

# How far is macbeth a gothic protagonist

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



How far is Macbeth a gothic protagonist? The gothic protagonist who is seen as the main character tries to overcome human limitations by making acting as god. Within the novel elements of Gothic is seen which is seen highly in the characters as well as other aspects. Shakespeare's Macbeth consists of the central protagonist who is Macbeth himself. Thus, Macbeth is seemed as a gothic protagonist because he urges for a gothic goal which is often for more power. A gothic protagonist is known to have sharply contrasting qualities within the character.

This is seen in Macbeth as we see the contrast between Good and evil which is a strong source of conflict within Macbeth. Macbeth's character is deeply divided and this conflict works itself out in depth. The first act of the play offers an increasing insight into the complex interaction of good and evil in Macbeth's mind. The "noble", "valiant" and "loyal soldier" of the early scenes is tempted by the visions of future personal glory conjured by the witches and comes increasingly under their influence.

The battle between these conflicting elements of Macbeth's character becomes evident immediately after the first of the witches' prophecies has come true, when he observes "this supernatural soliciting Cannot be ill, cannot be good". The proposition that "Macbeth is a villain in whom there is little to admire" is an inadequate judgement of Macbeth's character. Macbeth is not consciously and naturally malevolent, and there are many aspects of his character and his downfall which serve to support this.

Macbeth was not only a victim of his own actions, but also of the human condition and the extremely powerful forces of both his wife and fate. Throughout the play the audience undoubtedly experiences feelings of

<https://assignbuster.com/how-far-is-macbeth-a-gothic-protagonist/>

horror at Macbeth, but we are also driven, through an understanding of his character, to admiration and sympathy. This would not be the case if Macbeth was a totally vile and reprehensible villain, and thus the tragedy of Shakespeare's Macbeth is clear. Macbeth was certainly no villain to begin with.

He is introduced to us as a man of great honour, nobility and strength of morals. He is held in high regard by King Duncan, who addresses him as "valiant cousin, worthy gentleman"- so highly, in fact, that Macbeth is granted a promotion over Banquo (who seems to be of an extremely worthy and loyal character). But there is a fatal difference between Macbeth and Banquo- Macbeth's ambition and lust for power. He is a man with an unsurpassable desire to advance himself.

He himself identifies this quality while he contemplates an action that he is wholly repulsed by; " I have no spur To prick the sides of my intent, but only Vaulting Ambition which o'erleaps itself, And falls on th' other. " This " Vaulting Ambition" is what makes Macbeth vulnerable and leads him to commit possibly the most vile deed he can imagine, setting him on a path of destruction. There is a temptation to use the fact that he could comprehend the vileness of his deed as a reason as to why we should condemn Macbeth as even worse a villain.

Gothic fiction is a form of literature that includes elements of both horror and romance. Most gothic fiction has things that are supernatural, includes feelings like guilt, sin, madness, settings usually in a castle or in dark caves, mystery, suspense, violence, a damsel in distress, and omens or dark curses. The play " Macbeth" by William Shakespeare is written in gothic literature, <https://assignbuster.com/how-far-is-macbeth-a-gothic-protagonist/>

this is evident through an examination of the feelings of guilt, sin, madness, the battle between good and evil and omens and curses that take place throughout the play.

Omens, curses, prophecies, supernatural beings, these are all things that are very common in gothic literature. Shakespeare uses these things to make the play seem darker and have more mystery to it. There are three witches in “ Macbeth” and they make prophecies that will alter Macbeth’s future. They predict that three things will happen, one of them being “ The power of man for none of woman born/ Shall harm Macbeth,” 4. 1, 91 & 92. Traditionally, characters in gothic fiction have their future predicted by some supernatural being; they use this knowledge to alter their life. Macbeth is no different.

One would think that it is impossible to not be born from a woman, so Macbeth uses this to gain confidence that no one will ever be able to kill him. Later on in “ Macbeth”, after the witches make the prophecy of Macbeth not being killed by man born of woman, he goes to battle with Macduff. Since it is said to be that Macbeth cannot be killed by man born of woman, Macbeth is told “ Macduff was from his mother’s womb/ Untimely ripped,” 5. 8, 19 & 20. After being told this Macbeth decided to go to battle with Macduff and got killed, this shows that the prophecy did alter his life in a way he never saw coming.