities of this transition are too easily overlooked by the assumed integrity of the Australianism-professionalism-Keynesian synthesis.

'He has an alert conscience in respect to quantity'

Much of the preceding discussion can be personalized into two figures: L. F. Giblin, from 1919 statistician to the Tasmanian and then Commonwealth governments and, after 1929, the first Professor of Economic Research in Melbourne, working in close association with Copland; and R. I. Downing, who 'inherited' Giblin's chair in 1954 and whose significance in the coming of the 'Keynesian Revolution' to Australia has already been noted. The value of this personalization lies in revealing something of the multiplicity of identities lying beneath the surface of the customary interpretation, and in assessing the extent to which these identities can serve as historically transportable norms, on the one hand, or are the contingent parts of an unfolding problematic, on the other.

Born into the Tasmanian non-conformist establishment, Giblin graduated in mathematics and science from Cambridge in 1896, describing himself as a socialist by the turn of the century. While he showed few traces of Karl Pearson's eugenicism, he did advocate opening areas of family life to public regulation, calling for the reform of divorce laws and advocating a system of maternal benefits favouring larger families. As a Tasmanian Labor parliamentarian before World War I, Giblin insisted on an 'icily rational' scrutiny of any claim to the redistributive benefit of market regulation or of publicly owned social services. He wrote in references for his students those phrases which run through this

article: 'he has a lively sense of number and reality'; 'he has an alert conscience with respect to number and quantity' (this last as a reference for Downing as he left for Cambridge in 1936). What might seem eccentric associations – 'lively' and 'conscience' with respect to 'number' – accorded with Giblin's sense that a nation, a population, an individual condition could be brought into comprehension through statistical knowledge, and that such knowledge – personalized in both its imaginative investment and social conscience – constituted a professional expertise crucial to good government.

In Giblin, then, the themes of Australianism and professionalism have an exemplar. Through the 1920s and 1930s he analysed the effects of industrial, tariff and land settlement policies on prevailing costs, prices and wages, working sometimes through the beguiling schedules of productivity, skill, seasonality and hierarchy prepared by the Bureau of Statistics for basic wage determinations, and seizing every opportunity to indict the 'indifference' of governments to 'the quality of their public service and their blindness to the need of both first-class minds and technical competence if democracy is to be made safe from party-politics' (Giblin 1935: 2). From these positions, and after 1938 as chair of a committee of senior economists advising the Commonwealth government well into World War II, Giblin advocated the rights of the individual citizen to efficient markets and services.

Again, what are significant here are the ways in which his enquiries made the citizenry intelligible to government. In his 'Letters to John Smith' – a figure borrowed from the evangelical socialism of Robert Blatchford's *Clarion* – Giblin argued in the press during 1930 for the principle of 'equality of sacrifice'. By 1933, searching for new sources of revenue, Giblin rejected taxes on luxuries at a time when 'in order to restore the balance of production, we want to see luxuries and semi-luxuries becoming necessities' in calculating average standards of living – yet still determining on a strict price hierarchy determined by quality and need as much as incurred costs (Giblin 1933). In 1936 he succeeded in steering the Commonwealth Grants Commission, established to deal with inequalities in the positions of the six Australian states through the distribution of Commonwealth loans, towards principles of equalization based on common needs rather than disparate, localized disabilities. The Commission's subsequent report encouraged concentrations of large-scale, specialized production in the most efficient regions while being equally concerned to avoid the concentration of political power by vesting 'adequate resources and . . . sufficient powers' in all states and within states in accordance with the principles of federation (Commonwealth Grants Commission 1936: 47–9).

This careful separation of political and social citizenship from economic productivity was vital for Giblin, but equally important was that the identity conferred upon the citizen was in no sense one of an individualized subjectivity but of a kind of contractual, carefully itemized entitlement. In 1940, restless with Colin Clark's figuring in *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, Giblin suggested – with a characteristic tease at the excesses of commercialized consumption – that the 'per head' unit of estimation was unhelpful: the need was to devise a

'consuming unit in which a man would have weight 10, a women 9 (or should it be 15), with appropriate figures for children of different ages' (Giblin 1940: 265). The basic point, however, was in earnest: the citizen existed through assured access to the market, but in terms of an identity to be ascertained through specifically enumerated claims.

