The Destruction of Heritage – Rock Art in the Burrup Peninsula[++]

José Antonio González Zarandona[+] (Australia)

Abstract

The destruction of rock art in the Burrup Peninsula, performed by several mammoth industries strategically located in the Peninsula since the 1960s, allows me to analyze the concept of heritage and find meaning in the difficult task of interpreting rock art. The Burrup Peninsula not only hosts the largest rock art site in the world, but also one of the largest deposits of natural gas, iron ore and salt. As a consequence, the land (sacred to the Indigenous people), becomes extremely important in order to sustain the booming economy of Australia. In this difficult negotiation between heritage and progress the rock art is embedded with new meanings and the heritage becomes ephemeral. Failing to include the site in the World Heritage Site list (UNESCO), the roles of identity and memory are contested. As a result, the concept of heritage can be defined on several levels: local, regional, national and international.

Keywords: *Destruction, Heritage, Colonialism, Identity, Land*

[+] José Antonio González Zarandona, PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne, Australia.

[++] This paper was first published by the International Journal of the Humanities (2011, Vol. 4, Issue 1). It is reprinted here with the kind permission of Common Ground Publishers.

Introduction

In 1699, William Dampier, English explorer, seaman, adventurer and writer, arrived to what is known today as the Dampier Archipelago (hence the name), located in the northwestern coast of the Pilbara district, Western Australia; approximately 1650 km north of Perth. Although Dampier did not notice the petroglyphs (Dampier 1729) that constitute one of the most impressive features of the area, he did discover the archipelago that other explorers would visit in later years, such as Nicholas Baudin in 1801 or Phillip Parker King in 1818. The XIX century was decisive for the archipelago to establish industries which, for their voluminous capacity, had to be located in big open spaces, such as whaling and pearling. Not only had the landscape begun to change, but also the habits and customs of the original inhabitants of the islands, the Yaburarra (or Jaburarra). The first time the petroglyphs were noticed by a European explorer was on 19 June 1865, when Jefferson Pickman Stow set foot on Nickol Bay and met a group of natives. One of them showed him and his men the "drawings" on the rocks. "There were sketches of fishes, turtles, lizards, and different kinds of birds, including emus," he wrote (Stow 1981, 66).

Long-term human occupation in the Pilbara dates back to 26,000 years ago (JMCHM 2005, 10). Not too much is known about the Yaburarra people, except for the details that some explorers wrote down as they were surveying and exploring the area. In addition, their language is now extinct and except for some descendants of the last man recognized as the last Yaburrara, Nickolas Cosmos, in turn, son of Iniarba, considered the last full-blood Yaburarra, there is a scarcity regarding this socio-economic group. Aboriginals were pushed inland due to several events. The most likely to have been decisive was the Flying Foam Massacre in 1868, when a number of Yaburarra men, women and children were killed by the police force. The number of victims is not known but it is safe to assume that the event had a strong impact in the decrease of this millenarian tribe. Likewise, mistreatment, indentured labor in the whaling and pearling industries, small-pox outbreaks in 1865 and 1866 and the impact of colonialism, heavily influenced a decrease in the number of Aboriginals in the area. The survivors sought refuge in nearby stations, where they adapted themselves to the pastoralist industry, established after the favorable reports Francis Thomas Gregory wrote in 1861, when he explored the area. Gregory did not notice the petroglyphs as well (Gregory and Gregory, 1884). According to Gara, the traditional Yaburarra way of life disappeared after 1870 (Gara 1984, 17-18). Their closest ethnic group is the Ngarluma.

The importance and values of the petroglyphs were first recognized one hundred years later when two foreigners engineers, Enzo Virili and Robert Bednarik, working for the new companies established in the area (salt and iron ore mainly), started to explore the peninsula and pointed out their significance in archaeological terms, as well as the impact that was affecting the area (Virili 1974, 1977; Bednarik 1977). As a result of Virili's efforts, he was able to ask the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) to hire French rock art expert, Michel Lorblanchet, to undertake fieldwork in the archipelago. Lorblanchet

found the site incomparable to any other site in Australia and considered it one of the most impressive rock art sites in the world (Lorblanchet 1992; Vinnicombe 2002).[1]

The XX century brought more industries causing removal and destruction of petroglyphs. The landscape kept changing, as the life in the region. Two towns were founded: Dampier in 1965 and Karratha in 1968, to accommodate the growing population, as a result of the industrial expansion the government of Australia prompted, when it lifted the ban to export iron ore in 1961, and the peninsula was chosen to host the future industrial facilities. A causeway was built in order to connect the biggest island to the mainland in 1965. The island became a peninsula. At first it was known as Dampier Island but in 1979 the name was changed to Burrup Peninsula, as it is known today.

After large natural resources deposits were discovered in the 1960s, Woodside Offside Petroleum began to apply for permits in order to expand its facilities. An Aboriginal Heritage Act was passed in 1972 as a legal tool to protect Aboriginal Heritage, and the first official survey took place in 1980 (Vinnicombe 1987).[2] The aim of the project was to identify and survey the area which was going to host Woodside's future facilities. In the end, it did not prevent the removal of several boulders that were relocated in a compound fence, where they still are (see figures 4a, 4b and 4c). This poor archaeological advice and mismanagement provoked the expansion of the company and the destruction of art, without the approval or permission from the Aboriginal community.

