

Trieste and the Context of Italian Culture

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Italian culture is widely popular and despite great complexity between regions, it is often stereotyped, particularly by Americans. My own travels to several major Italian cities shifted my perspective on Italy as a unified, homogenous nation to one that might be defined by fragmented micro-cultures with stronger regional ties than national ones. In order to account for this phenomenon, I have undertaken my own cultural study of Italy through Trieste, a city on the northeastern border. Initially exposed to Trieste through my research on the Triestine author Italo Svevo and his novel *La Coscienza di Zeno*, I visited the city in November to gain an insider perspective on the culture. With the help of a local Triestine, I discovered that the city hardly fits into the neat classification of an Italian city due to its conflicted history and highly heterogeneous cultural makeup as well as linguistic distinctions. Taking my own personal experiences in Trieste and fleshing them out with research in both English and Italian, I am now examining Trieste within the larger context of Italy using historical, linguistic and cultural anthropological investigative techniques to shift how we view Italy and rethink the criteria for how we classify cultures, Italian or otherwise, as Trieste cannot be tied to one place or culture with certainty. My research will potentially be augmented by a return trip to Trieste in May of 2015 to gain further insights on Trieste that will serve as the context for my research on Italo Svevo's works.

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*A key source will be *Trieste* by Triestine historian Elio Apih, of which I am still the process of obtaining from another university.

