Mediterranean and Multiculturalism: What Role for Theatre?

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Abstract
The mission of the Piccolo Teatro di Milano since its foundation in 1947 has been to be a *Theatre of Art for Everyone*. Nowadays being a *Theatre of Art for Everyone* means dealing with multiculturalism[2]. Is it plausible to think of the theatre as a place of integration, uniting people beyond the boundaries of cultural differences? The *MED Project*, started by Piccolo Teatro in collaboration with other members of the UTE - Union des Théâtres de l'Europe,[3] an international association of the principal European theatres, analyses these topics, concentrating in particular on the Southern Mediterranean countries. The *MED Project*, facing new *liquid frontiers* aims to reinforce intercultural dialogue, fostering pluralism and diversity as opportunities for human and cultural growth and opening the cultural output of European theatres to a multicultural public. In practice it consists of : a) international conversations on theatre and its relation to multiculturalism and identity; b) an exchange program aimed at young artists from the Mediterranean; c) an international theatre schools Festival (*Masterclass Festival*).
This paper aims to deepen the potentialities of the Project presenting the results of an exploratory research conducted, during *Masterclass Festival*, through a questionnaire in three different levels: 1.the spectators who attended the shows presented in *Masterclass Festival*; 2. the acting students from international theatre schools who were invited to submit their essays in Milan; 3. the undergraduate students who participated in the workshop.

Keywords
Multiculturalism, migration processes, liquid frontiers, training, relationship and diversity.

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[2] Defines a specific political approach according to which cultural and multicultural diversity denotes the emperical fact that different cultures can exist and interact within a given space and social organisation.. (L. D'Angelo, R. Di Rago, *Teatro, didattica attiva, interculturalità*, Franco Angeli, 2009).

[3] UTE - Union of Theatres in Europe is a network of public theatres created in march 1990, from a project of Giorgio Strehler and Jack Lang, with the partnership of the French Cultural Ministry. UTE promotes a common cultural action, involving and nourishing all European nations. The theatres members are: Schauspielhaus Graz; Suomen Kansallisteatteri of Helsinki; Théâtre National de Strasbourg; National Theatre of Northern Greece (Thessaloniki), National Theatre of Greece (Athens); Habimah of Tel Aviv; Piccolo Teatro di Milano - Teatro d'Europa; Teatro Garibaldi di Palermo; Teatro Stabile di Torino; Teatro Nacional São João of Porto; Teatrul Bulandra of Bucharest; Cluj-Napoca Hungarian Theatre; Maly Theatre of St.Petersburg; Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers, Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozorište of Belgrade, Národní divadlo of Prague; Teatro Lliure of Barcelona; Teatro de La Abadía of Madrid.

Introduction

Historically, the Piccolo Teatro di Milano has been strongly engaged in being a *Theatre of Art for Everyone*, with a particular focus on social and cultural changes in Italy and specifically Milan.
Today, the Piccolo Teatro, in light of the growing multiculturalism resulting from the processes of migration in our cities, has decided to start a project dedicated to the Theater of the Mediterranean.
The Mediterranean Theatre, as a cradle of different migrant cultures, can be in fact considered an ideal tool for the creation of a common path of intercultural communication.
In the first part of this paper we will present the history and activity of the Piccolo Teatro di Milano dwelling on its educational and international vocation.
In particular, we will analyze the historical evolution of this project dedicated to the Mediterranean Theater launched in 2004 at the *International Mediterranean Festival 2004*.
Then, we will present the new *MED Project*, launched in December 2009 by the Piccolo Teatro along with three other partners of the UTE. A three-year educational project addressed to young artists and students from Milan and from countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean, leading to a series of conferences, scholarships and a *Masterclass Festival* of Theatre Schools.
In the second part of the paper, starting from the experience of the *Masterclass Festival* 2010 dedicated to the Mediterranean, we will present the results of a research conducted with the participants. The purpose of this research consisted in analyzing the perception by respondents of the capacity of theatrical language to be an instrument of multicultural integration.

The Piccolo Teatro of Milan - Theatre of Europe

The Piccolo Teatro di Milano, founded in 1947 by Giorgio Strehler and Paolo Grassi, was the first public theatre to be set up in Italy after the Second World War.
With Grassi as general manager and Strehler as artistic director, the Piccolo soon became a *Theatre of Art for Everyone*, producing high quality artistic works at affordable prices.
Here Strehler staged numerous classical dramas of Shakespeare, Goldoni, Chekhov, and many other greatest works of twentieth century dramaturges, such as Brecht, Beckett and Pirandello.
Its productions have toured many countries around the world.
In 1991, the Piccolo founded the Theatre of Europe, and joined the UTE - Union of Theatres in Europe, an international organization that encourages cultural exchanges among major theatres across Europe.
After Strehler's death in 1997, two leading personalities coming from the world of italian culture took over the management and the stage direction of the Piccolo Teatro: Sergio Escobar and Luca Ronconi.
With its three theatres: the Teatro Strehler, the Teatro Studio and the Teatro Grassi, the Piccolo Teatro is one of the most important cultural centres in Italy, producing circa 600 performances every year, with 350.000 spectators and more than 20.000 subscribers.

The Piccolo Teatro: its international and educational activity

Since its foundation, the cultural activity of the Piccolo Teatro di Milano has always been characterized by a strong international vocation and a particular attention to the educational aspect. The international vocation takes shape through the organization of a number of international tours for shows produced by the Piccolo Teatro and through the hosting of foreign plays in the halls of Milan
Concerning the foreign tours: 68 shows, 47 countries, 550 cities, 4000 performances, 3 million viewers, are the numbers of sixty years of international activity during which, since 1948, the Piccolo has travelled throughout Europe and the world, offering classical texts, works of Italian dramatists, the talent of great artists and the novelty of a style which was born from, and which continues to be produced by, the great mastery of its directors. Traditionally, the Piccolo follows an educational course which combines performances with meetings and workshop activities in collaboration with leading universities and theater schools worldwide.

Furthermore, since 1948, the Piccolo Teatro has hosted in its halls more than 750 performances from 40 countries and speaking 21different languages.
Since 1994, the Piccolo has organized an annual *International Theatre Festival* dedicated every year to a different theme. In particular over the course of the last ten years Milan has seen: the *Festival of great "Masters" of the European Theatre* (2000) as Peter Brook, Peter Stein and Lev Dodin, the *Festival of Children* (20001), the *Masterclass Festival* (2003), the *International Mediterranean Festival* (2004), the *Festival Milan-St Petersburg* (2005), the *Shakespeare Festival* (2006), the *Festival of the Classics* (2007), the *Festival of Science* in 2008. In the last seasons the Piccolo has also hosted a growing number of international shows which were not presented within a single "festival moment" but which were rather spread over the whole season.
In accordance with its mission : *Theatre of Art for Everyone*, the educational aspect and the training of the audience plays a very important role for the Piccolo.
This activity develops at several levels: a base level, in which the Piccolo, through the organization of conferences and meetings with artists, addresses itself to a general audience; an intermediate level of laboratories and workshops focused on the theatrical language and dedicated to a more specific audience of young researchers, a high level of training involving the Actor school of the Piccolo Teatro and some co-branding Master's Degrees, such as the *Master in Show Business Management* led in collaboration with the "Bocconi University" of Milan.
Among the training activities of excellence led by the Piccolo Teatro stands *Masterclass Festival*, a project conceived in 2004 by Luca Ronconi in collaboration with the UTE. Every spring the festival hosts in Milan the most interesting European and extra - European drama schools with the aim of comparing different acting methods and of working with students and teachers coming from foreign theatrical academies. During the festival the audience and the Milanese undergraduates can also attend essays and lessons led by the hosted schools.