The first efforts to locate and identify Aboriginal informants who could talk about the site were made by Kinsgley Palmer, and specially Bruce Wright, one of the first researchers who took a serious interest in preserving the Aboriginal heritage (Palmer 1975, 1977; DAS 1979a). Wright and other researchers produced several reports under the auspices of the now abolished Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) that stressed out the significance and importance of the area in terms of cultural heritage (DAS 1974, 1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1981). Since then, the area has been appropriated by several companies whilst the Aboriginal community was granted Native Title rights for the area, but excluding the peninsula, not until 2005.

The Destruction of Art

Western Australia has been called "a land of linguistic devastation." (Blevins 2001, ix). Not only languages, but also Aboriginal heritage has disappeared. Regarding the petroglyphs, it has been calculated that around one million petroglyphs motifs are hosted in the Dampier Archipelago (Vinnicombe 2002), making it arguably the *largest rock art site in the world*. Between a 5% and a 25% have been already destroyed or removed due to industrial expansion and poor archaeological advice (Bednarik 2002a, 30; 2006, 26; Donaldson 2009, 512). In this case, removal is the same as destruction, as Jean Clottes reminds us: rock art should always remain *in situ* in order to convey its meaning. The environment is an essential part of its meaning (Clottes 2008, 2-4). McDonald and Veth consider that up to 2004, less

than 14% of land on the Burrup Peninsula has been impacted by industrial land (JMCHM 2006, 34). The government of Western Australia, through its legislative council hansard, motioned by the Honourable John Ford, titled "Burrup Peninsula, Rock Art," held in the parliament of Western Australia August 16th 2005 (p3917c-3918) acknowledges that between 1972 and 2005, 7.2% petroglyphs and 4% sites have been destroyed, whilst 1682 petroglyphs and 119 sites have been relocated. Up to 2008, more than 3000 Aboriginal sites have been registered at DIA. As of January 20, 2011, the Department of Indigenous Affairs defines, on its website, Aboriginal sites as:

> …places of importance and significance to Aboriginal people and to the cultural heritage of Western Australia. Aboriginal sites are significant because they link Aboriginal cultural tradition to place, land and people over time. Aboriginal sites are as important today as they were many thousands of years ago and will continue to be an integral part of the lives of Aboriginal people and the heritage of Western Australia.

Sites can be a diverse range of places. They can be put into two basic but overlapping categories:

- Archaeological sites – places where material remains associate with past Aboriginal land use.
- Anthropological sites – places of spiritual importance and significance to Aboriginal people.
- All sites have both archaeological and anthropological aspects." (DIA 2011)

Destruction is an action that gives new meanings to the object upon which the attack is infringed. As Howard Caygill claims, there are phases that need to be considered for each work of art: creation, conservation and destruction (Caygill 2008). Each phase is linked to a duty of care that involves values; so forth the aesthetic value will be found in the first phase, whilst the art market is likely to assign an economic value to the art object during the conservation phase. The last phase is quiet difficult to assess since art is supposed to be preserved; not destroyed. However, Caygill argues that the duty of care is "intangible. Where it becomes visible is in those cases where the destruction (…) is traumatically accelerated (…). At such moments, the care that was sustaining the work in existence - otherwise taken-for-granted, intangible and invisible - comes into view." (Caygill 2008, 164). In this sense, the destruction of rock art in the Burrup Peninsula does not give precise new meanings, but makes its meanings visible. It was the destruction of petroglyphs during the 1960s and 1970s that prompted anthropologists and archaeologists to look for the meaning and function of the petroglyphs that were being destroyed. In Caygill's terms, it was precisely the destruction that revealed the duty of care. This duty of care will be analyzed through three different statuses that have been attached to the site: a sacred site for the Aboriginals before first contact; an industrial site for the thousands of people who live and work in the area, and as a heritage site for the local Aboriginal descendants and the Australian archaeologists who are researching the area.

Sacred Site

The history of meanings in the Dampier Archipelago stretches back to the times when three Aboriginal tribes occupied the archipelago, the island (now peninsula) and the mainland. It is thought that the Yaburarra occupied the peninsula, whilst the Ngarluma lived to the east, and the Martuthunira to the west (von Brandenstein 1967, 1970; Hall 1971; Tindale 1974; Bednarik 2006) (see figure 1a). On one hand, there is the claim that each tribe was autonomous and no relation between tribes was established (Radcliffe-Brown 1913). On the other hand, more recent researchers accept the fact that economic interdependence and kinship liaisons were common as territorial boundaries were not strictly respected (Tindale 1974; Veth et al. 1993). This changed when the first settlers and the whaling and pearling industries arrived in the 1840s-1860s.

According to Aboriginal descendants, rock art was a very important feature of their life. Not only served a ritual function, but it also bears the marks of the spirits who created the earth, the Margas. According to researchers who talked to informants, the Margas created the images in order to represent the Law as a reminder to the people, when the spirits would leave the earth (Wright 1965, 106; 1968, 52; Palmer 1975, 155; 1977, 45; Vinnicombe 1987, 6; Vinnicombe 2002, 12). Some images are auto-portraits of the spirits, featuring elongated penises and decorated head-dresses (see figures 2a and 2b). The former belonged to the Margas and used them to rape women who were sitting on the ground, until a man threatened them to halve their penises with a cutting stone (Palmer 1975, 155), called "tjimari" (Wright 1968, 54). This is the myth of the origin of circumcision. The latter were used as ornaments for ritual dance ceremonies (Palmer 1975, 156). For this reason, rock art in the peninsula is thought to be the work of a non-human hand, restricted to women and children and cannot be looked at, unless one is already initiated.

