

Galbraith argues that "[t]his is not the age of doctrine; it is the age of practical judgment." By this he means that our age resists defining the economy ideologically, whether the ideology be capitalism, socialism, liberalism, or what have you. "[I]deological identification," he says, "represents an escape from unwelcome thought—the substitution of broad and banal formula for specific decision in the particular case" (*The Good Society*: 20, 14).

My question is whether this isn't simply another way of saying that ours is, or, at any rate, should be, a properly critical age, in that all ideologies or doctrines have only so much authority as they can be shown to have by critical reflection directed toward making the right decision here and now in the present. To appeal to them otherwise, as *eo ipso* authoritative, is to try to escape from our proper business, which is the critical appropriation of all ideologies and doctrines on the basis of our common human experience and reason.

22 April 2003