

COLLAGE OF COLOR
IN
SILKO'S STORYTELLER

by
Sherrie Stewart

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

GRADUATE INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2010

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This thesis has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Sherrie Stewart

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

Lawrence Evers

April 2, 2010

Lawrence Evers

Date

Affiliated Professor of American Indian Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	4
INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER ONE: LONG AGO	13
Spanish Invasion	16
Conversion to Christianity	17
Educators and Federal Officials.....	22
CHAPTER TWO: FOUR DIRECTIONS – FOUR COLORS	31
CHAPTER THREE: THE FIFTH COLOR: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GREEN.....	47
CHAPTER FOUR: COLLAGE OF COLOR IN “STORYTELLER”	67
CONCLUSION.....	80
WORKS CITED	86

ABSTRACT

As an American Indian writer, Leslie Marmon Silko stretches the imaginations and perceptions of her readers. This Master's thesis investigates one of the motifs she employs to induce these results, the use of color symbolism. Color and color symbolism are utilized in every culture, but Silko's writings provide a quandary which begs investigation – how does this Laguna Pueblo writer integrate the color symbols of her culture and landscape into her stories and poetry? This question is addressed by researching the significance of specific colors within the Pueblo and related communities, exposing through close reading the use of these specific colors within the texts, and finally, through literary analysis, unraveling the language to glean new perspectives on the discourse. A primary work to be analyzed is her collection of poems and stories, Storyteller, and specifically one fictional piece from that collection also entitled “Storyteller,” which incorporates layering of Pueblo culture and color symbolism over a distinctly different community and landscape, the Inuit of Alaska. Using this particular story as a basis for looking at other pieces within Storyteller, the integrated system of colors emerges through a close reading of the text. Although color representation is considered universal or innate, this research addresses culture specific color systems and how that association enriches Native literature as well as the scholarship and theoretical basis of American Indian Studies programs.

INTRODUCTION

Colors are ubiquitous in our world of plasma color televisions, video-capable camera cell phones, and glossy graphic designs on ads stuffed in our mailboxes once a week. We know that yellow means caution or yield and red means danger or stop. In Euro-western cultures white denotes purity and goodness, while black evokes images of evil. On the other hand, we wear black to respect and mourn the dead. A recent study even asserts that the color red as a background color for a computer screen initiates heightened productivity while a blue background encourages creativity (Miller 1). These reactions to different colors are imbedded in the epistemology of the Euro-American culture.

While most Native American writers live within the borders of the United States, participate in the global economy, and absorb many of these reactions to colors, American Indian ceremonial traditions place a much greater emphasis on colors and each color may represent a direction, a place, an entity – all sacred and profoundly important within that native society. Native American communities share this with many other indigenous communities across the globe. It is fascinating that most native societies consider a set of colors as sacred, attach these colors to physical landscape, and use these colors in healing ceremonies.

In a study of culturally specific color systems that are connected to the cardinal directions, Roland Dixon finds that many societies use similar four-color patterns. One of the first points of interest in this matter of the color-symbolism of the cardinal points is the choice of colors which was made by the various peoples. By this I mean what groups

of colors were selected for this symbolism, irrespective of the directions which the colors were supposed to symbolize. Out of the thirty-odd systems of color-symbolism that I have been able to find, the most common color group is that of White, Yellow, Red, Blue; then in order follow, White, Yellow, Red, Black, and the two groups White, Yellow, Blue, Black, and White, Red, Blue, Black. These four groups together include nearly two-thirds of the instances collected; if we assume the equation Blue=Black, the first two groups coincide, and would contain some thirty percent of the total number of cases (Dixon 10-11).

These sets of colors and the directions to which they are connected vary from group to group, but the phenomenon can be found in Asia, Ireland, South and Central America, as well as in North America. Dixon remarks that the “colors of the East and West are the ones, as would naturally be supposed, in which the Sun plays the most conspicuous part. The colors likely to be associated with the Sun in its rising and setting are Red, Yellow, and White” (11). The three other colors most commonly found in these color systems are blue, green, and black. Other scholars, including Berlin and Kay, have investigated color in a cultural framework and found that “based on a selection, arrangement, and comparison of color terms from ninety-eight languages or dialects . . . that in all languages there are less than a dozen basic color terms and that these have developed with direct psychophysical reference to eleven universal color categories [= foci]” (Conklin 1).

These colors are black, white, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and grey. However, Dixon’s research finds that about half of these colors are not

attached to any cardinal directions in the communities that he includes in his study. He took into account “the sun, in its rising and setting; the geographical position of the people in question; [and] the climate of the region where they lived” but did not include “their religious ideas” (12). Utilizing these three categories produced “diversity and not uniformity” in the symbolism, and “no general principle can be laid down as underlying the choice of colors by different peoples. It may be objected that this statistical method of studying such a subject is inadequate, and that the religious motive must be taken into account” (16).

As I read Storyteller, I realized that Leslie Marmon Silko's use of color was patterned. I came to see that her systematic use of a color system held an important component of meaning for the work. Yet, when I looked into the scholarship, I could find little on this topic. Therefore I decided to research Silko's use of color symbolism in an attempt to understand the work more fully, and to interpret it more deeply.

Before beginning the interpretation of the color symbolism in Silko's collection, it is imperative that the Keresan cultural and ceremonial use of colors and directionality be researched. The directions, colors, landscape, and ceremonial participants, such as the Katsinas, are intermingled in a tightly woven web of rituals, stories and words, as seen in the following excerpt from her novel *Ceremony*:

“You know, grandson, this world is fragile.” The word he chose to express “fragile” was filled with the intricacies of a continuing process, and with a strength inherent in spider webs woven across paths through sand hills where early in the morning the sun becomes entangled in each filament of web. It took a long time to explain the fragility and intricacy because no word exists alone, and the reason for choosing each word had to be explained with a story about why it must be said this certain way. That was the responsibility that went with being human, old Ku'oosh said,

the story behind each word must be told so there could be no mistake in the meaning of what had been said; and this demanded great patience and love. (35-36)

So the analysis must observe and carefully “explain the fragility and intricacy” of Silko’s language. The significance of the colors and directions must be evaluated within the cultural framework, as seen in the “webs woven across paths through sand hills” of the Laguna landscape. The colors this author pulls from her palette are but strands of her web of words. Through telling the story of each color, through untangling the imagery strand by strand, an understanding of how “the sun becomes entangled in each filament of web” emerges. Each color, each direction, each word weaves nuance into the discourse. Just as Silko entangles her words, and their stories, to form a web made dazzling by the light of imagery, the story of each color lives through Silko’s words: “no word exists alone, and the reason for choosing each word had to be explained with a story about why it must be said this certain way.”

As authors weave their words into stories, spinning out black strands of adjectives and nouns and verbs onto a stark white page, a phenomenon occurs. The words become an “essence placeholder” in the “conceptual act” of cognition or emotion (Barrett 4). This concept testifies to the fragility, intricacy, and power of language and the word. The final defining hypothesis of the conceptual act model is that language plays a central role in making an instance of emotion what it is. If the psychological events people refer to as “fear” have no signatures (no known statistical regularities to ground the categories), then how do people learn the category? What serves to glue the various instances of anger together into a single category if they look very different from one

another? According to the conceptual act model, the answer is a word. It is as if the phonological form of the word introduces a statistical regularity where none existed before, gluing very different instances together into a single coherent category (Barrett 4). In studies of emotion and cognition, Barrett states that words “are powerful in human experience and refers to words as “essence placeholders” because “a word allows an infant to categorize a new object as a certain kind, and to make inductive inferences about the new object based on prior experiences with other objects of the same kind. Words are ontologically powerful” (4).

This “essence placeholder” of which Barrett writes refers to the power to evoke or categorize emotion. This being said, cannot one interpret the term “essence placeholder” as describing almost any word that evokes memories, thoughts, or emotions? Each and almost every word evokes subjective and individualistic reactions. Underlying Silko’s “essence placeholders” is a cultural cognition of memory and thought and emotion that differs greatly from that of the non-Native reader. The color blue, the direction of east, the placement of the sun in the sky, or the mention of a mountain lion mark a different essence for Keresan Indians than for non-Indians, or even for other tribes or nations.

Authors from other Native nations introduce colors that evoke memories and emotions in a significant way through their work. Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso’s poem, “That American Flag,” weaves Western and Navajo knowledge into a rug of red, white, and blue. She takes what the American flag represents to many citizens of the United States, unravels it color by color, then weaves those same threads into a rug that relates to the Navajo people. This poem, and the rug of altered color relationships, wraps around

the Navajo experience with Fort Sumner and its painful history, as well as the hopes of returning home to Dinétah. An excerpt follows:

The rugs' white horizontal bands were for the early morning sky
and signaled new beginnings.

The background of the American flag is white,
as is our sacred mountain in the east.

Thus, the women knew we would survive.

The red stripes were for the dirt at home, the sandstone cliffs,
and for the sumac that turns brilliant red each fall.

The red stripes in the flag are for our blood and for our ancestors,
who tried to search for the good in everyone and everything.

By weaving blue into rugs, the women recalled the hooghans
they built when the men were gone. They recalled the graceful ease
with which their teenage sons chopped wood, built corrals,
and rode horses. In doing so, the women were reminded
of their own strength. The blue in the flag is for the promise
of each spring granted us since Fort Sumner. The blue stripes
honor the men and their strength, tenderness, and intellect.

Often, the women wove stars in the rug – its center is for our home,
Nihimá, the land that was given to us. We are told that
a specific star watches over us, this star knows everything.

(A Radiant Curve 43)

The colors of the American flag, here absorbed and transformed by a Navajo poet, begin as a symbol of the United States and the pain brought to the Navajo by the soldiers following that flag into Dinétah. The color white in the flag can symbolize strength and purity; red, courage and passion; blue, justice and unity. Those same colors are woven into a Navajo rug and transformed by the women into a representation of white for survival, red for their land of Dinétah, and blue for their families and hogans. The star shifted from the representation of a state or government entity into something spiritual – a star that “watches over us . . . [and] knows everything.”

The poem demonstrates the transformation and absorption process. Colors are unraveled bringing them back to a fiber that can be used for weaving – something culturally relevant and familiar to the Navajo women. The language framework can also be verbally unraveled here and woven into an example of cultural color systems much as the Navajo rug grew from the unraveled military clothing.

Tapahonso relays Navajo strength, courage, and unity through pulling strands of survival, landscape, and family into her poem. These strands weave a rug of triumph that absorbs pain and transforms it into a symbol of hope and home. Her first lines compare how the Navajo and the soldiers are alike, and then how they are different. Then she weaves a Navajo rug from the colors and forms found on the flag. In this way, this poet melds the symbolic and the sacred.

Silko also builds elements of the symbolic and the sacred within her stories of “Yellow Woman,” “The Man To Send Rain Clouds,” and “Storyteller” presented in the chapters of this thesis. She, too, braids color symbolism, tales from “time immemorial,” the purification and nourishment of rain, directionality, and the sacred mountains and clouds into the discourse.

Therefore, the investigation of this topic begins with a discussion of the history of the Pueblo peoples, then moves into specific aspects of Laguna tradition, such as how specific colors became attached to specific directions and features in the landscape, and, finally, unravels the sacred and ceremonial relationship between direction, color, place, and spiritual entity. Throughout, these areas of discussion are correlated with examples from Silko’s collection demonstrating the cultural framework underlying her injection of

specific colors and color systems into her poems and stories. The hope is to embrace the “strength” of the web, add new understandings of the language, and present varied interpretations of Storyteller by unraveling the “intricacies of a continuing process” of telling the stories that explain the meanings of the words and of stroking these new perceptions of words, these new “essence placeholders” into a collage of color.

CHAPTER ONE: LONG AGO . . .

Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider's web—with many little threads radiating from the center, crisscrossing one another. As with the web, the structure emerges as it is made, and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made. (Silko Yellow Woman 48)

The Laguna Pueblo Indians told stories to teach, to tantalize, to explain, to embrace, and to remember. The remembering held the people together in common experience, cultural knowledge, and collective memory. That collective memory carried Pueblo ways of knowing, embraced past heroes and heroines, sifted their stories into the tangled present, and created a cultural framework that brought continuity of family and community. These stories survived three separate invasions – the enslavement and oppression by the Spanish Conquistadors, the intrusion and infiltration by missionaries demanding conversion to Christianity, and the benevolence and arrogance by the “Americanizing” army of educators and federal officials. Each invasion should have wrought a cultural genocide of the Pueblo way of life. Rather, injections of new perspectives, rituals, and educational or economic trajectories strengthened the Pueblo traditions through resistance and persistence while developing a cultural plurality as elements of each invasion were absorbed or rejected. This absorption and rejection emerges in the dynamic quality of storytelling as the medium of Laguna collective memory.

Several sources provide detailed historical accounts of these three invasions and the effects on the Pueblo peoples and their cultural transitions. One account, El Gringo: New Mexico and Her People by W. W. H. Davis, published in 1857, tells of this

attorney's impressions of the Pueblo people and excerpts from Spanish documents he found in Santa Fe as he traveled the court circuit just after the United States acquired the lands of the Southwest. Florence Hawley Ellis, writing about the Laguna people in the Handbook of North American Indians, Volume Nine, provides anthropological as well as ethnographic information about the Laguna community specifically. Anthropologists, notably Franz Boas and Elsie Clews Parsons, write about the rituals, ceremonies, and stories of the Pueblo and Laguna peoples. Although all these texts assisted in building an understanding of the history and culture of the Pueblo Indians, I depend mainly on Edward P. Dozier's Pueblo Indians of North America to present the historical background herein. As a Tiwa Pueblo Indian, respected scholar, and founder of the American Indian Studies program at the University of Arizona, Dozier conveys through his writings an understanding of the dynamic and complex Pueblo history, traditions, and culture.

In Pueblo Indians of North America, Dozier provides an explanation for the Pueblo's retention of their culture when he states:

Most of the Pueblo communities occupy the sites in which they were encountered by Spanish explorers and that, indeed, they had occupied for several hundred years prior to white contact. The persistence of the pueblos may be attributed partly, at least, to the harsh disciplinary measures imposed on deviant behavior and the "skimming off" of malcontents—both discipline and eviction are common practices in all the pueblos. Such practices would leave the villages oriented along traditional lines with populations restricted to those who valued communal living. Perhaps a more acceptable answer for persistence, however, is the integrative pattern of Pueblo society. (19)

The "integrative pattern" of which Dozier speaks refers to the divisions incurred by ceremony and governance. The clans, kivas, and kinship groups create separate levels of

societal structure which interconnect like the interlocking strands of the spider's web.

This interconnection adds strength, balance, and continuity to the culture of each Pueblo:

The Pueblos have thus persisted, despite factional disputes, and appear to be as vigorous and vital today as during any period in their past. The fact is obvious, despite popular notions, that Pueblo communities are highly adaptive social organizations, adjusting to differing ecological conditions, economies, and to differing social environments as well. Although the Pueblos have borrowed heavily from others, the core and the special organization of their society and culture remain uniquely Pueblo. (Dozier 20)

This "uniquely Pueblo" societal and cultural "core" has survived oppression and coercion by several outside forces. These outside forces caused the Pueblos to become secretive about rituals and ceremonies. Thus, the particular knowledge of these traditions was carried in the memories of the practitioners and passed down orally. The sacred emergence, hero, heroine, or creation stories were delivered to the new generation of listeners by storytellers. The storyteller spun the web of words, the stories of long ago, that formed the "structure" of the "Pueblo expression."