Likewise, some petroglyphs were considered thalu sites, where ritual ceremonies were performed and the perpetuation of certain animals were sought as part of the economic dynamic of the tribe. There are thalus for each animal or phenomenon (Daniel 1990).[3] One particular thalu site located in Patterson Valley, in the Burrup Peninsula, depicts what it seems to be a thylacine (Tasmanian tiger), thought to have disappeared from Western Australia 3,000 years ago (see figures 3a, 3b and 3c).Mulvaney believes this image communicates "mythological narratives and behavioural traits." (Mulvaney 2009, 40) In the case of the Burrup Peninsula, the depicted thylacine reflects "the antiquity of a subject and its function." Its particular depiction sets it apart from other petroglyphs in the area and even the peninsula. Mulvaney, supported by the thalu sites evidence, argues that the repeated pounding onto the rock and the lines are nothing else than a desperate attempt to ensure the existence of the thylacine, when Aboriginals realized it was becoming scarce; in other words, a maintenance ritual. Furthermore, he conceives "the radiating" lines as a "metaphysical link between the thylacine and surrounding prey, the 'fat-tailed macropod' in particular." (Mulvaney 2009, 46) This interpre-

tation is one of the few attempts to find meaning within rock art in the peninsula, according to Aboriginal mythology.

During this period of exclusion from the Western world (gaze), rock art was endowed with sacred-supernatural meanings, some of which may have survived throughout all this time. Unfortunately, we cannot know if what the Aboriginal community is claiming today can be applied to the petroglyphs of thousands of years ago, when they were created.

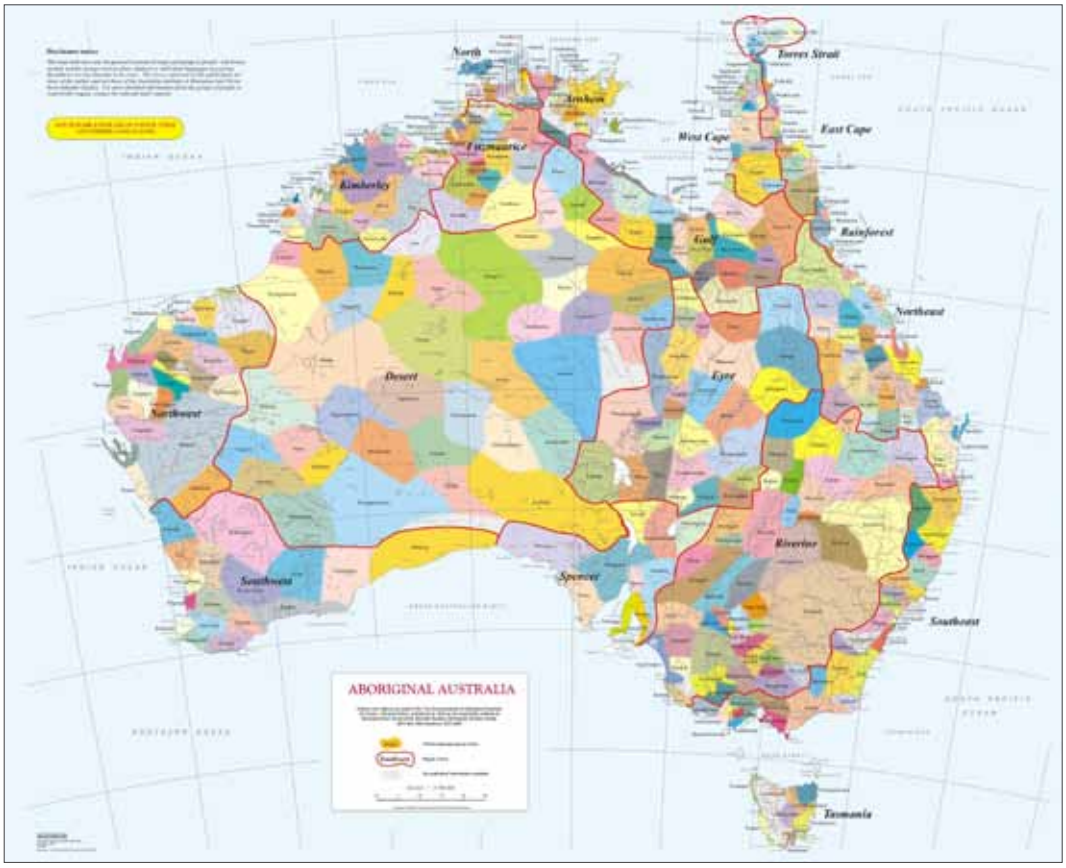

Figure 1a. Aboriginal Australia. David Horton. 1996. Map provided by AIATSIS.[4]

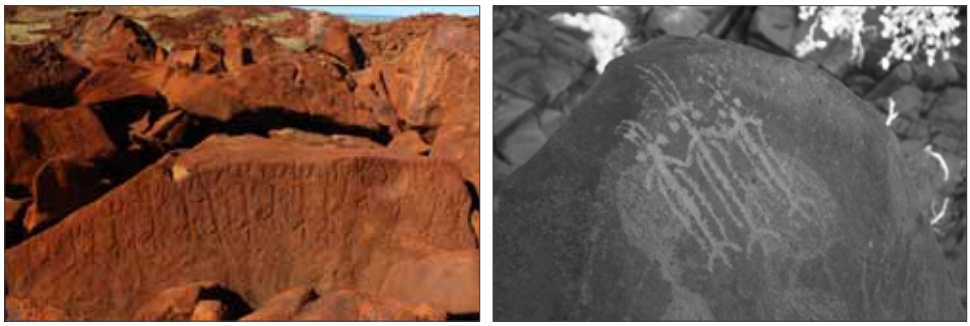

Figure 2a and 2b. Figures with elongated penises on the left, and three figures with head decorations on the right. Burrup Peninsula. 2010. © Antonio González.