This figure of the consumer, posited as a point at which to determine equity, and as an ensemble of entitlements to be disaggregated according to specific identities – worker, wife, parent, child and so on – is one of the central formulations of the inter-war period, and one which translates most ambivalently into the 'Keynesian Crusade'. Even prior to the full enunciation of the Keynesian emphasis on effective demand, the consumer was a figure through which to pose questions about the types of markets to be encouraged in recovery from depression. Writing in the *Economic Record* in 1934, A.G. B. Fisher, Professor of Economics at the University of Western Australia, noted with approval the tendency of economies to channel resources into the tertiary sector as they progressed, into 'facilities for travel, amusements of various kinds, governmental and other personal and intangible services, music, art, literature, education, science, philosophy and the like'. Fisher's individualized recommendation, that wise recovery policy would encourage investment in 'those things which people with rising incomes are likely to wish to purchase' (Fisher 1934), was at variance with Giblin's commitment to make 'luxuries' more accessible as common goods. But, even so, the consumer had a shared centrality in these analyses.

Implicit in these contrasts was the consumer as an awkward point of transition between the two concepts of citizenship Rose and Miller define, and the two registers of Australian labourism: one based in the labour movement – heavily invested with class overtones and 'wage justice', the defiant 'Paradise of the Working Man' (Beilharz 1994: 37) – and the other more pragmatic version, centring on government through the 'settled national policies' of protection and wage regulation yet still with an eye to 'economy'. The tensions involved in this transition had been particularly evident in that 1929 enquiry into the costs imposed by tariff policies mentioned above. Seeking a figure outside the two contending blocs in production – powerfully unionized labour and capital, which, in Australian circumstances, seemed deficient in social conscience and entrepreneurial vigour – the 'consumer' was evoked as the unrepresented majority who carried the costs of inefficient industry (Brigden *et al.* 1929). In 1931, in what was effectively the first composite general textbook for Australian economics students edited by Copland, F. W. Eggleston positioned the figure in this way:

In Australia, the influence of the citizen in his vocation as a producer has always been more powerful than his interests as a citizen of a consumer. The majority of Australian citizens has, therefore, never been able to express itself coherently and effectively.

(Eggleston 1931: 245)

Consumption, then, seemed to represent a more complete form of civic participation, of registering social and personal identities in the sphere of government, than other forms of economic activity (such as productivity, enterprise or labour). Still, the emerging issue here was the contrast between the consumer either as constituted around a national dividend or as a subjective agent defining his or her own interests. Just as in Britain in the 1930s a prominent group of Fabian economists – including Durbin, Gaitskell and Colin Clark (the last visiting the Melbourne Commerce School in 1937) – posed no essential antipathy between the market and society, seeking to accommodate the allocative role of market and price mechanisms in securing efficiency and investment with a commitment to equalizing income (Durbin 1985), so for Giblin there was an attempt to build a progressive *micro-economics of cost, scarcity, choice and efficiency* around ‘the consumer’ not as ‘an abstract figure in an abstract market’ of private choice – the caste the consumer increasingly assumed in post-war aggregative analysis (Williams 1983: 78–9) – but as a concretely defined citizen registering public entitlements. The point to register here is that this contrast was not simply *one of economic theory* but was also caught up in a multiplicity of identities and ways of knowing the citizen.

The education of economics students at the University of Melbourne provides a valuable perspective onto this multiplicity as it was drawn into the domains encompassed by Australianism and professionalism. A central feature of this education among the senior undergraduates and graduates drawn into Giblin’s research and discussion groups was their participation in extensive social surveys and demographic exercises. In notes Downing prepared for Giblin in 1934 as his research assistant, relating to the methods of one household survey, he proposed that ‘there is ample scope for a judicious extension, upon a large scale, of income bearing civil rights which will both reduce inequality, proportion income more nearly to need, and react favourably on production’ (Downing 1934). Two years later Giblin encouraged Downing’s first publication in the *Economic Record*, ‘Forecasting the age distribution of future population’, which encompassed issues from maternal and infant mortality, to expenditure on education and health services, to average age profile ‘and therefore attitudes towards social change’ (Downing 1936) – that is, that attitudes could be more or less read from demographic units. Questions of ‘social hygiene’ were also prominent in this broad agenda, establishing wider linkages, for example, with an inter-war medical ethic emphasizing preventive public health schemes (Gillespie 1991: 31–52) and a more ‘scientific’ emphasis in social work training, eventually formalized in the models of social case work introduced into such training at Melbourne University in 1941 in close association with the Commerce School. Here, again, was a connection with two professionalisms – medicine and social work – both in a phase of alignment with concepts of the *social* realization of citizenship in contrast to post-war concerns with the integrity of client relationships. There was also in this inter-war education a clear deference to earlier British surveys of housing and living conditions, and to the contemporary concerns of institutions such as the League of Nations, the Institute of Pacific Affairs and