The Piccolo Teatro and the Mediterranean

The interest of the Piccolo Teatro for the Mediterranean area goes back to 2004 with the organization of the *International Mediterranean Festival 2004*: a metaphorical place for the flow of ideas, paradigm of a complex thought "able to consider the unity of many and the diversity of the whole" - as Edgar Morin says -, and to redraw the geography of ideas and alliances" [4].
A grand festival that has hosted 30 theatrical, musical and dance performances from 18 countries including Spain, France, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, and which has been seen by over 35.000 spectators who have listened to the sound of 16 different languages from the southern shores of *Mare Magnum.*
A program that, as well as performances of music and dance, brought to Milan for the first time plays and texts from countries of the southern Mediterranean. Mediterranean theatre is characterized by a short history in which the strong influence of the occidental theatrical tradition (English and French) helped to develop a system of theatrical companies and schools where young writers, directors and actors deal with social and political issues of the euro-Mediterranean area.

The purpose of the Piccolo consisted in presenting to the Milanese audience a "snapshot" of the complex cultural scenario of the southern Mediterranean. In accordance with its strong educational vocation , the Piccolo also decided to enrich the Festival with an extensive calendar of conferences, meetings, viewings, exhibitions and seminars dedicated to the discovery and the understanding of the main themes of the Festival.
In 2004, on the occasion of the *International Mediterranean Festival 2004*, the Piccolo Teatro developed a marketing plan addressed to a specific target audience that could be interested in

[4] Declaration of Sergio Escobar, director of the Piccolo Teatro Milan, during the press conference held to present the Mediteranean Festival in September 2004 in the sala delle Colonne of the Palazzo dei Giureconsulti, Milan.

the problematics of the Mediterranean, as well as the audience of subscribers and regulars of the Theatre.
As shown in Figure N.1, the Piccolo set the objective of presenting itself to specific groups of people, institutions, associations and centers which were sensitive and close to the theatrical, cultural, social, linguistic and artistic activities of the countries hosted in the Festival.
Among the specific targets one can see the formation of a "postgraduate university class" formed by a group of 30 students coming from various Milanese universities and patterned on the training model of *Masterclass Festival*. This special target took advantage of an educational offer based on the investigation of the themes and issues developed by the Festival of the Mediterranean. In the following years, this complex network of relationships laid the foundation for the development of the *MED Project.*

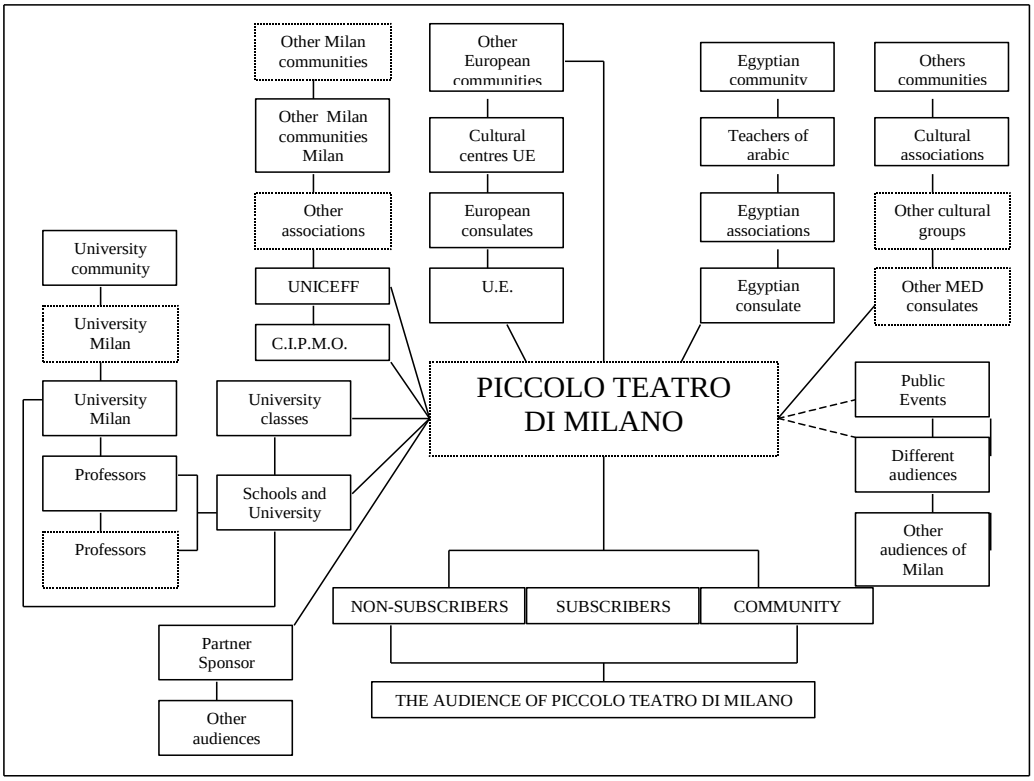


Fig.1. The targets of the *International Mediterranean Festival 2004*.

The *International Mediterranean Festival 2004* was part of an extensive international program of activities dedicated to the countries of the south-eastern shores.
Since the '60s The Piccolo has toured with its plays in countries such as Algeria and Morocco. In 2001 after the success of Carlo Goldoni's *Arlecchino, Servant of Two Masters* at the Jerusalem Festival, the Piccolo intensified its projects with Mediterranean countries through the realization of new tours, co-productions, exchanges, educational and international activities and so on.
From 2002 to 2004 the Piccolo strengthened its relationship with theaters and cultural institutions in countries such as Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Greece and Egypt. In 2004, Egypt was a part of an imported protocol of cultural exchanges with Italy and for this reason it was guest of honor at the *International Mediterranean Festival 2004*.
Since 2004 the Piccolo Teatro has continued to maintain strong artistic relations with the theaters of the countries of the southern Mediterranean, organizing tours and hosting events and conferences on the theme of the relationship between theatre and multiculturalism.

MED Project

During the half-yearly assembly of the UTE hosted by the Schauspielhaus of Graz (Austria) in December 12, 2009 , The Piccolo Teatro of Milan proposed to the representatives of the theatre members the new *MED Project* 2010. Other theatre members and some dramatic schools decided to join the project actively: Teatro de La Abadía of Madrid (Spain), Real Escuela de Arte Dramatico de Madrid (Spain), National Theater of Athens (Greece), National Theatre School of Athens (Greece), Teatro Garibaldi, Palermo (Italy).
At the same time the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers, the São João National Theatre of Porto (Portugal) and the Teatrul Bulandra of Bucharest (Romania) decided to gave their support the project.
Here we present the reasons, the mission, objectives and phases of the creation of *MED Project*.