Leslie Marmon Silko reinforces the tradition of storytelling in her collection Storyteller, pulling together ancient tales, present-day events, local gossip, and insightful stories that continue the dynamic tradition of storytelling. The outside influences of the invading Spanish, the Catholic priests, and the American assimilationists became a part of the stories included in Silko's Storyteller. The color systems and color symbolism of these groups must also be viewed as perhaps influencing Silko's imagery. So a brief review of the histories and impacts on Pueblo life by these groups, as well as comments on their associated color systems and color symbolism follows.

Spanish Invasion

During the 1500s, the Spanish explorers and military moved north from Central America into what is now the American Southwest in search of precious metals such as gold and silver among the rumored riches of the Pueblo Indians. Rather than riches, the Spanish found a well-organized system of sedentary communities of indigenous peoples which they termed the Pueblo Indians. These peoples resided in approximately twenty-six distinct villages consisting of several-storied adobe structures with thick walls and entrances through the roofs. The Spanish met little resistance from the Pueblos, but after a century of personal and religious oppression, manipulation, and enslavement, a general uprising in 1680 A.D. proved successful and the Spanish were driven out of the area for over a decade. During this period, the village of Laguna came into existence; per Dozier, “a number of Keresan Indians, however, moved west after the revolt, apparently in an attempt to get farther away from Spanish domination, and founded Laguna” (64).

By the turn of the 18th century, the Spanish had reinitiated rule over the Pueblos and, because of the revolt of 1680, loosened the previous rigid religious restrictions. During the Spanish occupation, The Pueblos evolved from a strictly agrarian people into a more diverse economic base including herding. The introduction of the horse, burro, and sheep by the Spanish caused much of this transformation:

In 1752, the Pueblos possessed three times as many horses as the Spanish soldiers and settlers. Also, at this time, they had many more men-at-arms, more lances, and a larger number of leather jackets for individual protection. The Spaniards had more swords and, possibly, firearms, although some of the Pueblos also possessed them. It is interesting that the pueblos of Laguna, Acoma, and Zuni each possessed more horses than any Spanish

settlement, and that Laguna had almost as many as all of the colonists together. (Dozier 80)

The Pueblo population began to diminish during the 1700s as Hispanic and “mixed-blood” Indians moved from the Indian pueblos into the Spanish villages. The two cultures shared similar economic bases, agriculture and herding, and during this time period the Indian population “migrated” into the Spanish villages. The “class blood lines of the non-Pueblo population” became “increasingly blurred in the succeeding century,” and eventually became “crystallized into the Spanish-American or Hispano population.” This population developed important cultural characteristics. . . . The non-Pueblo settled populations grew rapidly in numbers and by the end of the 18th century that population quadrupled because of the addition of Indians to the Hispanicized population (Dozier 87).

Throughout this period, from 1540 to 1847 A.D., the Spanish culture infiltrated Pueblo life. The economic base of the Pueblo Indians moved from subsistence farmers to add herding and trades such as silver- and blacksmithing. Some of the Native population shifted into Spanish villages; the introduction of horses and wagons changed the modes of transportation. The Pueblos selected some aspects of Spanish culture, such as herding and horses, but rejected others, such as language and religion. The most dramatic example of resistance and persistence in Pueblo life during this period of time came through the Spanish imposition of the Catholic religion upon the Pueblo Indians.

Conversion to Christianity

From the time Coronado traveled through the Pueblo country in search of the

“Seven Cities of Gold” in the 1540s, the Spanish insisted that the Pueblos discard their religious practices and convert to Catholicism. As a result of the intolerance by the friars and missionaries, the Pueblos moved their ceremonies and religious practices into secret places. This move to secrecy made the oral tradition even more important as the collective memory of the Pueblos. The stories held traditions and tales that defined the cultural identity of these indigenous people.

The friars who traveled along with the Spanish explorers and conquerors held that the Pueblos must be converted to Christianity through coercion, manipulation, or even through force. Missions were constructed at almost every village with the labor of the Pueblo Indians. Most of these structures dwarfed the surrounding structures, with halls of over one hundred feet long and thirty to forty feet wide, walls fifty feet in height and three to four feet thick, and a complex of instructional areas for teaching the Indians marketable skills such as blacksmithing:

The duties of the friars consisted in saying Mass, conducting prayer services, performing baptism and marriage, and conducting burial services. Some of the Indians were taught how to serve the priest at Mass, perform other services connected with Catholic ritual, and in some instances, to lead the Pueblo congregation in reciting prayers. In each pueblo, a member of the civil government system, the fiscal, was made responsible for all duties connected with the church and services. He had the responsibility of enforcing the villagers to attend Mass. In pueblos where there was no mission and no resident priest he kept the keys of the church, was responsible for the maintenance of the building and grounds, and made the church ready for the periodic visits of the priest. (Dozier 49)

Francisco, a character in N. Scott Momaday’s House Made of Dawn, is a fictional representation of such a “fiscal.” He tends to the church, assists Father Olguin, the mission priest, and oversees the duties of the altar boy:

It was cold and dark in the sacristy. The old man Francisco had already knelt at the small glass panel which opened upon the chapel altar, and a small, sleepy boy whose name was Bonifacio stood in the corner, putting on a faded red cassock. There was a shuffle and coughing of people in the pews beyond the wall. It was already a minute past the half hour. "*Andale, bombre!*" the old man whispered sharply, and the boy started and hurried out to light the candles, half unbuttoned. The old man watched him through the glass. He loved the candles; loved to see how the flame came upon the wicks, how slow it was to take hold and flare up. (24)

The fiscal also tracks the attendance of the tribal congregation by taking roll at every service. The position bridges the cultural and language barrier between mission priest and Native parishioners:

Beyond the responsibility of keeping the mission and church establishments in constant repair, supervising workers in the workshops, and performing religious duties, the missionaries also attempted to carry out the task of making the Pueblos into "good" Christians. This task consisted primarily of the attempt to eradicate Pueblo indigenous religious beliefs and practices and the endeavor to substitute Catholic counterparts. In these efforts, missionaries enlisted the aid of the governor and the military organization. The missionaries were especially disturbed by the persistence of the Indians in holding ceremonies which were considered idolatrous. The masked Katsina dances in which the Pueblos represented mythological beings were particularly vexing to the missionaries, and such dances were eventually prohibited. The Indians continued to hold the dances and other sacred rituals in secret behind closed doors, however. But news of the performances of such prohibited rites often became known to the friars, whereupon soldiers were called to enter Pueblo ceremonial rooms and punish the performers and their leaders. The missionaries employed drastic disciplinary measures in their attempt to wipe out the native religion. They whipped native religious leaders and executed repeated offenders. Periodically, Pueblo homes were raided for Katsina masks, prayer sticks, prayer feathers, and other objects considered sacred by the Indians. (Dozier 49-50)

The incompatibility of the two religions caused a rift between the missionaries and the peoples they pledged to lead to conversion. The Pueblo ceremonies benefited the people in this world whereas the Catholic religion benefited one in the afterlife. This concept

was foreign to the Pueblo Indians. Thus, the Pueblos took on the outer trappings of the Catholic rituals but continued to practice their own ceremonies in secret.

As a result of the suppression of native beliefs and practices, resentment swelled among the Pueblos. They did not give up their beliefs or even their sacred rites, but became more careful in concealment and secrecy. Under coercion they took over the externals of the new religion without understanding the deeper spiritual values of Christianity. Their own religious beliefs and organization fitted, as it were, to their own folk culture continued to have more meaning for them:

Pueblo religion is founded on the belief that supernatural forces control daily activities and that such forces must be placated and propitiated to obtain the needs of existence. Special institutions existed for a successful hunt, for a bountiful harvest, for warding off illness, thwarting the enemy, and for achieving harmonious social relations within the community. The new religion provided no institutions for relief from these immediate and pressing anxieties of daily life. Instead, the new religion dwelt on incomprehensible rewards or punishments in the life after death. In Pueblo belief, conduct in the temporary world did not determine the kind of existence one might have in the hereafter. There was no concept of heaven or hell; one lived on after death, but no rules existed here and now for improving or worsening one's position in the next world. Life was difficult enough in this world; let the future take care of itself. So loyalty in the native beliefs and rites persisted. The Pueblo Indian accommodated himself to the external practices of the new religion for the simple expedient of survival, but his own indigenous religion was not abandoned. This kind of accommodation might have persisted, but another branch of the colonial administration also threatened the Pueblos. For more mundane and selfish reasons, the secular arm of the civil government competed with the missionaries for the labor and services of the Indians. Eventually, the oppression became too much to bear even for a people who cherished their community independence. (Dozier 50)

Pueblo Indians appear to have absorbed very few Catholic beliefs and values during the first century of contact with Spanish culture and the Catholic religion. They performed the external acts required of them such as attendance at Mass, vespers, and so forth. Some were baptized, married, and even buried by the friars. Such acts were done under compulsion,

however, and it is unlikely that any of the church concepts were really understood and believed. That the Hopi Indians, similarly exposed to Catholicism for a century, were able to slough off all vestige of Christian training in the centuries following the revolt indicates that the Rio Grande Pueblos did not really become Catholics either. The coercive methods of the friars in teaching them the new religion and the efforts to stamp out the old folk customs merely drove the Pueblos deeper into their own indigenous religion. (70)

Even after the restrictions were loosened in the 1700s, many of the most sacred ceremonies remained hidden from non-Pueblos. The engrained secrecy continued and a phenomenon Dozier called "compartmentalization" occurred within the Pueblo communities. Even though the Catholic religion had been practiced by the Pueblos for over a century, the two ritual sets remained separate and distinct from one another.

Dozier describes the practice:

... concealing the more sacred dances and ceremonies from observation by non-Pueblo peoples was already in operation. . . . Of significance, too, is that the descriptions of the dances reveal no Catholic elements; on the other hand, Catholic ritual also was free of native ceremonialism. Already at this time the Pueblos were insisting on the separation of Catholic from native rituals and guarding against a mixing of the two. This is a phenomenon of Pueblo culture that we have elsewhere called "compartmentalization". Compartmentalization is an accommodating device developed by the Rio Grande Pueblos to permit them to enjoy and practice indigenous rites objectionable to Spanish authorities. Those dances and rites that aroused no opposition or displeasure from the non-Indian population were given openly and frequently, indeed as if these activities were all that remained of their indigenous culture. But behind closed doors, or in heavily guarded areas, there was the performance of another set of complex rites shorn of all borrowed elements from the intruding culture. These were the ceremonies that in their pagan glory offended Spanish civil and church authorities.

It is clear from reading eighteenth century historical accounts that the Pueblos resented church discipline more than any other aspect of the missionary program. To a people who did not internalize the deeper meanings and values of Christianity and who had only a vague and indefinite conception of the teachings of the church, the activities of the friars were simply another form of Spanish oppression. (75)

Thus, the invasion of the Spanish brought some socio-economic changes, but the religious oppression triggered internalization, or, as Dozier labels it, “compartmentalization,” of the Pueblo ceremonies and the Catholic rituals. Outwardly, the Pueblos appeared to tolerate and ingest the Catholic religion, but inwardly, the Pueblos rejected the Christian theology. This internalization and “compartmentalization” continued into the next invasion when the United States acquired the western territory that included the land of the Pueblos.

Educators and Federal Officials

The most profound changes in Pueblo life came about over the past one hundred and fifty years beginning in 1848 when the United States of America obtained the western territory within which the Pueblos reside. Anglo-American settlers, Protestant missionaries, boarding school educators, governmental workers, and mechanized modes of transportation flooded into Pueblo country irrevocably altering the socio-economic landscape.

A subsistence farming lifestyle had been maintained by the Pueblos for hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of years. The Pueblo’s geographic location and sedentary lifestyle allowed little change. The landscape dictated the Pueblo way of life. Even though Hispanic settlers moved into the desert southwest, the newcomers adhered to the lifestyle of the Pueblos:

Although the Pueblos were associated rather intimately with a Hispanicized population for almost 300 years, the latter took its cues of

livelihood from the Pueblos and hence did not change the basic subsistence pattern. Both groups were subsistence farmers, growing essentially the same kinds of crops, living in similar types of habitations, and producing the basic necessities of life for their own use. There was no specialization either in products of the land or in manufactured items; hence there was no opportunity for the development of complex trading activities. (Dozier 9)

With the introduction of the railroad and new trading posts, a new economic system began in the Southwest. Subsistence farming and the barter system gave way to a cash economy. Eventually, farming failed to supply the goods for cash and many Pueblos sought wage work in nearby towns. This process began with the “Americanizing” efforts of educators and government officials during the late 1800s and early 1900s:

Perhaps equally as important to the Pueblos as a new economic system has been contact with the people who brought about the economic revolution. Although there were large numbers of Anglo-Americans in New Mexico by the middle of the last century, the Pueblos' relations with the newcomers were not extensive. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Pueblo contacts with Anglo-Americans were restricted essentially to three sources: (1) Indian agents or "farmers", (2) Protestant missionaries, and (3) United States Indian Bureau boarding school representatives. Only the first group provided direct aid; government farmers taught the Indians better farming techniques and acted as a link between the Pueblos and the Indian agent in Santa Fe. (Dozier 14)

Leslie Marmon Silko’s ancestry provides insight into this “Americanizing” era. In her collection of essays, Yellow Woman and the Beauty of the Spirit, she tells of her own “mixed blood” and the integration of the Marmons into the Laguna social and political landscape. That integration appears to have been marginalizing for the family and weaves even more intricacies into her web of words:

Human beings need to feel as if they "belong"; I learned from my father to feel comfortable and happy alone in the mesas and hills around Laguna. It was not so easy for me to learn where we Marmons belonged, but gradually I understood that we of mixed ancestry belonged on the outer

edge of the circle between the world of the Pueblo and the outside world. The Laguna people were open and accepted children of mixed ancestry because appearance was secondary to behavior. For the generation of my great-grandmother and earlier generations, anyone who had not been born in the community was a stranger, regardless of skin color. Strangers were not judged by their appearances—which could deceive—but by their behavior. The old-time people took their time to become acquainted with a person before they made a judgment. The old-time people were very secure in themselves and their identity; and thus they were able to appreciate differences and to even marvel at personal idiosyncrasies so long as no one and nothing was being harmed.

The cosmology of the Pueblo people is all-inclusive; long before the arrival of the Spaniards in the Americas, the Pueblo and other indigenous communities knew that the Mother Creator had many children in faraway places. The ancient stories include all people of the earth, so when the Spaniards marched into Laguna in 1540, the inclination still was to include rather than to exclude the strangers, even though the people had heard frightening stories and rumors about the white men. My great-grandmother and the people of her generation were always very curious and took delight in learning odd facts and strange but true stories. The old-time people believed that we must keep learning as much as we can all of our lives. So the people set out to learn if there was anything at all good in these strangers; because they had never met any humans who were completely evil. Sure enough, it was true with these strangers too; some of them had evil hearts, but many were good human beings.

