CHAPTER-V

‘THE SCREAMING BEGAN IN MY MIND’: A STUDY OF WILD CAT SCREAMING
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Wild Cat Screaming, the third in the series of the ‘Wild Cat’ trilogy, completes the sequel to the ‘linear image’ (Shoemaker 116) but collapses within a variety of changes which Mudrooroo introduces to break the monotony of the same setting and the same protagonist emerging in the three novels. It is a story of the Fremantle. It has been acknowledged as a ‘social novel about prison’; or perhaps ‘a prison novel about society’ (Shoemaker 116). All that Mudrooroo writes about is the prison life and the character of ‘Wildcat’ is interesting as his activities find various avenues in various situations in the novel. Suffering from his childhood days the ‘troubled youth’ encounters multiple characters within the prison walls. Mudrooroo’s experiment with Doin Wild Cat twenty-three years later after the debut novel Wild Cat Falling finally reached its climax in Wild Cat Screaming. The protagonist is closely attached to his Black Australian community through the detective Watson Holmes Jackamara. Mudrooroo is satirical when he portrays the view of the Western Australian society. The matrix of his thoughts conform with the European standard of liberation through literature. The reformatory power of writing in Wild Cat Screaming foreshadowed the back to Aboriginality element that Mudrooroo blends uniquely with the political and economic degeneration in Western Australia.

Mudrooroo theorises European textual sources to meet his objective. The book is explicitly based upon the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham’s concept of the ‘Panopticon’ : “the prison in which the seers and the seen – the warders and their charges – are in a symbiotic relationship (Shoemaker 117). The guards exist
because of the prisoners; thus, according to Bentham, they are equally entrapped in the carceral system and gain their livelihood from being 'prisoners' themselves’. In the process of being entrapped they lose their identity just like the prisoners. Mudrooroo hints at a communal loss of identity and takes a chance to assert 'his own identity' when the seers are at a loss. Approval of his identity needs a chance for exposure and not an acclamation. He longs for his chance to escape but gradually he is attuned to the system inside the walls and emerges to be a critic and a voracious reader.

In the continuous process of surveillance, the seers and seen are both entrapped. Mudrooroo adopts Michel Foucault’s Panopticon model of the ‘ideal’ prison system in a dehumanized society. The seers themselves are forced to obey certain dictates and to mould their behaviour while performing their duties. Though habitual work makes a man slave of the system, Mudrooroo expects a systematic and total change through change in human behaviour. In the process both undergo a process of transformation and upgradation. Each and every human being in a society is supposed to play a definite and disciplined role in a society by maintaining law and order of the state. This ensures the continuance of the ‘panoptic mechanism’. At the same time, Mudrooroo’s innovative skill labelled as ‘Prison Reform Society’ explores the investment system within the prison walls. Mudrooroo combines the system of easy-flow of money in the hands of a few who are installed to practice justice but involve themselves in gambling and money-making process with the unscrupulous ways within the prison-system that was quite alarming and unacceptable. No steps were taken to stop the system even when Jackamara the detective informed the Commissioner of the Western Australian Police Force. In the name of economic and
social well-being a channelised undercurrent swiped the state. Robbi Singh, the head of the system with the Chief Warder and Dick his loyal assistant improvised new set of rules within the Panopticon framework. The prisoners were made to understand and believe that they would avail the maximum benefit by entering into this system, i.e., by contributing 10 percent when they would be seers, by upgrading themselves whenever a new convict enters the system and finally by collecting 1200 pounds they would be profit-earners of the organisation or the so called Reform System. Even members or visitors could earn this by purchasing a cell for 150 pounds. The ulterior motive of this was to reform the prisoners. If a convict was unable to supply a new convict he would be resentenced for three times failing which he would leave the Panopticon and fine a new convict for 150 pounds. Thus, by maintaining the balance the organisation would never run at a loss. The principles were well laid and stressed to convince each member and convict of the Reform system. In this context Mudrooroo recalls Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham the makers of the principle and the system. Mudrooroo sarcastically uses these names stating that in the name of upliftment the organisation practised vice and spread venom in the society. Robbi Singh and his fellow inmates are the controllers of a ‘bold, new pyramid-marketing scheme’ : By purchasing ‘a cell’ for 150 pounds, investors take the opportunity to earn 1200 pounds when they rise through the ranks to the exalted position of the ‘Seer’. At the same time new convicts are enrolled into the system and share the existing responsibility. “In brief” to quote Shoemaker again, “the prison becomes as blatant a capitalist scam as the worst time-share or pyramid-selling venture” (119). In this way Mudrooroo’s attacks the vices of the Western Australian Society, which finds expression in the novel when he writes :

