

JOURNAL ENTRY #2

Eric Weiner's chapters on ancient Athens and medieval Hangzhou describe his encounters with modern, living residents of those cities and with the geniuses and cultural patterns that nourished their respective "golden ages." Like any good non-fiction writer, he blends general with specific, abstract with concrete as he develops his thesis that creativity is not just born or made but cultivated.

Explore the chief examples of genius that Weiner uses to advance his ideas: In Greece, Socrates & Plato, Homer & Thucydides. In China, Su Tungpo & Shen Kuo. Consider the extent to which the cultural values of competition and novelty (in the west) and tradition and conformity (in the east) determine the nature of creative genius and the relative import of each "golden age" to human civilization. How has Weiner's thesis developed in these chapters? What strategic principles does he employ? How would you characterize the language of Weiner's writing style?

Write without stopping for 15 minutes.