the Commonwealth Government's National Health and Medical Research Council with nutrition levels as a point of intersection for a range of concerns with national efficiency, social adjustment and racial fitness. What was sought through these techniques was a quantification of health, housing, diet, family structure and budget, through which to ascertain the condition of the people, and to determine levels of supply and distribution appropriate to this condition.

Against this background – the daunting intricacies of this mass of detail and number, with no clear purchase on the larger, structural crisis of the Great Depression – it is easy to see the attractiveness to younger economists of the macro-economic precepts of Keynes' *General Theory*. An early sense of this liberation is conveyed in an essay Downing wrote for his tutor after he had made what, at least in retrospect, seemed the pilgrimage to King's College, Cambridge, in 1937:

Atheism, hedonism, fatalism and nihilism have disposed of a number of the unpleasant forms of self-mortification imposed by the Puritan ethic. Now Keynesianism has finally dispensed with any virtue attaching to thrift.

(Downing n.d.)

Yet this Keynesian bravura should not obscure the micro-level questioning of the factors which impeded the efficient operation of markets which immediately preceded it. It is not just a matter of reclaiming as an historical curiosity the kind of reformism Giblin represents, but of seeking to place that reformism within a history which attends to the 'fields of strategic possibilities' characterizing the formation of discursive practices, and the traces and vulnerabilities they might bequeath to succeeding practices (Foucault 1972: 38). Keynesian theory might have solved a problem at one level, but at another it had to find a place in relation to this existing field of intelligibility, of 'reality'. Certainly when Downing went to Cambridge it was not so much Keynesian economics which most immediately shaped his thinking, but that other, more politically challenging revolution centring around Joan Robinson's *The Economics of Imperfect Competition* (1933), and reinforced in his supervision by Gerald Shove (a member of the Fabian group noted above) and the influence of Michal Kalecki, whose informal seminar on prices he attended.

Whereas Keynes accepted the assumption that firms were price takers in competition, emphasizing the role of the state in sustaining demand, Robinson argued that firms were grouped price settlers, seeking to maximize their profits – a conclusion with far-reaching ramifications for the determination of economic values, and in raising the question of the role of the state in matters of allocation. Owing much to Shove's suspicions of any 'instantaneous fluidity' in economic adjustments, Robinson rejected the assumption that labour receives the value of its marginal product, arguing instead that profits were more likely to be stabilized in the course of industrial fluctuations, with the brunt of change being registered in wages (Feiwel 1989: 31–5). To this Kalecki added the observation – drawn from an extensive study of the relative stability in the share of wages in the national income of Britain and the United States despite marked

swings in the business cycle – that a dense network of impermeable monopoly determined the distribution of income more than any lame assumption of competition. Kalecki recommended the state assume a much more systematic responsibility to subsidize mass consumption, and called for greater flexibility in the wages system as a way of overcoming the maldistribution of profits from economic expansion (Kalecki 1939: 17–18). Even from this brief survey, it will be evident that there are several reasons why the counter-cyclical techniques of Keynes were preferable in the post-war decades of revived, managed capitalist expansion to the Kalecki–Robinson critique.