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"The Panopticon Prison Reform Society thus has official sanction and so many decide to enter into the Panopticon ... From this meeting ... the temporary prosperity and eventual economic collapse of Western Australia began, together with the subsequent scandals which rocked the entire political and economic system of the state." (86).

Mudrooroo picks up the issues of state prison reformation system and gives us a detailed description of the Panopticon with his ingenious suggestion. ‘The Panopticon’ was a type of prison building designed by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. The concept of the design was to allow an observer to observe (-opticon) all prisoners (pan) without the prisoners’ knowing whether they are being observed or not, thus conveying a “sentiment of an invisible omniscience”. Mudrooroo felt this omniscient presence everywhere during his long years in prison. He mentions Jeremy Bentham, who derived the idea from the plan of a Military school in Paris designed for easy supervision, and considered it as a solution to the complexities involved in the handling of a large number of men by a few. The Panopticon was likewise later suggested as an ‘Open’ hospital architecture in a different context in 1977 interview (Preface to French edition of Jeremy Bentham’s “Panopticon”).

“Hospitals required knowledge of contacts, contagious, proximity and crowding ... at the same time to divide space and keep it open, assuring a surveillance which is both global and individualising”.

In the 21st century setting, we are under close surveillance of someone and the gaze of a superior is always felt in every conversation and internalised in every good employee, the idea behind it is Panopticon that is being watched always and everywhere. This is realised in many areas such as closed-circuit television, surveillance at stoplights, in libraries, in restricted areas, in hotels in city centre and in
shopping malls where video cameras are used to reduce the risk of crime. The strategy employed make people aware of the watch and this awareness automatically reduces chances and provocations for wrong deeds.

The focus on social issues remind us of surveillance within family walls. Being disowned by his family members and later when he came to know that his mother did not sign his birth-certificate, it was open and clear that close surveillance was exercised within families too which suggests that mere human bondage is of less importance than systemic structure or investigation.

Mudrooroo draws upon Foucault's concept who compares modern society with Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" design for prisons (which was unrealised in its original form, but nonetheless influential) : "in the Panopticon, a single guard can watch over many prisoners while the guard remains unseen". The dark dungeon of pre-modernity has been replaced with the bright modern prison, but Foucault cautions that "visibility is a trap". It is through this visibility, Foucault writes, that modern society exercises its controlling systems of power and knowledge. The 'Carceral Continuum' runs through modern society, from the maximum security prison, through secured accommodation, probation, social workers, police and teachers, to our everyday working and domestic lives. All are connected by the supervision (surveillance application of norms of acceptable behaviour) of some humans by others. But the disproportionate representation of few under the surveillance of many put the Aboriginals at odd and striving end. The prisoners who were mainly the aboriginals were marginalized in this way. An escape from this structure and system was impossible. So Mudrooroo's struggle for existence was to
either transform or cope up with the system. The satirical approach of Mudrooroo that both the seers and the seen are entrapped in the carceral system suggest that none can exist without the other. A sort of kinship develops with the prison walls during the prolonged years of survival and as a result strategies evolve, be it for the good or bad of the society.

Foucault points out that Panopticon is: “Polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct school children, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work” (205). The system concerned with everyday life of men and seers themselves had to obey certain directives and change themselves necessarily in order to govern.

