



# Reclaiming Indigenous Voice: A Postcolonial Study of *The Temptations of Big Bear* by a Canadian novelist Rudy Wiebe

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## Abstract

Rudy Wiebe is a forerunner of restoring the 'Ignored History' and a devoted writer who turned his attention to the indigenous history of Western Canada at the crucial period when the Dominion Government ruled over Canada. Western Canada was in the position of opening the great West to European settlers and contrastingly encompassing the aboriginal people on reserves. Wiebe in his novel -*The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973) depict the period of social, cultural, political, and racial upheaval. The fiction writing of Wiebe remains a complex act of reading, as it is mainly based on a fresh and innovative style. His works almost employ narrative practices, multiple voices, and through shifts in perspective and time. The status of natives and whites re-imposed in Canadian society has been exposed by Wiebe. Mennonite themes are not the only concern of Rudy Wiebe in his fiction. The concern of original inhabitants, the native Indians, and other politically marginalized minorities, like the Metis, form part of commitment to humanity. Wiebe gives voice to the repressed agony lying deep inside history. He carefully unearths these voices and listens patiently. Wiebe's novel *The Temptations of Big* deal with the past of native Indians and Metis respectively. Early Canadian literature was dominantly white; the natives were portrayed as savage and primitive as opposed to civilized white culture. As Monkman says: "The Natives were treated as the embodiment of ideals and principles defeated or disregarded by the white man..." (102).

**KEY WORDS:** Postcolonialism, Hegemony, Hybridity, Primitive, Marginalization etc.

## Introduction:

Canadian literature has endured endless turmoil to achieve its current stature. The literature of the country has evolved from its colonial phase to its universal status with the remarkable contribution of writers from different cultural background who came to the country during the colonial rule. Literature of Canada is subdivided according to the two major languages of the country namely French and English. Faye Hammill in the book entitled *Canadian Literature* considers that —Canada's involved history of colonisation, immigration and federation is reflected in the literary production of the country. To him, the term Canadian literature in English,

generally refers to all anglophone literary writing produced in what is now Canada, including the work of immigrant writers and certain temporary residents, as well as literature from regions which in the past were politically separate from Canada, such as Newfoundland.

*The Temptations of Big Bear* by Rudy Wiebe is widely read as a powerful postcolonial text that explores Indigenous resistance, colonial domination, and the struggle for cultural survival in Canada. Interpreting it through the lens of Postcolonialism reveals how the novel critiques imperial power structures and gives voice to marginalized histories. A key postcolonial theme in the novel is the critique of colonial discourse. The Canadian government, missionaries, and traders represent imperial authority, imposing foreign laws, religion, and economic systems on Indigenous communities. The treaties, presented as instruments of peace, are exposed as tools of exploitation and control. Through this, the novel reflects what theorists like Edward Said describe as the construction of the “Other”—Indigenous people are marginalized, misrepresented, and silenced within dominant narratives.

Recently Tony Tremblay has even claimed that the tendency for Canadian literature to become "consciously postcolonial" is due "in large part to Rudy Wiebe's cultural programme of re-imagining the West" (159). Wiebe's *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973) is a masterpiece in the history of the Canadian West which highlights the European settlers' economic imperialism challenged by Big Bear's famous rebel. It covers the longer crucial conflicting incident of twelve years from 1876 to 1888 that happened between native Indians and White settlers in Western Canada. *The Temptations of Big Bear* by Rudy Wiebe offers a powerful exploration of the encounter between Indigenous communities and colonial forces in nineteenth-century Canada. Through the life and struggles of Big Bear, the novel foregrounds the tensions between cultural survival and colonial domination. A postcolonial reading, particularly through the lens of subaltern theory as articulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, reveals the complexities of voice, resistance, and marginalization embedded in the narrative. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is a seminal essay by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak that explores the challenges faced by marginalized groups (the subaltern) in having their voices heard within dominant power structures. Spivak critiques Western intellectuals and postcolonial theorists for often speaking on behalf of the subaltern without truly enabling them to speak for themselves. The subaltern refers to populations outside the hegemonic power structure, often oppressed and silenced.

