Bohemians, Anarchists, and Arrabales

How Spanish Graphic Artists Reinvented the Visual Landscape of Buenos Aires, 1880–1920

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When Spanish illustrator Manuel Mayol left Buenos Aires for his “mother country” in 1919, after some three decades in Argentina, the editors of the swish *Plus Ultra* hailed their founder as “one of the great men of Argentine graphic journalism” (Anonymous 1919b, 7).¹ It was a time of summing up the work of a heroic generation. Just a year earlier Mayol’s compatriot and comrade-in-arms José María Cao had died. “This noble master of pen and brush was a revolutionary, a transformer of Argentine humor”, eulogized *Caras y Caretas*, the most popular and cosmopolitan of all early 20th-century Argentine cultural magazines (Anonymous 1918, 39). Then, only months before Mayol’s departure, Enrique (Henri) Stein, the Frenchman whose *El Mosquito* had inaugurated the Argentine illustrated satirical press in the 1860s, also passed away. *Plus Ultra* remembered Stein as “the dean of native and foreign-born draughtsmen who cultivated the caricature in Argentina” (Anonymous 1919a, 4). It also told a revealing story about the front lines of radical *porteño* journalism in its early days:

One time, Eduardo Sojo, rival of Stein in art and politics, was being persecuted by powerful enemies; and, with that clear intuition that fear sometimes inspires, went to ask him for help. Stein replied, “You hide here in my house, where nobody would think to look for you’ (ibid., 4).²

Sojo, another Spaniard, survived this scare and many others. So did his caustic broadsheet *Don Quijote*, where his countrymen Mayol and Cao also first launched their Argentine careers in the 1880s.
Those familiar with the history of Buenos Aires in the liberal era (circa 1870 to 1930) or modern Argentina more broadly will not be surprised to learn of the deep imprint that such European migrants made on the artistic life of the bourgeois Argentine metropolis around 1900. The Spanish colonial period that stretched roughly from 1580 to 1810 in this corner of South America did little to produce native traditions in the arts (Church architecture and decoration being the principal exceptions), and local institutions promoting secular high culture along European lines were still taking shape in the final decades of the 19th century. Even the graphic arts, destined for public consumption in the form of newspaper and magazine illustrations, had a foreshortened history in Buenos Aires. Though modern Argentine dailies such as *La Nación, La Prensa, El Diario,* and *La Patria* were rife with verbal satirical barbs, a mainstay of local political culture, the field of pictorial caricature was still open for new arrivals to exploit. As for the arrivals themselves, they were legion – an average of 100,000 immigrants reached Buenos Aires each year between 1880 and 1920. Not all stayed, but enough did that around 1910 almost 50 percent of the 1.2 million porteños and some two-thirds of workers were foreign-born (Moya 1998, 56; Scobie 1974, 260, 263). In this context, the line between outsider and insider, especially in new realms of art, science, and industry, was wafer thin.

Nevertheless, it is ironic that three rebellious Spanish expatriates – Sojo, Cao, and Mayol – led the development of mainstream Argentine visual culture in its formative period at the turn of the 20th century. The ease with which they passed into leadership roles in Argentine graphic arts is astonishing, as is their prominence in an artistic environment still accustomed to taking its cues from France and Italy over Spain – whose local cultural reputation had plummeted after Argentine independence and still appealed most strongly among conservatives (Moya 1998, 333–353; Fernández García 1997, 26–35). Yet these outsiders, raised as radical republicans and cultural anarchists during the Bourbon Restoration of the Spanish monarchy, quickly carved out a niche for anti-establishment humor in Buenos Aires. Today, as in 1919, Sojo, Cao, and Mayol are best remembered for their powerful and biting caricatures of the Argentine political elite, which graced their many covers and centerfolds (Malosetti Costa 2005). But their contribution to Argentine culture was much broader still. Surrounding themselves with other promising young illustrators from Argentina, Uruguay, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and especially Spain (Arturo Eusevi, Juan Peláez, Cándido Villalobos, Francisco Fortuny, Alejandro Sirio, etc.), they did more than any other group of visual artists to shape the look of modern Argentina – especially Buenos Aires – in the eyes of the average reader or newsstand browser.4 Thanks to this mélange of cosmopolitan émigrés, Argentines discovered and often laughed at the characteristic sights of
their rapidly modernizing capital, and they encountered two new marginal urban landscapes that would soon become central to Argentine modernism: the arrabales (outskirts) and the bohemian underground.