Like Foucault, Mudrooroo too believed strongly in human freedom and his philosophy was a fundamentally optimistic one. Beginning with ‘Wounded in Action’ in which the protagonist is injured with his ‘hurting arm’, he finds himself back in prison as he is unable to do anything worthy outside the prison. In a state of trance he visualizes the attempts of the cat trying to climb higher and falls suddenly screaming: “He leaps off and up, one foot, two foot, and begins falling, falling, screaming, screaming, screaming…” (13) The justification of the title of the novel emerges through the animal imageries applied by Mudrooroo with the underlying suggestions of the activities and characteristics of the cat: ‘His claws grip’, ‘back paws’ (13), ‘Just a pussy cat’ (4), ‘you aren’t no child, you’re just an animal and should be locked up…’ (4) and so on. This imagery is also associated with the Aboriginals who are ‘numbered, dehumanized’ (15) and a ‘menace to the society’ (11). Mudrooroo’s cry of protest emerges from these situations he embraces in the
novel. His thoughtfulness, his natural flow of expressions cover up all the caverns in the novel. The final section of the novel asserts that 'Continuance' is the pattern of existence. He believed that something positive could always be done, no matter how bleak the situation is. He opposed strong punishment and has appealed through his novels a change of order for betterment of the society. Foucault's work has been criticised and one might also add that his work is actually aimed at refuting the position that 'reason' or rationality is the sole means by which truth is exposed and the validity of ethical systems is observed. But to criticise and use reason or rationality as a means does not devalue truth and ethics either. Mudrooroo blends Foucault's concept of reason with basic facts and truth of life. He makes Foucault living in the lines of the text and sets the problematic issues of Western Australia as examples of modern society.

Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* was originally published in 1975 in France and was, later translated into English in 1977. It is an examination of the social and theoretical mechanisms behind the massive changes that occurred in Western penal systems during the modern age. It focuses on historical documents from France, but the issues it examines are relevant to every modern Western society. 'It is considered a seminal work, and has influenced many theorists and artists'.

'The book challenges the commonly accepted idea that the prison became the consistent form of punishment due to humanitarian concerns of reformists'. Mudrooroo similarly picks up the idea of reformation and sub-titles the chapters as "The Panopticon : The Panopticon Prison Reform Society, Reformation, The Corporate Panopticon". The heart of the text delves into a detailed graphical
exposition of how the Panopticon works. Mudrooroo preaches that the ultimate aim or the highest rung of the ladder the convict must reach is that of the seer. To achieve this, he has to go through several stages while in the prison and within the Panopticon Reformation system. This enlightened idea took birth in the ‘Age of Enlightenment’ and shone from ‘the great economist, Adam Smith’ (Screaming 79). It was introduced to remove disparity in distribution of wealth. This could only occur when even the downtrodden could participate in the system. Here the convicts in the lowest rung of the ladder could enter and participate in the ‘Pyramid Game. As a matter of encouragement no body was left out in the prison. Wealth could reach even those who were niggers. Simultaneously their behaviour could be modified in the process and they would not exist as convicts anymore.

“As convicts keep on entering the Panopticon in which you are incarcerated, individually you keep on moving up, or being reformed until you becomes the seer of your own Panopticon and collect your 1200 pounds as follows:

a. “After you are fined and ‘sentenced’ you must inform on at least one (or more) criminals to fill up the empty cells.

b. Once all eight cells (in the Panopticon in which you are incarcerated) have been filled, the original seer collects the fines and is free” (Screaming 80).

Mudrooroo fills up the equation neatly and helps in the expansion of the Panopticon too. The vacant position is filled up to give an opportunity to a greater number.
"The formal convicts (now reformed) become warders, the former warders become welfare officer and chaplain respectively become seers of their own panopticon." (80)

This sharp rise is not that easy as anyone from beyond the prison walls may think. The entrepreneurs have to follow the directives and rules of the system too.

