



Mad Toy

Roberto Arlt , Michele Aynesworth (Translation)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Mad Toy

Roberto Arlt , Michele Aynesworth (Translation)

Mad Toy Roberto Arlt , Michele Aynesworth (Translation)

Roberto Arlt, celebrated in Argentina for his tragicomic, punch-in-the-jaw writing during the 1920s and 1930s, was a forerunner of Latin American “boom” and “postboom” novelists such as Gabriel García Márquez and Isabel Allende. *Mad Toy*, acclaimed by many as Arlt’s best novel, is set against the chaotic background of Buenos Aires in the early twentieth century. Set in the badlands of adolescence, where acts of theft and betrayal become metaphors for creativity, *Mad Toy* is equal parts pulp fiction, realism, detective story, expressionist drama, and creative memoir.

An immigrant son of a German father and an Italian mother, Arlt as a youth was a school dropout, poor and often hungry. In *Mad Toy*, he incorporates his personal experience into the lives of his characters. Published in 1926 as *El juguete rabioso*, the novel follows the adventures of Silvio Astier, a poverty-stricken and frustrated youth who is drawn to gangs and a life of petty crime. As Silvio struggles to bridge the gap between exuberant imagination and the sordid reality around him, he becomes fascinated with weapons, explosives, vandalism, and thievery, despite a desperate desire to rise above his origins. Flavored with a dash of romance, a hint of allegory, and a healthy dose of irony, the novel’s language varies from the cultured idiom of the narrator to the dialects and street slang of the novel’s many colorful characters.

Mad Toy has appeared in numerous Spanish editions and has been adapted for the stage and for film. It is the second of Arlt’s novels to be translated into English.

Mad Toy Details

Date : Published July 18th 2002 by Duke University Press Books (first published 1926)

ISBN : 9780822329404

Author : Roberto Arlt , Michele Aynesworth (Translation)

Format : Paperback 184 pages

Genre : Fiction, Classics, Cultural, Latin American, European Literature, Spanish Literature

 [Download Mad Toy ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Mad Toy ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Mad Toy Roberto Arlt , Michele Aynesworth (Translation)

From Reader Review Mad Toy for online ebook

Ernesto says

[is expelled from the military academy he's attending and, unable or unwilling to return home and face his family, goes to the city and checks into a cheap hotel with weird

Barby says

Durante años no le tuve mucha estima a este libro, y es claro que se debe a que me lo dieron para leer en el colegio cuando yo tendría unos 13 o 14 años. Otra vez tengo que leerlo, 10 años después, y todo el odio que le tenía me quedó injustificado. Es como dicen algunos, algunos libros hay que leerlos de nuevo de más grande y tendremos otra mirada de lo que las palabras nos transmiten. Ahora puedo decir que he hecho las paces con este libro.

Iván says

Tenia mucha curiosidad de checar la literatura de Roberto Arlt desde hacia rato. Ahora que lo he intentado, encuentro que es muy diferente a lo que esperaba. Muy diferente a todo lo que habia leído también, en cierta forma. Puedo definitivamente ver su influencia en otros (pocos) autores argentinos que he leído, como Sabato o Piglia (cuyo ensayo al inicio de esta versión me esclareció mucho).

Al principio me decepciono. Me pareció demasiado "barroco" en cierto sentido, de prosa muy purpura y formal. Además, tenía entendido que era sobre ladrones, porque me contaba ahora la historia de unos mocosos?

