

The aim of this thesis is to explore the genre of Native American women autobiography by concentrating on its four significant representatives. In the opening part, the work presents the genre providing its several definitions and tracing its origins. Further, it briefly summarizes the history of autobiography with a special focus on American literature and it introduces the genre of Native American autobiography and explains its particularities. Because the work deals with Native American women, the beginning also discusses their past and present social position and their first literary VOICeS.

The central part of the thesis investigates four distinct autobiographical narratives written by Native American women at different times and it surveys the main themes that dominate the genre of Native American woman autobiography.

Although all discussed books are labeled as the autobiographies, they mix together a number of various areas and genres such as history, sociology, mythology, ethnography, political documents, and many others.

Native American oral storytelling forms the fundamental base in the analyzed texts, but it is the most experimental autobiography of Leslie Marmon Silko that is wholly constructed as the process of storytelling when her stories carry formal characteristics of Indian oral tales such as rhythmic repetitions, the context of the stories and their modification, animal or spiritual characters, and humor.

In general, storytelling is a dynamic communal activity therefore Silko's book presents a great challenge especially for a non-Indian reader who becomes actively involved in the process when he has to recognize linked meanings between all the stories, poems, and pictures.