The Rules laid down by Mudrooroo are as follows:

1. "You must PAY THE FINE to enter the plan

2. You must be represented or ATTEND EVERY MEETING until you attain freedom.

3. You must ESCORT IN AT LEAST ONE NEW CONVICT in order to remain a Welfare Officer or Chaplain and move from one of these positions to Seer to avoid being resentenced. Being resentenced means that you become a repeat offender and are returned to a cell, for failure to find one new offender.

4. After being resentenced three times, you may be released by fining a new Convict 150 pounds and leaving the Panopticon.

5. All moneys must be paid to, or received from the Treasurer of The Panopticon Prison Reform Society, or if he is not able to be in attendance, from the society member designated". (80)

These rules forecast the disciplines for Reform and Freedom in which the behavioural change takes place simultaneously. This proves how a system can transform man from within but conditionally when he ensures a continuous flow of incoming
convicts. The protocols the Panopticon Reform system desires is mutual understanding, feeling of brotherhood envisage social circle for a wider distribution of wealth and prosperity. This complete economic support system is the brain-child of Robbi Singh an Indian. By donating 10 percent of each one’s earnings, or by purchasing a cell for 150 pounds (for any Member or Visitor), one could avail ‘the opportunity to earn 1200 pounds within ten meetings’ (79).

This being the overall suggestion of the organisers who flaunt their expertise in the penal system, accredited excellent results of the prison system ‘which is not functioning as it should’ presently. They wanted to draw the notice of the general public merely to raise funds for the smooth functioning of the system. Mudrooroo satirically defines Panopticon in the way Robbi Singh thinks and wishes. ‘The panopticon is about self-empowerment, is about leaving the prison of ourselves to advance into prosperity’ (85). The gimmick was to ‘further your ambitions and interests’, (85) and serve the society at large. The promise secured a sharp rise in economy of Western Australia. ‘Those who enter the Panopticon and pass into freedom find themselves at the leading edge of humanity’. This would foster the benefit of the society and make individuals happy. The proposal was accepted with exuberance and Mudrooroo opines that “the temporary prosperity and eventual economic collapse of Western Australia began, together with the subsequent scandals which rocked the entire political and economic system of the state.” (86) By recalling Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham Mudrooroo attaches a lofty effect but at the same time by improvising a different set of regulations in his own text he problematises identity politics and representation of the Aboriginals.
In *Wild Cat Screaming* Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham's greatest discovery and contribution was, “when the eight segments of the encoded diagram join together into the perfect circle of the perfect society to form the perfect company.” (86). ‘Prison’ is a form of a new technological power, which can also be found, according to Foucault in schools, hospitals and military barracks. It includes many complex ideas, however, the larger ideas of the book can be grouped according to its four parts: ‘torture, punishment, discipline and prison’.

‘Punishment became gentle though not for humanitarian reasons’ – as Foucault states, that the sovereign’s right to punish was disproportionate and ineffective and hence uncontrollable. Hence Mudrooroo was looking for alternatives. So, reformations were proposed and the Reformists felt that the power to punish and judge should become more evenly distributed, and ‘the state’s power must be a form of public power’. This, according to Foucault, was of more concern to Reformists than humanitarian arguments. Prisoners would have to do work which reflected crime, thus repaying society for their infractions. This would have allowed the public to see the convicts’ bodies enacting their punishment, and consequently had to reflect on the crime before they could commit any. But these experiments lasted less than twenty years.