Clearly, there are several points at which this theoretically and politically charged interpretation linked with the issues of allocation and distribution which had been current in Melbourne. These connections informed Downing's 1938 Cambridge Diploma of Economics thesis, 'The control of wages in Australia', which he began with the proposition that 'the only basis on which private enterprise might be acceptable was to assume the existence of equality of opportunity for all individuals', yet this was 'notoriously absent'. Throughout, Downing gave little credence to the ability of wage determinations to correspond to the needs of workers, their productivity, or the value of what they produced. Instead, he advanced a series of arguments intended to realize the greater potential of Australia's Arbitration Courts to be instruments of social improvement. If wage levels did not accurately reflect economic valuations, why should not the courts use them to address social objectives more directly? In particular, the court might allocate wages to individuals on the basis of a formula in which, Downing hypothesized, workers received half the wages bill, wives a quarter, and children an entitlement of one-eighth each. On this basis, total family income would be 50 per cent higher than the basic wage, to be funded by employers paying every employee a single man's wages and a tax of 100 per cent on this wage bill to be distributed according to family needs (Downing 1939: 1–2, 75). This was a clear statement of the principle that wages should represent an allocation of a national dividend to carefully disaggregated consuming units. It stood in an equivocal relation to a masculinist labourism while relying on its governmental structures. It also defined a rather different sphere of government than that associated with the Keynesian dispensation from 'thrift'. How could the two be combined – especially by a economist returning to Australia, to be drawn into the shaping of economic policy amid the stringencies of total war and the aspirations and anxieties which shaped policies for post-war reconstruction?

'Rentier proletarians' and 'chromium-studded motor vehicles'

In his exchange with Hayek following the publication of the latter's *Road to Serfdom* in 1944, Keynes conceded 'moderate planning will be safe if those carrying it out are rightly oriented in their own minds and hearts . . . [towards] the restoration of right moral thinking'. Keynes was following Hayek in observing that any promise of 'plenty just around the corner' must not further diminish

the dignity of enterprise, and that the origins of 'goodness or badness' were in the sphere of 'individual responsibility' rather than any generalized 'social conscience' (Keynes 1944).

These qualifications are worth bearing in mind in considering what 'Keynesianism' injected into the Australian synthesis discussed so far. If an idealized figure of 'the consumer' in the inter-war years had been evoked to mediate the more equitable allocation of a national dividend and – as Eggleston put it in 1931 – to secure a balance in the interests represented in government, then by the end of the 1930s this figure was moving into another, more exacting domain. Here 'the consumer' emerged as one crucial determinant of the stability of the economic system: a figure whose activities were increasingly registered among the aggregates of economic performance, on the one hand, and in a private sphere of citizenship, on the other. In a 1937 decision to restore the basic wage to 1929 levels, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court followed the fresh-minted Keynesian advice of W. B. Reddaway, who appeared as a 'expert witness' at Downing's instigation, and was excited to find himself an actor in 'Australianism' (Reddaway 1995: 4). Reddaway argued that a general wage increase should be granted to stem the capacity of 'entrepreneurs to start superfluous enterprises' since at least 'wage earners ... unlike other classes, spend their share of income without delay' and so contributed directly to economic recovery (Commonwealth Arbitration Reports 1937: 589). At the same time, Reddaway was writing to the *Economic Journal* that 'we cannot as a community enjoy an increasing income unless we are prepared, literally, to enjoy it – ie. to produce and consume more non-essentials' (Reddaway 1937: 307). This, then, was one aspect of the Keynesian revolution – still with an emphasis on a public domain of reform and citizenship 'as a community'. Yet as the return of prosperity in the late 1930s shifted into the control of a wartime economy, another aspect of Keynesianism cut in, witnessed not just by the techniques of containing a wartime and post-war inflation, but also the attempt to secure some influence over the reconstituted domain of 'individual responsibility'.

As economists were recruited into the wartime bureaucracy – Downing, for example, working as assistant to Copland, who was Commonwealth Prices Commissioner and then Adviser to the Prime Minister; Coombs as Director of Rationing, then of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction – the private consumer assumed a more complex significance as a 'problem space' within the economy and the prevailing rationalities of government. It is worth recalling that an inter-war professionalism of 'administration' had also been allied to concepts of the state and social management. Herman Finer's *The Theory and Practice of Government* (1932) offers a characteristic refrain from the texts Downing had studied in political science units running parallel to his economics courses as an undergraduate. Arguing against 'the crude contrast of Sovereign and Subject', Finer insisted that 'every act of our lives is an act of government'. It followed that:

it is urgent that we should no longer be blinded by the facts of the Absolute State or the predictions of the Servile State. In the State whose nature is

management or instrumentality, in the Ministrant State of today, the energising factor of our rights is duty, a inescapable price.