Seguí leyendo y la novela poco a poco me enamoró. Es realmente una novela con muy poca trama y aun la poca que hay tiene una cualidad no racional. Porque decide Silvio ser Judas? Que es lo que busca, realmente? Hay algo que realmente defina los eventos que pasaron en su crecimiento? Todas esas respuestas no pueden ser respondidas de forma clara, y eso es lo genial. En sí es la historia de un Silvio, un tipo obsesionado con la literatura picaresca, tratando de conseguir un poco de dinero y de trabajo mientras crece en varios lugares. La escuela de "El Lazarillo de Tormes" y todo eso. Una historia simple se vuelve grande contada por un gran escritor, creo que este es el caso. Arlt tiene una habilidad para hacer hermosos los momentos de nada, darle significado a tonterías. Los párrafos de cuando se pone a vender papel son una cosa tan hermosa. No me decido si es un estilo simplificado o barroco, lleno como está de aclamar a Dios y signos de exclamación, pero los momentos de mayor poesía están en las cosas pequeñas, en el sentimiento de Silvio de ver la existencia entera en un rayo de sol, su gratitud por los libros que le inspiraron. Prosa única y hermosa.

Eso sí, las actitudes machistas y homofóbicas tiene uno que decir "Es justo para su tiempo". Un homosexual trata de seducir a Silvio (hablando de como quiere ser mujer porque todos los homosexuales son mujeres en cuerpo de hombre, verdad?) y Silvio le dice que vea un psicólogo...después se siente mal de como no será nunca una mujer...como dije, se reconoce que NO lo villanizo, es justo para su tiempo. Las mujeres también son la recompensa de Astier para con todo, seres míticos que no hablan, están en otra parte.

El ensayo de Piglia al principio me ayudó a entender muchas cosas. Realmente es una novela mucho más extraña de lo que aparenta, pero la prosa de Arlt me encantó. Tiene un algo medio nihilista que encuentro un poco perturbante, pero combinado con su romanticismo crea una literatura hermosa. Definitivamente que

leere mas de el y sobre el, aunque quizas no pronto.

Lautaro says

Arlt es un experto en desmenuzar la realidad, una realidad que a su visión es triste y sucia. En el caso de "El Juguete Rabioso", Arlt habla de las dificultades que representa ascender socialmente a alguien nacido en la pobreza, y la mentira de la "Inclusión Social". El mensaje es claro: en una sociedad donde la cultura se encuentra profundamente ligada a la calidad económica la barrera social se vuelve impenetrable, el rechazo genera resentimiento y el resentimiento se convierte en maldad. Y la miseria, solo genera más miseria.

Arlt is a total expert in crumbling reality, a reality that, to his view, is sad and nasty. In "Mad Toy", Arlt talks about the difficulties of upward mobility for someone born into poverty, and the lie of "Social Inclusion". The message is clear: in a society where culture is deeply tied to the economic quality, the social barrier becomes impenetrable. Rejection breeds resentment, and with time, this resentment becomes evil. And misery only breeds more misery.

Sergio Bernales says

genio

Diana says

""¿Dónde estará el corazón?"

Los opacos golpes interiores me indicaron su posición."

Vadimir Ramos Andaur says

Este libro me persigue desde 2015 y recién hoy lo terminé de leer. Inteligente, veloz, crudo. El Juguete rabioso es atravesado desde un inicio por la inocencia pasional propia de la adolescencia.

Silvio Astier como muchacho de la primera mitad del siglo veinte me recuerda a muchos de los chiquillos de este milenio. Claro, no tiene celular ni redes sociales, sus héroes no son cantantes de rap, sino rufianes de nouvelles en clave caballerescas, pero lo aquejan las mismas incertidumbres de los cabros que viven en la periferia de Santiago: ilusiones de futuras grandezas, anhelo por la independencia económica, frustración ante un futuro incierto, el peso de la familia que habita el péndulo de la pobreza, traiciones de los amigos y maestros, miedos ante aparente inutilidad.

En fin, fijo un libro a dar de leer en el colegio. Contrás a tener en consideración: el lenguaje no resiste tan bien el paso del tiempo, muchas palabras parecen extrañas al español del siglo XXI, pero nada que no se pueda interpretar por el contexto.

Saga Norén says

SPOILER: El protagonista al final decide irse a Neuquén, y dice: *Dónde hay hielo y nubes, quiero ver montañas.*

Yo creo que un poco se equivoca, ya que si habla de la ciudad *per sé* se equivocó feo, ya que lo que va a encontrar no son montañas, sino una mini Capital, con mucho asfalto y calor en verano insoportable. Arlt creo que se equivocó y quiso mencionar Bariloche u otra ciudad, como Calafate, pero no Neuquén!

