

Despite its geographical position within the Asia-Pacific region, Australia puts a great deal of effort into recreating a cultural environment that would resemble the one of Europe and the United States, rather than the one of its neighbouring countries. Australia's cultural identity, however, due to the immigrant past of its very diverse population, have had to be invented from scratch during the past two centuries, and the process of its formation continues to these days. This gives us an exceptional opportunity to study the processes of cultural identity construction in an almost direct transmission.

Based on the bibliographical research, the thesis assumes that the roots can be identified in the following areas: (1) cultural traditions of the Australian Aboriginal societies, (2) recent cultural stereotypes that emerged during the past two centuries, and (3) specific natural and climatic conditions coupled with the presence of unique animal and plant species.

This thesis will focus on the broadest, yet most significant area: Aboriginal culture in both its past and present state, and on its existence within the context of contemporary Australian society. The area of contemporary cultural stereotypes, of which many are related to Aboriginal cultural tradition, will also be briefly discussed. Australian cultural identity will be subsequently interpreted on this basis.

Significant attention has been directed towards the topic of Aboriginal culture. It is one of the oldest cultures to have endured till modern times, yet an understanding of its heritage is veiled by various simplifications and stereotypes, both in Australia and in the other parts of the world. In this thesis, I present my view on Australian Aboriginal culture, interpret related historical issues, and discuss their effects on the construction of Australian cultural identity.