(Finer 1932: 24)

But if economists now had direct access to ‘the Ministrant State’, the very terms of that access confronted them with new subjectivities associated in part with the techniques of dealing with a fully mobilized society – its morale, its skills, aptitudes and diversity, its resistances as well as its entitlements as evoked in the rhetoric of reconstruction. Here, ‘rights’, ‘duty’ and the interdependence of Sovereign and Subject had a particularly stressed currency (Beilharz 1991). Equally, these subjectivities were themselves an extension of that more private sphere of citizenship emerging in the late 1930s. So in the 1940s the consumer was reconstituted at the intersection of two concerns, which were, as Keynes himself allowed, *social* more than *economic* (Tomlinson 1983: 51). The first was with minimizing the pressure of private demand on those materials and skills needed for the war effort; the second was with the potential for accumulated savings and expectations to push the economy into severe imbalance once the constraints of mobilization were lifted. And this pressure was located at precisely that point which had seemed most vital to recovery only a few years earlier: low income earners as the most efficient and effective consumers.

In this, the consumer acquired an increasingly elusive identity: the inductive ‘numbers’ which had once defined their entitlements and the ‘reality’ of their governed domain were replaced by deductive aggregates of economic performance, on the one hand, and a more subjectively defined sphere of government, on the other. Excess private expenditure emerged as the central threat to a ‘high employment economy’, even more threatening because such behaviour was now *internal* to strategies of economic governance. At the University of Melbourne the last of the inter-war social surveys – and the largest – had been initiated in 1939 with the intention of charting the residual deprivations stemming from the Great Depression. The survey was convened by Wilfred Prest, an economist who had a particular interest in the concept of ‘human ecology’ arising from his work in the declining Lancashire coal industries. But by 1944 Prest was concerned not only that the Department of Post-War Reconstruction seemed to have little interest in the project, given their increasing reliance on national accounting, but also that the war itself seemed to be breaking down established categories of analysis, fostering ‘a class of “rentier proletarians”’ whose behaviour expressed a series of subjective evaluations falling outside economic regulation (Prest 1944: 134). H. C. Coombs experienced a similar realization. In 1939, then one of the first economics graduates appointed to the Commonwealth Treasury, he had ruminated:

if we could, by an examination of institutional factors, divide people up into significant groups, we might be able to lay down further generalisations about human behaviour which would be statistically acceptable for the purposes of analysis. If we were able to do that we would have gone a good deal further to predict the outcome of any given situation.

(Coombs 1939: 166)

By 1944, now as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction, Coombs was hoping to revive his officers as they met to draft the Commonwealth's White Paper on Full Employment in the wake of a lost referendum which had sought a more secure centralization of economic controls. He offered them an alternative prospect: a society of evasive privacies which needed to be won over to the policies which would be the core of post-war government:

If you take any one person you will find that he is not only a voter in three elections; he is also a member of six or seven societies and of a church; he has a link here and a link there, but all of which organise him as a member of society. . . . In many ways, man is less effective in his purely political activities than he is in other ways.

(Coombs 1944: 7)

These 'realizations', of course, were in part a consequence of a more comprehensive engagement with both the economy and society than had been possible for inter-war economists, and of the imperative to secure new objectives in the context of total war. Yet they also need to be seen in terms of the changing fields of intelligibility and the strategies of government implicit within the Keynesian revolution. They are significant not only because of the problems they seek to address, but also because of the problems they define.

So by 1944 anticipations of post-war depression, requiring economic stimulus, had given way to expectations of uncontrollable inflation, demanding restraint. Economists faced the necessity of post-war controls, not so much over industry as over the maze of consumption. While Giblin argued that too much concern should not be given to the effect of wartime regulations on something as intangible as entrepreneurial incentive, Downing wrote for Copland a memorandum arguing for the standardization of goods as a part of price control in an effort to discipline popular consumption. He went on to make the case for further indirect taxes on entertainment, newspapers, advertising – all working towards a 'public psychology reasonably favourable to controls'. For without those controls, he insisted:

the economic position after the war will lapse into chaos, whether the most heroic measures are made to deal with excess spending power on financial lines or not. Indeed, it may be argued that the more heroic the measures the greater will be the chaos.