Figures 3a, 3b, 3c. A *thalu* site in Patterson Valley depicting a thylacine. Note how the lines are three dimensionally drawn in adjacent boulders. Burrup Peninsula. 2010. © Antonio González.

Figures 4a & 4b. Boulders "guarded" by a compound fence. Burrup Peninsula. 2010. © Antonio González.

Industrial Site

Although there are several industries located in the peninsula, I will analyze the establishment of one of the more recent. Burrup Fertilisers Pty Ltd represents the first industrial investment in Australia from India, strongly supported by the Western Australian government. It was formed in 2000 and started production six years later. As of January 20, 2011, according to its website (http://www.bfpl.com.au),

this company is owned by the Oswal Group, property of tycoon Pankaj Oswal. Burrup Nitrates Pty Ltd (BNPL), a company jointly managed by Yara International ASA of Norway and Burrup Holdings Ltd of Australia (the latter own by Oswal Group) commenced environmental approvals in 2008, in order to establish a 79 Ha plant in the peninsula, adjacent to Burrup Fertilisers: the Technical Ammonium Nitrate Production Facility (TANPF), which will produce 350,000 tonnes of TAN (Technical Ammonium Nitrate) per annum. It is expected that the operations of the plant will begin in 2013 (see http://burrupnitrates.com). In February 2010, a Public Environmental Review (PER) was made public through its website (http://burrupnitrates.com/updates.html) in accordance to the Environment Protection Act 1986. It was available for public comment from February 2010 until April 2010.

The PER acknowledges the risk of impacting the rock art, such as inadvertent disturbance at any stage of development; disturbance as a result of increased human traffic, such as: increased risk of vandalism or graffiti; and impact on rock art as a result of air emissions. Both impacts are deemed moderate in terms of significance. Management measures are also offered and discussed (BNPL 2010a, 88). In addition, a "Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan" was produced. In it, a reasonable amount of measures are taken in order to prevent the disturbance of Aboriginal heritage. Although it is difficult to oversee if they all are applied, it acknowledges the sites as important for the Aboriginal community and the necessity to "identify, record and assess the significance of all Aboriginal heritage sites within the Site." (BNPL 2010a, 4-7)

In August 2010, a PER supplement was released containing the response of BNPL to public submissions. Many issues were raised of course, but concerning the safety and protection of Aboriginal heritage two concerns were discussed: "impacts on Aboriginal and National heritage, including rock art; and the air quality, in particular the impact of air emissions on rock art."(BNPL, 2010b, 6) Regarding the latter, public submissions stated that "TANPF will significantly add to acidic emissions destroying Burrup Peninsula rock art." The BNPL response was based on the results of experiments conducted by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), which claim no threat to the rock art. (CSIRO 2007, 2008. BNPL 2010b, 9) According to the Public response, not only emissions would impact the Aboriginal heritage, but other factors such as location, the high risk of an explosion, being a national heritage and a possible world heritage site, were consider likely to impact on Aboriginal sites. Of course, the fact that neither the peninsula nor the archipelago are considered World Heritage sites, plays an important role in the decision of establishing new plants, and a negative role in achieving the nomination.

The Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation (NAC)[5] proposed close consultation with a management board that would include Ngarluma representatives, as well as the creation of a Cultural Heritage and Environmental Management Plan (CHEMP), in order to review and supervise the construction and closure of the project, after BNPL failed to engage NAC at the start of the project ("NAC notes that it is one of the stakeholders listed in the proponents PER document as being consulted. NAC

has not been consulted.") BNPL claimed the response was not true and that liaisons with other Aboriginal groups have been made. It also claimed that all Aboriginal groups need to be consulted (BNPL 2010b, 35). In addition, the National Trust raised concerns on the fact that the site is a National Heritage and the project could be potentially damaging (BNPL 2010b, 36). DIA asked for stronger measures against any employee that could damage the rock art and more involvement in the air emissions monitoring program, as well as compliance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act (BNPL 2010b, 32-24). The Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) expressed similar concerns.

Sacred beliefs and industrial progress cannot share (although they are) the same space: a contested space, where an Indian company in foreign soil finds meaning in an otherwise Aboriginal original country, and the duty of care takes another meaning. In this case, progress, economic boom, exploration of natural resources, and employment. As a sacred site for the local Aboriginal community, and as an industrial site for the thousands of workers, the peninsula finds meaning within a *local perspective*.

Heritage Site

Stripped from the label of sacred and industrial site, the site is also considered as heritage. "[I]n the absence of any land rights legislation in Western Australia, it is only through heritage legislation that the Ngaluma people can voice" their concerns (Veth *et al*. 1993, 173). *Heritage* is a powerful concept, a symbolic tool that comprises cross-cultural attitudes towards the same object, including aesthetic, historical, antiquity and archaeological values. The status of heritage endows rock art with some of these values, but sometimes they overlap and it is difficult to have a clear view.