- Spivak argues that the subaltern cannot "speak" in the sense that their voices are often mediated, distorted, or ignored by dominant discourses.
- She critiques the tendency of Western academia to appropriate subaltern voices, which can perpetuate their marginalization.
- The essay highlights the complexity of representation and the difficulties in truly understanding and conveying the experiences of the oppressed.

At the heart of the novel lies the figure of Big Bear as a subaltern subject—one who exists outside the hegemonic structures of colonial power and whose voice is often mediated or suppressed. Although Big Bear emerges as a leader who resists the imposition of colonial treaties, his perspective is filtered through historical

discourse and narrative reconstruction. This raises Spivak's critical question: can the subaltern truly speak, or is their voice inevitably shaped by dominant systems of representation? In Wiebe's text, Big Bear's resistance is both articulated and constrained, suggesting the limits placed upon Indigenous agency within colonial frameworks. *The Temptations of Big Bear* by Rudy Wiebe offers a powerful exploration of the encounter between Indigenous communities and colonial forces in nineteenth-century Canada.

Through the life and struggles of Big Bear, the novel foregrounds the tensions between cultural survival and colonial domination. A postcolonial reading, particularly through the lens of subaltern theory as articulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, reveals the complexities of voice, resistance, and marginalization embedded in the narrative. The novel also exposes the mechanisms of colonial power that operate through language, governance, and legal structures. The treaty system, presented as a tool of negotiation, ultimately functions as an instrument of control, dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their land and autonomy. In this context, Big Bear's refusal to sign the treaty becomes a profound act of resistance. His stance challenges colonial authority and asserts an alternative worldview grounded in communal land ownership and spiritual connection to nature.

The Natives in Canada were a source of wealth for colonial whites, as cheap laborers and slaves in different parts of the world. They used all the ways to dispossess Native Canadians of their land, culture and identity; adopted deception mainly to procure their land as we see in *The Temptations of Big Bear* Governor Morris coming with a treaty to Big Bear:

Haven't the chiefs here told you the conditions of the treaty? They have. I have been here eight days and we have agreed on everything. The Cree are the principle tribe of plains Indians; this has been the fourth time that I have met my Cree brothers with a treaty in my hand. And standing here on this – uh, sitting—on this ground I cast my eyes to where the sun rises, down to the great lakes I see a broad road leading from there to the Red River, I see it stretching onto Fort Ellice, I see it branching there, one to Qu'Appelle and Cypress Hills... A broad road, and all along it I see the Governor and the commissioners of Queen taking the Indian by the hand, saying, we are brothers we will lift you up, we will teach you the cunning of a white man. All along the road I see Indians gathering, I see gardens growing and houses building. I see them receiving money from the Queens commissioners I see them enjoying their hunting and fishing as before. I see them living as they have always lived, but with the Queen's gift in addition...

They read my face and through that my heart, and said my words were true. They all gave me their hands on behalf of the Queen. What they did, I wish you to do. (20)