Mudrooroo draws the idea of discipline and punishment from Foucault’s concept and builds up the pyramid within the prison-system. He conforms with Reformist and humanitarian arguments to discipline the criminal body. In order to enhance such programmes the structure of the prison was re-structured and recommended by philosophers, economists and theorists. A uniform distribution of
punishment would minimise enforcement of severity on one. So, in order to supplement the older concept the Prison-Reform Society finds its place in Mudrooroo’s work with an added feather, i.e., the ‘Pyramid Game’. The improvisation of Mudrooroo based upon true knowledge on historical facts or even if it is fictitious makes the novel extremely developing. The Aboriginal background coerce the narrator to express his views in a non-melodramatic, natural way. That the protagonist himself begins to read a lot, his acquaintance with various authors reforms his personality. The psychological aptitude and overall upliftment confess the contribution of the prison system undoubtedly. Out of the scam and scandal he etches a place different and clean for himself. Because he is an Aborigine he is victimized, because he has links with Detective Jackamara, both are trapped. Both are branded as menaces to society, and the pains that Jackamara undergo to bring out the secret all go in vain. His identification with his profession is at a loss. The protagonist’s identity as an individual is at a loss. Even being an Indian in a foreign land Robbi Singh gains ground. The original inhabitants are once again derelected.

Foucault argues that this theory of ‘gentle’ punishment represented the first step away from the excessive force of the sovereign and towards more generalized and controlled means of punishment. But, he suggests that the shift towards prison which followed was the result of a new “technology and ontology developed in the 18th century: the ‘technology’ of discipline, and the ontology of ‘man as machine’.”

Mudrooroo shows his proficiency in juggling with ideas. Mudrooroo combines the ideas of Foucault and Bentham on various occasions and situations. He
was influenced by Foucault's idea of the prison and mode of punishment. The narrator in *Wild Cat Screaming* repeatedly focuses on such issues and models of the prison, the reformation pattern that was so much desired by the convicts of the Fremantle prison and for the betterment of Western Australia, to improve the pitiable condition of the Aboriginals in prison, to guide them towards a better future, promising prospect, improve social condition and above all to teach them how to read and write. Mudrooroo's protagonist who is seen so much depressed and branded as 'a menace to society' learns to read and write, begins to think, to reason out and hopes to educate his fellow aboriginals after his completion of state penitentiary at the end of the novel.

Jeremy Bentham, on the other hand, one of the most influential (classical) liberals, argued in favour of individual and economic freedom, including the separation of Church and State, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, animal rights, the end of slavery, the abolition of physical punishment (also of children), the right to divorce, free trade, and no restrictions on interest.

Spectacular and harsh punishment was neither desirable nor advocated by they exponents. Mudrooroo desired to protect the aboriginals against such violences inflicted upon them for all to see. The revenge enacted upon the convict's body who is an aboriginal and a marginalized must not take the form of a public spectacle of torture. Foucault suggested that the intended purpose of punishment was to take revenge by harming the convict's body not by drawing the public attention. "The public execution that was ultimately an ineffective use of the body, qualified as non-economical, was an antithesis of the more modern concerns of the state: 'Order and Generalization'."
Mudrooroo presents before us a graphical design of the prison building called the Panopticon that was among the many proposals of Jeremy Bentham for legal and social reform. The Panopticon also inspired French philosopher Michel Foucault's work on the role of the prisons and metaphorical social prisons in *Discipline and Punish* where Foucault directly refers to Bentham's ingenious prison design and how it applies to various forms of societal controls.

Bentham is the first and perhaps the greatest of the "philosophical radicals". Not only did he propose many legal and social reforms, but he also devised moral principles on which they should be based. This philosophy of Utilitarianism, argued that the right act or policy was that which would cause "the greatest happiness for the greatest number"—a phrase for which he is generally regarded as the author—though he later dropped the second expression and embraced what he called "the greatest happiness principle". Mudrooroo's intention was to achieve this ratio in society, but as the number of aboriginals were few, happiness could neither be achieved nor could they aspire. The disproportionate representation in a colonial society left them marginalized. But it was Mudrooroo's knowledge and experiment with his writing that made not only the Black people aware of such ideas of implementation but also the white society at large that economic and social welfare were criteria of governance. Utilitarianism was revised and expanded by Bentham's student, John Stuart Mill. In Mill's hands, 'Benthamism' became a major element in the liberal conception of state policy objectives. Mudrooroo was highly influenced by Bentham's philosophy and his writings are rather suggestive frameworks based on his liberal conception of state policy objectives. Though Mudrooroo was the spokesman for the sub-alternized aboriginals, he laid down principles relating to policy matters of
the nation. He fought against discrimination; his novels convey repeated appeals for the well-being of the state to provide security, a precondition for the formation of expectations. He follows footsteps of Bentham by not favouring the sacrifice of a few to the benefit of the many.