For example, endowing rock art with *archaeological significance* is a very important step towards considering it secular art, in the first place, and afterwards, heritage. The significance of being an archaeological site derives from the fact that the site is not used in any sense, except for research purposes and archaeological analysis. It is meant to be looked at rather than being particularly useful for the local population. However, considering the Burrup Peninsula as an archaeological site can be problematic since archaeological sites underline the fact that the people who inhabited it have disappeared. Thus, the local Aboriginal descendants might feel uncomfortable with the label. On the other hand, the site and the petroglyphs elicited certain responses for their makers that we may never know. Perhaps they were aesthetic, perhaps supernatural. In any case, what we know today about those responses is that they existed before Australia was discovered by Abel Tasman, William Dampier or James Cook. As a result, McDonald and Veth ask to view these associations, which have persisted through difficult periods (as we have seen), "as being actively reasserted in the present day." (JMCHM, 2005, 157)

But this is also problematic because it cannot be done. Images die (literally and metaphorically) when the ideas behind them disappear. For a long time, the petroglyphs in the Dampier Archipelago were nothing but meaningless symbols,

after their makers and the Aboriginal tribe who made and saw them and knew their values, disappeared. At a certain point in the history of the site, the images were considered simple images. As a result, since the 1960s, it has been the task of many scholars to trace the ideas behind them, having succeeded in some cases, but no prove can be offered.

On the other hand, dispossessing the images of their *sacred reference* is a step towards considering it a universal (inclusive) heritage, rather than a regional or national (exclusive) heritage: "Places on the World Heritage list must have special universal values above and beyond the values they hold for a particular nation." (McDonald and Veth 2005, 1) By being the exclusive site where Aboriginals would perform ritual ceremonies, the site can be easily seen as a pagan site, whilst its international status as a masterpiece of human genius, shared by many cross-cultural audiences, transforms it into a World Heritage Site, and can be easily seen as a secular site charged a religious past. That is why Veth et al. considered important to protect the site, in the absence of land rights, through heritage legislation, because heritage is a more inclusive concept in comparison to "secular art," "sacred art," and even "art."

Moreover, sacred images are more difficult to interpret and assimilate in a secular environment. For if there is no knowledge regarding the images it is easier not to assess them in a sacred context. Contrary to art-historians, archaeologists prefer not to integrate narratives to the images, unless Aboriginal informants do so. Archaeologists would only accept a truth if this was confirmed by the local community, and if the community does not provide any meaning, the act of interpretation would be considered futile. Some European explorers in the XIX century did venture to suggest that some of the Aboriginal images they found in Australia could be linked to outer narratives (Mathew 1893; Grey, 1841, 215)[6] , but in the XX century this was not the case anymore. As Terry Smith claims: "(...) is not the work of scarcity, of taking something to be sacral and behaving in a sacred/secular way towards it, precisely a passaging from something evidently negative into a positive state?" (Smith 2002, 35)

In 2007, the Australian Heritage Council included the Dampier Archipelago and the Burrup Peninsula in the National Heritage List. The aim is obvious: national heritage is important and Australia recognizes Aboriginal sites as heritage, not only as Aboriginal heritage. By abolishing the Aboriginal aspect in the Aboriginal heritage equation, the Australian Heritage Council is making it more inclusive and welcomes the site within the multiculturalism that Australia, as a country, has been boasting for the last years; Terry Smith calling it the "official ideology in Australia"(Smith 2002, 2). Let us remember the definition of Aboriginal site: they are important places for the Aboriginal community today as they were in the past. However, the inclusion on the national list did not impinge the establishment of Burrup Fertilizers, something that the inclusion on the World Heritage List would have. It seems then that national protection allows foreign companies to be established as long as it keeps the economy growing.

Conclusion

Latest developments in the negotiations between all parties have produced the Murujuga[7] (DAS 1979a, npa; Bednarik, 2006) National Park. In 2003, as part of the Burrup and Maitland Industrial Estates Agreement Implementation Deed (the Burrup Agreement or BMIEA), freehold title was "transferred to an Approved Body Corporate," composed by the three registered Aboriginal groups who claim Native Title rights over the peninsula: Ngarluma/Yindjibarndi, Yaburarra/Martuthunira and Wong-goo-tt-oo.[8] This enabled the State Government to compulsory acquire native title rights so industrial development could grow "across southern parts" of the peninsula, whilst also providing "development of a conservation estate" and ensuring "the protection of Aboriginal heritage." The agreement also "includes a range of economic and community benefits" for the Aboriginal groups, "including education and training and a stake in future land developments." (CALM 2003) This meant that 60% of the land in the peninsula (the non-industrial land) "will be leased back to the State of Western Australia to be jointly managed as a Conservation Reserve by the Approved Body Corporate and the Department of Conservation and Land Management [since 2006, the Department of Environment and Conservation]." By pointing out the land as non-industrial, it created "an identifiable landmass that could be nominated to the National Estate and meaningfully managed for its conservation values." (JMCHM, 2005, 166)

The reaction of the National Trust Heritage Trust was: "to say that we can now hand 40 per cent of the rock art precinct over to industry is not management (...) it would be inappropriate to hand over 40 per cent of Stonehenge to industry" (NTN 2006, 29). In contrast, Frances Flanagan claims the agreement "is (...) the most comprehensive agreement ever made by any government with an Aboriginal group over land in Australia. Its value as a precedent for other native title groups negotiating with government cannot be underestimated." (Flanagan 2003, 21)

In April 2006 the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) was created to act as the Approved Body Corporate and "manage the benefits that flow from the Agreement on behalf" of the Aboriginal claimants groups (CALM 2003). The future lies bleak, since the project want to convert the site into a national park, with barbecues included (DEC 2006, 57).