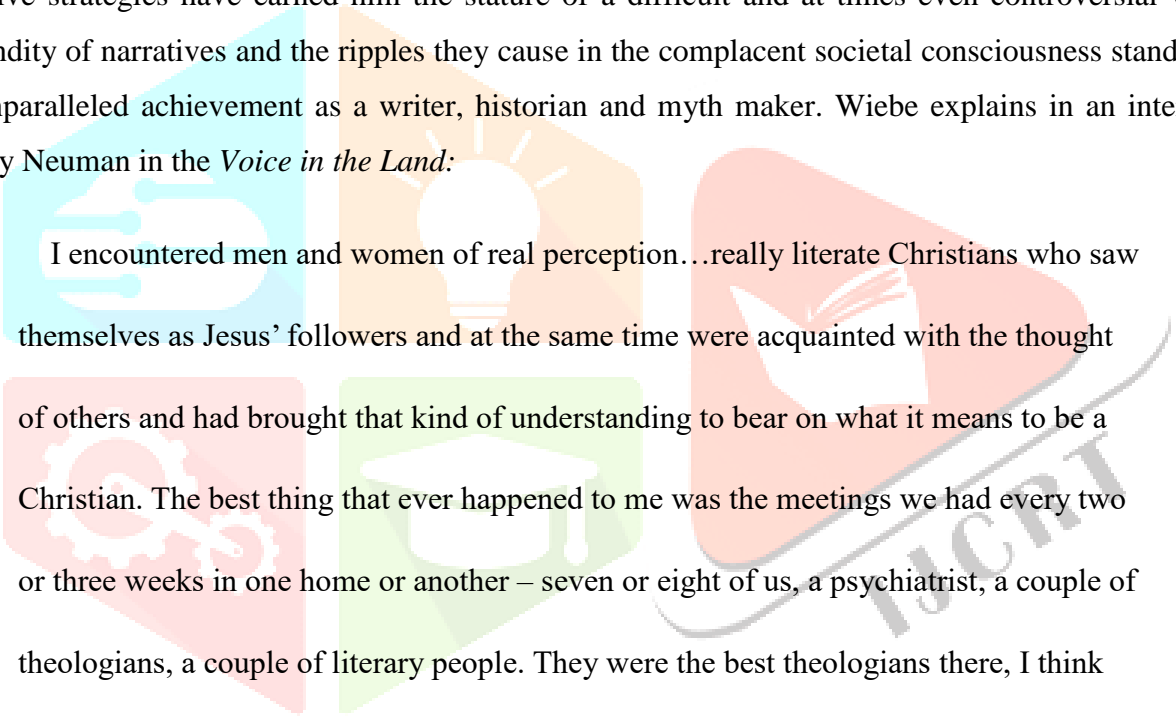
Furthermore, the narrative illustrates the cultural dislocation experienced by Indigenous communities under colonial pressure. The intrusion of European values disrupts traditional ways of life, creating a space where identity becomes contested and unstable. While some characters are compelled to adapt or assimilate, Big Bear's resistance underscores the possibility of preserving cultural integrity in the face of overwhelming force. In addition, the novel can be read as a critique of colonial discourse, echoing the concerns of Edward Said. Indigenous people are frequently represented through the lens of the colonizer, constructed as "other" and positioned as inferior. Wiebe, however, attempts to subvert this narrative by centering Indigenous perspectives, even while acknowledging the difficulty of fully recovering an authentic voice. Said's central concept in *Orientalism* is that colonial powers construct the "Other" through discourse—portraying non-European peoples as inferior, irrational, and in need of control. Although Said primarily focuses on the East, this framework extends to Indigenous peoples in North America. In the historical context of *Big Bear*, colonial authorities—administrators, missionaries, and settlers—produced similar narratives that depicted Cree communities as "uncivilized" and incapable of self-governance.

At the heart of the novel lies the figure of Big Bear as a subaltern subject—one who exists outside the hegemonic structures of colonial power and whose voice is often mediated or suppressed. Although Big Bear emerges as a leader who resists the imposition of colonial treaties, his perspective is filtered through historical discourse and narrative reconstruction. This raises Spivak's critical question: can the subaltern truly speak, or is their voice inevitably shaped by dominant systems of representation? In Wiebe's text, Big Bear's resistance is both articulated and constrained, suggesting the limits placed upon Indigenous agency within colonial frameworks.

The novel also exposes the mechanisms of colonial power that operate through language, governance, and legal structures. The treaty system, presented as a tool of negotiation, ultimately functions as an instrument of control, dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their land and autonomy. In this context, Big Bear's refusal to sign the treaty becomes a profound act of resistance. His stance challenges colonial authority and asserts an alternative worldview grounded in communal land ownership and spiritual connection to nature. Furthermore, the narrative illustrates the cultural dislocation experienced by Indigenous communities under colonial pressure. The intrusion of European values disrupts traditional ways of life, creating a space where identity becomes contested and unstable. While some characters are compelled to adapt or assimilate, Big Bear's resistance underscores the possibility of preserving cultural integrity in the face of overwhelming force.