Thus, the emergence of prison as the form of punishment for every crime grew out of the development of discipline in the 18th and 19th centuries. Foucault looks at the development of highly refined forms of discipline, of discipline concerned with the smallest and most precise aspects of a person's body. Discipline, he suggests, developed a new economy and politics for bodies. Modern institutions requested that bodies must be individuated according to their tasks, as well as for training, observation and control. Therefore, he argues, discipline created a whole new form of individuality for bodies, which enabled them to perform their duty within the new forms of economic, political and military organisations emerging in the modern age and continuing till this day.

Thus, the implementation of the 'prison reform' system is ingeniously blended in the texture of the novel along with the search for identity not only of the Wildcat but also of the other characters like Jackamara who is an Aborigine from Queensland but through his 'speech and demeanour, he becomes, as Helen Daniel has put it 'wittily reminiscent of Arthur Upfield's Boney.' (Shoemaker 119)

Jackamara is sent to Wildcat's prison to investigate the Panopticon scheme. He acts as a secret agent and as a Black Australian prisoner simultaneously. He is an Aborigine, a spy and an investigator. Even when he is engaged in surveillance he is also the object of investigation by others. Mudrooroo from various
quarters projects that in a centralized way, Aboriginality is under attack. Aboriginals are constantly watched by the police on the streets and they have been treated unequally. Instead of receiving any fruitful result by producing reports of the prison scam, Jackamara is at a loss of identity perhaps because he is an Aborigine and has tied a relationship with another Aborigine while in prison (Wildcat). Mudrooroo's quest for identity persists. Jackamara gives the Wildcat 'a taste of what life is like on the other side of the continent, as well as the other side of the penitentiary wall. The link with the Aboriginal world is established when the optimistic cat flies out of the prison, far away from the city, back to 'Uncle Wally's camp'.

"The bush ... lives in you,' he says, 'It calls you, if you let it' ... 'Lots of things they can't take away from us', he says. 'Lots of things they don't know about' (141-142).

The connection with the land, the roots, the soil, can never be denied. But Jacakamara's hope was to see through the eyes and activities of the Wildcat the whole community transform. Without any political aspiration the crucial factor - was the search for a larger identification of Aboriginal identity and its representation in a colonial society.

"I'll talk to them, see if I can get a Nyoongah group together, teach them English, or writing, or something like that ... man, I can fly, and perhaps, perhaps I can teach others to fly." (142)

In Shoemaker's words Wild Cat Screaming "is a complex and sophisticated novel. It is probably Mudrooroo's most cerebral text" (120), and the author constantly looks for new ways of seeing the aboriginal world, and new ways of saying what it is he seems. Typically the ending of the book is crucial. In the final
chapter, Mudrooroo shows that some hope has finally remained in the troubled mind of Wildcat. "The screaming began in my mind, then that black demon came along and sorta treated me like a human being. You know, I got back some hope and the screaming went away..." "Life isn't all just a matter of going on". (140)

Published in 1992 after the year of protest to establish political and legal rights of Indigenous people to inhabit their own social, cultural and economic space in Australia, *Wild Cat Screaming* was set against a background of public rallies protesting the increase in the level of ‘Aboriginal youth-related crime’. As Paul Sheiner notes, in Western Australia such perception, “had worked its way to the top of the political agenda.” There was public pressure by the ‘West Australian’ a regional newspaper with the largest circulation in Australia. Public outcry reached its peak in February 1992 with the enactment of a Crime (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act. This Act provided for the mandatory incarceration of repeat offenders in institutions that cater for both juveniles and adults” (253).