Since 1979, several key players have tried to nominate the Burrup Peninsula and the Dampier Archipelago for the UNESCO World Heritage List (just to name the most important: Bruce Wright, Robert Bednarik: http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/dampier/web/garrett.html), and Robin Chapple: http://robinchapple.org.au/). In a report for DAS, Wright concluded the area is likely to be considered "for entry on a U.N.E.S.C.O. World Heritage Register in the future." (DAS 1979a, 11) UNESCO Convention was only seven years old. The perspective was different and what yesterday was considered heritage today might be not. Accordingly, the site would be protected and the industries will have to leave the area eventually (Bednarik 2011; Mulvaney 2011). Perhaps that is the case, but until they do, there is a task that must be made beforehand: the site needs to be defined. Are the Burrup Peninsula and the Dampier Archipelago sacred sites, archaeological sites, natural or industri-

al parks? What kind of heritage is it? Is it a cultural or a natural heritage, or both? Contrary to Uluru, the Burrup Peninsula still bears the name given by the Australian Minister for Lands (Mulvaney 2011, 18), and not its Aboriginal local name. Memory is linked to the Flying Foam Massacre in a small homage (see figure 5), but memories of the place are unstable, therefore, even as a memorial (and to a degree, a monument) the site cannot be defined. Another problem is the fact that Australia has nominated other Aboriginal cultural significant sites as World Heritage, such as Kakadu National Park, Uluru National Park, Tasmanian Wildernes and Willandra Lakes Region.

Figure 5. Plaque Erected by Yaburarra and Ngarluma Descendants and the Department of Aboriginal Sites, Commemorating the Flying Foam Massacre. The Inscription States that "as Many as 60 Yapurarra" were Killed. Burrup Peninsula. 2010. © Antonio González.

Bearing in mind that the peninsula may host up to one million motifs, it is deplorable that this site cannot be up-graded to a higher-level of heritage. Then how do we interpret the site? How do we define it? It is my conclusion that through a cross-cultural point of view we will be able to understand this site. The use of a powerful symbolic tool such as heritage is enlightening; however, the concept itself should be redefined in order to group all cross-cultural attitudes towards the site. Otherwise, it would be considered just an Aboriginal heritage site, as opposed to a national or world heritage site. If a serious, realistic and protective Management Plan that includes all interested parties (industry, Aboriginal groups, rock art associations, Australian Heritage Council and the Western Australia Government) is not implanted, the Burrup Peninsula and the Dampier Archipelago will be subjected to the whims of a few and converted in an industry backyard.

Following the claim that the destruction of an image conversely creates another image or a counter-image (Smith 2002, 34; Mitchell 2008, 186), the destruction of

petroglyphs in Western Australia perpetuates the image of a nation that is still struggling with its Aboriginal past, neo-colonialism and an increasing flow of immigrants that is keeping the economy bursting, whilst still negotiating an identity (as many other countries). The Burrup Peninsula is, to an extent, a microcosm of what is happening in the rest of the country. The economic boom, no doubt influenced by the progress of the Australian mining industry, is evidence that industrial development will not stop at this point, nor it will stop feeding the dragon either.[9]

Contrary to other much publicized acts of destruction (e. g. Buddhas of Bamiyan, World Trade Center Towers), in the Burrup Peninsula there was no camera, nor journalist, nor media channel that could reproduce images of the destruction, hence the little attention to this site. The only image we have is the million petroglyphs' motifs left. How do we get an image from the site?

Endnotes

1 It is worth noting that Lorblanchet had been working in the Lascaux cave before arriving in Australia, and considered by many experts the most impressive expression of prehistoric art.

2 Although several surveys have been undertaken, especially since the 1990s, to date there is no complete survey that tells how many petroglyphs are in the area; therefore, the amount of petroglyphs destroyed are calculated on the basis of the available surveys and reports.

3 Daniel recorded with the help and guidance of Aboriginal elders several thalu sites in the West Pilbara and their function.

4 This map is just one representation of many other map sources that are available for Aboriginal Australia. Using published resources available between 1988–1994, this map attempts to represent all the language or tribal or nation groups of the Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. This map is NOT SUITABLE FOR USE IN NATIVE TITLE AND OTHER LAND CLAIMS. David R Horton, creator, © Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS and Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz, 1996.

5 The Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation is the Prescribed Body Corporate charged with the management and preservation of Aboriginal heritage in the Ngarluma determination area, after the High Court in May 2005 granted the Ngarluma descendants Native Title rights over the determination area. However, native title rights over the Burrup Peninsula were excluded, leaving the peninsula as an industrial lease.

6 Grey linked one cave painting in the Kimberley to Ezekiel, the prophet, whilst Mathew tried to connect some to the Hindu universe.

7 Murujuga is the name of the site in Aboriginal language. It means "hip bone stick out."

8 Only the Ngarluma/Yindjubarnid have been successful in pursuing Native Title rights. As we have seen, the Ngarluma are the owners of the area, excluding the peninsula, according to the decision by the Australian High Court.