Such a satirical, intimate, and resolutely popular vision of Buenos Aires marked a clear departure from previous attempts to depict the city, which since the 1820s had emphasized picturesque landscapes and exotic habits – anything that artists, mostly foreign-born or simply passing by, found amusingly quaint or distinctive about porteño traditions from a European perspective. The waterfront was the chief panorama in this old ‘views and customs’ tradition, of interest to outsiders because of its difficult landing (requiring an awkward transfer from boat to skiff to marine wagon) and its antiquated occupants, from water sellers collecting their product to Afro-Argentine washerwomen doing their masters’ laundry. Inland, street scenes invariably focused on outlandish fashions and atavistic characters, of which the ‘beggar on horseback’ was the most notorious example (Outes 1940; González Garaño 1947; Del Carril/Aguirre Saravia 1982; Moores 1945). Eager to record such sights before they were lost to urban modernization, the earliest photographers of Buenos Aires only perpetuated this approach with their own ‘views and customs’ albums in the 1860s and 1870s (Priamo 2000; Junior 2002). Shortly thereafter, local painters began to train with academic masters in Europe, an experience that would eventually infuse Argentine art with a realism privileging urban social themes – principally the quotidian tribulations of the laboring classes. But before this artistic trajectory could become dominant, Sojo, Cao, and Mayol took the visual culture of Buenos Aires by storm, creating an irreverent image of the modern city and its many inhabitants – for its many inhabitants. One might even say that these expatriate artists were the first to laugh with porteños, rather than at them.

Sojo came first and threw the loudest bombs with his unsparing brand of political satire, which he developed as a young artist and rebel in Madrid during the 1870s, just as Spain’s brief republican experiment – the ‘Sexenio Democrático’ – was unraveling. A fierce opponent of both Church and Crown in the pages of radical Spanish journals such as El Buñuelo and El Motín, he wasted little time after arriving in Buenos Aires in late 1881 redirecting his anti-authoritarian polemics toward the liberal but undemocratic Partido Autonomista Nacional (PAN). Aspiring writer José Sixto Álvarez (“Fray Mocho”) later remembered helping Sojo secure the finances to launch Don Quijote in 1884 and escorting him around “the streets, showing him the things and the men of this country” (Fray Mocho c. 1890). It was the men who stood out to him the most. In the four weekly pages of Don Quijote, the inner two of which were reserved for a large lithograph, Sojo’s alter-ego “Demócrito” took aim at national and local officials in elaborate and
often grotesque caricatures. Sometimes he set them in mock historical and biblical scenes, intended to deflate the pretense of Argentine politicians; at other times he hung them in effigy, animalized them, or exaggerated their most embarrassing physical characteristics. The pictures were intended to offend—and they did. Always afoul of the law, by 1887 Sojo found himself in and out of jail regularly. Nothing delighted him more or sold his paper better.5