*The Temptations of Big Bear* presents a nuanced portrayal of subaltern resistance within a colonial context. Through Big Bear's struggle, the novel highlights the enduring impact of colonialism on Indigenous identity, land, and voice. A postcolonial analysis rooted in subaltern theory reveals not only the silencing of marginalized communities but also their persistent efforts to assert agency and resist domination. Thus,

Wiebe's work stands as a significant literary intervention that invites readers to reconsider history from the perspective of the oppressed. Canada had to face many setbacks in its process of making a stable and prosperous citizenry, which remains socially and linguistically diverse yet politically united, have been and continue to be. Canada has an old history which goes back to the days before the arrival of Europeans in sixteenth century. It is interesting to note that first Canadians were aboriginal people. Aboriginals were the first immigrants to Canada from Siberia. Over the years, Canada has been peopled by various races coming from different parts of the world- the English, the French, the Europeans, the Asians and the Africans. The first nation people of Canada had developed cultures and languages that varied as widely as the terrain they occupied. These native people have been referred to as voiceless, even wordless group, mostly because of their illiteracy until 70's and 80's. Rudy Wiebe is one of Canada's best-known authors and one of the most widely critiqued. Wiebe's distinctive Christian world view, his daring and epic plunge into history and social imagination, the nuances of human experience he brings to the surface, coupled with his unconventional narrative strategies have earned him the stature of a difficult and at times even controversial writer. The profundity of narratives and the ripples they cause in the complacent societal consciousness stand witness to his unparalleled achievement as a writer, historian and myth maker. Wiebe explains in an interview with Shirley Neuman in the *Voice in the Land*:



I encountered men and women of real perception...really literate Christians who saw themselves as Jesus' followers and at the same time were acquainted with the thought of others and had brought that kind of understanding to bear on what it means to be a Christian. The best thing that ever happened to me was the meetings we had every two or three weeks in one home or another – seven or eight of us, a psychiatrist, a couple of theologians, a couple of literary people. They were the best theologians there, I think the Mennonite church has ever had ...one of them, John Howard Yode has influenced my thought about what it means to be a Christian more than almost anything else. (243)

Wiebe's novel *The Temptations of Big Bear* and the one that followed, *The Scorched Wood People* deal with the past of native Indians and Metis respectively. Early Canadian literature was dominantly white; the natives were portrayed as savage and primitive as opposed to civilized white culture. As Monkman says: "The Natives were treated as the embodiment of ideals and principles defeated or disregarded by the white man..." (102)|\_.

When the Natives resisted, the whites use armed forces against them and the actual owners of the land had to confront a more advanced and powerful group. The Native inhabitants of the country were silenced by the whites in Canada, as is depicted in novel. The Cree is a Native tribal group of Canada which once occupied most parts of the country.

In 1850's the federal started the process of colonization and imposed the Indians Acts upon the Cree communities and the way of life was drastically affected by mandatory schooling, the construction of permanent housing, and the decline in the prices of fur and in the number of buffalos. The Indian treatise and the epidemics brought the Plains Cree tribe to ruin by 1880s and they were forced to live on the Indian reserves allotted to them by the government; consequently Natives were geographically, socially and psychologically displaced. In exchange of the temporary nourishment, the whites wanted the Natives to surrender their rights to the land and give up freedom.

*The Temptations of Big Bear* is considered a classic saga of the past of the Canadian West and offers a unique fascination with history. It covers an eventful period of twelve years (from 1876-1888) of Indian White conflict in Western Canada at the end of which the entire land was confiscated by the sovereignty of British Crown. Here Wiebe tries to rebuild history through the medium of fiction. James Knockleby in his essay "*The Historical Validity of Rudy Wiebe's The Temptations of Big Bear*" explains the relevance of the novel in modern Canadian society:

Society is very forgetful of events unless there are people like Wiebe to remind us. In the end, he needed to write a story that allowed the reader to live life as a Native, to see what they saw, to breathe the same air, collide our world with theirs, to blend and understand what really, truly happened in the past.(03)