Mudrooroo’s own experience of being sent to an institution and his education there directed him to write in order to serve the colonized black people of Australia, to establish their identity and meet a proper moral and political end. As Maggie Nolan suggests, Mudrooroo’s texts “are reflexively concerned with the political context of their writing and reception, and the constitution, through writing and reception, of the colonial subject” (201).

Mudrooroo’s novel and his way of writing is under attack as it is suggestive of a projection of ‘another tool of colonial assimilation in which any worthwhile gesture of subversiveness is lost’, as Clark suggests observing Ivor
Indyk's attack that "in terms of Mudrooroo's habit of appropriating and rewriting his own texts, there may be a point at which the process of [such] rewriting becomes self-consuming". (252)

Maggie Nolan is suggestive of the denial of a 'cultural mobility to black Australians'. Nolan speaks of the assumption of a 'static form of pre-invasion Aboriginality' that is the only 'authentic Aboriginality'. The colonial attempt was to 'fossilize' Indigenous culture. The story-telling method that Mudrooroo captures was the area of white literary tradition, but in the struggle for existence, establishment of identity and self-recognition, entry into print culture by Black Australian writers, "is a source of empowerment, rather than of negativity and division" as Mudrooroo writes in *Milli Milli Wangka* (50). The movement and the lead was given by assisted non-white writers to engage in a number of productions of their own 'discourses of representation as a means of constructing an alternative to the reality of the dominant group.' Writing was an integral part of self-definition and the emphasis was on historical reconstruction, the ethical imperative of reconciliation with the past when Mudrooroo once said in *White Forms: Aboriginal Content* (1983) : "Indigenous minorities submerged in a surrounding majority and governed by them". By this he means that coming out of the colonial regime was impossible, finding a place in such a society was even more difficult and a paving way for the Aboriginals to speak, to resent and to write was a harder task too. Hence, his *Wild Cat Screaming* that portrays the "unnamed protagonist’s long-term imprisonment for shooting and wounding a police officer was not only an expression of protest detailed analysis of what was going on in the society then. In the early 1990s, the media produced racist discourses which denied Aboriginal identity as ‘naturally’ ‘irresponsible, destructive and evil’
As a result of this, crimes and violence among young Aboriginals in particular grew. Mudrooroo suggested that these practices widened the gap in spite of all the talk about reconciliation. The ambiguous position of young Aboriginals who find themselves nowhere in a society which belong to others and in which they are never free is depicted in *Wild Cat Screaming* along with a variety of issues set against a colonial background. Here he portrays his own psychological complexities and emotions. The story is that of the aboriginal boy who is a ‘menace to the society’ and is treated as an outcast. He contrasts his life with that of the white child who leads a clean life even though there is an underlying suggestion that they may not be all clean. The comparative study implicates at the outset that the aboriginal life is not only unclean but also deprived. His nights are all nightmares, full of screams and cries behind the bar in jail. Mudrooroo justifies the title of the novel by linking the cry of the protagonist with the cry of the cat. The objective of screaming is to protest and resent. The cry is against unfulfilled dreams of the youth expressing masculine aggressiveness, his aspirations to be free, to fly like the crow, in order to visualise the society from a distance. On earth the prowl of the cat establishes his own identity to represent the mass Aboriginals in a white, colonized, marginalized society. To fly like the crow forever is imaginary with the limited power as his deplorable status could not cope up with the formal existence. In reality he has to succumb to the life he inhabits full of melancholia and unfulfilled dreams. Thus his hopes remain unachieved.