The MED Project Reasons
Following a number of rapid social changes that seemed to reshape the European social frameworks at the beginning of the new millennium, the Piccolo Teatro decided in 2004 to deal with topical issues such as multiculturalism and integration[5] in the Mediterranean area, in Italy and in Milan. Its aim was that of exploring through the power of the theatrical language the new human relations of our trans-cultural European cities, increasingly populated by immigrants coming from the south shores of the Mediterranean sea.

This is the reason that lead the Piccolo Teatro to suggest to the UTE Assembly the idea of a new project based on the Mediterranean: the *MED Project*.
As summarized in fig. No 2, we see the guidelines which lead the Piccolo to believe that theater, with its multiple languages, can truly be a valuable tool for cultural integration.
The starting point, which is also the final objective, was the growing awareness of the condition of migrants in our society and the consequent change of our society's structure, and how this reflects on our cities.
Today, we are facing a growing phenomenon of migration in which migrants possess a greater awareness of their condition. Compared to the past today's immigrants know both the benefits and risks they face by leaving their country of origin. They are conscious of the fact that their condition may change rapidly, being able to move easily in different countries and perhaps returning to their country of origin. Often this condition of extreme mobility leads to the creation of real *transnational families* in which the members are scattered around the world.
In this scenario the hubs of every displacement are represented by the so called *primary relationships*: multiple ethnic networks (familial, community or occasional) which give life to a complex *migratory system*.
In this context of *liquid frontiers*[6], we can also consider migration as a variable system of life which differs from the traditional linear one of settled populations. This involves a protean framework destined to spread over in a way to create an increasingly mobile society. As claimed by Jan Nederveen Pieterse: "siamo tutti migranti[7]". Thus, it is possible to see migration as a distinctive feature of the transformation of society.
Speaking about migratory processes we can also refer to theatre, and in particular to the definition provided by Peter Brook: "il teatro è come un uomo che attraversa uno spazio vuoto

[5] Defines a bilateral process that is the ability of individuals to live together while respecting the dignity of everyone, the common good, pluralism and diversity, nonviolence and solidarity and to participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their community. (L. D'Angelo, R. Di Rago, *Teatro, didattica attiva, interculturalità*, Franco Angeli, 2009, Milano).
[6] [In the globalization era, the frontier-land is not a place either. Frontier-land cannot these days be plotted on any map; it is not a geographical notion anymore. It is 'the whole life', lived as it is from one project to another, each aimed at expanding the range of similarly one-off and short-lived projects and none of them aimed at terminating the obsessive search for projects that has become the updated, *liquid-modern-frontier* version of the solid-modern frontier-land.]. Z. Bauman, *Utopia with no topos*, SAGE Publications, 2003, London.
[7] [we are all migrants.]. P.J.Nederveen, *Melange globale. Ibridazioni e diversità culturali*, Carocci, Roma, 2005.

mentre un altro lo sta a guardare, ciò basta a mettere in piedi un'azione scenica[8]". It is therefore no surprise that the crossing nature of migratory processes seems to share with theatre the same spatial conception of action.

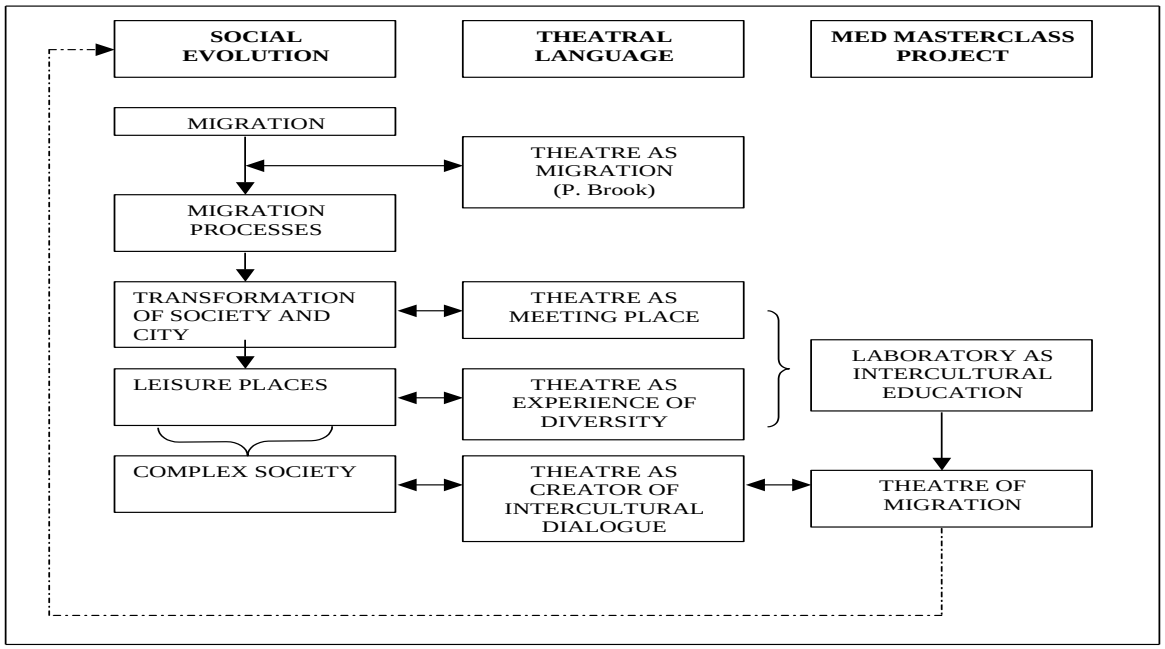


Fig.2. Path of the reasons the *MED Project*.

The result of these migratory processes is that in Europe and Italy we see an increasing transformation of our cities and in particular of our leisure places that become more and more mixed[9]: condominiums, public transport, beaches, parks, public gardens, multifunctional shopping centers have become places where intercultural coexistence is already a reality. Increasingly we see immigrated fourth generation families established in our cities.
Spaces for leisure well represent the complexity, richness and contradictions of an increasingly multicultural society.
We can therefore say that moments of contact, knowledge and upbringing with immigrants, beyond those of school centers and cultural and religious groups, have also become increasingly open places of leisure.
These places, which also become active spaces for communication, representation and observation of our own identity, convey to us the idea of leisure time as a crucial moment in cultural integration.It's no surprise that theatre, a prime example of free time, can truly represent an ideal activity for *cultural encounter*.As said before, this *complex society* based on diversity does not always facilitate encounters amongst the several identities that inhabit our cities.
The task of society, institutions, schools,universities should be that of reconciling these differences, trying to make any difference a resource for learning and growth. Nevertheless, this target can be reached only by challenging the same social rules. According to Zygmunt Bauman[10], the modernity of a social life form resides primarily in the fact that individuals and society as a whole must be able to question, if deemed necessary, the rules by which they live.
In this scenario, the concepts of *relationship* and *encounter* play a fundamental role in the process of knowledge and examination of ethnic, social or character diversity.
Theatre can really teach us to approach this concept of diversity.