9 GHD, "Sino Iron Ore Project." http://www.ghd.com/global/projects/sino-iron-ore-project (accessed February 5, 2011).

References

Bednarik, R. "A Survey of Prehistoric Sites in the Tom Price Region, North Western Australia." *Archaeology & Physical Anthropology in Oceania* 12 no. 1 (1977): 51-76.

Bednarik, R. "The Survival of the Murujuga (Burrup) Petroglyphs." *Rock Art Research* 19 no. 1 (2002): 29-40.

Bednarik, R. *Australian Apocalypse: The Story of Australia's Greatest Cultural Monument*. Melbourne: AURA (2006).

Bednarik, R. "The Dampier Campaign." *Rock Art Research* 28 no. 1 (2011): 27-34.

Blevins, J. Nhanda: *An Aboriginal Language of Western Australia (Oceanic Linguistics Special Publications No. 3)*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Burrup Nitrates Pty Ltd (BNPL). *Technical Ammonium Nitrate Production Facility: Public Environmental Review (PER.)* Perth, WA, Australia: BNPL. 2010. http://burrupnitrates.com/updates.html (accessed January 20, 2011).

Burrup Nitrates Pty Ltd. *"Technical Ammonium Nitrate Production Facility - Response to Public Submissions (PER). PER Supplement."* Perth, WA, Australia: Environmental Resources Management Australia. 2010. http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/pdf/national_parks/management/burrup_agreement.pdf (accessed January 21, 2011).

Caygill, H. "The destruction of art." In *The Life and Death of Images. Ethics and Aesthetics,* edited by D. Costello, and D. Willsdon. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008. 162-173.

Clottes, J. "Rock Art: An Endangered Heritage Worldwide." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 64 no. 1 (2008): 1-18.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO). *Field Studies of Rock Art Appearance - Final Report: Fumigation & Dust Deposition - Progress Report: Colour Change & Spectral Mineralogy.* Australia: CSIRO, 2007.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO). 2008. *Burrup Peninsula Air Pollution Study: Report for 2004/2005 and 2007/2008.* Australia: CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research; September, 10, 2008.

Conservation and Land Management (CALM). *Burrup Peninsula Conservation Reserve Management Plan.* Perth, WA, Australia: Department of Environment and Conservation. 2003. http://www.ont.dotag.wa.gov.au/B/burrup_and_maitland_industrial_estates.aspx (accessed January 19, 2011).

Dampier, William. *A "Collection of Voyages."* In *Four Volumes*. London: James and John Knapton at the Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1729.

Daniel, D. *Thalusites of the West Pilbara*. Perth: Department of Aboriginal Sites, Western Australian Museum, 1990.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS). *Dampier Archipelago Aboriginal Sites*. Unpubl. Report for Incorporation into the Pilbara Study Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1974.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (B. J. Wright). *Dampier Archipelago Liquefied Natural Gas Project: A Survey for Aboriginal Sites*. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1979.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (V. Novak). *Dampier Archipelago Liquefied Natural Gas Project: A Survey for Aboriginal Sites, King Bay Area*. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1979.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (J. Clarke). *Dampier Archaeological Liquefied Natural Gas Project: A Survey for Aboriginal Sites: Quarry, Communications Station and Access Roads*. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1979.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (B. J. Wright). *A proposal for the Archaeological Investigation of and Preservation of Aboriginal Sites in the Dampier Archipelago*. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1980.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (J. Clarke). *Dampier Archipelago Liquefied Natural Gas Project. Survey for Aboriginal Sites in the Vicinity of Proposed Access Road Dampier to King Bay*. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1980.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (J. Clarke). *Dampier Archipelago Liquefied Natural Gas Project. Supplementary Report II. Survey for Aboriginal Sites in the Vicinity of Proposed Borrow Pits, Granite Quarry and Lay Down Areas, Burrup Peninsula, WA*. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1980.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (B. J. Wright). *The Recording and Protection of Aboriginal Prehistoric Places on the Dampier Archipelago*. Unpubl. Report. Press Release, June. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1981.

Department of Aboriginal Studies (DAS) (B. J. Wright). *A Proposal for The Archaeological Investigation of and Preservation of Aboriginal Sites in the Dampier Archipelago*. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Western Australian Museum, 1982.

Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). *Proposed Burrup Peninsula Conservation Reserve. Draft Management Plan 2006-2016*. Perth: Western Australia Department of Environment and Conservation, 2006.

Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA). *Aboriginal Sites*. 2011, http://www.dia.wa.gov.au/en/Heritage-and-Culture/Aboriginal-heritage/Aboriginal-sites/ (accessed January 20, 2011).

Donaldson, M. *Burrup Rock Art: Ancient Aboriginal Rock Art of Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago*. Western Australia: Wildrocks Publications, 2009.

Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Western Australia. *Technical Ammonium Nitrate Production Facility, Burrup Peninsula Burrup Nitrates Pty Ltd. Report and Recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority.* Report 1379, 2011. http://edit.epa.wa.gov.au/EPADocLib/Final%20EPA%20Report%20050111-web.pdf (accessed January 18, 2011).

Federal Court of Australia. In *The Matter of Daniel v State of Western Australia [2003] FCA 666*, 2003. http://judgments.fedcourt.gov.au/2003/J030666.yes.htm. (accessed February 2, 2009).

Flanagan, F. *The Burrup Agreement: A Case Study in Future Act Negotiation.* Agreements, Treaties, and Negotiated Settlements Project (ATNS). Indigenous Studies Program. University of Melbourne, 2007. http://www.atns.net.au/papers.asp (accessed January 20, 2011).

