A new children’s theater
Considering from the “theater of the 60’s and 70’s”, although the periodization is arbitrary for decades, until the Military Coup of 76, we find a period of great turmoil dominated by the vision of respected champions. (Arce, 2007)

As Arce writes, the theater in Cordoba was characterized within 60 to 70 for its experimental profile, that departed it from traditional forms, it propelled different themes and conceived another relationship with the public at the various levels of reception: the emergence of a new Cordovian theater (Minero in Moll, Pinus and Flores, 1996: 148) renewed the theatrical field, breaking with classical precepts, as regards to political and poetic of an artistic event, whit no leave out those innovations on reception, expressed in convivio (Dubatti, 2007). But, what about children’s theater? Are those changes noted in this theater?
In spectaculars practices aimed at children, were promoted changes related to the extra–stage action? Which aesthetic lines were privileged? What were the issues addressed?

As in other areas of Argentina (Llagostera, 2009), the new theater for children was definitely consolidated in Cordoba during the 70’s, linked to a political upsurge in which was highlighted their mark (Garff, 2010), hosted a do for children complex, with multiple creations in that were gestated a space of exchange between disciplines, a dialogue between artists and audience, a relationship between diverse groups. What began in the 60’s was strengthened in the next decade and then, in the 80’s had extended as a network mode. Many agree to take that experience as a matrix that lasts until today. Therefore, in this work we propose to analyze one of the first manifestations engendered by the new Cordovan theater for children, precisely, born in a revolutionary space, paradigmatic of the “Learned” Cordoba: the academic ambit.

The National University of Cordoba (UNC) was a privileged meeting point for discussion, political action and search for new artistic forms–driven transformation since the reform of 1918 and the echoes of the Cuban Revolution (1959) to the premises of May French (1968) that finally settled with the events of Cordobazo in 1969. With proposals that delineated the culture as the common property of the people, were held in their classrooms innovative collective experiences such as the University Choir, the Total Workshop of the Faculty of Architecture and Canto Popular Movement. But in 1965, it was to
implement a dramatic change in the UNC with the creation of the Department of Performing Arts (now the Department of Theatre), first place in our country —Argentina— to study theater in college. Hence concern ourselves here on Floraline, the square little cow, the first realization that emerged from these cloisters: what were the postures shared with the new Cordovan theater for children that began to sketch?, what kind of resources were used for this?, what was relationship with the context that made possible this theatrical event?, why ventured on a thematic “controversial” and what means chosen to make, this theater for children?

**Theater as a space open to diversity**

Children are very similar to artists that would be made to understand, to help reveal the mysteries of the world, further imagine, have the same ability to synthesize the same look, lack of domestication. (Eruli, 2006:5)

In 1965, as mentioned, the Department of Theatre at the UNC took its initial steps at the hand of the first students and teachers. Later that year, premiered *Floralina, the square little cow*, written by Hebe Conte.

In the show, a cow being discriminated against by the rest to be square instead of round, had to face the conditions given by the group norms. His parents proposed two conflicting decisions, but equally dramatic: either shut forever, or married a square bull if it existed. Floralina to
this dilemma, decided to take another option. Neither imprisonment, neither forced marriage: the little cow was walked to their own road to find an answer. With this piece, rigorous reasoning was tried to transform a society that apparently assumed no alternatives. That first cohort of the Department performed a critical reflection in a play for children, about a taboo subject: to be different in a society that is wielded as homogenous. The themes that stood out in the play and discussed in this paper are taken up by many groups that made the new theater Cordovan for children: discrimination, liberacion in front of authority, the travel experience, strength of youth, opposition being/seems (the opposition to the archaic manner and fashion), and solidarity.

Floralina’s parents, faced with the problem of discrimination that was being their daughter, reacted looking adapt. The mother, worried by rumors that stigmatized the entire home and produced core segregation for the physical condition of the square little cow. The