Similarly, when my great-grandfather, a white man, married into the Anaya family, he was adopted into the community by his wife's family and clans. There always had been political factions among these families and clans, and by his marriage, my great-grandfather became a part of the political intrigues at Laguna. Some accounts by anthropologists attempt to portray my great-grandfather and his brother as instigators or meddlers, but the anthropologists have overestimated their importance and their tenuous position in the Pueblo. Naturally, the factions into which the Marmon brothers had married incorporated these new "sons" into their ongoing intrigues and machinations. But the anthropologists who would portray the Marmon brothers as dictators fool themselves about the power of white men in a pueblo. The minute the Marmon brothers crossed over the line, they would have been killed.

Indeed, people at Laguna remember my great-grandfather as a gentle, quiet man, while my beloved Grandma A'mooh is remembered as a stern, formidable woman who ran the show. She was also a Presbyterian. Her family, the Anayas, had kept cattle and sheep for a long time, and I imagine that way back in the past, an ancestor of hers had been curious

about the odd animals the strangers brought and decided to give them a try.

I was fortunate to be reared by my great-grandmother and others of her generation. They always took an interest in us children and they were always delighted to answer our questions and to tell us stories about the old days. (102-4)

This era saw the insurgence of Protestant missionaries and federal government educators. By 1872, government schools were built at several of the pueblos, including at Laguna, Zuni, and Jemez. The Pueblos embraced and supported these day schools. Albeit that formal education appealed to the Pueblos, the removal of Pueblo children to boarding schools in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, or beginning in 1881, to a newly built school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, met resistance.

Within Storyteller, Silko brings this period of time, this time of forced assimilation, to her readers through descriptions of her Aunt Susie. This woman is a scholar, as Silko writes, and holds an important place in this author's life. Aunt Susie is a part of the transitional generation between the oral and the written transfer of knowledge:

I always called her Aunt Susie
because she was my father's aunt
and that's what he called her.
She was married to Walter K. Marmon,
my grandpa Hank's brother.
Her family was the Reyes family from Pagate
the village north of Old Laguna.
Around 1896
when she was a young woman
she had been sent away to Carlisle Indian School
in Pennsylvania.
After she finished at the Indian School
she attended Dickinson College in Carlisle.
When she returned to Laguna
she continued her studies
particularly of history
even as she raised her family

and helped Uncle Walter run their small cattle ranch.
In the 1920's she taught school
in a one-room building at Old Laguna
where my father remembers he misbehaved
while Aunt Susie had her back turned.
From the time that I can remember her
she worked on her kitchen table
with her books and papers spread over the oil cloth.
She wrote beautiful long hand script
but her eyesight was not good
and so she wrote very slowly.
She was already in her mid-sixties
when I discovered that she would listen to me
to all my questions and speculations.
I was only seven or eight years old then
but I remember she would put down her fountain pen
and lift her glasses to wipe her eyes with her handkerchief
before she spoke.
It seems extraordinary now
that she took time from her studies and writing
to answer my questions
and to tell me all that she knew on a subject,
but she did.
She had come to believe very much in books
and in schooling.
She was of a generation,
the last generation here at Laguna,
that passed down an entire culture
by word of mouth
an entire history
an entire vision of the world
which depended upon memory
and retelling by subsequent generations.
She must have realized
that the atmosphere and conditions
which had maintained this oral tradition in Laguna culture
had been irrevocably altered by the European intrusion—
principally by the practice of taking the children
away from Laguna to Indian schools,
taking the children away from the tellers who had
in all past generations
told the children
an entire culture, an entire identity of a people.
And yet her writing went painfully slow

because of her failing eyesight
 and because of her considerable family duties.
 What she is leaving with us—
 the stories and remembered accounts—
 is primarily what she was able to tell
 and what we are able to remember.
 As with any generation
 the oral tradition depends upon each person
 listening and remembering a portion
 and it is together—
 all of us remembering what we have heard together—
 that creates the whole story
 the long story of the people. (3-7)

The stories Aunt Susie imparted to Silko appear in Storyteller along with contemporary stories that convey the unique history, rituals, and traditions of the Laguna Pueblo Indians. The stories reflect the poetic language and narrative style of the author, but the essence of many of the stories is enmeshed in the oral tradition and collective memory, irrevocably altered by the boarding school era:

In 1881 a boarding school was established in Albuquerque; primary schools had begun to function in many of the Indian pueblos since 1872. The association of Protestant missionaries and government school supervisors is undoubtedly the result of actual close cooperation between the two groups in educating Indians. During this period (the late 1800s), for example, half of the salaries of the teachers in the pueblos was met by the government and half by various Protestant denominations. (Dozier 14)

Just as when the Pueblos resisted Spanish coercion of the Native population into accepting the Catholic religion, the Pueblos resisted the compulsory enrollment of Pueblo children into federal boarding schools. Removal of the children from home and pueblo was adverse to the continuity and harmony of family and community, the main tenet of Pueblo life:

Some of the Pueblos initially resisted the educational programs of the government; however, in subsequent years they enthusiastically supported

such efforts. The forced recruitment of Indian youngsters brought about general Pueblo resentment for educators and government educational representatives. There was no objection to local schooling; indeed, many of the Pueblos employed Hispano teachers to instruct children in the rudiments of writing and reading, prior to American contact. It was the enrollment of Indian youngsters in boarding schools at considerable distances from their homes that the Pueblos opposed, as well as the cultural and linguistic alienation which resulted from such experiences. (Dozier 14)

Along with the Indian boarding schools, the federal government established the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Established as a part of the Department of War and subsequently moved to the Department of the Interior, this federal entity was mandated to oversee the Indian reservations and populations. Of course, the Pueblo Indians had been overseeing their own civic and economic affairs for hundreds of years:

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has undoubtedly affected the Pueblos more profoundly than any other single source of influence from the Anglo-American world. Before the mid-1920s, Indian administration was committed to transforming Indian communities into variants of the dominant American culture as quickly as possible. Anglo-American administrators of Indian affairs during this early period of Indian-white relations accepted without question the superiority of Anglo-American culture. They believed that the solution of the "Indian problem" lay in the complete "Americanization" of the Indian and his assimilation into the American "melting pot." (Dozier 15)

Federal Indian policy has undergone several transformations. In 1928, the Merriam report announced the destitute condition of American Indians across the United States and John Collier, newly appointed as the Bureau's director, revamped the bureau's policies to incorporate a cultural pluralism and the right of self-government. The Bureau has undergone transitions since that time, seesawing between total termination of the Indian / federal government relationship to benevolent nurturing of culturally relevant government entities:

Today, the Indian Bureau is treading a path midway between the assimilationists' policies of the past and the "cultural pluralism" position of Collier.

Among the Pueblos, the principle of self-government was applied with earnestness during the Collier regime. This basic philosophy was paramount in the thinking of high ranking Bureau officials. The Pueblos did not fully understand the intentions of the government, interpreting the "new look" of the Indian Bureau as merely "fresh dressing" on old paternalistic and repressive policies of the government. They were not conscious that important or radical changes were anticipated or actually came about in the management of their affairs during Collier's administration. A few communities in trouble, pueblos that had departed from the old cacique rule, benefited from the help of Bureau officials. Among these pueblos are Santa Clara, Laguna, Zuni, and Isleta, where community government now operates along secular lines and whose political officials are "elected" by the people. More comprehensible to the Pueblos are the Bureau's changed policies regarding the suppression of Indian customs and ceremonial activities that had characterized the administrations before 1928. The present renaissance in Indian ceremonial life is undoubtedly due to the permissive policies of the Indian Bureau established by John Collier during his long term as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. (Dozier 17)

In current times, the Pueblos have gained an umbrella of self-determination, establishing and maintaining individualized Pueblo governance. The Pueblos have requested, and been granted, placing their lands into trust with the federal government. This double-edged sword guarantees no state or local interference on Pueblo lands, but requires that the Pueblos suffer the intrusion of Bureau of Indian Affairs officials. Many Pueblos continue to conduct secret ceremonies and some prohibit any photographing or sketching of public ceremonies.

The invasion of the Spanish beginning in 1540 A.D. irrevocably changed the lives of the indigenous peoples of the Southwest. The Spanish brought along with them the fabrics and colors of Europe and the Catholic liturgical colors. Prior to Spanish contact, the Pueblos acquired their colors from the landscape, fauna, and flora surrounding them

on the deserts and mesas. The Pueblo colors of white, red, blue, yellow, and green became augmented with the liturgical colors that included black and violet and rose. The American invaders brought the colors of the American flag, red, white, and blue, but these colors held values incomprehensible to the Pueblo Indians. The Keresan Pueblo colors of white, red, blue, yellow, and green became augmented with the Catholic liturgical colors that included black, violet, and rose. The American military and settlers brought the colors of the American flag with them to the region, but these colors lacked directional meanings and stood for aspects of nationalism. To the Keresans the red, white, and blue would have been interpreted differently.

The colors that these invaders carried with them held no meaning for the Pueblo peoples. The Lagunas, for example, carried stories of creation or emergence in collective memory. The stories of Grandmother Spider and her emergence from the four lower worlds of white, red, blue, and yellow, when traveling from bottom to top, and emerging into this fifth world designated by green, had no relationship to the red, white, and blue of nationalism in the American flag. Each color in Laguna legend was attached to a cardinal direction and to a sacred mountain. The mountains marked the homes of the Laguna spiritual entities and the “essence placeholders” of the stories. Through their secrecy, the Lagunas have retained their traditions and culture, but through the stories of such writers as Leslie Silko, readers can experience strands of Laguna “expression” and the essence of collective memory.

CHAPTER TWO: FOUR DIRECTIONS – FOUR COLORS

Of course the mother was very sad.
 She went, grieved back to Acoma
 and climbed her mesa home.
 And the little clothing,
 the little moccasins
 that she's brought
 and the *yashtoah*,
 she stood on the edge
 of the high mesa
 and scattered them out.
 She scattered them to the east
 to the west
 to the north and to the south—
 in all directions—
 and here every one of the little clothing—
 the little *manta* dresses and shawls
 the moccasins and the *yashtoah*—
 they all turned into butterflies—
 all colors of butterflies.
*And today they say that acoma has more beautiful butterflies—
 red ones, white ones, blue ones, yellow ones.*
They came
from this little girl's clothing. (Storyteller 14-15)

Leslie Marmon Silko repeatedly infuses four colors into her writings in Storyteller. These four colors are white, red, blue, and yellow. Many times throughout the discourse a direct correlation to certain directions is also indicated in the word choices. As one moves through this collection of poems and stories, the questions arise: Why these four colors? And do these colors demonstrate particular elements of Pueblo culture? In an attempt to address these questions, a journey into Laguna Pueblo ceremony and culture is included below. The four main reference text consulted are Edith Swan's article "Laguna

Symbolic Geography in Ceremony” within which she describes the Laguna emergence stories and culture as they pertain to Silko’s novel Ceremony; Franz Boas’ anthropological case study of Keresan Pueblo Indian culture, language, and stories entitled Keresan Texts; Claire Farrer’s article entitled “The Sun Is In It’s Heaven, All Is Not Right With the World” discussing anthropological and astronomical aspects of Pueblo culture; and Virginia Roediger’s Ceremonial Costumes of the Pueblo Indians for direct information on the colors implemented in ceremonial costumes. All of these resources discuss the Laguna color system, directionality, sacred landscape, spiritual entities, and ceremonial calendar.

Raised along the perimeter of the Laguna Pueblo reservation, Silko absorbed the significance of the cardinal directions and sacred colors in Laguna culture. Her father being Laguna and her mother Anglo also influenced her view of tradition and culture. This mixed blood ancestry added strands of complexity to Silko’s work. Albeit that the central thrust of the inquiry here is her use of the colors and color systems related to the Laguna traditions, the interpretations must take into account that other influences, as well as Silko’s own poetic style and language skills, infused her stories. Many of these stories, whether poetry or prose, appear grounded in Laguna traditions and ceremonies, so this analysis begins by unraveling the old stories and analyzing how this artist weaves the old with the new, how she colors her characters with mythical hues, and how her stories are entangled with timelessness.

As with many indigenous peoples, the Laguna Pueblos have a “creation” or “emergence” story which explains the people’s beginnings on their lands. In the Laguna

emergence story, “folklore depicts the gradual upward progress of the people who still appear in their super-natural form...climbing from one world to the next, successively going from the white to the red, blue and yellow worlds” which correlates with the “cardinal directions of east, south, west and north” (Swan 230-31). The directions also relate to the ‘rain clouds’ and the “most prominent are winter (north) and summer (south)” (Swan 231). Throughout the desert southwest, where the Lagunas have resided since before recorded Western history, these are the directions from which winter and summer storms travel and, “within the Laguna sacred world, winter, spring, summer and fall occur respectively in the north, west, south and east (Swan 231). This connection between the four cardinal directions and the four associated colors appears repeatedly, although ambiguously, in Silko’s Storyteller.

Much of Swan’s cultural information is derived from the anthropological studies of Franz Boas. In his book, Keresan Texts, Boas compiles research including information about the four-color pattern found in Laguna stories and ceremonies. As he translates the Keres or Laguna Pueblo “Emergence Stories,” the four lower worlds are each designated a color: “Then there were four worlds underneath. First a yellow one, next a blue one, next a red one, next a white one (10). Within his remarks, Boas also points out the color association between the four lower worlds and the four colors, “There are four worlds under ours, a white, red, blue, yellow one from below upward” (277). In a summary of one of the Keresan stories he designates the association of color to direction in Laguna tradition as “colors: blue, west; red, south; white, east; yellow, north; brown, zenith; green, nadir” (283). Thus, Swan’s interpretation of the basic color correlations between

underworlds, colors, and directions from Laguna tradition are couched in Boas's anthropological research.

Albeit that Swan appears accurate on color patterns and directionality, anthropologist Claire Farrer disputes Edith Swan's interpretation of the basics of Laguna directionality in regards to the sun cycle in relationship to the winter and summer solstices. In her article, "The Sun Is in Its Heaven," Farrer points out "the problems with Swan's lack of understanding of basic astronomy persist. It is here, on page 231, that she first stumbles into errors of basic astronomy that are then compounded in the verbal arguments" when Swan states "the Southeast as Summer Solstice/far south or southeast corner" as well as noting Northeast as "Winter Solstice/far north or northeast corner. These are precisely backward" (156). Farrer goes on to point out the inherent astronomical errors in Swan's description of sunwise and anti-sunwise relationships:

At the summer solstice the sun rises and sets in its northern most positions while at the winter solstice the sun rises and sets in its southern most positions. Both contain anti-sunwise diagrams; sunwise, means to follow the path of the sun: i.e., to begin in the east, go through the south, and end in the west. Some people believe that, at night, the sun goes through the north in order to rise again in the east. But a sunwise circuit means the path the sun can be observed to follow. Anti-sunwise is the opposite, of course. Puebloan people are renowned for their exquisite sun-watching and ceremonial timing and surely recognize the differences. (156-57)

Above, Farrer pointedly addresses Swan's lack of astronomical understanding on some of the aspects of the directionality and sun cycle. On the other hand, the associations of the colors of the four underworlds with the cardinal directions are substantiated through the translations and remarks of Franz Boas in Keresan Texts. Therefore, Swan's references to and conclusions from comments regarding the solstices

and sun cycles are not included herein. However, the one constant in Laguna Pueblo tradition is the cycle of four. There are four underworlds and these underworlds, and their designated colors, correspond to the four directions of east, south, west, and north. Swan extracts these colors from anthropological studies such as those of Boas and presents them as white /east, red / south, blue / west, and yellow / north. These colors match the color pattern we find repeatedly in many of Silko's pieces in Storyteller.