(Downing 1945: 13)

If the public testament to reconstruction was a commitment to full employment, the underlying anxiety for economists was expressed in the taxes, controls, subsidies, bargains, persuasions and admonishments necessary to govern private consumption. The most significant and controversial measures in wartime economic policy were not over issues of the socialization of private assets but over devising a system of controls capable of regulating the consumer, with the emphasis on indirect rather than direct measures so as to preserve at least that illusion of private autonomy which was an integral part not

only of morale campaigns and the struggle for political legitimacy, but also of the new rationalities of government themselves. So those comprehensive programmes of social welfare and public works conceived early in the war as the spine for the new social order had, by war's end, assumed the more tactical, contingent cast of instruments in counter-cyclical policy (Shaver 1987). If a new social contract centring on income maintenance had been struck, it would require continual renegotiation around the emerging and redefined spheres of public and private interests which those rationalities, in themselves, had largely evoked. In the process, various professionalisms realigned themselves – not least that of government. If Downing's contemporaries went to Canberra in the early 1940s with Giblin's ideal and Finer's contractual model in their heads, they became – those that stayed as the post-war mandarins – the exemplars of a pluralism centring on assisting the state, with studied neutrality, to achieve a 'balance' between the contending interests of many private interest and pressure groups (Capling and Galligan 1992: 30–6). And, as far as labourism is concerned, the new autonomy and the new professionalization of economics required a slow re-education across all those legal and bureaucratic structures which had once assumed the common objective not of managing *the* economy but of achieving *some kind* of economy in the distribution of the 'national dividend'.

By the end of the 1940s Downing was back teaching at the University of Melbourne, seeking to reconcile inter-war and post-war economics. His students were informed that fluctuations were an integral part of a modern economy, a necessary dimension of the progress of capitalism in its pursuit of expanding markets and its propensity to pull back once profits showed any sign of falling. He drew from Keynesian 'technique' – now carefully distinguished from Keynesian 'theory' – the possibility of a more autonomous, technocratic economic science, capable of overriding crises. So, if private investment could not be stabilized, the role of government policy lay in compensatory public works. These measures, however, might never be sufficiently flexible in their response to fluctuations, especially if governments saw such works more as props to the aggregate performance of private enterprise than as allocative devices in themselves. Certainly, it was impossible to place most of the social commitments being increasingly caught up in the rhetoric of the welfare state on 'the shelf' of projects to be implemented when demand failed. Governments had to engineer some other way – some other package of inducements, (dis)incentives, rebates and controls – to contain the costs surrounding these social policies. 'It is probable', Downing argued in 1948, with Kalecki still in influence, 'that social and economic needs would be better met if a significant part of anti-cyclical policy were concentrated on consumer subsidies, reduced hours and reduced taxation, increased social services and so on', but these policies were precisely the commitments it was difficult to reverse when inflationary circumstances required (Downing 1948: 5–15).

Here, then, was the consumer still in an idealized form, but increasingly hedged around as a new problem space. To older hands, like F. R. E. Mauldon, Professor of Economics at the University of Western Australia, reflecting in

1949, the post-war prominence of the consumer embodied the 'psychological tendency for individuals to make their own interpretations of the degree to which the productive system can be made to yield more income through leisure and to require less labour' (Mauldon 1949). Oscillating between Mauldon and Downing's evocation of this new economic subjectivity was the figure which would be at the centre of post-war political rhetoric, at least until the rise, in the later 1970s, of local neo-liberals who sought to reclaim 'individualism' and 'choice' from these ambivalencies of the consumer. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, however, the figure was caught in the increasingly residual Australian policy pattern of subsidized private choice in which individuals – again, often male wage earners supporting a family – received reimbursements via the tax system for 'choices' in health insurance, for example, or in schooling or housing, which they made as citizens seeking to exercise their 'individual responsibility' rather than expressing any embarrassing or politically suspect 'social conscience' (Murphy 1995). As Butlin argues, the new macro-economic ascendancy led to stop-go budgetary methods to override, or correct, economic cycles but did little to sustain any regulation of wages, to encourage industrial restructuring or productivity gains, and marked an even further break with the inter-war provision of economic and social infrastructure as part of national development and social reform (Butlin, Barnard and Pincus 1982: 103–7, 115–19). The effect of this pattern on the redistribution of wealth was indirect at best. By 1959 Coombs was wondering what could be done with a mass of private consumers who were indifferent to prices and preferred a world which 'sprouts television antennae from every roof top and whose streets are jammed with opulent chromium-studded motor vehicles' (Coombs 1959: 340):