Although Don Quijote remained committed to political caricature over its 18-year run in Buenos Aires, its illustrations were often set on the streets of the Argentine capital and occasionally featured typical urban characters as part of its anarchic dramaturgy. At first this occurred because “Demócrito” was an inveterate critic of mayor Torcuato de Alvear, whom he regularly lampooned as “Palmerín” for his much-ridiculed decision to plant palm trees around the central Plaza de Mayo in 1883. But Sojo and his assistants also employed city scenes as backdrops for a wide variety of satirical images, as can be seen in his lithograph for the February 20, 1887 issue (fig. 1). Here “Palmerín” is joined in a mock carnaval parade by caricatures of President Miguel Juárez Celman and his ministers, who violently force the residents on the “Street of the Evicted” to cough up their cash—symbolizing the destructive effects of elite speculation and graft on national productivity. Meanwhile, the caption alludes ironically to official efforts to curtail the free expression of popular carnival traditions on the streets of Buenos Aires that year. The “most rich” (mas caras), it seethes, could still wear their “masks” (máscaras) and enjoy their own festival of greed at the public’s expense. “We are living a full-on carnival all year long”, Sojo complained in the accompanying column, “and [yet] they do not want to give the people its little bit!” (Anonymous 1887, 1).

In lampooning the country’s leaders, Don Quijote always presented itself as the champion of ordinary Argentines, and Sojo’s main contribution to Argentine culture was to visualize Buenos Aires as a politicized space that threatened the average inhabitant but could be countered by acerbic laughter. This perspective guided his frequent representation of the capital city as a place of arbitrary authority and a thousand risks and deceits. “Personal security in Buenos Aires is a myth”, ran the caption under a street scene showing the assassination of former provincial rebel Ricardo López Jordán in 1889 (Demócrito 1889, 2). Nor could the police be trusted to make life safer for the ordinary porteño. Time and again Don Quijote depicted officers harassing people or otherwise curtailing individual liberties on sidewalks and street corners. The official lottery was another favorite target, ridiculed as a con job from which few city dwellers could escape. Yet behind all these dangers stood the omnipresent menace of the PAN state. “Here he comes! Here he comes!”, shout the frightened people in one 1890 image as they flee the approaching President Juárez Celman, whom Sojo routinely caricatured as a donkey.
In another urban caricature from 1888, a little girl asks if the building across from her academy on “Liberty Street” is also a school. “For the love of the mayor!”, replies her mother, shuttling her away from the brothel; “don’t look over there” (Demócrito 1888, 2–3). If the authorities turn a blind eye to vice, goes this joke, why not the rest of us?

While such drawings used typical but imagined porteño streets to stage their satire, in other instances Don Quijote referred quite precisely to well-known urban places and landmarks. The Plaza de Mayo, surrounded by the executive Casa Rosada and other government buildings, was an obvious setting for the denunciation of PAN leadership. In a spread from January 29, 1893, the plaza
hosts a satirical allegory of the ruling coalition, whose efforts to hold power in the face of the repeated popular uprisings since 1890 have shredded its legitimacy and reduced everything it touches – its members, its policies, its press backers – to rubble (fig. 2). “Load it up!”, shouts a gaúcho (cowboy) on horseback, personifying the Argentine people, to a wagon driver preparing a trip to the city dump. The message is clear: these authentic Argentines, who so far have had no place in the epicenter of national politics, will soon be coming to the main square of Buenos Aires to clean up the mess left by the PAN and inaugurate a new era. As it turned out, a second Radical revolution would be crushed later that year, repeating the experience of the 1890 ‘Revolution of the Park’, a rebellion against the Juárez Celman administration that Don Quijote long claimed to have helped instigate (Biagini 1991, 103–110). Many of its later portrayals of specific locales in the Argentine capital celebrated this event in the Plaza del Parque or subsequent demonstrations in its honor downtown.

![Figure 2: Demócrito II (José María Cao). “¡¡¡Al carro!!!” Don Quijote, vol. 9, no. 24, 29 January 1893, pp. 2–3 (The Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).](image)