Gara, T. J. *The Aborigines of the Dampier Archipelago: An Ethnohistory of the Yaburarra*. Unpubl. Paper. Perth: Western Australia Museum, 1984.

Gregory, A. C., and F. T. Gregory. *Journals of Australian Explorations.* Brisbane: Government Printer, James C. Beale, 1884.

Grey, G. *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia, During the Years 1837, 38, and 39, Under the Authority of Her Majesty's Government. Describing Many Newly Discovered, Important, and Fertile Districts, with Observations on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Aboriginal Inhabitants, & c. & c.* London: T. and W. Boone., 1841.

Hall, H. A. *A Partial Vocabulary of the Ngalooma Aboriginal Tribe*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. 1971.

Horton, D. R. *Aboriginal Australia* [Map]. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1996.

Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd (JMCHM). *Desktop Assessment of Scientific Values for Indigenous Cultural Heritage on the Dampier Archipelago, Western Australia*. Unpubl. Report. Canberra: Heritage Division of the Department of Environment and Heritage, 2005.

Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd (JMCHM). *A Study of the Distribution of Rock Art and Stone Structures on the Dampier Archipelago.* Unpubl. Report. Canberra: Heritage Division of the Department of Environment and Heritage, 2006.

Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd (JMCHM). *Archaeological Survey of Deep Gorge on the Burrup Peninsula (Murujuga) Dampier Archipelago* WA. Unpubl. Report. Perth: Department of Indigenous Affairs, 2009.

Lorblanchet, M. "The Rock Engravings of Gum Tree Valley and Skew Valley, Dampier, Western: Chronology and Functions of the Sites." In *State of the Art. Regional Rock Art Studies in Australia and Melanesia,* edited by J. McDonald, and I. Haskovec, 39-59. Melbourne: Occasional AURA. Publication No. 6, 1992.

Mathew, J. "The Cave Paintings of Australia, Their Authorship and Significance." *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 23 (1894): 42-52.

Mitchell, W. J. T. "Cloning Terror: The War of Images 2001-04." In *The Life and Death of Images, Ethics, and Aesthetics,* edited by D. Costello, and D. Willsdon, 180-207. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Mulvaney, K. "Dating the Dreaming: Extinct Fauna in the Petroglyphs of the Pilbara Region, Western Australia." *Archaeology in Oceania* 44 no. 1 (2009): 40-48.

Mulvaney, K. "Dampier Archipelago: Decades of Development and Destruction." *Rock Art Research* 28 no. 1 (2011): 17-25.

Native Title Newsletter (NTN). *Native Title Research Unit* July/August.4/200. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2006.

Palmer, K. "Petroglyphs and Associated Aboriginal Sites in the North West of Western Australia." *Archaeology & Physical Anthropology in Oceania* 10 no. 2 (1975): 152-160.

Palmer, K. "Myth, Ritual and Rock Art." *Archaeology & Physical Anthropology in Oceania* 12 no.1 (1977): 38-50.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. "Three Tribes of Western Australia." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 43 (1913): 143-194.

Smith, T. "The Political Economy of Iconotypes and the Architecture of Destination: Uluru, The Sydney Opera House and the World Trade Center." *Architectural Theory Review* 7 no. 2 (2002): 1-44.

Stow, J. P. *The Voyage of the Forlorn Hope from Escape Cliffs to Champion Bay 1865*. Adelaide: Sullivan's Cove, 1981.

Tindale, N. B. *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia.Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits and Proper Names.* USA: University of California Press. 1974.

Veth, P., and J. McDonald. *Burrup Peninsula. Aboriginal Heritage Project*. Perth: Department of Conservation and Land Management, 1993.

Vinnicombe, P. *Dampier Archaeological Project. Resource Document, Survey and Salvage of Aboriginal Sites, Burrup Peninsula, Western Australia*. Perth: Department of Aboriginal Sites, Western Australian Museum, 1987.

Vinnicombe, P. "Petroglyphs of the Dampier Archipelago: Background to Development and Descriptive Analysis." *Rock Art Research* 19 no. 1 (2002): 3-27.

Virili, F. L. "A Preliminary Report on the Aboriginal Sites and the Rock Art of the Dampier Archipelago, W.A." In *Form in Indigenous Art: Schematisation in the Art of Aboriginal Australia and Prehistoric*

Europe. edited by P. J. Ucko, Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, London: Gerald Duckworth, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977 and Associated Biennial Conference, 1974.

Virili, F. L. "Aboriginal Sites and Rock Art of the Dampier Archipelago." In *Form in Indigenous Art: Schematisation in the Art of Aboriginal and Prehistoric Europe*, edited by P. J. Ucko, Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1977. 439-451.

Von Brandenstein, C. G. "The Language Situation in the Pilbara -Past and Present." *Papers in Australian Linguistics*, 1-20, no. 2, Occasional Papers, No. 11. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1967.

Von Brandenstein, C. G. 1970. *Narratives from the North-West of Western Australia in the Ngaluma and Jindjpandi Languages*. Canberra: AIAS.

Wright, B. J. "Some Aboriginal Rock Engravings in the Roebourne-Hamersley Range Area." *The Western Australian Naturalist* 9 no. 5 (1965): 97-118.

Wright, B. J. *Rock Art of the Pilbara Region, North-West Australia*. Occasional Papers in Aboriginal Studies 11. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1968.