As we approach Silko's stories, one important point to recognize is the attitude of Pueblo Indians towards any "outsiders," including anthropologists such as Franz Boas and Elsie Clews Parsons. Silko writes of her Great Grandfather telling a story to Parsons which was later included in Keresan Texts.

In the collection which Parsons made
 there is a coyote story
 told in Laguna
 by my great-grandfather.
 It is a very simple story
 with a little song
 which is repeated four times
 the meadowlark teasing the she-coyote
 calling her

"Coyote long-long-long-long mouth!"

Until Coyote gets so confused and upset she spits out the water
 she was carrying back to her pups.

Four times Coyote tries to carry the water back and four times
 Meadowlark sings this song

"Coyote long-long-long-long mouth!"

and Coyote opens her mouth
 spilling the water.
 When she finally gets back to her pups
 they are all dead from thirst. (255)

Pueblo Indians chose secrecy in order to preserve their rituals and ceremonies during the Spanish occupation from 1540 to almost 1850 A.D. Even today many Pueblos restrict photography or sketching by tourists. By collecting their information from tribal members through stories and interviews, Parsons and Boas depended on the truthfulness of the people for their facts and interpretations. Silko shares the coyote story in Storyteller because, as she puts it,

Maybe he chose that particular coyote story
 to tell Parsons
 because for him at Laguna
 that was the one thing he had to remember:

No matter what is said to you by anyone

you must take care of those most dear to you. (256)

So even though I depend on the interviews and collected stories by Elsie Parsons and Franz Boas as a foundation for this analysis, the stories may have changed over time from the original ancient tales. Also, the anthropologists must depend on the accuracy of the translators or tellers during the interviews and we have no way to verify their accuracy. However, these ceremonial colors and directions are the best information available for this analysis.

Silko absorbed these ceremonial colors and directions through the songs and

stories she heard as a child from such storytellers as her Aunt Susie, and she included the colors and their associated directions in her writings. That process can be found at several points throughout Storyteller.

One traditional story told to her by Aunt Susie as a child conveys the story of a little girl who drowned herself in a lake because the mother did not make her a special food. Silko transforms the story into a poem for this collection. The ending of that poem is the opening epigraph above. A correlation between the four directions and the four colors is evident in this traditional story depicted in Silko's poem. The grieving mother regains the top of the mesa and "scatters" her drowned daughter's "little clothing," "little manta dresses and shawls," "little moccasins," and "the yashtoah" to the four directions:

She scattered them to the east
 to the west
 to the north and to the south—
 in all directions-- ...
 they all...
 turned into butterflies...
 all colors of butterflies...
red ones, white ones, blue ones, yellow ones.
They came
from this little girl's clothing. (14-15)

Silko incorporates directionality and color symbolism into this poem depicting a story told to her by her Aunt Susie. The specific order of the directions does not match the order cited by Boas, but the four directions are specifically joined to the four colors of the four underworlds as cited above (Boas 277). The significance evolves through the proximity of the colors, the directions, and the transformation of the clothing articles into butterflies. This transformation, along with the weaving of the colors and directions,

evokes the cultural connection to the four underworlds, Grandmother Spider, the sacred mountains surrounding the Pueblo lands, and the Katchinas.

The four cardinal directions within the emergence story are marked by distinctive landscape. This landscape, the sacred mountains surround Puebloan lands and mark the physical and spiritual boundaries for the people. The emergence story tells of Grandmother Spider coming into this world from the four lower worlds and “making, naming and positioning the sacred mountains in each cardinal direction” (Swan 232). The point of emergence is called Shipap by the Laguna people and is located on Mount Taylor. Just as there is some confusion with the sunwise, the winter and summer solstices, and directionality, apparently there are divergent opinions of the directional designation of Mount Taylor. Edith Swan states, “Mount Taylor is designated the sacred mountain of the west but more frequently it is the sacred peak of the north” (232). Further, Boas remarks that identical names exist for the Acoma and Laguna for Mount Taylor – “sacred northern mountain called Kawaishtyima” (283). Discerning the exact color which signifies the direction and designated landscape is difficult, but the fact remains that the one constant continues to be the four colors from the lower worlds and the four cardinal directions.

One of Silko’s stories within which she integrates these four colors and directions in Storyteller is in the piece entitled “Yellow Woman.” Yellow Woman is a heroine in several traditional stories of the Keres (Puebloan) peoples prior to contact with European explorers. She travels from her home and lives with a spiritual being, a Katchina, to ensure the well-being of her people.

In this contemporary version of the Yellow Woman story, Silko interlaces modern Laguna life of a woman captivated by a handsome man she meets by the river with the mythic Yellow Woman. Her use of the four colors and directions is more subtle in this piece, but all are included in the discourse. The couple slept “rolled in the red blanket on the white river sand” (54) and Silva, addresses this young woman as “Yellow Woman.” Later in the story, the anonymous narrator who the reader knows only as Yellow Woman, remarks about the “cold wind coming down off the blue mountain to the north” (57). In its entirety, the story integrates the four colors, the four directions, with sacred landscape and spiritual entities:

I looked at him beside me, rolled in the red blanket on the white river sand. I cleaned the sand out of the cracks between my toes, squinting because the sun was above the willow trees. I looked at him for the last time, sleeping on the white river sand.
I felt hungry and followed the river south... (54)

The insertion of the “red blanket” in contrast to the “white river sand” evokes a strong image of opposites. The white of purity is laid upon by the red of passion; The red of danger is held by the white of innocence. These are Euro-Western concepts of color, and the author utilizes this imagery to build the exposition of this story. However, the colors of red and white have other connotations as well. According to Boas, for Laguna people the color white represents the east while the color red represents the south. These are adjoining on the compass—portraying a movement forward on the sunwise ceremonial calendar from east to south, but a backward movement in the anti-sunwise seasonal calendar from autumn to summer. This backward seasonal movement combines with the narrator’s “following the river south” foreshadowing her return to Silva and the “red

blanket.” the introduction of the forward (sunwise) and backward (anti-sunwise) movement in directionality and seasonality mirrors the narrator’s temporal confusion in the Yellow Woman story:

“Do you know the story?”

“What story?” He smiled and pulled me close to him as he said this. I was afraid lying there on the red blanket. All I could know was the way he felt, warm, damp, his body beside me. This is the way it happens in the stories, I was thinking, with no thought beyond the moment she meets the Katsina spirit and they go. (56)

In the “story,” Yellow Woman leaves her home and family to meet the Katsina and live with him so that her people survive. According to Laguna Puebloan traditional stories:

The ancient ones came up and out. The dead go in and down: they return to the Emergence Place and the worlds below. In turn, some ancestral spirits become the Katsina who bring the rains. The Katsina dwell at Weinimatse located west or northwest of Zuni Pueblo. (Boas 277)

These Katsina spiritual entities are part of the “core supernatural” of the Laguna ceremonial tradition. According to Swan, the Katsina are believed to be anthropomorphic beings. By integrating the Katsina into her “Yellow Woman” story, Silko braids the ancient and spiritual into a contemporary setting:

Katsina join the Kopsishtaya and Shiwana to form the core supernatural powers in Laguna ideology; the former are anthropomorphic beings, best known as the masked deities who arrive in dawn's light for the winter season. (Swan 231)

The Katsinas are an integral part of the ceremonial life of the Laguna Pueblo Indians and are inextricably linked to the emergence story, the four lower worlds, Grandmother Spider, and the stories of Yellow Woman. Silko continues to weave the story of Yellow Woman and the Katsina into the text as the narrator questions her captor:

“Have you brought women here before?” He smiled and kept chewing, so I said, “Do you always use the same tricks?”
 “What tricks?” He looked at me like he didn’t understand.
 “The story about being a Kadcina from the mountains. The story about Yellow Woman.”
 Silva was silent; his face was calm. (57)

The language in these lines builds a relationship between the color yellow, the direction of north, the sacred landscape signified by the association of the “mountain” and the “Kadcina.” Yellow is the color designation for the direction of north and here Silko refers to the Kadcina, personified in Silva, as telling her the “story about being a Kadcina from the mountains.” This conversation connotes the weaving of two stories, past and present, and two beings, a Laguna woman and an anthropomorphic Kadcina, to the color yellow, to the direction of north, and to the mountain landscape.

The author continues this weaving of the two women – Yellow Woman and the narrator – into one story throughout the entire discourse. In order to differentiate the mythical Yellow Woman from this anonymous character, the narrator introduces language that sets the two women apart temporally. The young woman seduced by Silva fights her loss of autonomy and absorption into the Yellow Woman “story.” This narrator juxtaposes herself opposite to the ancient Yellow Woman in an attempt to regain her mental equilibrium:

“I don’t have to go. What they tell in stories was real only then, back in time immemorial, like they say”

...

“I live now and I’ve been to school and there are highways and pickup trucks that Yellow Woman never saw.” (56)

These lines indicate the protagonist’s attempt to separate her self from the ancient story

and regain the reality of her existence in present time. She states the cultural differences between her life and that of Yellow Woman who lived “back in time immemorial.” In her present life, this young woman asserts, “I live now,” and “I have been to school and there are highways and pickup trucks that Yellow Woman never saw.” The temporal separation of the two women is also denoted by the terms “back” and “now” within these lines. However, regardless of her protests, the anonymous narrator becomes enmeshed into the Yellow Woman story.

Although the narrator resists being drawn mentally into the Yellow Woman story, she travels with Silva to his mountain home. The trip on horseback alienates her from family and pueblo and draws her further into the ancient story:

The house was made with black lava rock and red mud. It was high above the spreading miles of arroyos and long mesas. I smelled a mountain smell of pitch and buck brush. I stood there beside the black horse, looking down on the small, dim country we had passed, and I shivered.

“Yellow Woman, come inside where it’s warm.” (57)

Silva calls her “Yellow Woman” and perpetuates this protagonist’s confusion between present and past. From his mountain home, “looking down on the small, dim country” through which the two had traveled, her pueblo, including her family and life in that place, becomes “small” and “dim,” or disappears completely. Her movement further into the role of “Yellow Woman” is also signified by Silko’s injection here of the color red. Just as Silva had been “rolled in the red blanket on the white river sand,” he invites

“Yellow Woman” to move “inside” his “house... made with black lava rock and red mud.” The color combination has now moved from red and white to red and black, again signifying opposites. Yellow Woman and Silva have traveled from the white of the “river sand” into the black of the volcanic mountains. The proximity of the colors yellow and red in these lines is also significant. As indicated above, the color yellow is attached to the direction of north and red, the direction of south. In these lines, these opposite directions are joined once again in the mountain home of Silva as “Yellow Woman” moves “inside where its warm” to the “Kadcina” in his red / summer house. Thus, Silko continues to weave strands of temporal confusion, directional opposites, and traditional connections to Laguna culture into this contemporary story.

So far, Silko has included the colors yellow for north, white for east, and red for south in this story. Now she introduces the color blue for west. Again, confusion arises as to the designated directionality in the text. The color blue is both “behind me” and in front of her as she looks to the “blue mountains” far across the vista from Silva’s mountain home:

“I don’t believe it. Those stories couldn’t happen now,” I said.

He shook his head and said softly, “But someday they will talk about us, and they will say, ‘Those two lived long ago when things like that happened.’”

He stood up and went out. I ate the rest of the potatoes and thought about things— about the noise the stove was making and the sound of the mountain wind outside. I remembered yesterday and the day before, and then I went outside. I walked past the corral to the edge where the narrow trail cut through the black rim rock. I was standing in the sky with nothing around me but the wind that came down from the blue mountain peak behind me. I could see Faint Mountain images in the distance miles across the vast spread of mesas and valleys and plains. I wondered who was over

there to feel the mountain wind on those sheer blue edges—who walks on the pine needles in those blue mountains. (57)

Herein, Silko brings Yellow Woman into direct contact with the “blue mountains.” The colors yellow and blue are part of the duality of the Pueblo culture. According to Virginia Roediger, these colors represent male and female, respectively:

One of the conventional patterns at Hopi for the body paint of the god impersonator is red on the torso and upper legs, with blue on the right shoulder and breast, the left lower arm, and the right lower leg. Yellow is on the left shoulder, the right lower arm, and the left lower leg, and two vertical lines of alternate blue and yellow run from breast to waist and from shoulder to elbow as well as around each knee (pl. 24). This may possibly bear some relation to the Indian conception of the duality of life, in which blue signifies female and yellow male. (111)

Roediger describes the body of a Hopi ceremonial dancer displaying the colors red, blue, and yellow. These are three of the colors of the lower worlds – only white is not included here. However, the specific use of yellow and blue in the body paint of the Hopi dancer reflects the colors of yellow and blue in the “Yellow Woman” story. A Keresan creation story speaks of two entities, one male and one female, using “kicking sticks” to place the humans onto the earth: “I shall play with the yellow kicking stick and I [she] with the blue kicking stick.” Then she promised (to do so) (Boas 7). Here once again the colors of yellow and blue are joined, the yellow stick kicked by the male entity and the blue kicked by the female. This “duality of life” also adds to the collage Silko strokes in this piece permeated with color symbolism. The color yellow for Yellow Woman is in juxtaposition to the blue of the “blue mountains” which are Silva’s home. He has told Yellow Woman that he is a “Katsina from the mountains.” This yellow for the female narrator of Yellow Woman and blue for the male character of Silva are opposite of the designated color

association stated by Roediger and demonstrated in the creation story translated by Boas. Once again Silko injects opposites and confusion into the discourse.

Moreover, according to Swan, the Katcinas are anamorphic. Silko may be building this feature into Yellow Woman by blending the colors yellow and blue into this character when she places “Yellow Woman” spatially in the “blue mountains.”

Within Ceremony, Silko addresses how these types of changing trajectories of tradition strengthen a culture while maintaining the balance and harmony necessary for the community to survive. Her belief that things must “change” or become “dead” reflect the multiple uses of colors, directions, and seasons in this “Yellow Woman” story:

... “But long ago when the people were given these ceremonies, the changing began, if only in the aging of the yellow gourd rattle or the shrinking of the skin around the eagle's claw, if only in the different voices from generation to generation, singing the chants. You see, in many ways, the ceremonies have always been changing.”

Tayo nodded; he looked at the medicine pouches hanging from the ceiling and tried to imagine the objects they contained.

