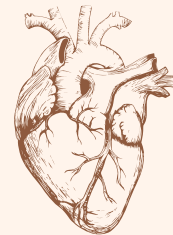


# The Green World as a Literary Artifact



Bethany G. Roberts

Missouri Southern State University

gracethewriter16@gmail.com

318.439.2668

## Summary

Shakespeare used the green world (usually depicted with nature) as a place for his characters to resolve conflict, come to terms with death, and critique contemporary norms. By discerning what literature deems natural and artificial, we may better understand the ideals and conflicts in the culture around us.

## Questions

1. What do representations of nature in literature typically demonstrate about their portrayed societies?
2. What has come to represent natural and artificial worlds in literature, and why?

## What is the green world?

A place of "metamorphosis" to visit where "the comic resolution is achieved" before characters return to the "normal world . . . The green world has analogies, not only to the fertile world of ritual, but to the dream world that we create out of our own desires. This dream world collides with the stumbling and blinded follies of the world of experience."  
(Frye 182-83)

## Examples in Shakespeare

### The Balcony Scene

*Romeo and Juliet*

Proactive Juliet physically stands above Romeo in her father's house, while poetic Romeo hides in the garden.

### The Ghost Scene

*Hamlet*

Hamlet's madness may come from a conflict of authority between tradition (Claudius) and the green world (Hamlet).

## Examples in Other Media

- Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
- Into the Woods
- A Court of Thorns and Roses
- Harry Potter

*"Into the woods, no telling when—  
Be ready for the journey.  
Into the woods, but not too fast,  
or what you wish, you lose at last."  
— "Finale: Into the Woods"  
from Into the Woods*

## Further Reading

Frye, Northrop. "Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths." *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton University Press, 1957.