Wilcox English 7-8

Analysis of Macbeth, Act I—Scenes 1-3

Due Friday, February 6, 2015

Share in Google Docs, submit in srprojectwilcox.weebly.com, or turn in a hard copy. Worth 20 points!

Use at least one quote from the Barron’s text we are using in class to support each paragraph (except the last one, the conclusion) and follow the citation format for plays (I, ii, 31), in which you start with the act, then the scene, and finally the line of text you’re quoting.

A paragraph should be a minimum of 5 sentences and a maximum of 11 sentences.

In a four-paragraph essay, explore the following topics in Shakespeare’s Macbeth, Act I, Scenes 1-3:

* In the first paragraph—set the scene by showing the play, author, and the “basic situation” (also known as the “basic problem,” the “set-up,” or the “exposition.”) This section would explore the who-what-when-where-why? of the play, and establish an overview of the complication(s) you see.
  + This is a great place to discuss the mood or tone of the play, to describe the setting, the location, the time frame, or any other context clues to help your reader.
* The second paragraph would show characterization of the characters we’ve met so far. What do you know of Macbeth, King Duncan, or Banquo, and possibly Lady Macbeth, if we get that far? These are the major characters, though you don’t have to explain all of them. Look at both indirect and direct characterization. For indirect characterization, show what others think of the character. For direct characterization, show what the character himself shows us about himself.
  + Think of appearance (how should the character appear to the audience), actions, internal thoughts, what is said to others (how truthful, topics?), goals and motivations, challenges.
  + Ask yourself why Macbeth would have responded in the way he did to the message from the witches and then about his becoming the Thane of Cawdor. What kind of character or personality type would make that kind of jump?
  + Ask yourself why Shakespeare has moved the play along with no backstory of Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? Do we know them well? How does it affect the play or our viewing that we don’t know much about them at all?
* The third paragraph should explore the complications. These are the plot events that move the story along—events that happen 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. These complications are either internal conflicts, in which the character wars with himself internally, or external complications, in which the struggle or battle is with another person or a force outside of the character.
* The fourth paragraph is a conclusion which can show your opinion or impression so far with the play. You can also make predictions for your reading of the play, or any concerns or issues you see so far with the plot, characters, topic of the play, with the fact that it’s a tragedy, etc.