I have always wondered [he continued] at the passivity of the Australian public towards rising prices. Perhaps it is because our money is spent by women, but our opinions and our protests – in public at least – are expressed by men. . . . There is room for more investigation and research for the protection and guidance of the buying public and for the exploration of ways of adding to the scope and quality of individuals' lives and of the forms of production and expenditure which would best contribute to them.

(Coombs 1959: 346)

We can take his point while equally wondering to what extent economic analysis had created this same figure in its realignments over the previous twenty years, especially in terms of recasting and more explicitly gendering the political salience of the consumer away from that ideal figure as envisaged by Eggleston, for example, in 1931.

Consumers, citizens and markets

How can all of this be related to the rise of economic rationalism in the 1980s? The first point to make is simply to observe that much of the system of welfarist

government as it was consolidated under the wise tutelage of the 'Coombs generation' was not a timeless verity realized but had its own conditions of historical emergence, and its own internal problematics. To recall these is to be reminded how contingent are many practices of government, and how particular and local are the ways in which social identities are constituted as meaningful and intelligible to/for government. 'Australianism' and 'professionalism' are parts of this contingency, and if they are to function as reference points in evaluating recent 'plagues' and corruptions, then it is worth looking more closely at the multiplicity of identities they hold, and the circumstantial nature of the balance they achieve. None of this is to impugn the 'conspicuous reformers' of the post-war years: Downing, who instigated enquiries into poverty, health insurance, taxation and superannuation, and who, as Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission from 1973 until his death in 1975, fought for the role of the ABC in serving a diverse society and in occasionally challenging mainstream opinion; Coombs, who has been a staunch and increasingly disillusioned advocate for Australian Aborigines, for the reform of the bureaucracy to make it better represent all sections of society, for an environmentalist ethic. But it is to note that the central issues each faced after the 1950s in some way focused on dealing with that active, individual and subjective domain of citizenship which emerged as a distinct entity with them (Downing 1975).

The second point is to suggest that Keynesian macro-economics, for all its promise of looking after 'the society-wide economic variables' with some autonomy from the messy intricacies of micro-economics (Kenway 1994: ch. 10), subsumed an earlier economics which took more seriously – and perhaps with a sharper sense of social reformism – issues of micro-economics: the allocation of scarce resources, the issues of pricing and supply. As Holton and Turner have argued, 'the market-place has been seriously underestimated as a social institution', especially by those whose preoccupation with the 'the problem of producer domination' has had the effect of reducing 'consumers to alienated purchasers of fetishised commodities' (Holton and Turner 1989: 3). Inter-war Australian economists, at least as surveyed here, took the market seriously as a sphere of citizenship, but on condition that allocative policies worked towards a greater level of economic equality (rather than more diffuse social equality) among its participants. Their contractual, public sphere of citizenship, and even their manner, demeanour and professional persona in articulating this sphere, is clearly out of temper with the diversity of claims now made on government through the 'politics of identity'. Yet there is still some merit in meeting the more reductionist challenges of economic rationalism, not by posing some inherent opposition between citizenship and the market, but by marking out the possible claims to citizenship, the 'civic entitlements', arising in many discrete markets – markets of ethnicity, gender, environmental and social access, health and so on as contemporary equivalents of those identities Giblin sought to bring into calculation. There are, Glyn Daly argues, many different types of market representing 'multiple and particularistic forms of democratic subjectivity' (Daly 1991: 86–100). They should not be obscured through myths of a once-pure

economics and bureaucracy, or by assuming that 'number' and 'reality' are two essentially opposed entities.

Australian National University

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