“At one time, the ceremonies as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies strong.

She taught me this above all else: things which don't shift and grow are dead things. They are things the witchery people want. Witchery works to scare people, to make them fear growth. But it has always been necessary, and more than ever now, it is. Otherwise we won't make it. We won't survive. That's what the witchery is counting on: that we will cling to the ceremonies the way they were, and then their power will triumph, and the people will be no more.” (126)

Regardless of Silko's intention or reader's perception, deploying this color system strengthens the piece. Each color combination –white and red, red and black, red and yellow, or yellow and blue – add to the imagery in this story that weaves contemporary characters into tales from “time immemorial.” However, developing an understanding of

the underlying significance of this Laguna Pueblo or Western Keres color system can assist the reader in understanding the cultural framework for Silko's use of particular colors and color combinations within the text.

Thus, all four sacred colors and designated directions appear in this "Yellow Woman" story. White, the color for east, is introduced in the first line of the story by the narrator's descriptions of the "white river sand." The color yellow for north is represented by the "Yellow Woman" first-person narrator and her ties to the ancient story. Silva, who seduces the protagonist by claiming to be a "Kadcina from the mountains," has connections to the color red through the "red blanket" and the "red mud" of his home. Finally, the blue of west flows from the "sheer blue edges" of the "blue mountains." The analysis of this "Yellow Woman" story and the poem preceding it display the Laguna color system, directionality, sacred landscape, spiritual entities, and ceremonial calendar.

These associations of color and direction and entity expand the possibilities of interpretation. Readers of Silko's stories visualize the blue mountains or the multitude of butterflies as poetic language, interesting imagery, or "essence placeholders." Through discovering the significance of each color in the Keres traditions, a new essence materializes for each word. The word "yellow" represents not only a color, but a direction, a season, a mythical entity, and even a different world – a lower world through which peoples traveled to emerge into this one. The worlds become colors, the colors become words, and the words become stories.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FIFTH COLOR: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GREEN

“The Man to Send Rain Clouds”

In the previous chapter, the significance of the colors white, red, blue, and yellow and their relationship to the cardinal directions and ceremonial calendar for the Laguna was explored. Another color which Silko adds to her palette in Storyteller is green. The colors white, red, blue, and yellow flow from the Laguna emergence story within which Grandmother Spider traveled upward from the four lower worlds, each designated by the colors white, red, blue, and yellow, respectively, into this world where she created, named, and placed the sacred mountains at the cardinal directions. Each cardinal direction is designated a specific color. The Laguna oral tradition weaves strands of these colors, the four lower worlds, their correlating directions, and the sacred mountains into the emergence and creation stories. While Silko injects the color green infrequently throughout the text, it holds a significant place within the emergence story and Laguna ceremonial ritual. Therefore, we must return to the translations and remarks of Franz Boas, the descriptions and interpretations of Edith Swan, and the anthropological research and history of Edward Dozier to provide us contexts within which to read the color's significance. Corresponding excerpts from Storyteller, specifically from her short stories entitled “Storyteller” and “The Man To Send Rain Clouds,” provide new color patterns that include green, fresh perspectives of these works as viewed through the lens of Silko's Laguna cultural heritage, and alternative interpretations of the intricacies of her writings.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, green is the color of nadir (down), the primary color of the fifth world, and carries the meaning of rebirth or renewal in the natural world. However, some of Silko's deployment of the color green appears to have no significance other than augmenting the imagery of a specific landscape. For example, in her fictional piece "Storyteller," Silko writes of the "dark green tundra" (27) and the "bright green river grass" (26) of the Alaskan terrain. She also injects green to describe the "jade knife" (32) wielded by the hunter of the blue glacier bear. These may be simple descriptors, but, combined with the implementation within the story of the four colors of the lower worlds, "green" can be a signifier connecting the "green tundra" and "green grass" to the Laguna emergence story and evokes the image of rebirth after the frozen white of a long Alaskan winter.

According to Boas, green denotes the place of emergence by Grandmother Spider at Shipap. In this light, the color green holds a significance equal to or surpassing the four colors of the lower worlds. Shipap is not only the place of Grandmother Spider's emergence into this fifth world, but also the point of egress and ingress of the ancestors, the ancient ones or Katcinas, and the spirits of those who die in this world and journey back to the lower worlds. The color green marks the color of the fifth world as well as the emergence point, sometimes designated as being under a blue lake or river. Green is also associated with "green corn" and the dress of summer:

Summer demands that there shall be seven months summer and five months winter. [He resides] to the South. . . Summer's shirt is yellow, woven from corn silk, the belt of green corn leaves, a tall pointed hat of the same material with a yellow corn tassel 'on top. He has green leggings of moss. His moccasins are embroidered with flowers and butterflies. He carries an ear of green corn. (Boas 247)

Within Summer's dress, green is a significant color. Green corn leaves form both the belt and the core of the hat while "green moss" forms the leggings—this symbolizes the stem and leaves of the all important corn plant. These green materials grow when nourished by the same summer rains that nourish the corn crop and the formation of moss. The moss also correlates with the story of Reed Woman who left the fifth world when her sister, Corn Woman, complained that she bathed in the river all day. According to the traditional story and Silko's similar narrative in Ceremony, when Reed Woman left the land of the Pueblos the land dried up and drought occurred everywhere. As she left, moss filled her tracks. Thus, a central focus of Pueblo ceremonies is the request for life-giving rain:

It was summertime and Iktoa'ak'o'ya-Reed Woman
 was always taking a bath.
 She spent all day long sitting in the river splashing down
 the summer rain.
 But her sister Corn Woman worked hard all day sweating in the sun
 getting sore hands
 in the corn field. Corn Woman got tired of that
 she got angry
 she scolded
 her sister for
 bathing all day long.
 Iktoa'ak'o'ya-Reed Woman went away then
 she went back
 to the original place
 down below.
 And then there was no more rain then. Everything dried up
 all the plants
 the corn
 the beans they all dried up and started blowing away
 in the wind. The people and the animals
 were thirsty.
 They were starving. (13-14)

In this traditional Laguna story, Silko stresses the balance of the heat of the sun with the cooling effect of “splashing down the summer rain.” Corn Woman and Reed Woman are sisters and both are necessary to maintain harmony with Mother Earth. When Reed Woman departs to the lower worlds, the balance is lost and the people suffer.

The green of the tundra and river grass may be emblems of the return of Summer, the renewal of life, and the completion of the ceremony requesting the return of Reed Woman to stop the suffering of the people. Herein, green may mark a time of physical and cultural renewal, subtly coloring the Alaskan landscape with the green of Grandmother Spider’s powers of “making, placing, and naming” the landscape of the fifth world, emblemized by the color green. On the other hand, the “shattering” of the “jade knife” on the frigid icepack of winter may also symbolize a cultural transformation. The phallic jade knife certainly breaks apart as the hunter succumbs to the blue glacier bear. This breaking apart appears to be opposite to the renewal of the green of the tundra or river grass. Although appearing to collide, these two trajectories actually blend, bending and braiding together to create the cyclical movement of life- a continuous cycle of renewal and birth leading to a shattering or death – emblemized by the emergence point where life and death enter and depart from the same green point on the Laguna landscape.

These elements, these braided trajectories, saturate Silko’s writings. By understanding the significance of the color green, the balance created by Reed Woman and Corn Woman, and the emphasis on a harmony with “nature,” readers of Silko’s works can glean new interpretations from the discourse. In Ceremony, Silko explains this

harmony and balance through an association with Mother Earth when Tayo and his uncle, Josiah, travel to a natural spring to gather water for thirsty sheep:

Tayo used to stand in the big sandstone cave and hold the siphon hose under the water in the shallow pool where the spring water splashed down from the west wall of the cave. The water was always cold, icy cold, even in the summer, and Tayo liked the way it felt when he was sweating and took off his shirt: the splashing water made an icy mist that almost disappeared before it touched him.

“You see,” Josiah had said, with the sound of the water trickling out of the hose into the empty wooden barrel, “there are some things worth more than money.” He pointed his chin at the springs and around at the narrow canyon. “This is where we come from, see. This sand, this stone, these trees, the vines, all the wildflowers. This earth keeps us going.” (45)

Silko’s use of the color green in “The Man to Send Rain Clouds” also depicts the cycle of birth and death through the Laguna emergence place and the balance and harmony evolving through combining the four colors of the lower worlds with the color of Nadir, green.

In Western Keres tradition, upon death the face is painted with the colors of the deceased’s clan so that his or her heritage will be recognized on the journey through the lower worlds. This tradition is demonstrated in one of Silko’s earliest pieces, “The Man to Send Rain Clouds.” In this story, Old Teofilo dies at a sheep camp and his grandsons apply different colored paints to his face as part of a blessing before bringing him back to town for burial:

Before they wrapped the old man [in the red blanket], Leon took a piece of string out of his pocket and tied a small gray feather in the old man's long white hair. Ken gave him the paint. Across the brown wrinkled forehead he drew a streak of white and along the high cheekbones he drew a strip of blue paint.

He paused and watched Ken throw pinches of corn meal and pollen into the wind that fluttered the small gray feather. Then Leon painted with

yellow under the old man's broad nose, and finally, when he had painted green across the chin, he smiled. "Send us rain clouds, Grandfather." (183-84)

After painting the face and spreading the corn pollen for the blessing, the two young men, Leon and Ken, wrapped Old Teofilo in a "red blanket" and placed him in the back of their pickup truck for the journey back to town. This passage injects the color green in direct connection with the four colors of the lower worlds described in the Laguna emergence story. The color red in the blanket for south is wrapped around the old man in death. The colors blue and white, for west and east, are stroked in close proximity to the eyes – white above the eyes on the forehead and blue across the cheekbones just below the eyes. This proximity to the eyes may denote the rising and setting of the sun which all Puebloan peoples respect and follow daily. Then Leon paints yellow and green near the mouth. The yellow for north is the location of the ancestral Katcinas and the green denotes Shipap, also located in the north, through which Old Teofilo will travel into the lower worlds. The proximity to the mouth may signify the lack of breath and speech in death and replace the power of speech as these colors translate to the ancient ones recognition of Old Teofilo's clan relationship and permission to enter the lower worlds. According to Boas,

At death, the deceased face is painted with designs distinctive of clan membership so that the person is recognized by Our Mother when the soul returns to dwell with her at shipap. The dead are painted by a shaman so that they may be recognized in the future world. The lizard clan use black and white short stripes. The sun clan use yellow, green, white, red short stripes on each side of the face. The water clan use white, green, and blue. The turkey clan use brown and white. The oak clan use dark red and white. The elders of the clans pray to beings that are considered particularly related to the clans. (295)

Thus, Silko signals the reader to the importance of the face paint through the reverence and ritual with which the two young men apply the colors to clan-specific areas of the face and the ceremonial spreading of the corn pollen and meal. This color pattern also informs those with the knowledge of clan specific colors of Old Teofilo's clan affiliation. The author implies that a journey takes place through the use of the verb "send" in connection to the "rain clouds." Old Teofilo must travel away in order to "send rain clouds to his family." That ability to "send us rain clouds" is imbedded in Keres ontology. Again, according to Boas, "On their [sacred mountain] peaks reside the shiwana or storm clouds. These thunder clouds are said to be the children of Sun Man, who awakens them each day" (76-7).

Sun Man, or Father Sun, rises each day to awaken the rain clouds. This is represented by the Katcinas' arrival at dawn to bring rain to the people. Silko also refers to the association between Father Sun and the rain clouds: "Father of the clouds you are beautiful at sunrise" (Ceremony 190). In Keresan mythology, the Storm Clouds are captured or imprisoned by certain spiritual entities. When this occurs, "the rains cease. Storm clouds are the physical form of the breath body of the ancestors who in turn become the Katcina bringers of rain" (Boas 76-77). Within her story, Silko brings together the importance of water and the rain clouds for the Laguna people and the significance of the ritualistic use of color in the burial ceremony. The face painting on the body of the recently deceased, "resemble those of Katcina impersonators, and some of the songs sung over the corpse imply an association with the storm clouds" (Eggen 266). So the dead ancestors (as Katcina) bring rain, well-being and the means for a livelihood

to their living descendents. The shiwana medicine society has special responsibilities in rituals for rainmaking (Swan 231).

The colors, white, blue, yellow, and green, appear to be the clan colors of which Boas and Swan speak. Silko describes the ceremony of painting the deceased's face, tying the feather in the hair, and throwing "pinches of corn meal and pollen" into the wind to start the old man on his journey to the lower worlds (184). These face paint colors, along with the "red blanket" bring together the four colors of the lower worlds and Nadir or fifth world. Green, and the landscape it represents in Laguna creation stories, is now woven into this pattern of colors, this collage of landscape, spirituality, and ontology. Leon smiles when he asks Old Teofilo to "send us rain clouds" under the old cottonwood tree. Leon understands that Old Teofilo moves through the Spider Woman's emergence point at Shipap and joins his ancestors in the four lower worlds. This understanding is part of the collage that Silko paints in her use of color symbolism in this story.

Another layer to the symbolic use of the color green within Silko's story comes from the hundreds of years of Spanish and Catholic influence on the Pueblo Indians. This influence is a second strand in this story. Old Teofilo's funeral supplies the setting for the intersection of the dual meanings of religious rituals, one Catholic and one Laguna.

Upon meeting Father Paul on the road from the sheep camp with Old Teofilo wrapped in a blanket under the tarp in the pickup, Leon responds to the priest's condescending remarks by neglecting to tell Father Paul of the old man's death.

"Thank God for that. Teofilo is a very old man. You really shouldn't allow him to stay at the sheep camp alone."

“No, he won't do that any more now.”

“Well, I'm glad you understand. I hope I'll be seeing you at Mass this week—we missed you last Sunday. See if you can get old Teofilo to come with you.” The priest smiled and waved at them as they drove away. (183)

This lack of disclosure by Leon springs from the hundreds of years of secrecy developed by the Pueblo people in order to preserve their ceremonial rituals:

Beyond the responsibility of keeping the mission and church establishments in constant repair, supervising workers in the workshops, and performing religious duties, the missionaries attempted make the Pueblos into "good" Christians. This task consisted primarily of trying to eradicate Pueblo indigenous religious beliefs and practices and substitute Catholic counterparts. In these efforts, missionaries theoretically enlisted the aid of the governor and the military organization. The missionaries were especially disturbed by the Indians' persistence in holding ceremonies which were considered idolatrous. (Dozier 50)

The masked Katsina dances in which the Pueblos represented holy beings were particularly upsetting to the missionaries, Catholic and later Protestants alike, and these ritual performances were eventually prohibited. “The Indians continued to hold the dances and other sacred rituals in secret behind closed doors,” however, using their participation in Catholic ceremonies as a cover (50).