The 1893 Plaza de Mayo caricature is significant for another reason. It was made not by Sojo, but by Cao, who arrived in Buenos Aires in 1886 and began collaborating in Don Quijote as “Sancho Panza” the following year – while Sojo was in an Argentine jail for the first time. By this point the rebellious director had
launched a version of *Don Quijote* in Montevideo as well, and in 1892 he would leave Buenos Aires for a few years to do the same back in Madrid. In the meantime Mayol also joined their ranks after landing on Argentine shores in 1888, likewise in search of both a political escape from the conservative atmosphere of Spain after the Restoration and a personal opportunity to ‘hacer la America’. His contributions to *Don Quijote*, which began in 1890, appeared under the pseudonym “Heráclito”. The following year Cao switched to “Demócrito II”. As the names suggest, the hand of the founder often guided the pens of these newcomers – and indeed many of their illustrations were co-signed by “Demócrito”. Perhaps due to their influence, however, by the mid-1890s *Don Quijote* began to flirt with satirizing everyday life in the Argentine capital. For instance, “The Plagues of Buenos Aires”, an image cycle from August 30, 1896, neatly pans the many hazards of the street, from predatory lending to hanging electrical wires to toxic medications to a deathly slow judicial system (fig. 3). Although the corrosive *Don Quijote* never fully exploited the potential of social satire, the growing city now beckoned as a subject to be lampooned in its own right.

Fig. 3: Demócrito (Eduardo Sojo). “Las plagas de Buenos Aires” (detail). *Don Quijote*, vol. 13, no. 3, 30 August 1896, p. 2 (The Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).
If Sojo was the bomb-thrower, reducing the Argentine political landscape to rubble, his erstwhile assistants Cao and Mayol became the architects of modern Buenos Aires in images. Their vehicle was the ‘festive’ illustrated magazine *Caras y Caretas (Faces and Masks)*, launched in 1898 under the editorship of yet another Spaniard, Eustaquio Pellicer, who had migrated to South America after a failed republican uprising in 1886. Mayol became the artistic director, which ensured that his vision governed much more than his own pictures for the publication. Alongside Cao, he assembled a crack team of illustrators, mostly expatriates and many of them fellow Spanish immigrants. Together they produced dozens of drawings for each weekly issue (which had 20 to 40 pages of content, not counting the copious advertisements), only a small number of which were political caricatures. Although still prominently placed on covers and full pages, none of these send-ups of prominent politicians and policy blunders approached the Juvenalian savagery of their predecessors in *Don Quijote*. In fact, as the editors of *Caras y Caretas* explained in its first anniversary issue, the use of satire as “a vengeful weapon and tool of castigation” was “excessive for the times” and in “decline” (Anonymous 1899a, 18). Its new purpose, they said, should be to “crack smiles” on the faces of readers as they confronted the novelties of modern life, never becoming “too serious” or “too flippant” (ibid., 18–19).

In the quest for this humorous middle ground, a “satire of mores”, the pictures of Cao and company would be essential. So too the portrayal of Buenos Aires, whose restless change and bewildering variety now took precedence over politics. Not that politics disappeared entirely, of course; it just became a subsidiary folly of urban modernity. The focus of *Caras y Caretas* fell instead on the many characters, situations, and sights that made up everyday life in a large metropolis – anything knowingly typical or typically eccentric, either of which was good for a laugh or a sigh or both. The standard fare included cartoonish vignettes of the daily travails of ordinary porteños, comical street dialogues between people of different walks of life, and exaggerated portraits of unusual but characteristic urban occupations – or even a lack thereof. Whereas earlier artists in the ‘views and customs’ tradition had highlighted the horse-riding beggar as representative of the city’s incongruent backwardness, the illustrators of *Caras y Caretas* fixated on the atorrante, a modern bum with a penchant for philosophy and irreverence, as an archetype of the newly heterogeneous Buenos Aires. Interestingly, the atorrante was also one of the few popular urban types to have captured Sojo’s attention, but *Don Quijote* always disparaged him as a stooge of PAN rule. *Caras y Caretas*, by contrast, envisioned him as a worldly-wise rebel, quick of tongue and beholden to no man (cf. Vidal 1820, 50ff; Demócrito 1886, 2; Cao 1905, 28; Giménez 1905, 35).
There was practically no part of Buenos Aires that Mayol and his assistants would fail to visualize over the next two decades, and their attention to the specificity of urban streets and neighborhoods far exceeded anything that had come before in Argentine art or popular culture, including Sojo’s *Don Quijote*. That fact alone would make the Spanish and other expatriate illustrators of *Caras y Caretas* pioneers in the artistic reimagining of the Argentine port city as a modern metropolis. Not all was meant to be funny, either. Leading by his own example, Mayol encouraged his contributors to submit paintings and sketches of poignant urban landscapes for recurring full-page sections such as “Páginas artísticas” (“Artistic Pages”), “Buenos Aires pintoresco” (“Picturesque Buenos Aires”), and “Escenas callejeras” (“Street Scenes”), which offered some aesthetic relief from the wit and whimsy of their drawings for the regular “Sinfonía” (“Symphony”) and “Chafalonía” (“Trinkets”) columns, as well as for countless one-off spoofs. Another way these draughtsmen brought the new city to life was through their many illustrations for short stories and poems featuring home life and other intimate urban settings – the patio, the street corner, the balcony by day, the world beneath the lamppost by night. These too shaded more towards the sentimental than the satirical, though either mode could be used depending on the character of the literature to be adorned.