Un librito escrito en 1926, un poco deprimente si soy sincera, al estilo de Manuel Puig, básicamente en esas épocas mucha gente enfermaba de tuberculosis y eran enviados a Córdoba para su recuperación, por los aires limpios que transmitían las sierras..

Tom Lichtenberg says

Excellent novel by Roberto Arlt, set in 1920's urban Argentina - it's a book about boyhood and poverty that compares well with other great books of this kind (Call It Sleep, Stop-Time, This Boy's Life), with a hard-boiled flavor as intense as Dashiell Hammett and as colorful as Dostoevsky.

It consists of 4 episodes in a young poor boy's life - his glorious dreams of being a bandit, the harsh reality of horrible jobs - and what characters this guy writes! There is no 'type' in here, no character just filling a slot. Each one is as unique as a real person, and each one contributes in their own inimitable way to the events that occur.

The title is translated as 'The Mad Toy', but I keep thinking of it as "The Rabid Plaything", which evokes, to me at least, more of the energy and vividness of the writing.

Natasha GJ Nanny Nakia says

El juguete rabioso, novela que iba a llamarse La vida puerca, narrada en primera persona por el protagonista Silvio Astier, recorre su vida en Buenos Aires y sus fracasos. Siempre Silvio está destinado a fracasar, incluso fracasa siendo malo. La novela puede leerse en cualquier orden, ya que los cuatro capítulos que se presentan son independientes entre sí.

Silvio es un personaje brillante y amante de los libros, tanto que incluso llega a robarlos. A pesar de ser de mente despierta, sus acciones son amargas. Continuamente en descenso, pasando por un intento de suicidio, Silvio termina con una acción contradictoria pero que lo hunde más en la oscuridad.

Roberto Arlt exprime con total crudeza la vida de un joven pobre en los barrios bajos de Buenos Aires, haciendo de esta novela única en su tipo.

Daniela Cobián says

Una novela de la calle que reniega de la academia, pero está escrita con un lenguaje pretenciosísimo (aunque a su vez incorpora el argot de la calle). Combinación rarísima, eso es lo que puedo decir.

Creo que el mayor acierto es el retrato que hace de la marginación y la pobreza. Hay momentos en los que sí te sientes mal de que la vida sea así de puerca y de que el destino de la miseria y el fracaso se sienta tan inescapable.

Other than that, a mí el estilo no me gustó de nada y tampoco estoy del todo convencida acerca de su estructura basada en episodios relativamente inconexos. Creo que la estructura logra sostener una tesis, pero no estoy segura de que logre sostener la historia.

Patricio says

I read about the early 20th century Argentinean writer Roberto Arlt a couple of months ago in an interview given by the late Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño, whose translated novels are beginning to appear in English in New Directions. Bolaño said that no one read Roberto Arlt anymore. I made a mental note to pick up something by Arlt, but then, as most of my mental notes go, I forgot about it.

Or so I thought. A couple of weeks ago I was in the Spanish section of the Central library looking for God knows what when I somehow stumbled upon three of Arlt's novels: El Juguete Babiioso, Los Siete Locos and Los Lanzallamas. I picked up El Juguete Rabioso (Mad Toy) and read the prologue by Juan Carlos Onetti, the Uruguayan writer. Onetti praised Arlt in a way that made it hard not to get the book. He said that Arlt was the "closest thing to genius" to ever come out of the Río de la Plata. I thought about Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortazar and was surprised that Onetti had not mentioned them as being close to genius.

I was blown away by the novel mainly because of Arlt's use of language. He uses the whole of Spanish. This is kind of hard to explain. Let me try. Though the characters are deeply Argentinean, and they speak the way Argentineans do, Arlt does not enclose himself in Buenos Aires. He opens up his ear to the whole language of Latin America and Spain. You don't know whether the narrator's Mexican, Argentinean or Spanish. He mixes slang with scientific or intellectual words, neologisms with archaic terms, ready made phrases with poetic metaphors of his own. It was astonishing. The language might be a bit baroque at times, but it is not literary at all. It feels alive.