These actions by the Spanish priests, governors, and military caused all Pueblo Indians to completely internalize their religious beliefs, that is make it secret, something not discussed with outsiders. The two religions became separate components of life. During Catholic mass or celebrations, the people complied and participated physically with little understanding of the significance of the rituals' spiritual meanings. Laguna, like other Rio Grande Pueblo communities, conducted ceremonies to fulfill their responsibilities to their holy deities, such as Father Sun and Mother Earth, or the Rain

Clouds in order to ensure an ample amount of rainfall for a good harvest, fertility, or other good things to mediate the harsh conditions of life on this earth. Life in the hereafter could not be mediated by one's actions in this world according to Keresan religious beliefs, so the entire theology of Christianity seemed irrelevant. The Pueblos sheltered their religion and rituals in secrecy.

However, when Elsie Clews Parsons and Franz Boas compiled versions of the creation and emergence stories of the Laguna people during the first quarter of the 20th century, they found that some of the narratives included components of Catholic influence. This is a process called syncretism. Boas states in Keresan Texts:

Evidently the whole account from Laguna is thoroughly influenced by Catholic teachings. The change of sex of I'tc'ts'ity'i [from female to male] is presumably due to his identification with God the Father, while Nau'ts'ity'i seems to be identified with the Virgin Mary. The division of water and land on pp. 12 by I'tc'ts'ity'i who sits above the clouds, the creation of plants, of animals in the same version, the writing on the stone of six numbers followed by his resting on the seventh stone? Are biblical in character. The transfer of J'tc'ts'ity'i to be father of the whites may perhaps be accounted for by the attitude of the Catholic priests to the idea of a creator as God the Father. Perhaps the colonization of the Pueblo area by the Spanish, which is predicted on p. 226 and the feeling of helplessness against Spanish aggression may have caused? helped in the change. The contradiction between the versions p. 5 and p. 226 suggests that there may still be uncertainty in regard to these concepts. (235)

Boas refers to “uncertainty” about the syncretism concepts, but these may be adaptations of the stories especially arranged for the anthropologists collecting the origin tales to demonstrate acculturation or absorption of the Catholic beliefs. Or they could be the versions of the stories that were told to outsiders. Again, we cannot be certain of the anthropologists' agency, only of their accuracy as to the information they gathered, the version of the stories they heard and their attempts to produce accurate translations.

When thinking of the secrecy employed by the Pueblo Indians during the Spanish occupation and which extended into present times, the theory of “compartmentalization” can certainly be applied to the telling and the interpretation of creative works.

Silko relays this “compartmentalization” of the two religions when Leon neglects to tell Father Paul of Old Teofilo’s death. As noted above, the priest’s language is conveyed in a condescending tone even though he is described as “young” (183). Silko continues to juxtapose the two religions when she introduces the cultural duality within the concept of “holy water” (184).

Albeit that Leon and Louise decided not to call Father Paul to perform a funeral mass or give the last rights, Louise asked Leon to have Father Paul sprinkle holy water at the burial. At “noontime the church bells rang the Angelus” (183) and Old Teofilo’s relatives ate “beans and hot bread” (183), and during the rest of the afternoon “neighbors and clans people came quietly to embrace Teofilo’s family and to leave food on the table because the gravediggers would come to eat when they were finished” (184). When “the funeral was over, and the old men had taken their candles and medicine bags and were gone,” Louise requested Leon to ask “about the priest sprinkling holy water for Grandpa. So he won’t be thirsty” (184).

I present a long quote of this incident in order to expand the reader’s understanding. The entangling of the priest’s attitude toward his parishioners and the distance at which the parishioners hold the priest demonstrates the process of compartmentalization. On the other hand, burying Old Teofilo in the church graveyard and asking the priest to attend to administer the holy water, even if for different reasons,

portrays syncretism. The priest's "holy" water holds no color and therefore no ability to be "holy" or sacred in the Laguna burial ceremony. The language of the discourse indicates not only the disdain with which the priest holds the Indian rituals, but also his lack of knowledge regarding their customs. All this language reflects the reasons Dozier has stated for the Pueblo's compartmentalization of traditional ceremonies from the Catholic religion as well as the dynamic nature of the Pueblo culture:

Ken stopped the pickup at the church, and Leon got out; and then Ken drove down the hill to the graveyard where people were waiting. Leon knocked at the old carved door with its symbols of the Lamb. While he waited he looked up at the twin bells from the king of Spain with the last sunlight pouring around them in their tower.

The priest opened the door and smiled when he saw who it was. "Come in! What brings you here this evening?"

The priest walked toward the kitchen, and Leon stood with his cap in his hand, playing with the earflaps and examining the living room—the brown sofa, the green armchair, and the brass lamp that hung down from the ceiling by links of chain. The priest dragged a chair out of the kitchen and offered it to Leon.

"No thank you, Father. I only came to ask you if you would bring your holy water to the graveyard."

The priest turned away from Leon and looked out the window at the patio. "Why didn't you tell me he was dead? I could have brought the Last Rites anyway."

Leon smiled. "It wasn't necessary, Father."

The priest stared down at his scuffed brown loafers and the worn hem of his cassock. "For a Christian burial it was necessary."

His voice was distant, and Leon thought that his blue eyes looked tired.

"It's O.K. Father, we just want him to have plenty of water."
(184-85)

This dialogue is reminiscent of a scene in N. Scott Momaday's House Made of Dawn in which Old Francisco has died and his grandson Abel goes to the local

priest to request his grandfather's burial. Father Olguin first reprimands Abel for waking him so early and then attempts to reconcile his actions by telling the young man, "I understand." In this scene, old Father Olguin's lack of understanding mirrors that of young Father Paul's confusion and misconceptions in Silko's story:

Abel was suddenly awake, wide awake and listening. The lamp had gone out. Nothing had awakened him. There was no sound in the room. He sat bolt upright, staring into the corner where his grandfather lay. There was a deep red glow on the embers, and the soft light opened and closed upon the walls. There was no wind outside, nor any sound; only a thin chill had come in from the night and it lay like the cold of a cave on the earthen floor. He could see no movement, and he knew that the old man was dead. He looked around at the windowpanes, those coal-black squares of dim reflection. There was nothing. It was a while still before the dawn, before the first light should break in advance of the seventh dawn, and he got up and began to get ready. There was no need for the singers to come; it made no difference, and he knew what had to be done. He drew the old man's head erect and laid water to the hair. He fashioned the long white hair in a queue and wound it around with yarn. He dressed the body in bright ceremonial colors: the old man's wine velveteen shirt, white trousers, and low moccasins, soft and white with kaolin. From the rafters he took down the pouches of pollen and of meal, the sacred feathers and the ledger book. These, together with ears of colored corn, he placed at his grandfather's side after he had sprinkled meal in the four directions. He wrapped the body in a blanket.

It was pitch black before the dawn, and he went out along the corrals and through the orchards to the mission. The motor turned and, one after another, the lights went on upstairs and in the stair well and in the hall, and Father Olguin threw open the door.

"What in God's name--?" he said.

"My grandfather is dead," Abel said. "You must bury him."

"Dead? Oh . . . yes--yes, of course. But, good heavens, couldn't you have waited until—"

"My grandfather is dead," Abel repeated. His voice was low and even. There was no emotion, nothing.

"Yes, yes. I heard you," said the priest, rubbing his good eye.

"Good Lord, what time is it, anyway? Do you know what time it is? I can understand how you must feel, but—"

But Abel was gone. Father Olguin shivered with cold and peered out into the darkness. "I can understand," he said. "I understand, do you

hear?" And he began to shout. "I understand! Oh God! I understand -- I understand!" (183-84)

The characterization and tone of Father Olguin, who presides over the mission at Jemes Pueblo, resembles that of young Father Paul, apparently the priest for Laguna Pueblo though the text is not specific. The young priest refused to administer the holy water at first, believing Old Teofilo's soul to be doomed for eternity, but finally submitted and went with Leon to the small graveyard near the church. Just as his words implied at the meeting on the road with Leon, and were symbolized by the "twin bells" from Spain in the tower Father Paul thought little of the Pueblo lifestyle and beliefs:

He looked at the red blanket, not sure that Teofilo was so small, wondering if it wasn't some perverse Indian trick—something they did in March to ensure a good harvest—wondering if maybe old Teofilo was actually at sheep camp corralling the sheep for the night. But there he was, facing into a cold dry wind and squinting at the last sunlight, ready to bury a red wool blanket while the faces of his parishioners were in shadow with the last warmth of the sun on their backs.

His fingers were stiff, and it took him a long time to twist the lid off the holy water. Drops of water fell on the red blanket and soaked into dark icy spots. He sprinkled the grave and the water disappeared almost before it touched the dim, cold sand; it reminded him of something—he tried to remember what it was, because he thought if he could remember he might understand this. He sprinkled more water; he shook the container until it was empty, and the water fell through the light from sundown like August rain that fell while the sun was still shining, almost evaporating before it touched the wilted squash flowers. (185-86)

Silko again symbolizes Father Paul's feeling of superiority and his feelings of futility in his mission to convert the Indians to Christianity. Note that the holy water he sprinkles is "evaporating before it touched the wilted squash flowers." It does not nourish one of the four sacred Laguna plants, one that is essential to the life and health of the community. So his "holy water" of the Christian religion is "evaporating" before it "touches" the

“wilted squash flowers” of the Indian people who should thirst for the salvation he offers. This spiritual “thirst” in the story is then developed into a trope by the author as Louise and Leon ask for the holy water to quench Old Teofilo’s physical thirst and the physical thirst of their community where the old man will send rain clouds after he completes his journey to be with the ancestors and Katcinas. The strands of condescension by the priest, Spanish superiority, the lack of willingness to respect or to even try to understand the traditions of the Laguna people are all evident within the language of this story.

The language of this episode also conveys an associational disjunction between the ceremonial colors of the Laguna people and the liturgical colors of the Catholic church. As discussed previously, the ceremonial colors of the Laguna consist of white, red, blue, yellow, and now green. These colors are attached to colors and physical landscape within the lands of the Pueblo Indians. Conversely, the liturgical colors within the Catholic religion are attached to the figures of the Father or God, the Son or Jesus, and the Holy Ghost, as well as martyrs and the Virgin Mary. Black is also considered the color of death and is used by Catholic church to help transport the human spirit to the other world. But as an unconsecrated death colors can not be used, therefore they are rendered meaningless. Black is not included in the Laguna sacred colors. Rather, Old Teofilo wears the colors of his clan, white, blue, yellow, and green, along with being wrapped in the red blanket – all sacred colors of the Laguna people.

Old Teofilo carried his relatives’ blessing and the dampness of the Holy Water to the north and Shipap where the winter rainclouds originated. His relatives dressed him in new jeans and shirt, placed his hand-sewn moccasins on his feet, and then called the

priest to bring the Holy Water to carry with him into the lower worlds. The Laguna theoretically conquered but definitely colonized and in some cases enslaved by the Spanish five hundred years ago, still maintain their culture in this burial process. However, the priest was called to the graveside to administer the Holy Water, even though it had a different meaning for the relatives than the priest. The meaning of the sprinkling of the bottle of water over Old Teofilo's body held a different significance for the priest than for the relatives at the gravesite. The priest, disgruntled because he had not been called to give the Last Rights to the old man, believed this to be a useless process. Old Teofilo's relatives believed that the water secured that the old man would have something to drink on his journey. Louise asked Leon to bring the young priest to the gravesite to administer the holy water "so he won't be thirsty" (185), and Leon had told the priest, "It's O.K. Father, we just want him to have plenty of water (185)." Also, Leon hoped that Old Teofilo would send rain clouds back to help his people when he arrived at the end of his journey. The Laguna absorbed the ritual of sprinkling Holy Water on the deceased, but adapted the effect to their own beliefs. In essence, they "Lagunaized" Christian symbolism, meaning and ritual.

Silko begins the story with Laguna sacred colors in the traditional painting of Old Teofilo's face, and, at the end of the story, she again uses those colors at the mission graveyard. She speaks of the "corn meal" which can be yellow or white, the snow on the "blue mountains," and the "faint red light from the west":

The wind pulled at the priest's brown Franciscan robe and swirled away the corn meal and pollen that had been sprinkled on the blanket. They lowered the bundle into the ground, and they didn't bother to untie the stiff pieces of new rope that were tied around the ends of the

blanket. The sun was gone, and over on the highway the eastbound lane was full of headlights. The priest walked away slowly. Leon watched him climb the hill, and when he had disappeared within the tall, thick walls, Leon turned to look up at the high blue mountains in the deep snow that reflected a faint red light from the west. He felt good because it was finished, and he was happy about the sprinkling of the holy water; now the old man could send them big thunderclouds for sure. (186)

By returning to the four-color pattern of white, red, blue, and yellow, Silko also returns to the pattern found in the colors of the lower worlds and cardinal directions. This re-visiting of the basic pattern at the end of the discourse brings the story full circle, mirroring the braiding of the elements of life and renewal with the elements of death and burial. Even though she does not include green here, this cyclical pattern again brings balance to the story.

Silko injects the color green ambiguously, but perhaps ritualistically, several times in “The Man to Send Rain Clouds.” As described above, green paint is applied to Old Teofilo’s chin: “Louise stood outside with her hands in the pockets of Leon’s green army jacket that was too big for her” and “Leon put on his green cap and pulled the flaps down over his ears” and “The priest sank down into the green chair and picked up a glossy missionary magazine. He turned the colored pages full of lepers and pagans without looking at them” (185). Green strings tether these characters together. This multiple use of green, however, should not be construed simplistically as the color associated with the Nadir or emergence place of Grandmother Spider. The color green holds a different symbolic meaning for the Catholic religion. However, tethering the characters together with green and braiding of the ritual of sprinkling holy water and corn pollen begs an investigation of the Laguna color system compared with the Catholic

liturgical color system.

The symbolic system of colors instructed by the Catholic religion for use in certain ceremonies and rights includes many of the colors in the Laguna symbolic system, including the color green. These are called the “liturgical colors”:

By a law of her liturgy the Church directs that the vestments worn by her sacred ministers, and the drapery used in the decoration of the altar should correspond in colour to that which is prescribed for the Office of the day. The colours thus sanctioned by the Church in connection with her public worship are called the liturgical colours. (Morrisroe 1)

These liturgical colors traveled with the Spanish during their immigration to the American Southwest. However, the information collected by anthropologists such as Boas and Parsons indicate that the colors of the lower worlds and of Nadir existed long before the Spanish arrived in the land of the Pueblos. Other research by Roland Dixon, previously presented, indicates that the four-color system of the Pueblos is common in indigenous peoples of the Americas. The Catholic liturgical colors are similar to those of the Pueblo color system:

Since the time of Pious V, five colors have been recognized as the liturgical colors of the Roman Catholic church – “white, red, green, violet, and black. Rose colour is employed only on Lætare and Gaudete Sundays. Blue is prescribed in some dioceses of Spain for the Mass of the Immaculate Conception.” (Morrisroe 1)

Although the Laguna sacred colors appear to have been in use prior to Spanish contact in the 1500s, Catholic friars, priests, and missions have been a central component of the Pueblo Indian landscape for almost five hundred years:

Benedict XIV (De Sacro Sacrificio Missæ I, VIII, n. 16) says that up to the fourth century white as the only liturgical colour in use. Other colours were introduced soon afterwards. Innocent III (d. 1216) is among the first to emphasize a distinction. He mentions four principal colours, white, red,

green, black (De Sac. Alt. Mys., I, lxv) as of general use, and one, viz. violet, as occasionally employed. This latter was regularly used from the thirteenth century. An "Ordo Romanus" of the fourteenth century enumerates five. Between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries blue and yellow were common but they may not be used without very special authorization. (Morrisroe 1)

From the late 16th century, the Laguna people had been enticed, or forced, to participate in Catholic religious rituals and exposed to the liturgical colors. Rather than adapting the liturgical colors into their ceremonies as with the ritualistic sprinkling of the holy water at Old Teofilo's burial, the Laguna people did not integrate, or synthesized, the liturgical colors into the traditional knowledge of ceremonial colors.

