Based on the WPR evaluation criteria, IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE, Defining means more than saying what something is!!

Part of analyzing the readings and taking a stand on the debate includes commenting on the parts of the original question and the context provided. Is it a valid question? Are the premises logical, problematic?

Organizing, outlining, drafting strategies & Samples

Use your prior knowledge of academic discourses, the prompt, the readings, the evaluation criteria and your stance to generate models for the essay’s structure—experiment! YOU ***Decide*** what you want the outline to do/not do!

Nuts & Bolts:

1st the quantitative dimension. Remember our triangulation model—finding the passing zone!

* Estimate 3-3.5 paragraphs per page
* Prompt asks for 5-7 pages
* Translates to 15-24 ¶

2nd budget the above estimate based on the 3 standard parts of an essay: (start with minimum!)

* Intro = ? ¶
* Conclusion =¶
* Body=¶

I don’t always know what I’m going to say/write, but I have a good idea of what I have to talk about and how!

I know my essay needs to

* Introduce /contextualize the essay topic and how I’m framing it
* offer a clear thesis/central idea/hypothesis;
* summarize,
* what else?
* I can try to designate which of the 3 sections of the essay each of the above fits into. I also need to sense which of these are distinct statements and which overlap with each other, e.g. defining and classifying can overlap

REVISION QUESTIONS FOR ELABORATING

*What do I mean? How do I know? Why does it matter?*

Your answers go into the draft!

SAMPLES! ***Possible*** parts/sections of an Intro – ***what do these paragraphs DO?***

#1 The debate can be addressed on a number of different levels, for example, the underlying notion that a country, a socio-political phenomenon of people, traditions, institutions, etc. can have a fixed ‘nature’ or ‘essence’ is easily disputable and virtually impossible to resolve. However, the claim that America’s apparent Exceptionalism is both historically and morally discernible, allows for ample discussion, speculation and debate and making a definitive judgment on this idea of America’s inherent uniqueness among nations. Based on the readings’ concepts, arguments and empirical data, the most tenable position holds that AE had both good and bad aspects.

#2: Can a nation have a ‘nature’? [ If] the usual denotation of ‘nature’, as a philosophical category, basically means that an entity or phenomenon has stable, defining characteristics that distinguishes it from other entities and phenomena. At a most literal, empirical level, no one would mistake the US for another country; but this seems true for most other nations as well(in fact if we can distinguish the US we necessarily discern other nations as well).

Any country has qualities that make it a country (thus shared features with other ~~entities~~) and qualities that differentiate it from other nations. That is, we know countries by both their unique and common traits. If we see a country as a historical phenomenon, then perhaps it is an exaggeration to argue for it possessing a ‘nature’; since most time-bound phenomena are subject to change.

More importantly, claims that a nation’s identity is a manifestation of qualities in pure form, is problematic since one would always be vulnerable to over generalizing empirical evidence. Consequently, for the purposes of this essay, I use ‘nature’ as an ***identifiable*** entity that is subject to changes and variations.

*[next steps?]*

Summarizing Bromund & Koh’s debate

Virtually all of the texts begin their part in the debate with the historical basis for A.E.(pp. )

Some authors frame the debate as controversial but manage to maintain a fairly balanced position that accepts the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ evidence(see )

Only two authors, Jacobs and Bromund, position themselves at an extreme end of the controversy. Their characterizations, supporting evidence and evaluations mostly cancel each other out—there is little room for dialogue here.

Bromund specifically addresses Koh’s text – in fact- a good portion of his article serves as a rebuttal to the Koh ‘spin’ on AE.

While the ‘existence’ of the idea and historical reality of AE is accepted by all authors in the reading set, its complete historical uniqueness and unequivocal moral superiority are hotly contested. Phillips(1), Sellevold,(5) Koh, (8) and Bromund(16-17), all at least allude to the long tradition of Americans perceiving themselves as both unique and superior that began with the17th century puritan settlers and remains potent to the present. Furthermore, there is substantial agreement that this idea/ideology is widely embraced by many Americans across party, race-ethnic, gender, class, and regional divisions, (Phillips, 2)

Bromund makes a compelling argument but also clearly writes from a defensive stance—he seems to feel the US is threatened by Americans who question, repudiate or ridicule A.E. His argument for uniqueness puts a lot of weight on America’s firsts as being perennially significant, as he lists her groundbreaking accomplishments, e.g. “…world’s oldest and most stable liberal democracy,… .its foundation from colonial rebellion, its political principles of equality, and government by for and of the people,(pp.16-17) and so on. He also tacitly employs the ‘common sense’ tactic and, with it, veiled accusations of foolish disloyalty for those who question the nation’s pure virtue status.