What held all these disparate strands of urban portraiture together was an emphasis on the eccentric and evanescent details of Buenos Aires as seen from an insider’s perspective. Although the graphic artists who spearheaded this revolution in representing the city were mostly foreign-born, so too were many of their readers. It was difficult to say who was a *porteño* and who was not in this heavily immigrant context, and no doubt for many recent arrivals the images of *Caras y Caretas* fostered a quick if superficial knowledge of their new Argentine home. The illustrators were themselves just a few steps ahead on this learning curve, but unlike previous traveling artists their pictures were not meant to exoticize the Argentine capital for audiences abroad. They expected their local readership to be able to relate to the sights they captured, such as the affecting familiarity of well-trodden city streets, plazas, and parks at transitional moments such as dusk or dawn, the humorous but slightly intimidating look of the *compadrito*, a tough but fashionable neighborhood swell, the ridiculous contortions of local political figures (including national leaders, who were based in Buenos Aires), and the often absurd situations *porteños* found themselves in while trying to eke out a living in a sprawling and not always welcoming capital. For instance, Mayol’s “Aid for the Flooded”, published in the September 2, 1899 issue, manages to satirize the ill fit between the city’s modern aspirations and the often precarious existence of its less fortunate inhabitants (fig. 4).
As this example suggests, *Caras y Caretas* was often literal in its pursuit of the eccentric side of Buenos Aires. Among its many metropolitan explorations and excavations, the representation of the urban outskirts – a place soon to be known in Argentine cultural history as the *arrabales* – stands out as both an innovation and a persistent subject. Neither clearly city nor clearly country, home to makeshift housing and marginal residents, and above all distant from the centers of Argentine politics, commerce, culture, and society downtown, this ramshackle periphery captivated the illustrators of *Caras y Caretas* as an oddly mysterious modern landscape – both a harbinger of the metropolis to come and a reminder of the humble lives swept up in or cast off by its expansion. Although the city edge had long fascinated artists of Buenos Aires, the dominant view in the ‘views and customs’ tradition was a waterfront panorama, executed from a distant point along the *ribera* (shoreline) and anchored by the church spires in the center of town (Bockelman 2012). It was, in essence, a portrait of the city’s ‘front’ side, considered from a European or Atlantic perspective. Assuming its readers were already residents, *Caras y Caretas* took them instead to its ‘back’ side, where the open *pampas* (plains) met the outbuildings of the Argentine capital, the modest plateau of the central city fell off into low-lying *barrancas* (ravines), and several small waterways, such as the Arroyo Maldonado and Riachuelo, still stood guard against the restless westward advance of urban modernity.
Mayol, who like many of his fellow expatriate illustrators harbored grander ambitions as a painter, arguably deserves credit as the first artist of the Argentine arrabales. Carlos Pellegrini had executed a landscape or two on the southwestern corner of Buenos Aires in the 1840s, yet these were mainly rural images. Ernesto de la Cárcova’s much-admired oil painting *Without Bread nor Work* (1894), showed the defiance of those suffering the economic downturn of the 1890s in the growing factory belt on the city’s south side. But Mayol discovered the urban outskirts as a unique metropolitan territory. His showpiece was “A Homestead in the Suburbs”, which likely began on canvas but appeared in *Caras y Caretas* as a full-page color lithograph on May 6, 1899 (fig. 5). It depicts, from behind, a rustic porteño returning home with his horse after a day of labor in town. A cluster of dilapidated but resolute shacks awaits him, as do two silently expectant figures, probably his parents, eager to hear if he met with good fortune. They could use a break – the brick is crumbling, plaster is peeling off walls, and their land is but hardened mud. And yet they are hanging on here at the edge of Buenos Aires, whose inescapable presence is shown by a solitary smokestack in the distance. Its natural counterpoint is the slender but towering tree that occasionally shades their home, ultimately lending the scene a sense of hope amid the hardship.

