The Use of Naturalism in Tennessee Williams’ *The Night of the Iguana*

By: Brittany Tennis

**Sponsor:** Dr. Inga Meier

**Thesis:** This project examines the connections among setting, themes, and character development in *The Night of the Iguana* and explores the transformative potential contained within and revealed by these connections.

---

### Nature

- **Setting**
  - (Rainforest in a hotel in Mexico)

- **Religion**

- **Animals**

- **Forces of Civilization**

### Characters

- Reverend T. Shannon
- Maxine
- Hannah
- Nonno
- The Fahrenkopts
- Judith Fellowes
- Iguana

### Development

- He uses nature as a refuge from his loss of job, his thoughts, and his desires (Act I, i).
- She is the guiding force for Shannon and attempts to help him with all of his endeavors (Act II).
- She embraces and appreciates nature through knowledge of her surroundings ex: wild orchids (Act 1, i).
- He also embraces and appreciates nature through his final poem and his death (Act 1, i).
- This family values materialistic amusement (Act 1, ii).
- She wants to get away from the hotel and refuses to respect the beauty of nature (Act 1, i).
- The iguana symbolizes Shannon’s loss of job, sanity, and his confinement (Act II).

**Why does it matter?**

In analyzing the characters’ relationships with each other and the setting, audiences can witness the transformative nature of the human experience, a vicarious experience they may, in turn, apply to their own lives.

**Sources:**