1. Some of the students met several roles on stage: José Masiá (Pa Mu and Villager Blue) Myrna Brandán (Pink little cow, Playful Wind and Villager Blue), Maria del Carmen Blunno (Lilac little cow and Villager Yellow); Selva Gallegos (Rayitas Hen and the puppet king), Edith Fernández (Pintitas Hen, and Skinny Knight), Juan Carlos Gianuzzi (Mr. Rooster and Great Wolf Gurrumú) Deborah Mittman (Mrs. Weasel and The Fat Prince), Mercedes Pérez (Birdie and The Princess); Gaston Tuset (Villager Yellow and Lamb). Other students were developing a single character on stage, this is the case of Eddy Carranza (Floraline); Walter Arneodo (Floripón) Ada María Gómez (Mama Mu), Armando Espejo (Pajarín), Raúl Calles (Scarecrow) and Héctor Clotet (Barker).
non–common in Floralina caused the rejection of others, and Mama Mu in the first instance, instead of taking the social problem of exclusion, was concerned about the social impact that incurred on the family. It was exhibited in the spectacle, the removal mechanisms operating in a society when something else disturbed the set of values, modes of behavior, symbols and others (which were articulated here in the guise of Floralina) and the hegemonic cultural identity looks shaken the elements that make a group cohesion and sense of belonging to it. That is most legitimate for most people (in this case, being round), is a shared identity with which any form of dissent threatens to break the rules of the game and puts on the table the diversity.

The crossroads, as noted above, occurred when Floralina was facing the authority and decided to face by their own means to the problem; showed that even when she used to follow the rules and follow orders when it was losing its identity because the crystallization of its pariah status, preferred to make their own way. Thus, it’s highlighting the positive aspects of the personal quest for resolving social conflicts, against hegemonic knowledge. Later, other spectacles of the new Cordovan theater for children preferred this issue of being against the imposed rules: for example in The Adventures of Pirlimpimpín and the Drummer (1969) and in the play written by Laura Devetach Paloliso in 1973 and staged by members of the TV program Pipirrulines.
The value of the right to choose prevailed in the plot of *Floralina, the Square Little Cow*, as the protagonist does not want to marry someone under duress and did not want to remain marginalized at home, undermining their knowledge of the world, assimilated at travel in the spectacle. This route is characterized as a need to transmute a state of affairs, is not only confined to the cohort of students, but included all young thinking. The rite of passage that is represented in scene by Floralina was part of a distinct identity of the student movement that was carrying a proposal for transforming the society of that time:

**Floralina**

[...] I travel around the world!

**Rayitas**

Weird occurrence! Did you not feel comfortable in your yard?

**Pintitas**

I would never think of leaving my hen-house, so comfortable and warm, to go on a trip! [...] Do you leave so far from home to find a fiend?

**Rayitas**

It must be young people’s ideas! In our time...!

(Conte, 1965: 32)
The opposition of “the new” and “the old”, present in the show was convincing. Presented in society as a negative value, for the nostalgia of “what happened before” and the fear of the different changes that encouraged young people driven, was translated in the spectacle as the engine that allowed the heroine to reach the transformation of their situation. The adults (Mama and Papa Mu), meanwhile, did not pretend to change order but wanted to adjust to it and locate Floralina, in a politically correct situation without changing the order of their society.

In addition in the show is unveiled, the duality to be/seem: when Floralina advanced in its course, was included into micro–conflicts. One of them, with a weasel, who was stealing chickens’ eggs and also cheated the rooster with refined manners and appearance. The superficiality was discredited as a disguise that hides behind a socially acceptable behavior someone who actually injured others. In the same vein, some birds was afraid of the Scarecrow, and when they realized its construction due to the intervention of the Playful Wind, were happy to discover the threads of power and its release was allowed when the fear was left side, to break the simulation of oppression that personified the scarecrow:

**One another**

Stupid! You were afraid!

**Pajarín**

Because his clothes were moving!
Pajarita
And they seemed strange things coming over us, threatening!

Both
And they were rags! Just rags! Here they are! [...]

Birdies
No more fear! No more rags! No more scarecrow! [...]

Pajarita
Let’s Laugh!

Pajarín
Let’s fly!
(Conte, 1965: 41)

Solidarity was present in the play, in which prevailed the idea of thinking in the other and be aware of what might happen this will, in opposition to capitalism and its individualist discourse, put on highlight the idea of community:

Both
(Commiserating each other.) And what are we expected to do? Die of hunger? Nobody understands us! Poor us, the little birds!
Floralina
Oh, how impossible beings! Stop! Comedians! You well know that what you are saying is not true! In the world there is food for everyone, but we must also think of others! Not only of ourselves! (Conte, 1965: 38)

In the denouement of the play, Floralina knew a particular bull. This, far from keeping up appearances as other characters, showed himself as he pleased. With a wreath on his head, frolicked admiring the nature (another common topic at this time). The final, one might expect in a children’s play, would be a fantasy character, with a magic wand, would changed Floralina’s geometric figure and make it “normal”, in the imagination of the play, a rounded cow. But the interesting thing about this show is that to resolve the situation, the cow should not change and become common; the proposed solution was to accept difference and not transvestite, no denying, diverting, or changing it, and it is highlighted as a feature that makes Floralina unique:

Floralina
Beauty, me? But I'm square!