[8] [the theater is like a man crossing an empty space while the other looks on, that was enough to set up a stage action.]. P.Brook, *Il teatro e il suo spazio*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1968.
[9] Mariangela Giusti, *Immigrati e tempo libero*, Utet, 2008.
[10] Z. Bauman, *Modernità liquida*, Laterza, Bari, 2010

We can really say that theatre consists in experiencing all forms of diversity. As a matter of fact, when we watch a show we experience a world which is different from our everyday life, thanks to mechanisms of camouflage and identification[11].
The ability of the actor, director and all those people involved in making a show, lies in the ability to allow us to identify, partly or wholly, with the characters on stage. This mimic mechanism, and the consequent experience of the individual fragmentation, gives a boost to our consciousness of diversity.
Experiencing the theatre does not only mean looking at or observing what happens on stage, but it can also be an experience of reflection. That which we see regards ourselves, and lets us learn more about ourselves through that which is different.
The specificity of theatre consists in being structurally an experience of duality in which our counterpart demands to be recognised and heard. Thus, we can really define theatricality as the relationship between diversities.
For this reason, theatrical language can really foster dialogue among different cultures and their mutual knowledge[12], but it can also encourage the awareness of our own subjectivity, of our own faculties and abilities through the use and the re-appropriation of our own body, in particular the voice.
Theatre allows us to reflect on what we are and on the values which underpin our identity. It becomes a place of meeting in which it is possible to overcome prejudices and stereotypes that may be dangerous for our social life and civil society.
Theatre, as a place of cultural *dialogue*[13] and encounter through diversity, is marked by a strong capability of *communication*.
We can then speak of *theatrical intercultural communication* as a four-phase process leading to a mutual cultural adaptation. As we can see in Tab.1 in the first stage it is necessary to observe our culture (identity) as if from the outside. As in the theater we look at ourselves through the eyes of another: the theater acts as a mirror or mask.
In the second phase we look at our culture in a disenchanted and less indulgent way. In this phase a touch of irony and good humor can be helpful: the comic theater.
The third phase consists in understanding the other. In this phase my purpose is letting the other enter my universe of possibilities, without necessarily accepting it fully, in the same way in which one approaches a new theatrical text. An example: even if I do not understand the reason why some women wear a veil, I must learn to assimilate this reality into my universe and be aware of its existence. The final goal, as the ending point of theatrical intercultural communication, is mutual adaptation. This does not mean the disappearance of the individual reality as a result of the total acceptation of each other, but it consists in a gradual coming together of both sides.
The reasons until now expounded represent the basis on which the Piccolo has conceived the *MED Project*.

Phases of the theatrical intercultural communication	**In theatre**
1. Looking at your own culture from the outside	Mirror plays; masks
2. Losing of an indulgent outlook	Irony
3. Comprehension of the other	New text to decrypt
4. Mutual adaptation	

Tab.1, Source: Lauretta D'Angelo, Rosa Di Rago, *Teatro, didattica attiva, interculturalità*, Franco Angeli, pag. 59, 2009.

[11] R. Schechner, *La teoria della performance*, Bulzoni, Roma 1984.
[12] L. D'Angelo, Rosa Di Rago, *Teatro, didattica attiva, interculturalità*, Franco Angeli, 2009.
[13] Definisce uno scambio rispettoso e aperto di opinioni e punti di vista tra individui, gruppi di diversa appartenenza etnica, culturale, linguistica e religiosa. (L. D'Angelo, R. Di Rago, *Teatro, didattica attiva, interculturalità*, Franco Angeli, 2009).

In 2010, the Piccolo, after having planned the project, decided to give its direct contribution by holding *Masterclass Festival,* a festival of drama school coming from various European and extra-European countries.
Masterclass Festival is characterized by a strong educational and laboratorial content in which students from around the world meet to share different drama methods and theatrical languages.
In this optic, the Piccolo Teatro has chosen to dedicate the 2010 edition as well as the upcoming 2011 and 2012 editions to the theme of multiculturalism in the Mediterranean area.

It is therefore possible to consider the *drama workshop* as a place of mutual growth on the condition that differences are accepted rather than denied.
This process of mutual knowledge allows us to work on our own identity, bearing in mind that: "la vera relazione tra le persone ha luogo nella sfera dialogica: l'uomo diventa io a contatto con il tu[14]". The drama workshop, as a tool for the creation of cognitive contests, can really promote the encounter with others and their own human authenticity, although, as suggested by Grotowski, "l'essenza del teatro è costituita da un incontro[15]".
Thus, the theatrical workshop becomes a testing ground for the narration of our own histories, a place in which trying to satisfy "il bisogno di farsi sentire", di essere accettati e capiti"[16].
Intercultural education, in a context of dialogue such as the drama workshop, becomes synonymous with "experience" through emotions, fears and disorientation when faced with the extraordinary, also representing an opportunity to put yourself in other people's shoes[17].

In 2010, *Masterclass Festival* has focused its attention on *migration*, a phenomenon that we consider to be the foundation of all sociological changes in our today society.
One of the main subjects of discussion and confrontation during the festival was *migration theater* or rather a theater made up by the contribution of migrants. This kind of theatre involves both immigrants and natives because, unlike folk art, it does not come with one specific character. This is why it is better to speak of participation rather than integration.
In particular, a very important feature of *migration theater* is *migrant writing*, or the work of immigrant authors who write of their own and other experiences of migration in the language of the countries where they reside. The narrative itself, as suggested by Duccio Demetrio[18], can be an occasion of encounter, as writing can be one of the possible places in which to articulate thoughts, memories and personal experiences. A narrative pedagogy can also help to connect the Self and the Other in the attempt to find similarities and differences in worldview.
The narration of migration shows that the encounter with the Other is often full of imagination, expectations and prejudice on both sides. Therefore, stories, tales and narrations can become a source of knowledge and mutual communication, an understanding of the experiences of others and the critical examination of ones own cultural experiences, world views and relations.
In June 2010, for the first time *Masterclass Festival* saw the presence of students from drama schools of Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Greece or Morocco, who in the past or present have experienced or are experiencing the necessity of migration.
And for the first time, as we shall see in the collaboration with "RESAD - Real Escuela de Arte Dramatico de Madrid", a new element of study was intrjoduced: *the dramatic writing* linked to the theme of migration, the starting point of the *MED Project* and in particular of *Masterclass Festival.*

[14] [the true relationship between people takes place in the dialogic sphere: the man became the Self in contact with the Other.]. M.Burer, *Il principio dialogico e altri saggi*, San Paolo, Milano, 1997.
[15] [the essence of theater is based on the encounter .]. J. Grotowski, *Per un teatro povero*, Bulzoni, Roma, 1993.
[16] [the need to be heard, to be accepted and understood]. P. Brooks, *Trame, internazionalità e progetto nel discorso narrativo*, Einaudi, Torino 2004.
[17] N. Greig**,** *Young People, New Theatre*, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008.
[18] Contribution of Duccio Demetrio during the event *La scrittura ha un futuro? Seminario di studio* (Does writing have a future), a seminar orginazed by the Università Bicocca di Milano on 29 January 2008 at the Casa della Cultura, Milano.