Although similar, the color systems nonetheless evoke disparate meanings and emotions. According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, the liturgical colors denote specific symbolic images:

The variety of liturgical colours in the Church arose from the mystical meaning attached to them. Thus the color white, the symbol of light, purity and innocence, glory and joy; red, the language of fire and blood, indicates burning charity and the martyrs' generous sacrifice; green, the hue of plants and trees, bespeaks the hope of life eternal; violet, the gloomy cast of the mortified, denotes affliction and melancholy; while black, the universal emblem of mourning, signifies the sorrow of death and the somberness of the tomb. (Morrisroe, 1)

Catholic concepts of color include these symbolic values. White denotes "light, innocence and purity" while red, "the language of fire and blood, indicates passion, burning charity and generous sacrifice," now more commonly seen as courage." Moreover, the color green, the hue of plants and trees, "bespeaks the hope of life eternal" and now represents protecting the environment or Mother Earth. Yellow or gold augment or replace the color white some rituals and infer warmth and sunshine, as well as being

the color of royalty, as is purple. Blue relates to the “Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Mary,” but also brings to mind the blue sky or blue waters (Morrisroe 1). Some associations can be seen between the Laguna and liturgical color systems. For the Laguna, white relates to the direction of east where the first light of the day enters the world and to which morning prayers are directed. Red is the color of south from which the summer rains travel, the lifeblood of the Laguna people. Blue and yellow form the colors of west and north, respectively, but, more importantly, symbolize the duality of life, female and male. Green, the symbol of “eternal life” in Catholicism, represents Nadir and evokes images of Spider Woman’s emergence story, of the ancient spiritual Katchinas, and of Shipap, the entrance to the four underworlds.

Silko reflects the “compartmentalization” of the Laguna and Catholic religions throughout “The Man to Send Rain Clouds” and then builds balance by spinning the color green into both the Laguna and Catholic exposition. These relationships intertwine to provide a broader spectrum for Silko’s imagery in Storyteller and engage the Laguna color system, directionality, sacred landscape, spiritual entities, and ceremonial calendar. Throughout Storyteller, Silko paints her stories in the sacred colors of the Laguna people. The colors white, red, blue, yellow, and now green become words of many “intricacies” when viewed through Pueblo history and tradition. The colors take on new meanings, become altered “essence placeholders,” and connote the “strength” of the web of words Silko has spun across the Laguna landscape.

CHAPTER FOUR: COLLAGE OF COLOR IN “STORYTELLER”

Yet this vast complex of knowledge and belief, amassed for thousands of years, was never recorded in writing.

Instead, the ancient Pueblo people depended upon collective memory through successive generations to maintain and transmit an entire culture, a worldview complete with proven strategies for survival. The oral narrative, or story, became the medium through which the complex of Pueblo knowledge and belief was maintained. Whatever the event or the subject, the ancient people perceived the world and themselves within that world as part of an ancient, continuous story composed of innumerable bundles of other stories. (Yellow Woman 30-31)

Another story in Storyteller within which the Pueblo system of colors depicting the lower worlds is included is Silko's short fiction piece set in Alaska entitled “Storyteller.” Four distinct stories are woven into this “bundle,” each accented with colors that create a design of shapes and symbols throughout the text. This color design is associated with certain characters or groups to produce a collage of language much as an artist paints separate colored sections onto a canvas. The intricacies of this piece – stories within stories, each marked with its own specific color – form a dense pattern of strategically placed emblematic images. This author presents pieces of each story, adding sections of color one by one to the canvas of the text that is then interpreted by the reader's mind. The full impact of the intertwined stories, like the full impact of the total composition of a piece of art, is understood and appreciated only when the piece is viewed after the last portion is finished. Then the reader, or admirer of the work of art, absorbs the meaning of the intricacies of the design in its entirety.

In the process, the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts, or in this case, the collage becomes more entrancing than its individual colors. The relationship of the

colors to each other are critical, how they blend and stay distinct and whether seen from near or far. As I navigate through this “bundle” of stories and enmeshed pattern of colors, white, yellow, red, and blue, each color and its adjoining story is unraveled from the discourse in order to better understand and interpret its importance within “Storyteller” as a whole. After all four colors and stories are analyzed, I step back and address how the color pattern relates to Laguna culture and how this relationship broadens the interpretations of the stories.

As in the other examples included in this analysis, there are four major colors in the “Storyteller” palette. White snow covers the Alaskan landscape, the locale and setting of the story, symbolizing the time period and season of the year, but it also provides the symbol for a loss of boundaries when a culture is fragmented and then engulfed by colonialism. The color yellow reflects the Gussuk technology, capitalism, and moral degradation. The color red marks the path to murderous revenge inflicted by the young Yupik woman telling the story. The color blue strokes the image of the blue glacier bear, the sky, and the river, symbolizing the timelessness of death. Each color adds dimension to the overlay of the story. By exploring each in turn, the overall pattern of the story develops and the effect of Silko’s melded design in its entirety emerges.

Set in Alaska during winter, the reader expects that the color white would appear prominently throughout the story to describe the landscape. Even though the Native Alaskan has a wealth of diverse terms that are used to recognize shades of white, Silko chooses to use only the general term of “white” throughout the story. In addition, Silko’s word choice infers associations when she uses “white” signifying the loss of boundaries,

both moral and cultural, during the course of the story. The Eskimo village has undergone a cultural change from the incursion of Euro-Western customs, technology, educators, and oil drillers. Silko terms the oil drillers as “Gussuks,” a Native Alaskan term derived from the Russian word Cossack, for any non-native intruders. The oil drillers are just the latest in the procession of “Gussuks” to move into the Alaskan landscape. These “white” Gussuks and their culture inflict a “winter” of imminent demise onto the villagers. She looked ahead and all around her; in the twilight, the dense white sky had merged into the flat snow-covered tundra. In the frantic running she had lost her place on the river. She stood still. The east bank of the river was lost in the sky; the boundaries had been swallowed by the freezing white (30).

Twice in this excerpt Silko uses the word “lost.” The young woman is lost geographically because the boundaries between land and sky had been obliterated, “swallowed by the freezing white.” She is becoming indistinguishable from the white landscape because of her own loss of traditional identity. The Eskimo village is also “lost;” their culture is “swallowed” by the colonizing of the “white” oil drillers and the trappings of technology they brought to the village. “The reader’s impression of the story’s world is that of overwhelming whiteness” (Dell’Amico 6) and the fragmentation that “overwhelming whiteness” inflicts upon the Native Alaskan people and their cultures. This fragmentation of the native culture is conversely a homogenization, a sameness, as the Eskimos absorb the trappings of colonization or “Americanization,” and lose critical knowledge. The white homogeneous landscape as the “hills and sky were lost in the density of the pale ice” (18) symbolizes the homogeneity of the young generations

of the “Eskimo” people created by the injection of Euro-western technology and education:

Even some Eskimos who had been away to school did not want to come back. They stayed downriver in the town. They said the village was too quiet. They were used to the town where the boarding school was located, with electric lights and running water. After all those years away at school, they had forgotten how to set nets in the river and where to hunt seals in the fall. (Silko 21-22)

Just as the “freezing white” of ice and snow blurs the geographical features necessary to identify where the young woman is located physically, temporally, and spatially in the landscape, it also represents the “lost” cultural boundaries for the young woman, as well as how “white” colonialism overwhelms the villagers and dissolves the cultural boundaries of these native peoples. As a Laguna Pueblo Indian, Silko believes that humans are an integral part of the landscape, not simply a “viewer” of the natural world:

So long as the human consciousness remains within the hills, canyons, cliffs, and the plants, clouds, and sky, the term landscape, as it has entered the English language, is misleading. "A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view" does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow outside or separate from the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. (Silko Yellow Woman 27)

Thus, when Silko repeatedly terms the young woman as “lost,” and says that the young people have “forgotten” how to survive in the natural world, she also refers to a loss of connection to their “landscape” of culture and Mother Earth. The young woman in the story and her people are withdrawing from their cultural landscape and being “swallowed” by the white colonized landscape through a loss of traditional identity. The

Eskimo village is also “lost;” their culture is “swallowed” by the colonizing landscape of the “white” Gussuks and the trappings of technology they brought to the village.

Another color that Silko brings into her palette is yellow. She continuously presents yellow as associated with the white man’s capitalism and technology. Silko repeatedly uses yellow in connection with the Gussuks. The narrator, a young Eskimo girl, describes the mentality of these intruders when she says, “They thought they could keep out the cold with stringy yellow wadding” (18). She goes on to describe how the Alaskan landscape and that cold affect their technology:

The boggy tundra sucked up their yellow drilling machines in the summer while the cold threatened to immobilize them during the winter: There were no cars or snowmobiles that day; the cold had silenced their machines. The metal froze; it split and shattered. Oil hardened and moving parts jammed solidly. She had seen it happen to their big yellow machines and the giant drill last winter when they came to drill their test holes. The cold stopped them, and they were helpless against it. (18)

Herein the color yellow is directly describing the technology within the phrases “yellow drilling machines” and “big yellow machines.” Silko repeatedly uses the color yellow when speaking of the Gussuk technology, including something as basic as electric lights: “She smiled at the effect of the subzero air on the electric lights around the trailers; they did not shine. They left only flat yellow holes in the darkness” (23).

Later in the story, yellow is again connected with technology and the “jagged” effect it has on the natural world. The young woman travels to the local commissary to find the oil drillers: “The snow was dirty and worn down in a path to the door. On either side of the path, the snow was higher than her head. In front of the door there were jagged yellow stains melted into the snow where men had urinated. She stopped in the entry way

and kicked the snow off her boots” (22). It is common knowledge that “yellow snow” is contaminated; Silko signals the reader here that damage is inflicted upon the natural world of the Eskimo village as the Gussuks cause “jagged yellow stains” as they contaminate the people, the village, and the natural world with their technology.

Yellow evokes diverse meanings and emotions. Yellow ribbons are used to symbolize the courage of returning soldiers and the hope of the families for their safe journey home. Yellow is also the color of yield or caution on traffic signs and in traffic lights. However, this yellow appears to symbolize cowardice reinforcing the old man’s view of the white men as liars and that “they only come when there is something to steal” (22). So Silko attaches the color yellow to the Gussuks in the story and injects yellow capitalism, destructive and deceptive to the people of the Eskimo village, into the design as one of the intertwined themes of “Storyteller.”

A third prominent color, red, is associated with the young girl’s home and family. She had seen something red in the grasses where her parents had died. “She had nailed scraps of red tin over the logs last summer,” and the linings of her boots that the old woman had made for her were red (24). The girl had attached the tin to the cabin for “the bright color,” but within her story she uses the color as a marker on her trail of revenge. First she asks her grandmother about the “something red” in the grass to discover that a Gussuk storekeeper had poisoned her parents. She seduces the red-haired oil driller, entices the scarlet-faced store man onto the ice for revenge, and then she finds her way home by pinpointing the red tin nailed to the side of the old log cabin.

Silko places the color red ambiguously, but strategically, throughout the text. The metal nailed to the side of the cabin becomes significant only after the color red is tied to the death of the young woman's parents. It is unclear from the text whether the "something red" seen by the young girl in the grass the morning after her parents died is blood or a container for perhaps Sterno, but this red is inextricably braided with the other incidences of red throughout the story. Then Silko uses the color red again: "She pulled on the sealskin boots, the mukluks with the bright red flannel linings her grandmother had sewn for her, and she tied the braided red yarn tassels around her ankles over the gray wool pants" (20).

Carol Dell'Amico explores the symbolism of the red in her critical essay on "Storyteller" and discusses the significance of the red flannel lining and strings of the mukluks:

The color red is profoundly associated with her parents' death, and so the story's other references to red take on meaning in retrospect. The "red lining" of the boots now suggest the red and tender interior of the body or stomach, which in her parents' case was undoubtedly scarred and torn by the poison. The "tassels" suggest flowing blood, and, therefore, death or murder again. The color red is threaded through the story like the intertwining themes of death, crime (murder), and revenge. (6-7)

That "something red" that the young woman sees throughout the story forms the shape of the parents' death. Dell'Amico's association of the linings of the boots with "the red and tender interior of the body or stomach," suggests that blood may have been the "something red in the grass." However, she also indicates the cause of death, "which in her parents' case was undoubtedly scarred and torn by the poison." Regardless of the exact identity of that "something red," Silko tethers the color red from the parents' death

to the injection of red throughout the story with the tassels “suggest[ing] flowing blood,” and these “tassels” thread the Grandmother to the dead parents and, in the end, to the young woman by a blood bond.

Silko also uses that “something red” as a symbolic moral and cultural marker for the young woman’s trek through a land losing its boundaries. The tin on the side of the cabin is her marker for home and safety. The flannel of the sealskin boots evokes the image of the Grandmother and her spirit’s admonition, “It will take a long time, but the story must be told. There must not be any lies” (26). The red-haired oilman and the scarlet-faced store man become targets of the young woman’s interest and revenge, respectively. After enticing the store man onto the ice and drowning him in the river, she again returns to the red of her cabin home. Silko presents this girl’s part of the collage in red – the red of love, the red of blood, the red of revenge.

A fourth, and perhaps the most intriguing color, is associated with the old man’s bear and hunter story. The old man meticulously described the “giant bear whose color was pale blue glacier ice” (22), the hunter, and their trek across the ice in the frigid cold. In the end, the hunter lures the bear with the scent of his beaver hat, but the hunter could not fight both the bear and the cold: “The hunter had been on the ice for many hours. The freezing winds on the ice knoll had numbed his hands in the mittens, and the cold had exhausted him. He felt a single muscle tremor in his hand that he could not stop, and the jade knife fell; it shattered on the ice, and the blue glacier bear turned slowly to face him” (32). On the surface, this story appears to encompass the old man’s view of his own death. The “blue glacier bear,” as a metaphor for death, moves relentlessly while the old

man/hunter fights frigid cold and physical exhaustion; in the end, the old man loses and death turns “slowly to face him.”

The “blue glacier bear” story may also refer to the desolation of the Alaskan landscape, or the glacier, where one is lost without traditional knowledge. The glacier “ice” may refer to a space without food or shelter for the Eskimos who reject their native culture. In this light, the drama of the bear and hunter story evolves on a colonized landscape which is deadly for both the hunter and the bear. The hunter succumbs first, but the bear, if considered as the shape of the Native Alaskan, or Eskimos, as Silko terms them, cannot exist in this traditional culture-starved, barren landscape.

