

## **Literature MYCT: Essay Structure**

Introduction: Hook, relevant contextual information, thesis statement (what + how) [Try to do something most people would not do to secure insights]

Main Body: Points + Evidence + Elaboration + Link (not necessarily in that order)

Conclusion: Wrap it up and end off with a quote/question

## **Literature MYCT: PBQ Passage Analysis**

### **General Analysis**

- Power struggles
- Build up of tension (how)
- Breaking of dialogue norms (look out for curt responses or soliloquies)
- Talk about Macbeth's hubris
- Talk about the contribution of a certain scene to the anagnorsis (which will serve its purpose in purging emotions and breaking the suspense, and reaching maximum tension).

### **Aristotle's Unities**

- Unity of place (1 main place), time (in one day maximum), plot (one main plot with few or no subplots)
- When a unity is broken we must explain why

### **Ironies**

Dramatic irony is when the audience knows something that the character doesn't, and the character continues to behave in a way contrary to what would be good for him/her to behave like.

Situational irony is when what is expected strongly differs from what actually happens (like English comprehension).

## **Literature MYCT: Argumentative Analysis**

### **Rosicrucian System**

Bile (bilious - choleric): increase in bile makes one easily angered, irritable

Blood (blood – sanguine) increase in blood in the body would make one cheerfully optimistic (bold, loud, rude, merry-making type)

Phlegm (phlegm – phlegmatic): increase in phlegm makes one very calm and steady

Black bile (bilious – melancholic): increase in black bile makes one very sad

### **Machiavellian Philosophies**

The teachings of Niccolo Machiavelli (in his book *On Generosity and Parsimony*) he explains how parsimony (being stingy) is better than being generous, and how it is possible to employ the

“robbing Paul to pay Peter” scheme to appear to be generous, while at all times not spending anything.

Kings and royalty would be well aware of Machiavellian teachings.

### **Upset Natural Order, and Authority**

By the time Macbeth commits the murders of Duncan and Banquo, he is widely known as an archetype of evil. Even the Second Witch says “something wicked this way comes” (4.1)

### **Equivocation**

All things foul commit equivocation. When Macbeth asks the witches what they do, they simply reply “A deed without a name” (4.1). Even the apparitions themselves all beat around the bush (nothing is stated clearly).

It can be argued that Macbeth’s equivocation is what leads to a vicious cycle of equivocation, in which Macbeth has no choice but to ask the weird sisters about his future. Now, knowing that they are elements of evil (summons of Hecate herself), they themselves are equivocators. So when the apparitions appear, they (being elements supernatural and evil themselves) equivocate in their replies to Macbeth (beating around the bush and not making anything in their replies clear), which then triggers his downfall. As such, can it be argued that Macbeth’s, by equivocation, had to join forces with the evil (equivocators themselves), and this in the end turns out to be a trap for him, as Macbeth (while being an equivocator himself) cannot see through the equivocation of others (apply Duncan’s quote: “There’s no art to find the man’s construction in the face”), and he falls in a trap that he himself starts digging?

Equivocation is the intermediate that blurs the clear distinctions between the binaries of good and evil. Macbeth uses equivocation when in a position lacking the power required to achieve his ambitions in order to illegitimately attain kingship (or rather, to deceive the outside world into believing that his illegitimate methods are in fact legitimate), and when he gets his position of power, he no longer needs to apply equivocation. This is seen in him saying “The flighty purpose never is o’ertook unless the deed go with it. From this moment, the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstlings of my hand” (4.2). When Macbeth gives up equivocation, he fails to recognize the equivocation of others (previous point).

- “Fair, here’s an equivocator...yet, could not equivocate to heaven” (Porter, 2.3)

Essentially, while equivocation can be used to achieve your ambitions, it cannot be used to turn oneself good (to equivocate to heaven). However, by the time Macbeth attains the position of Kingship, he now has the power and authority to carry out his evil deeds without the need to equivocate to prove its legitimacy (thus he stops equivocating when he’s king). And when he stops, he fails to recognize the equivocation of others, and his careful manipulation of equivocal communication backfires on him when he fails to recognize the message of the apparitions.

### **Apparitions**

The first apparition is an armed head. It tells Macbeth to beware of the Thane of Fife (Macduff).

The second apparition is a bloody child which tells Macbeth that none born of woman can harm him.

The third apparition is a crowned child with a tree in his hand. It tells Macbeth that Macbeth cannot be vanquished until Great Birnam Woods comes to high Dunsinane hill.

### **Good VS Evil**