Taking this outlying and unpolished landscape seriously as an artistic subject was highly unusual when Mayol made “A Homestead in the Suburbs”. It would be another decade or more before celebrated Argentine painters such as Pío Collivadino and Benito Quinquela Martín and the rebellious printmaking collective Aristas del Pueblo began to make the arrabales the focal point of modern art in Argentina. But of course *Caras y Caretas* never wanted to be “too serious”, and so its image of the urban fringe could be comical too. Even though he inclined toward the sentimental in his own cityscapes, Mayol also made satirical scenes like “Aid for the Flooded”, which makes almost as much fun of the outskirts as of those in town who have failed to understand what it needs. More importantly, as artistic director he encouraged others on the magazine’s staff to exploit the humorous incongruence of the arrabales. When the wealthy Anchorena family donated its ex-urban estate in Olivos to be the new presidential mansion in 1899, Cao created a spoof of President Julio Roca trying to reach the property, only to be stopped at the city limits by an officer upholding the law that the Argentine head of state “cannot absent himself from the capital without the permission of Congress” (Anonymous 1898b, 13). Years later, for a July 1906 issue, he mocked a proposal to rename a sorry peripheral street after another president. “This is how we honor our illustrious men”, says a shabbily dressed booster of the idea, ignoring the dead cat in the road (Cao 1906, 36).
For all the attention that *Caras y Caretas* gave to the indeterminate outskirts, it also specialized in detailing and satirizing other marginal haunts in the city center – in particular the new bohemian world of aspiring poets, philosophers, and painters that began to take shape in downtown Buenos Aires in the 1890s. Already in the first issue we find a witty advertisement, almost certainly drawn in-house, for Aue’s Keller, a cheap restaurant known for its beer and tolerance of tight-pursed intellectual vagabonds. The image shows two such men enjoying the smell of food from the street – enough, the establishment half-promises, “to experience the illusion of having eaten” (Anonymous 1898a, 6). Many scenes of the bohemian literati sitting around sparsely-served café tables, debating artistic ideals lost on the general public, would follow, most commonly as illustrations to...
poems and short stories that alternately promoted, pitied, or parodied this set. A good example, drawn by Fortuny, comes from the 1904 story “Opiniones artísticas” (“Artistic Opinions”) by Carlos de Soussens, who was himself considered one of the great bohemians of his day. Here a nervous aspirant to the world of letters stumbles haltingly through a prepared discourse, interrupted by laughter and protestations as he tries to prove himself “well-read” (Soussens 1904, 35). Cao tried to offer a more celebratory take in his illustration for “Versos de año nuevo” (“New Year Verses”), poet Rubén Darío’s 1910 paean to earlier bohemian nights in Buenos Aires. But the papers and books falling forgotten to the floor as the assembled dreamers get drunk betray a more ironic view of their gatherings (fig. 6).

