



# Discourses of Development, Destruction and Desecration

## Studies in the Manipulation of Nature

International Symposium  
for details and registration, contact  
[development.destruction@gmail.com](mailto:development.destruction@gmail.com)

**Keynote:**  
**Dr. John Whalen-Bridge**  
**National University of Singapore**

“When the last tree is cut down, the last fish eaten, and the last stream poisoned, you will realize that you cannot eat money.”

—*Alanís Obomsawin*



Dates: 2015  
October 31  
November 1

Graduate School of Intercultural Communication  
**OKINAWA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

## CALL FOR PAPERS

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### **DISCOURSES OF DEVELOPMENT, DESTRUCTION AND DESECRATION: STUDIES IN THE MANIPULATION OF NATURE**

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WHERE: Okinawa Christian University  
777 Onaga Nishihara, Nakagami-gun, Nishihara-cho, Okinawa, 903-0207  
DATES: October 31 & November 1, 2015  
DAY: Saturday & Sunday (guided tour)  
BUILDING: Shalom  
ROOMS: 1-1, 1-3, 1-4, & 1-5  
Keynote: Dr. John Whalen-Bridge, National University of Singapore  
LANGUAGES: English & Japanese

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the last fish eaten,  
and the last stream poisoned,  
you will realize that you cannot eat money.”  
—*Alanís Obomsawin, 1972*

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### **Background**

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“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” In 1854, Henry David Thoreau, author, poet, philosopher and naturalist, expounded the benefits of a simplified lifestyle and closeness to nature in the face of industrial progress and the “desperate” existence it imposes upon peoples and cultures. Thoreau’s Walden still stands today as a valuable critique of Western culture’s attitudes toward materialism and consumerism, which have been absorbed and applied in cultures throughout East Asia and the Pacific. These ideologies, put into practice, have had profound effects on the natural world. As a force of life, nature has been highly honored as beliefs in its creative powers have been codified in scientific texts and creation stories of our own origins as a species.

As a storehouse, nature has been highly honored for its natural riches, celebrated by writers in literature, poetry, and cinema and yet explored by the leaders of industry for sale, exploitation, and plunder in the name of free market enterprise.

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### **Purpose**

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Against this backdrop, the Graduate School of Intercultural Communication in cooperation with Okinawa Christian University will host an international conference on mankind’s ongoing manipulation of nature as witnessed in concepts and practices of development, destruction, and desecration. The central aim of the symposium is to enact dialogues that unfold realities concealed and/or distorted by

## CALL FOR PAPERS

powerful interests. It sets out to cast a critical light on these attitudes and practices that persist in shaping all manner of public and corporate policy.

Presenters are asked to critically examine meanings of 'nature', 'environment', 'progress', or 'development' that clash or harmonize with discourses and/or conservation practices across cultures and time. The conference aims to create a public forum for discussion of these competing concepts and definitions.

Presenters are asked to consider the following:

- a. Contemporary discourse practices – nature construed as an object to be “developed” in the name of economic progress, homeland security, military expansion, or technological growth ...  
e.g.: the rhetoric or propaganda of development, etc.
- b. Instrument/Power systems – nature as an object for human use; humans possess inherent subject status that affords them the self-proclaimed right to exploit ...  
e.g.: Reclaiming land from oceans, Paving and concreting land for military and industrial expansion, Drilling for oil, gas, coal. Diverting and damming rivers, commodifying water, privatizing resources, patenting seeds and genetic manipulations
- c. Warehouse – nature as a repository of genetic materials for present and future human use; rainforests and other ecosystems as repositories of presently and conceivable value for future human need ...  
e.g.: drugs, medications, modified strains of plant life engineered for human consumption
- d. Temple-Holy place – nature as a source of inspiration and worship ...  
e.g.: Nature parks, national parks; also literary productions extolling oneness with other forms, etc.
- e. Holistic/Philosophical perspectives – nature as a value in itself, independent of human need or desire ...  
e.g.: Every life form has its own reason for being, independent of human use or intent. Every life form – at least sentient life – has an interest in living, etc.

ABSTRACT DEADLINE: August 31, 2015

ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS: Abstracts should be 300 to 500 words - including the title of your presentation, your professional affiliation, rank, e-mail address, and (international) phone number.

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