

WHO AM I? Alessandro Messina, Trieste WINNER OF THE ESSAYS CONTEST

I am living in Trieste with my family , I was born in Trieste but as most of the Trieste inhabitants I am simply the union of different cultures, languages and habits.

My father was born in Sicily and my family name is Messina like the Sicilian city while my mother comes from a small village in Croatia not far from Trieste. Both are migrant people so I am the product of migration (internal referring to my father - from south to North.)My mother speaks both Italian and Croatian but unfortunately I can speak only Italian.My grandparents are living in Sicily and in Summer we often go and visit them to enjoy the beautiful Mediterranean Sea and the superb cuisine!They moved to North Italy in the 1960s together with the many Italian looking for a job and a better life and they settled in Trieste.It was quite unusual because Trieste is a unique city: it was the most important city of the Austrian Hungarian Empire where people spoke German and felt part of the Austrian Empire.After the WWI in 1918 Trieste became Italian. Trieste is a multicultural city where the Serbian, the Slovenian, the Greck and the Jewish minorities were and are living .In this sense we are “ Unity in diversity” . We are used to hear many different languages during daily life and our cuisine is very similar to the Austrian, Serbian and Greek.

Without being aware I have been influenced by the spirit of the city that we consider the only city you can live in but at the same time I have been influenced by the education my parents gave me , their different culture: the warm, welcoming Sicilian spirit of my father and the more strict and traditional spirit of my mother.

People living in Trieste are less welcoming than people coming from the South where people like to share every experience ,eating, talking, laughing together.

I like listening to my grandparents and parents when they tell me many memories of the past but I feel they belong to the past and I am living my present time.

I can't answer the initial question, I think the best way is to live fully your life travelling and meeting as many different cultures as you can!