A third interpretation of this bear and hunter story emerges when considering the violence committed on the young woman by men, beginning with the old man “grandfather” character, and Silko’s use of sexuality on the path to revenge. In his book, Native American Renaissance, Kenneth Lincoln interprets the young woman as the glacier blue bear and “man” as the hunter:

The girl’s nominal “grandfather” is in fact her first seducer. This male violator is imaged reductively in the red-haired oil man, then in the store man whose “eyes moved like flies crawling over her body.” He becomes “the man” hunted in the dream-story, whose phallic jade knife shatters on the ice. The glacial bear, the girl’s mythic protector, faces “man” at the story’s end. ... [She] avenges and old and ongoing crime. Death to the “man” is gestate from “something red in the tall river grass.” ... And in the camp, the girl stalks her parents’ murderer. ... The girl’s sex burns her, as it serves as a weapon of revenge; her sensuality courses back to the orgiastic image of “something red” in the grass. (230-31)

Thus, according to Lincoln, the revenge the young woman wields merges with the bear and hunter story. However, the “glacier blue bear” story comes from the old man, and although Lincoln’s view is well supported, he negates the perspective of the old man as

the “storyteller.” When the reader focuses specifically on the old man’s perspective, and his bear and hunter overlay, the relationship of the hunter to the old man becomes apparent. He and the hunter succumb to the glacier blue bear of death almost simultaneously.

Moreover, Silko cyclically associates the blue of the glacier bear at the end of the story with the color of the icy sky in the beginning: “The sun had not moved from the center of the sky. The color of the sky had not been good lately; it had been pale blue, almost white, even when there were no clouds” (17). By beginning and ending the story with that glacier blue color, she encircles the stories contained within, binding all together within one overlay, one multi-colored and multi-faceted cyclical design.

Thus Silko melds multiple stories, painting her shapes and symbols onto the written page, each marked by its own distinctive color, within the short fiction piece of “Storyteller.” The culture of the Eskimo village becomes swallowed by the white of colonialism. The Gussuks story associated with the color yellow pits the white man’s technology against nature for material gain. The young girl’s story, stroked in red, lays a design of well-planned revenge. The old man’s story, encircling the others with the color “glacier blue,” creeps through the pattern of the other stories much as the huge bear moves deliberately across the ice. This metaphor for the girl’s revenge on “man,” or the impending death of the old man or perhaps even the inevitable mortality of mankind, demonstrates the influence and importance of oral tradition and traditional knowledge.

According to Silko in Yellow Woman, Yupik traditional knowledge foresees the end of the world, the ultimate destruction of the Earth as landscape, occurring through a

freezing and overlay of ice, opposite of the Euro-western concept of the Earth's end being a blazing inferno of fire. "For the Yupik people, souls deserving punishment spend varying lengths of time in a place of freezing. The Yupik see the world's end coming with ice, not fire" (46). The Gussuk assumes that his technologies "protect him from the frozen tundra environment" (46), but the store man's arrogance and lust carries him away from his trappings of technology and into the young woman's landscape where "he still dies, drowning under the freezing river ice, because the white man had not reckoned with the true power of that landscape, especially not the power that the Yupik woman understood instinctively and that she used so swiftly and efficiently" (45). She had "never seen herself as anything but a part of that sky, that frozen river, that tundra" but the river's ice and the blinding white are her accomplices, and the Yupik woman never for a moment misunderstands her own relationship with that landscape (46). After the store man drowns in the river, the young Yupik woman believes herself "lost" geographically on "the treacherous, frozen river. She can see nothing but the whiteness of the sky swallowing the earth" (46). As she searches for a landmark in the blurred white landscape, she sees "a spot of bright red: a bright red marker she had nailed up weeks earlier because she was intrigued by the contrast between all that white and the spot of brilliant red" (46). Her red tin marker on her cabin guides her back to home and safety.

Back in her cabin home, the old "storyteller" finishes his bear and hunter story with its unspoken prophecy "the hunter's death in the embrace of the giant, ice blue bear is the foretelling of the world's end. When humans have blasted and burned the last bit of life from the earth, an immeasurable freezing will descend with a darkness that obliterates

the sun (Silko Yellow Woman 47). He dies just as the hunter succumbs to the blue glacier bear. This story becomes part of the young woman's story. She accepts her new role as "storyteller." In this way, the stories continue and grow, revealing the dynamic quality of the collective memory and carrying on the oral tradition.

Thus, the bear and hunter story carries multiple meanings, depending on who is telling the story. When the old man tells the story, he speaks of his own retreat from and surrenders to his own death. The young Yupik woman's story conveys her wielding of revenge on men as her sexual abusers. However, if the story emerges through oral tradition, it predicts the freezing of the world and the ice's shattering effect on man and landscape.

These colors, white, yellow, blue, and red, also are the symbolic colors of the lower worlds in Laguna emergence stories. The white of the direction east symbolizes the fall season and the "fall" of the village culture as it is absorbed by the white of colonialism. The yellow of north indicates the weapons of snow and cold that impair the progress of capitalism. The blue of the bear story denotes death, but in the Laguna color symbolism it also introduces the season of spring and new beginnings. The young girl "has a story now" and becomes the new "storyteller." The color red for south, the direction from which come the rejuvenating summer rains, also evokes an image of the cleansing effect of the rains and the revenge the young woman exacted on the store man by drowning him in the river. The beginning of the story is set at the winter solstice and, just as the sun is suspended in the southern sky at this moment in time, the young woman's life had been in suspension since her parent's death from "something red" in the

grass. Now, as in the Laguna sun cycle, her life begins to move once more across the landscape. Viewed in its entirety, the reader envisions the four stories, the four colors, the four directions, creating an intricate design that encapsulates all within one collage of color.

CONCLUSION

As one can see from the analyses above, Leslie Silko repeatedly infuses four colors and four directions into her writings in Storyteller. Many times throughout the book a direct correlation to certain seasons, solstices, direction, or sacred entities is also indicated in the choice of color. Through our scrutiny of her collection of poems and stories, an understanding of this author's repeated injection of the same four colors is made clear. These four colors, white, red, blue, and yellow, flow directly from her Laguna Pueblo traditions and culture. Specifically, these colors are the exact colors of the four lower worlds as described in the Laguna emergence story in which Grandmother Spider travels from the four underworlds into this one in "time immemorial" and creates the land of the mountains and mesas for Pueblo Indians. That emergence story also attaches each color to a direction utilizing a sunwise pattern of east as white, red as south, blue as west, and yellow as north. This pattern that replicates that of the sun's daily journey is repeated in Laguna Pueblo ceremonies and culture. Our understanding of this cultural system has been informed by the color system study of Roland Dixon, the historical writings of Edward Dozier, the analytical summaries of Edith Swan, the anthropological studies of Franz Boas, Claire Farrer, Elsie Clews Parsons, and the cultural descriptions and diagrams of Virginia Roediger who uses a folklore paradigm to document ceremonial attire. These resources supplied ethnographic information on the Laguna history, the Keresan color system, directionality, sacred landscape, spiritual entities, and the ceremonial calendar.

Within Roland Dixon's study of culturally specific color systems connected to the cardinal directions, he finds that many societies use four-color patterns. One of the most prominent color patterns is that of white, red, blue, and yellow, the sacred colors of the Laguna Pueblo from the four lower worlds and designated to the cardinal directions. As discovered through unraveling the text of Storyteller, this pattern appears repeatedly throughout her writings. Specifically, her infusion of this four-color pattern in the poem she revised from the story Aunt Susie told her about the drowned little girl and her "scattered" clothing transforming into "all colors of butterflies" on Acoma mesa solidifies the connection between the Laguna culture, the four colors, and the four cardinal directions. This poem braids these elements, the colors, the directions, and the importance of the oral tradition, together for the reader.

The Tiwa historian and scholar, Edward Dozier, expands our understanding of the Pueblo Indians through meticulously conveying their history since Spanish contact in 1540 A.D. This history informs about the subversive effects of Spanish conquest and how the Pueblos retained their culture by moving rituals and ceremonies into secrecy. In "The Man To Send Rain Clouds," Dozier's discussing how the Pueblos compartmentalized segments of the Pueblo ceremonies from the Catholic rituals allows expanded interpretations of the text. The condescension and lack of insight about the Pueblo ceremonies by Father Paul in the story is juxtaposition with the transformed concept of "holy water" for Old Teofilo's relatives at the graveside. These divergent views are also reflected in the use of color when painting the old man's face for the burial ceremony as compared to the almost total lack of color Silko adheres to the priest and the church. The

injection of colors, and the intricacies of the application of particular colors to certain areas of the face representing clan affiliation, continues to expand the reader's understanding of the importance of color within Pueblo ceremony and ritual.

Rituals, stories, and words intermingle throughout Storyteller to convey the layers of expression and intricacies Silko brings to her poetry and prose. She weaves elements of Laguna expression and literary intricacy that allows understanding and interpretation on several levels. A reader with little or no contact with Laguna culture may enjoy a story like "Yellow Woman" as a contemporary story about a woman enticed away from her mundane life to adventure into the mountains with a mysterious man. However, if acquainted with the significance of the Yellow Woman mythical character in Laguna legend, one realizes that the dialogue about "the story" and how that story relates to the young woman's seduction is relevant. Another layer is added if the sacred colors, their corresponding directionality, and subsequent seasonality, is transposed over the language of the story. The infusion of the Laguna sacred colors, as described through the several anthropological studies, provides even more literary depth to the discourse.

These added layers and expanded literary depths evolve as the essence of each word is enhanced through revealing the traditions and cultural "place holders" of the Laguna people. Even though the term "essence placeholder" may appear to restrict the meaning or interpretation of an expression or word, in this context, the essence is expanded by viewing the expression or word through a new cultural lens. In this way, the essence of the word takes on more intricacies and interpretations. For example, my interpretation of the word "south" previously held no affiliation with color or season.

Now, as I read the word south, I think of the color red and the season of summer. When reading Silko's work, this added facet of south's "essence placeholder" evokes different thoughts, emotions, and memories than my previous readings. The hope is that these added layers and expanded essences assist to explain the meanings of the words because, as Silko writes in Ceremony, "the story behind each word must be told so there could be no mistake in the meaning of what had been said."

One story in which Silko blurs the "meaning of what had been said" is the story of "Yellow Woman." Throughout this story, identity and time merge in the confusion of the protagonist as she is drawn into the mythical story of Yellow Woman and the Kachina from the mountains. The Kachinas are an integral part of the ceremonial life of the Laguna Pueblo Indians and are inextricably linked to the emergence story, the four lower worlds, Grandmother Spider, and the stories of Yellow Woman. Silko includes a prominent literary device to initiate this melding of the two stories, the two identities, and "time immemorial" with the present. Although the protagonist says that she has her own name and "lives now," the narrator's name in present time is never used in the story. Her mysterious man from the mountains, who claims to be a Kachina, has a name, Silva, but calls her only by "Yellow Woman." In this way, Silko builds the trope of a timeless character, a nameless narrator, who absorbs the persona of the mythical Yellow Woman.

Silko again applies this literary device in "Storyteller," a tale about a young Yupik woman and her journey to her role as a storyteller. None of the characters in this story have names, but are referred to only as Old Woman, Old Man, Storeman, and Young Woman or Young Girl. In this case, Silko appears to use these characters as

representations of the segments of the Yupik society. Just as there are four main characters, the young woman, the old woman or Grandmother, the old man, and the Gussuk storeman, there are four colors in the overlay. Each color is attached to a character or group that has its own story. This “bundle” of stories builds an exposition that weaves white colonization, yellow capitalism, red revenge, and blue mortality. The young woman finds her own story as the old man dies and she becomes the “storyteller.” Each color and story is an integral part of the pattern or web of words.

The intricacies of this culturally specific web of colors, directions, seasonality, and spirituality moves cyclically within all of Silko’s pieces. However, there is also an element of duality, an element that brings harmony and balance. The framework around which Silko weaves an intricate web of opposites also brings balance to her writings. The male and female of yellow and blue, respectively, are opposite of the colors of “Yellow Woman” and the “blue mountains” within which Silva, the Katsina lives. The winter of yellow and summer of red are opposite of the colors designated to the Gussuks from the south and the young Eskimo girl from the north. The fall of white and the spring of blue demonstrate the opposites in the landscape of “white river sand” and “blue mountains” in the “Yellow Woman” story, all weave a web of balance and harmony within the stories.

Albeit that correlations to Euro-American cultural reactions to color appear to be infused in the writings, my analysis establishes that the Laguna traditions and values of balance and harmony form the cultural framework for the insertion of the same four colors into the texts. Publications on Laguna Pueblo culture provide information for an outsider to better understand the color system and how each color represents a direction,

a place, an entity or holy presence – all sacred and profoundly important within Laguna’s philosophy, belief system and ritual practice. Thus, Silko’s use of Laguna sacred colors symbolically throughout her collection of poems and stories in Storyteller paints an image for the reader that infuses four colors, four directions, four seasons, creating an intricate design that encapsulates the emergence story, Grandmother Spider, the mountain and mesa landscape, the ancestral Katcinas, and the ceremonial calendar within one collage of color.

WORKS CITED

- Barrett, Lisa. F. "Variety Is the Spice of Life: A Psychological Construction Approach to Understanding Variability in Emotion." COGNITION AND EMOTION. 23. 7 (2009): 1284-1306.
- Boas, Franz. Keresan Texts. New York: American ethnological Society, G.E. Stechert and Co., agents, 1928.
- Davis, W. W. H. El Gringo; Or, New Mexico and Her People. New York: Harper & Bros, 1857.
- Dell'Amico, Carol. "Storyteller: The Imagery of Silko's Short Story." Short Stories for Students. Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Short Stories Volume 11. Detroit, Mich: Gale Group, 2001.
- Dixon, Roland B. "The Color-Symbolism of the Cardinal Points." Journal of American Folklore. 12. 44 (1899): 10-16.
- Dozier, Edward P. The Pueblo Indians of North America. Case studies in cultural anthropology. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.
- Ellis, Florence H. "Laguna Pueblo," The Handbook of North American Indians. Vol. 9. 1979. 438-449.
- Farrer, Claire R. "The Sun's in Its Heaven, All's Not Right with the World: Rejoinder to Swan." American Indian Quarterly. 14. 2 (1990): 155-159.
- Lincoln, Kenneth. Native American Renaissance. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- Morrisroe, Patrick. "Liturgical Colors." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1976.
- Miller, Greg. "Color Me Creative." Science Now. (online version) February 5, 2009.

http://news.sciencemag.org/sciencenow/2009/02/05-01.html?sms_ss=email
March 9 2009.

Roediger, Virginia More. Ceremonial Costumes of the Pueblo Indians: Their Evolution, Fabrication, and Significance in the Prayer Drama. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Silko, Leslie. Ceremony. Contemporary American fiction. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1986.

-----. Storyteller. New York: Arcarde Pub, 1981.

-----. Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Swan, Edith. "Laguna Symbolic Geography and Silko's "Ceremony"." American Indian Quarterly. 12. 3 (1988): 229-249.