Fig. 6: José María Cao. Illustration for Rubén Darío, “Versos de año nuevo.” Caras y Caretas, no. 587, 1 January 1910, p. 138 (The Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

Beyond this café counterculture, readers of Caras y Caretas were constantly introduced to artistic souls and creative rebels tucked away in hidden corners of the metropolis. So, for instance, on October 4, 1902 we find Mayol’s vision of a
bohemian artist at work in his studio, made for Fray Mocho’s story “¡Modernista!” (“Modernist!”). Paint splattered on the floor, he looks on defiantly, cigarette in mouth, with the cultivated air of a laborer – an appropriate image for a decade in which many young poets, painters, and printmakers in Buenos Aires identified as cultural anarchists (fig. 7). Among them was Eusevi, another Spanish émigré working for the magazine, to whom Cao dedicated a memorable caricature on October 7, 1899. Bearded and emaciated like some artistic ascetic, he sits cross-legged before his latest composition, so absorbed in work that he does not even notice his humble lunch, a tin of sardines. Mayol’s mock portrait of Cao for the same issue imagines him quixotically reading his favorite book, *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1899) by Russian anarcho-spiritualist Leo Tolstoy (Anonymous 1899b, 33, 38). As these examples indicate, the illustrators of *Caras y Caretas* considered themselves urban eccentrics too, not terribly different from the many anonymous artists they were asked to draw. The fine line between success and failure, between the self-appointed bohemian and the one who had no choice, is nicely captured by Aurelio Giménez’s fictional portrait of a dejected writer drinking himself to death, made for a 1906 short story by Antonio Monteavaro. Though the police find a working poem in his pocket, they decide to list the deceased as an “atorrante” on their report (Monteavaro 1906, 51).

Fig. 7: Manuel Mayol. Illustration for Fray Mocho (José Sixto Álvarez), “¡Modernista!” *Caras y Caretas*, no. 209, 4 October 1902, p. 39 (The Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).
Such scenes of urban margins were so commonplace in Argentine publications by the time *Plus Ultra* appeared in 1916 that newly arriving Spanish graphic artists such as Alejandro Sirio were quickly initiated into the tradition (Ballesteros 1916, 28; García-Landa 1918, 58). Gone were the heroic days when migrants such as Sojo, Cao, and Mayol could simply import the style of satirical illustrations learned back in Europe and use them to interpret *porteño* affairs. Also gone was the bombast of *Don Quijote*, which had done so much to reorient the depiction of Buenos Aires away from the picturesque ‘views and customs’ that long delighted outsiders and toward an unapologetically popular perspective on the city and its failings. What it did not really do, paradoxically, was to portray the ordinary people it sought to reach as readers nor the places where they lived. With *Caras y Caretas*, Mayol, Cao, and a host of other Spanish illustrators deepened the application of caricature to the many-sided Argentine metropolis, and so they discovered, alongside their increasingly cosmopolitan audience, the eccentricities and follies of their new home. Who is to say what modern Buenos Aires would have looked like, in the mind’s eye, without them?

**Notes**

1. Many turn-of-the-century Argentine cultural publications were unpaginated. In such instances, the page numbers cited are estimates, with the front cover or front page counted as 1.
2. The common Argentine label ‘*porteño*’ refers to anything or anyone from the port city of Buenos Aires.
3. As the Spanish immigrant population of Buenos Aires grew, Argentine *hispanismo* became both more culturally mainstream and more ideologically reactionary after 1900. In this diversifying context, Spanish artists were able to make gradual inroads into the *porteño* art market. See Karp Lugo 2016.
4. For a brief overview of the various activities of these and other Spanish caricaturists in Buenos Aires, see Gutiérrez Viñuales 1997. Biographical portraits can be found in the appendix to Fernández García 1997, 215–270.
5. For more on Sojo’s transatlantic career, see Laguna Platero et al. 2016.
6. Sojo took these words as an attack and *Don Quijote* responded with an extended polemic against the upstart magazine. See Rogers 2008, 69–94.
7. On Soussens and his milieu, see Galtier 1973.
8. Compare with Cao’s more whimsical take on the bohemian artist for Montero Zamora 1901, 31.
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