MED Project Mission

Given the previous presented "reasons" we can divide the Mission into three points:
- *Theatre* is a place where every form of expression has equal dignity, therefore it represents the ideal context for a collaboration in order to create a Mediterranean space where a group of peers have the chance to meet, in mutual support and enrichment.
- The awareness of a *common culture and heritage*, the acquaintance with different lifestyles and forms of art, the experience of a genuine contact and *multicultural experience*, are achievable goals.
- The Mediterranean faces these issues, providing them with a new charm, and a new urgency: the Mediterranean of the coasts, of the North and the South, of the balances and the conflicts, but also the *Mediterranean of the people* who have left those coasts and now live in the cities of our countries.

MED Project Objectives

We can summarize the Mission of the *MED Project* in figure n.3 where the *MED Project* is a place where, on one side, we have creation and circulation of the Mediterranean productions as well as training activities for young professionals, on the other side intercultural shows for theatre audiences as well as a theatrical output for immigrants.

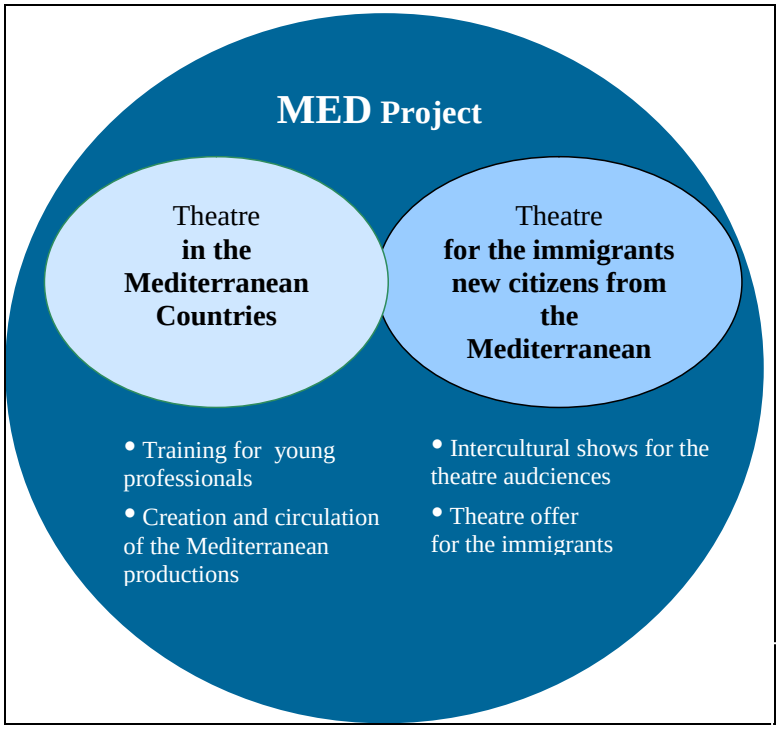


Fig.3
MED Project Objectives

This Mission can be realized through five main objectives:
1. Taking advantage of the *existence of a common environment* and cultural heritage.
2. Reinforcing *intercultural dialogue* and the systematic research of an integration where pluralism and diversity are emphasised as opportunities for human and cultural growth
3. Motivating the creation and the *circulation of works and artists* from the Mediterranean area.
4. Opening a *cultural offer to immigrants* who have left the shores of the Mediterranean and now live in our countries.
5. Analyze through a research with the participants to the *MED Project* if it is plausible to think of the *theatre as a place of integration*, uniting people beyond the boundaries of cultural differences?

MED Project Plan

In order to achieve the aforementioned five objectives the *MED Projects* has developed into a three year schedule of activities as in Tab.n.2.

In real terms the *MED Project* is based on three main areas: *International conferences*, *Theatre Erasmus* and the *Masterclass Festival*.

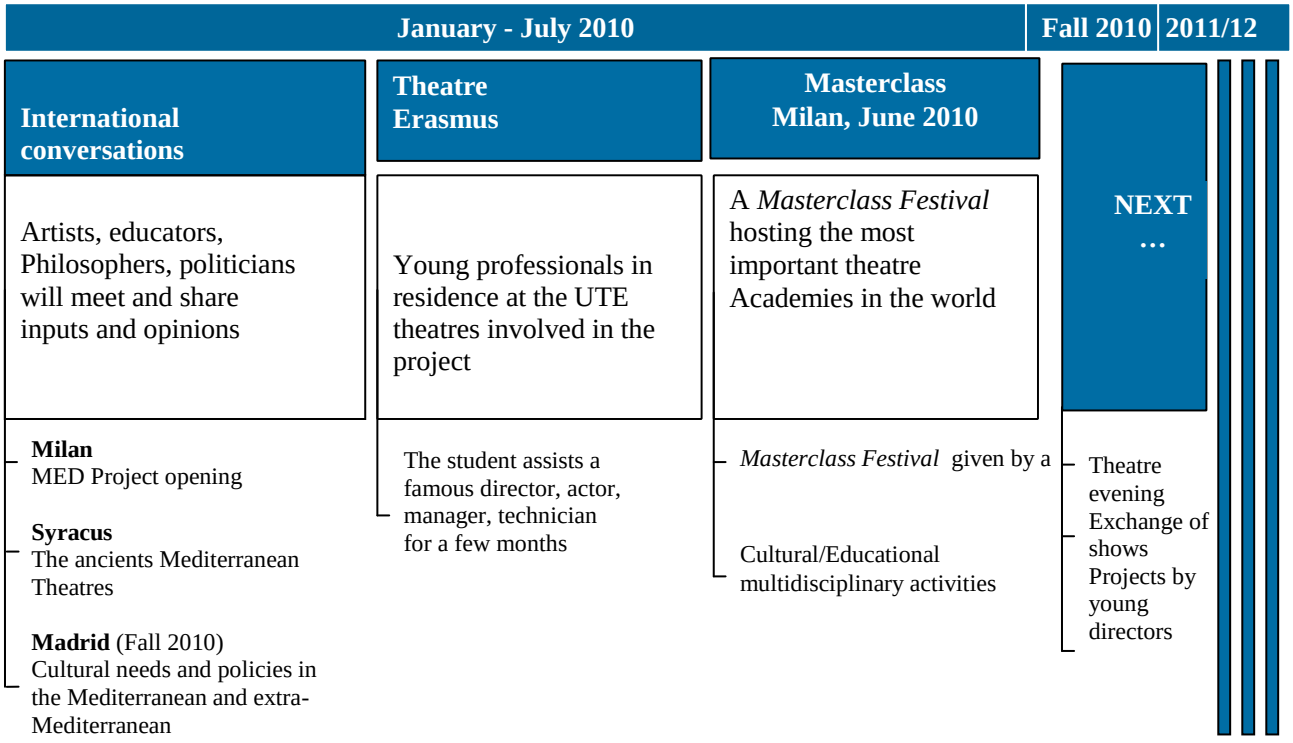
International conferences

This activity has been created in order to talk about and reflect on cultural policies, identity and integration through the theatre language.

The first symposium, organized by Piccolo Teatro, leader in the Project, took place in Milan on the 27th of March on the occasion of the Italian National Theatre day. All the UTE members that participated in the *MED Project* were present in Milan in order to share the *MED Project* schedule and to define the budget and the way to finance it through European funds.

The Second, organized by Teatro Garibaldi of Palermo, took place in Syracuse on 16th of July. The aim of the dialogue was to study the origin of Mediterranean Theatre through the presentation of the ancient Theatrical venues throughout *Mare Nostrum*, such as the Syracuse Theatre, The Epidauro Theatre and the Taormina theatre.