*The Temptations of Big Bear* is a fictionalized version of the life of Cree chief Big Bear and his refusal to sign a treaty with the whites in 1876 unintentional involvement in the killings of Frog Lake in 1884, to his imprisonment and death. According to historic documents, Big Bear, alias Mistahimusqua, was born around 1825 near Jackfish Lake. His father, Black Powder, an Ojibwa, was the chief of mixed band of Cree and Ojibwa. After his father's death, Big Bear took over as the chief of a Cree band. In 1871, he was the leading chief of the Prairie River people and his influence rose steadily. In 1876, Big Bear refused to sign the treaty with the authorities; he gradually lost control of some of his warriors, which resulted in Frog Lake massacre in 1885. As a result, Big Bear was guilty of treason and was imprisoned. He died on 17 January 1888, soon after his release from prison. However, colonials named him as troublemaker, because of his refusal to sign a treaty and to settle on a reserve. But in novel Weibe tries to reinterpret the life of the Cree chief and presents him as a leader who tried to unite the Indians and safeguard their rights peacefully.

Wiebe had a skill as a white man to understand Native thinking, born in minority ethnic group, Wiebe realized the scope of exploring the past of the Natives and giving them a right place in literature. He considered it as a goal to give voice the story of Big Bear and his people who had been forgotten by the modern society. Wiebe says in an interview with Eli Mandel in *Voice in the Land*:

...I suppose this is what I was on the trail of Big Bear...because I felt strongly that here was an incredibly great man, who had never been talked about, almost unknown, and – well I did all I could with that at the moment ...(154).

In the novel *Big Bear* is presented as a leader and a powerful orator who resists the “temptations” of both violence and surrender. Big B because of his foresight does not trust the terms and conditions lay out in the Indian treatise and, therefore, refuses to sign them. The novel gives a clear account of the treatise between the Indians and the Whites, and explains that the treaties are partial, and only the Whites can understand the conditions in it. Most of the Natives who are ignorant and helpless think that treaties will save them from hunger. For many of them there are no choices and are forced to accept the help of the whites by signing treaties and therefore Indians like Big Child, Star Blanket etc. sign the treaties and move to reserves allotted to them and instead give their ancestral rights to land.

A few young men start thinking about the armed resistance from Big Bears camp although he tries to resist the white encroachment on Native society and culture in a different way. He does not favour open conflict he fears that this will lead his people into trouble and realizes that his people will survive in the land politically and culturally through firm spiritual faith. Said argued that colonial powers create simplified, often distorted images of non-Western people. In *The Temptations of Big Bear*, Indigenous peoples are similarly represented through colonial discourse—as “savages,” “rebels,” or obstacles to progress. However, Wiebe complicates this. He tries to restore voice and dignity to Big Bear, challenging the colonial narrative. From a Saidian perspective, the novel becomes a counter-discourse—an attempt to rewrite how Indigenous people are represented. A central idea in Said’s work is that knowledge is never neutral—it serves power. Colonial governments, missionaries, and traders in the novel produce “knowledge” about Indigenous peoples that helps justify treaties, land seizure, and control.

Big Bear resists this system. His refusal to sign treaties immediately shows a deep awareness that these “agreements” are tools of colonial domination. This aligns with Said’s idea that imperial power operates through both force and discourse. Said emphasized that colonized people are not passive—they resist. Big Bear embodies this resistance:

- He questions colonial authority
- He seeks unity among Indigenous groups
- He refuses to accept imposed structures

Through Said’s lens, Big Bear is not just a historical figure but a symbol of anti-colonial resistance, challenging imperial narratives. Wiebe’s narrative style—fragmented, multi-voiced, sometimes disjointed—can also be read in a Saidian way. It resists a single authoritative (Western) perspective and instead reflects multiple realities and voices, disrupting the dominance of colonial storytelling. *he Temptations of Big Bear* through Edward Said highlights:

- The construction of Indigenous identity by colonial powers
- The link between knowledge and domination
- The importance of resistance and counter-narratives
- The complexity of representation in postcolonial writing