The journey of the Aboriginal boy’s life proceeds through four main episodes of the novel consisting of in-built units, his transition and transcendence is from a state of surveillance to a state of dream when he would be able to teach the rest.
of his men in the bushes the art of survival and the technique of existence. In his attempt to find a place in society he is displaced, he is sent to prison and spends a long time inside the Fremantle. Though structure and function of prison is interrogated the outcome emerges to be one of 'internal liberation', as Adam Shoemaker points out. By the end of the novel Mudrooroo has overcome this 'mental miasma':

“And then he goes quiet and we sit along that fire and a sense of freedom comes over me. Suddenly for the first time in a long spell, I feel happy. Absurd, but I am. Now I know that I can make it, and that no one can break me. I have something special in me which can’t be touched, which has its own freedom.” (142).

The separate yet distinct thoughts of Mudrooroo find expression in the several small sections and sub-sections in the novel: Wounded in Action; consist of ‘Back Again in Prison’, ‘My New Home’, ‘Robbi Singh’, ‘The Welfare Lurk, Falling Again’, ‘The Reform Movement’, ‘Doing Time’, ‘Yarded’, and ‘Visiting’. Mudrooroo is clear-cut and build up the momentum gradually. The massacre of the battle of Pinjarras in 1840 in which thousands of Aboriginals were killed has historically identified Mudrooroo’s great great grandfather’s involvement and responsibility. The colonial descent from his mother’s side could not but be denied though Mudrooroo mentions this fact knowingly or unknowingly in the novels. His dark skin and a marginalised upbringing was responsible for his mother’s relationship other than with Thomas Johnson, Mudrooroo’s authentic father. It was for this reason that Mudrooroo’s mother was deprived from their family heritage. Mudrooroo perhaps came to know this fact later in his life and has time and again held his mother responsible for the avowed ‘assimilation’ policy. The themes of ‘Parental responsibility’, the ‘heartlessness of the law’, the destructiveness of choosing money
and position rather than love" are interlocking and Mudrooroo consciously intends to implement the theme in the social context. The natural setting within which innumerable activities take place, makes the first person narrator responsible for his actions. The part-Aboriginal boy’s attempts to find a place in the society is a search for his identity. He barely exists as a mock-hero. His existence only on the fringes with the bushmen is real. But his life in a colonial world is that of a prisoner. His dissatisfaction with his life leads to his search for the personal truth among the religious cults, and arts of the East. It was a crucial period when society at large bred boys of his kind and Mudrooroo points out that no simple or singular solution exists for the Aboriginal people: total assimilation is impossible as is a complete return to a “traditional” past, to quote from John Fielder:

“If it is impossible for many Aborigines to assimilate completely into the majority culture, I ask myself if it is possible to escape back into traditional society. From what I have seen, traditional society has either become transitional society, or been made over into an artefact. It has become fossilised and the young people have turned away from the fossilised remains.”

Mudrooroo’s progressive attitude, a radical move towards simplification, or “civilization”, successful ‘assimilation’, or back to the totally tribalised form indicates that Mudrooroo’s stress is on the Aboriginal caught in a mesh. The colonial strategies set the majority of Aboriginal people up for failure, condemning them to an anomalous, ambivalent existence on the fringe. Mudrooroo’s ideology of Aboriginality functions ‘as a tactic to challenge neo-colonial reading and writing practices, and provides the basis of pedagogic practices that need to be instituted themselves. The advocacy of oppositional tactics aimed at fostering an
ideology of Aboriginality initiated and directed by Aboriginal people, resistant to the neo-colonial liberal society, as Fielder continues.

In his quest for identity of the Aboriginals in a colonial society he has problematised representation of identity at the same time has provided solutions with possible reformations in the society with an aim to achieve freedom for themselves and progressing towards a prosperous and healthy development of Western Australia. Internalisation of the self through control and discipline can liberate. But the end result of liberalization is back to the prison as the protagonist has become a part and parcel of cells and walls of the Fremantle.
Works Cited


John Fielder; Post-Coloniality and Mudrooroo Narogin’s Ideology of Aboriginality, Span Number 32


________*, *Wild Cat Screaming*; Angus and Robertson, 1992.


White Forms; Aboriginal Content, 1983.

Notes

1. www.wikipedia.org
2. www.wikipedia.org