The next conference will take place in Madrid at Teatro de La Abadía next October and the topic will be specifically intercultural integration in the theatre. The Madrid meeting will be also an occasion to schedule the next conversations.



Tab.2. The *MED Project* Plan.

Theatre Erasmus

A fundamental task of the *MED Project* consists in training a new generation of theatrical professionals from Mediterranean countries.

Through European founds the *MED Project* will give scholarships to two young students for a three year period of internship in one UTE member theatre participating in the *MED Project*.

Masterclass Festival

Masterclass Festival is an annual Academies Festival conceived in 2004 by Luca Ronconi[19] as an occasion for sharing different theatrical methods coming from several international Theatre Schools. Every year *Masterclass Festival* focusses on a specific topic. The Piccolo Teatro has decided to integrate the *Masterclass* Festival 2010 edition into the *MED Project*.

This is the reason why *Masterclass Festival* 2010 has been named *Nomadic Energies*, becoming the heart of the *MED Project*.

Besides the traditional goals of *Masterclass Festival*, (meeting different cultures, different ways of making theatre, different ways of conceiving actor training, meeting young artists from different cultural backgrounds in order to interact with them, learning theatrical communication work through participation in the performance) this Mediterranean edition aims to offer a way to enrich the learning path of each participant through a practical training project, believing that through theatre we can all learn how to live and relate to other people.

In *Masterclass Festival* there are three different targets, the students from the International Academies invited to *Masterclass Festival*, the Milanese university students who attended the "workshop class" and the general audience who attended the performances presented by the different Academies. *Masterclass Festival* 2010 opened with *Alla ricerca di un Flauto Magico by* the Theatre Academy of the Piccolo, Teatro Garibaldi of Palermo followed with two productions *Lucio* by and with Franco Scaldati and *Sutta Scupa* by Giuseppe Massa.

The Drama School of Athens, directed by Victor Arditti, presented *The Mediterranean meets the Land of the Raising Sun*, a project that put together the ancient tradition of Japanese Theatre and the language of the Greek School of Theatre.

For the first time in Italy, the young Moroccan company "Nous jouons pour les Arts" founded by graduate students of ISADAC (Institut Supérieur d'Art Dramatique et d'Animation Culturelle de Rabat), participated in *Masterclass Festival* with *Li'fhamator* inspired by the theatre of the absurd of Eugène Ionesco.

RESAD (Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Madrid) presented *El Mar*, conceived during a dramaturgic writing seminar based on the theme of migration.

Paolo Grassi - School of Dramatic Art presented two of its projects: *Miracolo* inspired by the Cesare Zavattini and Vittorio De Sica movie, in collaboration with the Yoram Levinstein Acting Studio in Tel Aviv, and *Occhi Gettati* by Enzo Moscato.

For the fourth time in *Masterclass Festival*, the drama school of the National Theatre of Strasbourg came to Milan with *I Masnadieri* by Friedrich Schiller and *Faust* by J.W. Goethe.

The contamination among different theatrical languages has characterized this through three different productions from Brazil, Denmark and China.

The young group Pé No Chao, from the Recife "favelas", brought the dance-theatre performance *Magie Noire* to the stage.

The Odin Teatret presented its *Andersen's Dream* directed by Eugenio Barba.

The MC93 of Bobigny - Paris brought on stage *I Briganti* performed by the students of the Opera School of Beijing.

A brand new project in this 2010 edition is the intensive workshop on the different techniques of theatre language. This project has been created with the collaboration of the school teachers of the Piccolo Teatro.

This edition was also the occasion to schedule the next *Masterclass Festival* 2011 and 2012 that will again focus on the Mediterranean and on the theme of cultural integration. In particular, the Piccolo Teatro will continue its collaboration with RESAD and ISADAC (Marocco).

[19] the PiccoloTeatro artistic director and Piccolo Teatro Academy Director.

Verification questionnaires on the Mission and *MED Project* objectives

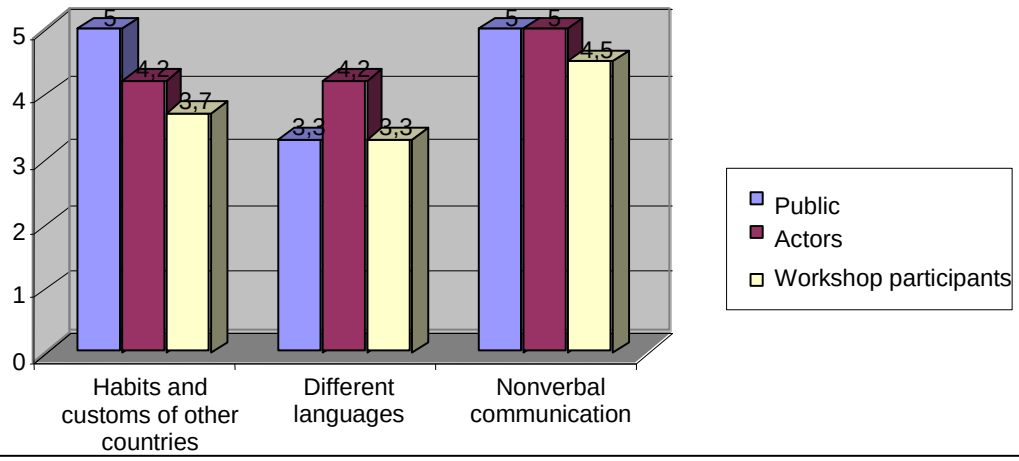
In this second part of the paper we present the results of the questionnaire submitted to the three referential targets of *Masterclass Festival*:
- the spectators who attended the shows presented in *Masterclass Festival*;
- the acting students from international theatre schools who were invited to submit their essays in Milan;
- the undergraduate students who participated in the workshop.

A total of 380 questionnaires were filled in: 200 by the spectators, 150 by the actors and 30 by the workshop participants.
The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions grouped into three areas: the first focused on the aspects of satisfaction and characteristics of *Masterclass Festival*, the second on the theme of the Mediterranean and intercultural integration and the last one on the attendance and knowledge of the Piccolo Teatro of Milan.
With this questionnaire, created during the primary activity of the *MED Project*, we wanted to verify the quality of the basic reasons of the project and the achievement of the objectives placed before.
In succession, we will focus our attention on the four questions in the questionnaire related to the issues faced in *Masterclass Festival*, trying to compare the answers of the three targets.
Subsequently we will analyze the evaluation of experiential opportunities offered to 30 participants in the workshop.

Knowledge acquired by the viewing of international shows

This question asked what was the knowledge principally gained through participation in *Masterclass Festival*, between: habits and customs of other countries, elaboration of foreign languages and nonverbal communication.
As we see in Figure n. 4, the audience has in particular highlighted the importance of the customs of other countries as well as knowledge of forms of nonverbal communication
The actors of foreign Theatre Schools, as well as workshop participants reported that they learned mostly new forms of nonverbal communication.

Fig. 4 **Knowledge acquired by the vision of international shows**



The comparison between different responses shows that for all three target groups, participation in the *Masterclass Festival* was a clear opportunity to deal with the experience of new forms of nonverbal communication. For the general public, attending the performances of the Festival was also an opportunity to learn about customs and traditions of other countries. An example of this last experience was the presence of the Beijing Opera School, during which meetings and social moments involving the Chinese community in Milan, including Chinese language schools, were scheduled.