Floripón
Yes, I see. But that's what makes you beautiful! If you were not square, you'd be just a cow and nothing more! (Conte, 1965: 47)
In a perfect world without edges, there was no place for the unusual, it was something about which you should not talk... on stage, or on the streets. Therefore, the problem of disrespect to one another, by the distinct lack of understanding was embodied in the practice stage, because the actors and the actresses were bound by their personal experiences. We are intending to Erulli (2006: 5) that the child as a subject close to the artist was evident in this show, not only in the “lack of domestication” and rebellion expressed by the group, but the symbiosis that produced actors with characters to in sharing his staging with children, trying to dialogue rather than imposition of a teaching. Its own experience of being “different” to be students of the career of Theatre is homologous to the situation that was to cross the protagonist of *Floralina, the Square Little Cow*. Myrna Brandán, who was part of the play as a student, explains:

I don’t remember if we had deepened on the problems, and... it was the difference. And as we were different in every way: in the university, off campus, for our families, our friends... we were studying Theatre... Even now people ask you, if you are studying theater, “Yeah, well, but what are you studying?” (In Patrignoni, 2009b)

Criticism, explained that the staging was “as their purpose, the development of aesthetic taste of children, as well as the enrichment of their imagination” (Daily Córdoba,
1965). In this way, it shows the character that productions of the new Cordovan theater for children, was far from teaching with morals, should provide an attentive audience, which is respected and provided them a high standard of aesthetics and poetics. The theater was drawn as a game, and as such, had its rules and united in its fun to do critical thinking, away from the didacticism of children’s theater classic. However, these guidelines and the resources used had transgressed codes and forms, without distance or items that block the convivio (Dubatti, 2007). On the contrary, its scenic practice reaffirmed from which managed to link with viewers, in the instance of play’s gestation, by its interaction with the audience from the stage and post-play conversations. The dialogue was proposed because the child’s participation was expected of it that “be it not just seeing quiet, but plays an active and is himself part of the show” (Sormani, 2005: 29), assuming the integrity and sincerity of this type of public.²

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2. The “theater for children” in this context, extends beyond its meaning: while the artists considered especially a child as a recipient when creating their proposals be extended to adults. Closely related to theories such as Paulo Freire’s, its art was oriented to the new man to be overcome to humanize relations of oppression and transformation to contributed to the release. Therefore, both in their search at reception and in the production, we see a full practice, multiple, intended to communicate with the audience to achieve a common good: freedom. Hence the respect for the interests and needs of the child and the adult interest in awareness towards reconfiguring the social order. On the other hand, joined in its practice an artistic language could implement, as expressed Carlos Martínez, belonged “to a time when philosophy was composed of integrity man, a man
Taboos of yesterday and today
The assumptions that theater people have made for years about children are often atrocious, elementary, tiny, —and then— of subnormal. But not only at the thematic or worlds but also to raise the allowable theatrical format to perform a show. The complexity is usually excluded from any proposal in a kind of “in case they don’t understand”. (Chabaud, 2010. The quotation marks are from the original.)

Many times, as described Chabaud, who makes children’s theater, forbids certain themes to represent the pair set out in the way of presenting the imaginary, a simply scheme, and a poor use of languages are involved in the plays. This prevents the involvement of “real” spectators, the genuine exchange of meeting with the other. In contrast, Floralina, the Square Little Cow methods for presenting a subject taboo, was itself creative: the difference is not displayed but it is suggested. It brought into play the active reception of the viewer through aesthetic proposal, and incorporated the problem of difference as something that runs in a veiled manner in society, as noted above.

The new theater for children of Cordoba, as the theatre for adults, anticipated the position of some current plays, by breaking up the space performance and ways to

who had training in all, so could enjoy the art of music, visual arts, also of statistics” (in Rojas, 2010).
provoke the imagination. Here too the students were involved, they were responsible for the scenery, as we read in the playbill (Department of Performing Arts, 1965). As noted in other spectacles of that time, the layout of the scenic technology does not repeat the traditional patterns, but refers to symbolic and ambiguous that a capable subject presumed to complete the meanings from the show.