Although Said's framework primarily addresses the East–West binary, its underlying logic of power and representation applies equally to Indigenous peoples in settler-colonial contexts. The colonial authorities in the novel—missionaries, traders, and government officials—generate a discourse that reduces Indigenous identity to categories such as “savage,” “rebellious,” or “uncivilized,” thereby legitimizing imperial expansion and territorial dispossession. Wiebe's narrative attempts to subvert this discourse by granting Big Bear moral authority, intellectual depth, and political agency, thus functioning as a counter-discursive text. However, as Said cautions, representation is never free from the structures of power within which it is produced. Wiebe, as a non-Indigenous writer, inevitably mediates Indigenous experience through a Western literary framework, raising questions about authenticity and narrative authority. The novel's fragmented and multi-vocal style resists a singular colonial perspective, yet it simultaneously reflects the limitations of speaking for the “Other,” revealing the tension between resistance and complicity that lies at the heart of postcolonial literature. Thus, a Saidian reading of *The Temptations of Big Bear* highlights both its role as a critique of colonial discourse and its embeddedness within the very structures it seeks to challenge, making it a complex site of postcolonial negotiation. He dreams of his land where everybody will live peacefully together. All through the novel Wiebe explains that owning land is absurd as far as Native culture is concerned, selling land is like selling the sea or the air they breathe. This is in contradiction with Anglo – Canadian concept of land and white settlers in Canada fail to realize this as their perception is dominated by economic and commercial factors. These conflicting perspectives can be detected into the Canadian past in *The Temptations of Big Bear* and finds the theme of relationship between human beings and the land in which they live. In the novel Big Bear says, “No one can choose for only himself a piece of the Mother Earth... And she is for all that live... Who can receive land? From whom would he receive it. He continues:

All I see is the little piece of land I must choose and then never Leave unless some Farm Instructor says I can go. What is that, when I must have the mark of such a thing on paper to walk on the land they have borrowed? I feel as if I choked. I love the One above; I ask That One whom we love to help me. If we respect and honour the Queen because of her great work on Earth, how much more must we honour the Earth? Is this Queen more to us Than the Earth? The proper way to live with the Earth is to give each one the right The First One gave every one man. Let Man walk where his feet can walk. (199-200)

Big Bear reiterates the Native concept of land on another occasion in the novel:

...I am fed by Mother Earth. The only water I will be touched by comes from above, the rain from the Only One who makes the grass grow and rivers run and the buffalo feed there and drink so that I and my children live. That we have life! (200)

The continuous representation of the two different cultures operates at multiple levels in the novel. Big Bear continuously resists and finds it difficult to negotiate with the whites on treaties. On one hand Governor Morris sees Big Bear as troublemaker on the other he is losing over his people. He finds himself increasingly isolated.

The son of Big Bear, Little Bad Man and the Wandering Spirit, the war chief of Big Bear who lose their temper and shout for white blood. They also get help from Metis warriors. They ignore Big Bears words which lead to violence at Frog Lake where nine whites are brutally killed. W. J. Keith sees it as, “a tragic clash between two irreconcilable ways of looking at human being and their environments” (EF 69). After this massacre, Canadian government starts a military campaign against Big Bears band of Cree. Unfortunately, Big Bear who wanted to avoid bloodshed is found guilty of the violence. This leads to the surrender of Big bear before the North-West Mounted Police at Fort Pitt and after the trial, he is sentenced by a white court.

The trial scene in chapter six of the novel gives a intense contrast of two cultures. The hypocrisy of white law is seen through the trial that becomes a complete mockery of justice. Big Bear is charged with treason and is given punishment. Big Bear before the declaration of the punishment makes his speech and is justifying his deeds:

My people are hiding in the woods , terrified- those are my Children and they are starving ,driven from the land which was our inheritance and they are running somewhere in the darkness....Have you no children? Have they never asked you food? Is there nothing but punishment in the Grandmother’s (British Queens) law? ...This land belonged to me. When I had it, I never needed your flour And pork...Before many of you were born I ran buffalos over this Place where you put this building, and the white men eat the meat I gave them. I gave them a hand as a brother; I was free, and the smallest person in my band was as free as I because the Maker of life had given us our place on the earth and that was enough for us. But you have taken our inheritance, and our strength. The land is torn up, black with fires and empty. You have done this. And there is nothing left now ....Who will say a word for my people? Give my people help! I have spoken. (397-8)