The efficacy of theatre in dealing with cultural integration issues (concerning reasons).

In the next two questions we wanted to verify the perception of the efficacy of theatre and its languages in dealing with current issues, such as *cultural integration*, and in particular the reasons for this effect.
As we see in Figure n. 5 all three targets have highlighted the capability of theatre to be an ideal tool in talking about current topics. This perception was higher in undergraduate students who attended the workshops through which they acquired a deeper knowledge of theatrical language. This is because, unlike the audience and the actors themselves, they have followed the complete development of the *Masterclass Festival*, attending not only the shows, but also the classes of all schools that have preceded them, as well as lessons run by the teachers of the School of Piccolo Teatro.

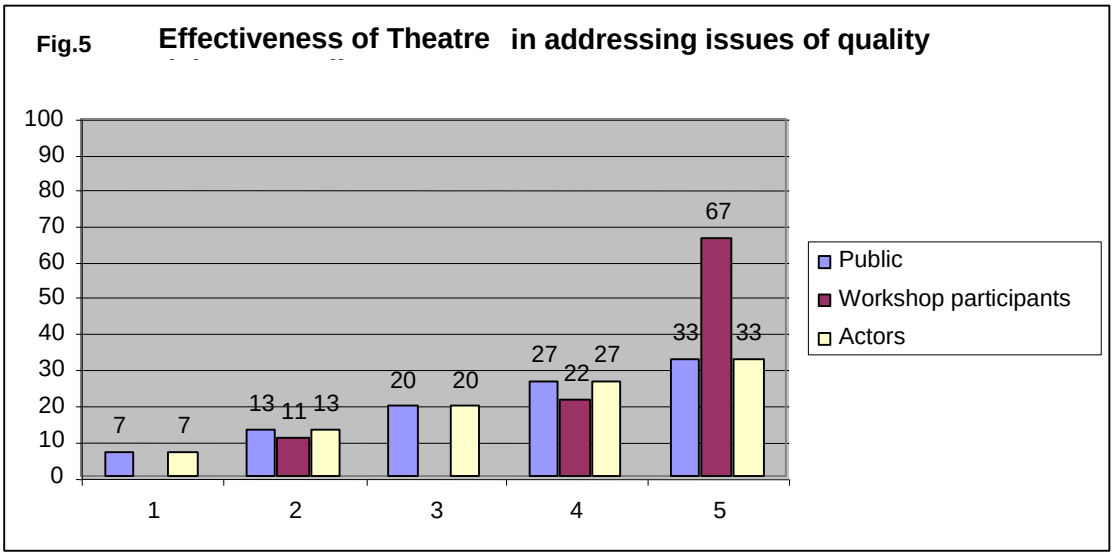
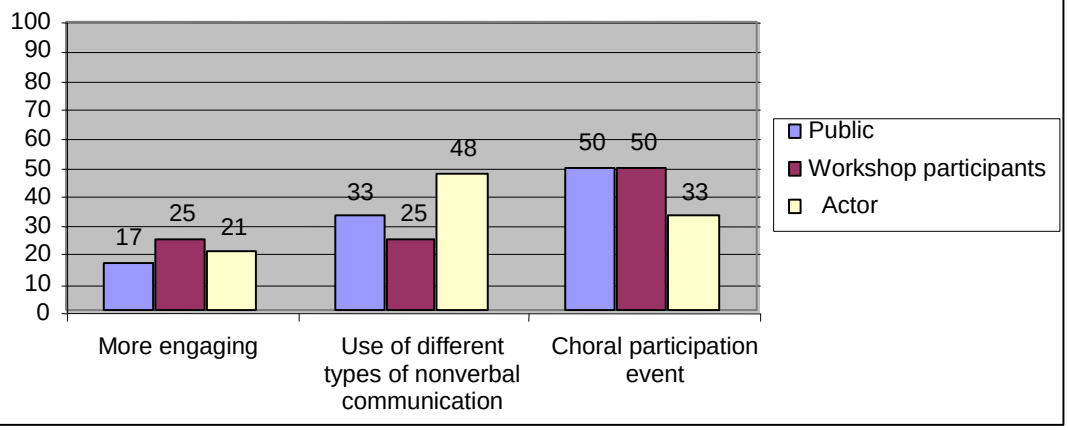


Fig.5: 1→ little 3→ fairly 5→ significantly (data expressed in %)

In figure n.6 we can see in particular the reasons expressed by the different target groups on the efficacy of theater in dealing with issues of cultural integration.
From the answers we see that both the audience and workshop participants consider that the main motivation for efficiency of the theater in dealing with current issues is the factor of the *choral participation* at the event shared with other participants.
The actors argue that the main reason lies in the fact that theater, as outlined in the previous question, allow for the use of different types of *nonverbal communication*.
The reason why the audience and the workshop participants focus more on the choral participation is that, unlike actors who experienced *Masterclass Festival* only on days when they presented their essays in Milan, the former have more assiduously followed the whole process.

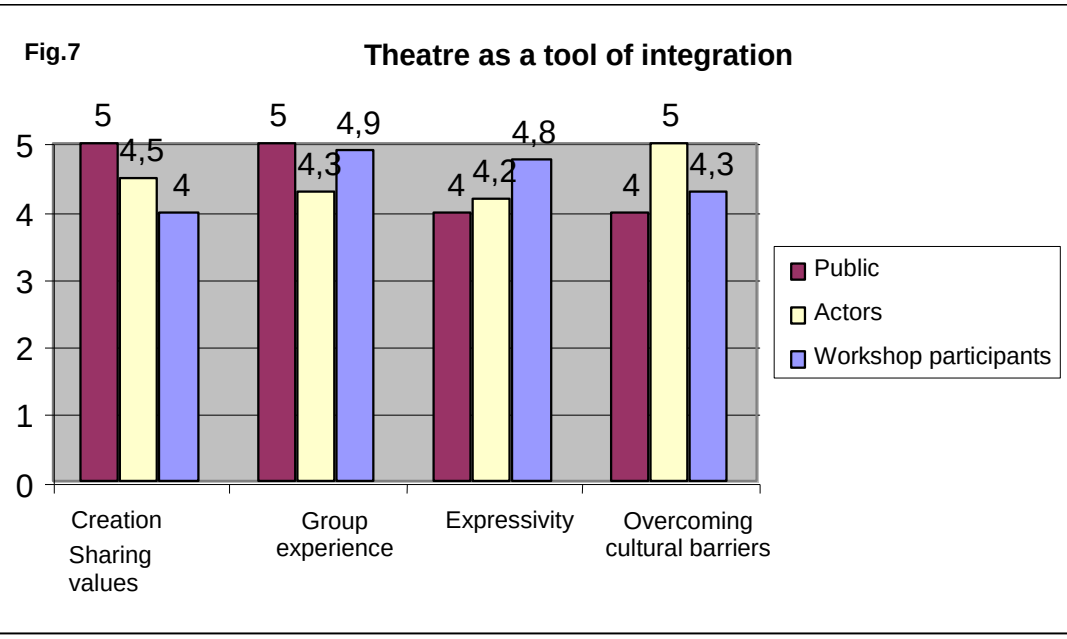
Fig. 6



Theatre as a tool for integration

In this question, as in the following, we entered the heart of the themes of the *Masterclass Festival*. In particular, in figure n. 7 we see the answers concerning the capability of theater as a tool for cultural integration.
In general, all three targets consider theater as a tool to promote integration between different cultures, as the average result from the responses is 4.5 (value indicating the degree of agreement between *fairly* and *significantly*).
Actors and audience justification of this view lies in the fact that theater is considered as a *group experience.*
The three targets indicate as justification the fact that theater constitutes an ideal space for sharing and creating values.