In line with this, the costumes designed by Carlota Beitia and realized by the team of the Performing Art Department, there was not to a way to disguise, because they were not realistic representations of animals. The colors and detail arbitrarily represented the uniqueness of each one, for example, the bull had a little hat with horns. The scenery was available with panels that had represented the various environments in a very general way. Students of the Performing Arts Department were aware of their choices for mounting the play:

Never had we done any childish thing by treating it as idiot [...] that we had very clear. Even from the locker room, never we worked with the overalls, this dreadful thing that is the adult personify as a child. From the voice work, nothing to imitate the child, language, is anything “nininini”. We opined and discussed and we said no; I think we saw other works too and we saw the way we did not want to do it. (Brandan in Patrignoni, 2009)
The artistic expressions that were proposed on the stage were treated seriously, without taking easily the aesthetic chore, just because it was for children. At the same time, the play used the resources of the theater within the theater and metatheatrical as “theater whose problem is centered in the theater and, therefore, it self–representation” (Pavis, 2003: 288), which innovated on the ways of making theater for children. At the same time attending to scenes in which characters represented in front to other characters (such as the scene of the puppets, represented by actors), the metatheatrical space was plentiful in its play. With this technique was evidenced a theatrical self–reflexive to the extent that, while reaffirming the fiction, moreover approached the dramatic text to reality, to an idea about life.

The relationship between the university group with political reality and the proposed change went through the production of the Department of Performing Arts and it observed in Floralina, the Square Little Cow and in The Magic Tiddler (represented by the same group in 1967). The issue of being different and criticism of hegemonic systems like capitalism were addressed in the plays for children of students in training. This, in turn, connects artists with the public as “beyond the specifics of the activity, everyone agrees that it is a matter of choice. When someone chooses to address children with them is because they have a common imaginary —said Dorin— the connection occurs when one vibrate in that place”. (Planetario Magazine, 2003)
Between training and profession, these spectacles participated of innovation begun in the 60’s and consolidated in the 70’s, as cast members belonged, precisely, to one of the most favored by critical thought and reflection in impulses for social change and discussed issues that today, perhaps are not allowed on stage, more because of adults (in charge of regulating, approving and, in the case of family members and teachers, to attend the theater with the kids) than because of children. For cast members of the Performing Arts Department, as expressed Myrna Brandán, “it was normal in the plays to work these issues and the critique of power, also what were the institutions was clear, the art of the difference, in the fight against the institutional power–blocking at creativity” (in Patrignoni, 2009b). As we have seen, the new Cordovan theater for children raised a break from the traditional model, experiment and innovated, taking advantage of other practices in addition to conventional theater, starting with this line of stage action that went beyond the stage, during the sixties. Changing the rules was a force raised in the plays performed by the University of this time. In The Square Little Cow closely linked to diversity to be shouldered by their difference to live in the world and find their own way, rather than mimic the common, appropriate to the context.

Finally, it is worth noting at the same time, the Department’s decision to conduct performing arts theater for children, which remained raised during the stage of the Stable Theatre of the University of Cordoba (TEUC)
during the 70’s, when it isn’t now almost activity like those in the classrooms of the UNC. As said Carlos de Urquiza, there is a “lack of curricula on children’s theater in official’s schools acting training”. It is a fact, children’s theater today, has no space in the curricula of training. Also, what happens to the readers informed and skilled readers in relation to this theater? Without doubt, the object of study is presented complex and interesting, but notice that has been largely ignored by researchers or, at best, has been addressed in generals phenomenon’s unstudied from its particularities, while critics devoted to children’s spectacle are scarce, media spaces erases the theater for children and the theatres do not privilege in their spaces the children’s plays (Urquiza, s/f). Added to this, play–makers often circumscribes children’s theater as a minor genre, “petty cash”, a transit point for the “serious” productions (these are, in their view, only intended for adults), easily accessible even if the specialists in the field recognize the need to specialize in it (Falconi, 2006; per case), as stated Chabaud,

The union itself has been complicit or promoter of this poor theater, educational, sweet miserably to the extent that almost always considered this option

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3. When we speak of receipt of an artistic event, we understand that there are different ways to approach it, differentiating various types of possible readings: the informed, than the action is through by journalism and criticism, another is the specialized, nature of academic assumed, for example, researchers (Patrignonni, 2010).
theatrical as a planchette of financial salvation. “We need money”, says one, “Let us make a children’s play”, another one usually answer automatically, without previous thought. Thus, children’s theater—in many Latin American latitudes [...]— has been exercised from the most cowardly of impunity, without any artistic rigor and, worse, without those involved made no question about his ideal audience (2010).

Could it be that children’s theater, in itself, became the taboo of the Argentine theatrical field?

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