However white jurists did not understand his words and is sentenced to three years imprisonment in Stony Mountain Penitentiary. Towards the end of the novel when Big Bear is released, he learns from Horse child, his youngest son, about the destruction of his dear ones. In the novel the death of the Big Bear is portrayed brilliantly in beautiful language. Big Bear walks up the sand and lies down. The earth provides him a burial as the sand grains close over him in delicate streams. The passage in which Big Bear becomes, in death, the rocky land on which he lived is magnificent:

He felt the granular sand joined by snow running together against and over him in delicate streams. It sifted over the crevices of his lips and eyes, between the folds of his face and hair and hands, legs; gradually rounded him over until there was a tiny mound on the sand hill almost imperceptible on the level horizon. Slowly, slowly, all changed continually into indistinguishable, as it seemed, an everlasting unchanging rock. (415)

Thus, the son of the land reunites with his own land. The failure of the white culture to understand the noble principles of freedom maintained by the Cree chief is testified by Big Bear's final imprisonment and death in the novel. W.J. Keith says, "...a noble individual (was) destroyed by the inexorable clash of cultures" (43). Another eminent critic, John Moss points out:

Here is a man torn by the struggle between power and spirituality and integrity. On one extreme, many of his people particularly the Worthy Young Men urge him to lead them into battle. On another, his people's miserable condition demands that he make a treaty with the whites. Either way, he is the leader of his people. Yet, honest to the dictates of his own spirit, he can do neither. Neither pride, nor propriety, entices him to take action. He dies a lonely man, his people lost. There was no winning for him, except in death. (370)

The novel *Temptations of Big Bear* occupies a significant place in postcolonial literature because it can be interpreted through both Orientalist and Subaltern frameworks, revealing the layered complexities of colonial power and representation. Drawing on the ideas of Edward Said, particularly from *Orientalism*, the novel demonstrates how colonial discourse constructs Indigenous peoples as the "Other." Although Said's theory originally addresses the East-West divide, its central argument—that the West produces knowledge about the colonized to dominate them—applies equally to Indigenous communities in settler-colonial contexts. In the novel, colonial administrators, missionaries, and traders represent Indigenous peoples as primitive, irrational, and incapable of self-governance. Such representations are not neutral; they function ideologically to legitimize land appropriation, treaty imposition, and cultural subjugation. However, Rudy Wiebe complicates this dominant discourse by offering a counter-narrative that humanizes Big Bear, portraying him as a thoughtful, strategic, and morally grounded leader. In doing so, the novel resists Orientalist stereotypes and attempts to restore dignity and agency to an Indigenous figure who has historically been marginalized. Big Bear's resistance to signing treaties and his efforts to unify his people challenge colonial authority and expose the manipulative nature of imperial governance. Through this lens, the text becomes a critique of the power structures that Said identifies as central to colonial domination.

At the same time, the novel invites a Subaltern reading, particularly in light of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" While Wiebe seeks to recover the voice of Big Bear, the representation remains mediated through a Western authorial perspective. This raises critical concerns about authenticity and narrative authority: to what extent can the experiences of marginalized Indigenous communities be truly represented within a literary framework shaped by colonial language and epistemology? Although the novel employs a fragmented, multi-voiced narrative style to resist a single authoritative viewpoint, it cannot entirely escape the structures of power that condition its production.

Thus, Big Bear emerges as a paradoxical figure—both a subject of Orientalist misrepresentation within colonial discourse and a subaltern voice struggling for articulation within the text. The novel succeeds in foregrounding resistance and questioning dominant histories, yet it simultaneously reveals the limitations of speaking for the colonized. This duality underscores a key tension in postcolonial literature: the desire to recover suppressed voices alongside the recognition that such recovery is always partial and mediated.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Temptations of Big Bear* is a rich postcolonial text that both critiques Orientalist constructions of Indigenous identity and engages with the problem of subaltern representation. By exposing the mechanisms of colonial power while attempting to re-center Indigenous experience, the novel highlights the complexities of resistance, voice, and narrative authority, ultimately positioning itself as a site of both challenge and contradiction within postcolonial discourse.

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