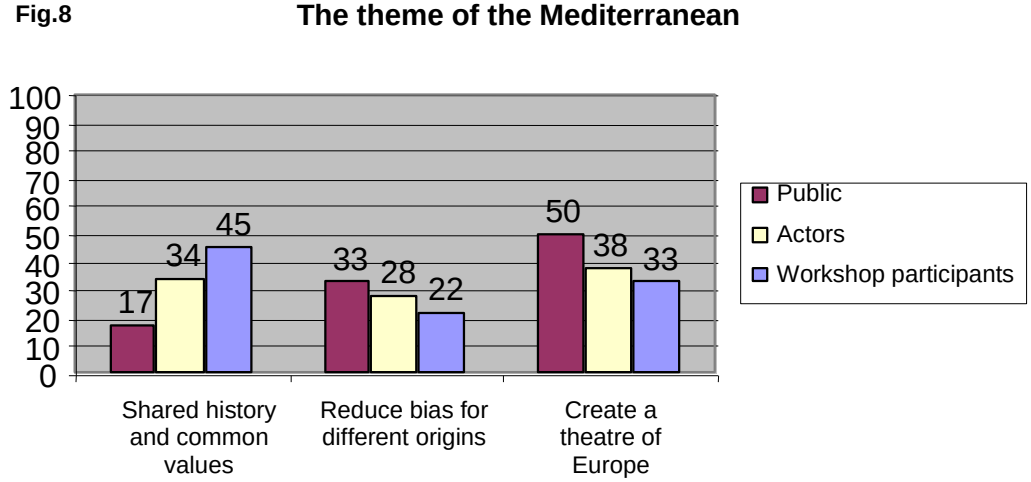
Fig.7



Analysis of issues in the Mediterranean

In this question, as we see in Figure n.8, we analyzed the perception of the issue of the Mediterranean by the three target groups, particularly the ability of this topic to create *shared values*, eliminating prejudices on *diversity* and enhancing the idea of creating a *Euro-Mediterranean Theater for All*.
According to both the audience and actors , the theme of Mediterranean chosen by the Piccolo is able to pursue the idea of creating a *Euro-Mediterranean Theater* and to collaborate in the creation of a common heritage through the involvement of younger generations.

Fig.8

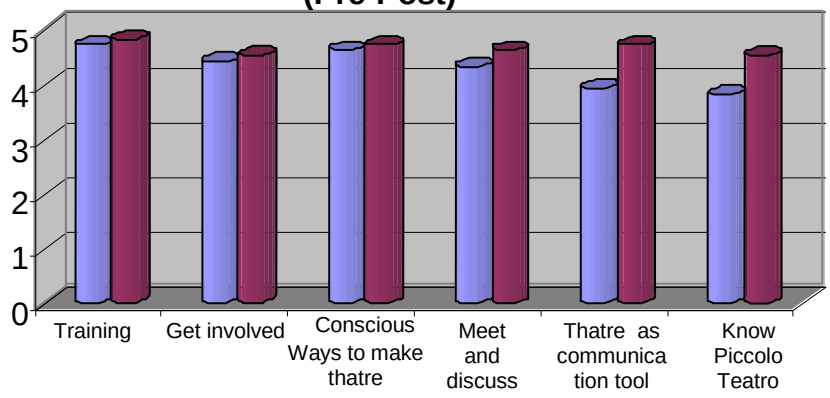


The workshop participants who filled out the questionnaire before and after having participated in *Masterclass Festival*, also shared in their first filling of questionnaires the idea of creating a *Euro-Mediterranean Theater*, then at the end of the training course, they indicated the reasons for this choice through the fact that the countries bordering the Mediterranean have a shared history and therefore common values.
This change may depend on the fact that the participants in the workshop are the only ones who got the chance to know all the foreign drama schools in *Masterclass Festival* and on these occasions to learn about their histories, cultures and diversities.

Analysis of the opportunities offered by *Masterclass Festival* (Workshop participants only)

As already mentioned, the 30 undergraduate students who participated in the workshop represent the target that were most profoundly involved in the experience of the *Masterclass Festival.*
For this reason, we have chosen to submit only to them the questions about the specific opportunities offered by *Masterclass Festival* (Fig.9).
Starting from the analysis of the answers before and after the participation certain interesting observations can be made.
The first is that the perception of the educational value remained high both before and after the laboratory, indicating a good level of satisfaction.
The same consideration is valid both for the opportunity to challenge themselves and to learn of other theatrical methods.

Fig. 9



It is interesting to notice that, after the participation in the festival, knowledge of the "Piccolo Teatro" has increased in these targets, as has the perception of moral values of *encounter and discussion* and in particular the experience of theatre as a communicative network.
This final consideration supports one of the main reasons of the *MED Project*, which is the importance of *theatrical intercultural communication.*

Conclusions

The writing of this paper, which coincided with the end of the *Masterclass Festival*, one of the core activities of the entire *MED Project*, has also represented a moment of reflection on the *mission* and aims of the *MED Project*.
From the answers to the questionnaires given to the participants in *Masterclass Festival*, we had confirmation that the meaning of keywords such as *multiculturalism, migration processes, liquid frontiers, dialogue and intercultural communication,* through language theatrical education and experience, are perceived and noticed by the main recipients of the project: young people.
These confirmations encourage the Piccolo Teatro of Milan, together with other partners of the UTE - Union de Théâtres de l'Europe, to carry on with the *MED Project*. The next opportunity to present this work and discuss its future developments will be the conference that will be held in Madrid in October 2010 organized by Teatro de la Abadía of Madrid.
The considerations contained in the questionnaires will be then taken into account and used for the organization of the next *Masterclass Festival* edition and for the 2010/2011 theatrical season of Piccolo that will be entirely dedicated to the Mediterranean.
The Mediterranean proves to be not only a physical place of origin of our Euro - Mediterranean society, but also an inexhaustible source of *culture* and *common knowledge.*

"Tutto conoscere per tutto amare è la cultura, è la conoscenza che ci unisce, che ci affratella che ci fa riconoscere l'altro con gli stessi sentimenti, con le stesse passioni, con gli stessi fini d'amore, di affetto e di bellezza che abbiamo in noi"[20].

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[20] [Culture is to know everything and to love everything, it is the knowledge that binds us together, that unites us, makes us recognize each other with the same feelings, the same passions, with the same purpose of love, affection and beauty we have in us.]. Gabriele Mandel (Bologna, 1924 – Milano, 1 July 2010) Academic and author of numerous writings on art, psychology and poetry.

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