The plot is simple. A group of lively and smart Junior High students make a huge plan to rob their own school. The planning and actual execution brings them very close. They pull it off for the most part, but at the end everything crumbles down and each goes their separate way in life. We stay with one of them, Silvio Astier, a kind of Julian Sorel, the main character from Stendhal's Red and Black, who tries to make it out of poverty but fails year after year maybe because of how society is built.

Harsh reality pushes Silvio to deal with the worst of urban Buenos Aires: grotesque characters for whom there is nothing beyond money or satisfying their crudest sensual needs. Throughout the novel Silvio hangs in an exasperating balance: the wish to make quick money to bring his mother and sister out of poverty and that of giving meaning to his life--that is, I think, finding an outlet, any outlet, for self-expression and fulfillment.

At one point, after having made it through hell, he gets kicked out of the Air force for being "too much of a thinker." This is dismal to his aspirations because he had put all of his energy and hopes into getting into the Air force. He tries to kill himself but fails. At this point he meets a good hearted parking attendant who lets him into his plan to Rob a rich man's house with the help of the man's maid. This is Silvio's last shot at making money. Everything seems to be about to work out perfectly when something completely unforeseen happens. Shit. The reader is taken aback and then the novel's over. "What the hel!" the reader thinks and throws the book against the wall while cursing at Arlt and Silvio Astier.

But then you think about it and little by little begin to see what it was all about. You pick up the book from the floor and apologize because you realize that Arlt's point was something else all together. And you also realize that Silvio was much more complex than you thought. Then you go back to the library and pick up his second novel, "Seven Mad Men," which is what I did.

Deni says

siglo en la misma línea. relectura, pero la verdad no lo tenía nada fresco. increíble la pasión de Astier pero mucho más increíble aún este autor radical en la historia de nuestra literatura.

jeremy says

sometimes at night i would think of the beauty with which poets made the world shake, and my heart would flood with pain, like a mouth filling with a scream.

admired by the likes of jorge luis borges, juan carlos onetti, julio cortázar, and roberto bolaño, argentine novelist, playwright, and journalist roberto arlt was a pre-boom writer who inspired many a south american author (including fellow countryman césar aira). throughout his stunning collection of essays, *between parentheses*, bolaño mentions arlt on a number of occasions:

the second line of descent is more complex. it begins with roberto arlt, though it's likely that arlt is totally innocent of this mess. let's say, to put it modestly, that arlt is jesus christ, argentina is israel, of course, and buenos aires is jerusalem. arlt is born and lives a rather short life, dying at forty-two, if i'm not mistaken. he's a contemporary of borges. borges is born in 1899 and arlt in 1900. but unlike borges, arlt grows up poor, and as an adolescent he goes to work instead of to geneva. arlt's most frequently held job was as a reporter, and it's in the light of the newspaper trade that one views many of his virtues, as well as his defects. arlt is quick, bold, malleable, a born survivor, but he's also an autodidact, though not an autodidact in the sense that borges was: arlt's apprenticeship proceeds in disorder and chaos, through the reading of terrible translations, in the gutter rather than the library.

the mad toy (el juguete rabioso), arlt's first novel (published in 1926), is but one of five he wrote during his brief life. inspired, in part, by his own childhood, arlt's story is set in 1920s buenos aires and tells the tale of a precocious and resourceful teenager as he struggles to escape his urban poverty and limited opportunities. silvio drodman astier, despite his youth, is crafty yet prone to crime, curious yet malcontent. with a cunningness matched perhaps only by his ingenuity, silvio, an avid reader with a fondness for both baudelaire and dostoyevsky (as well as science and mathematics), dreams of a life for himself that may,

perhaps, be forever just beyond his reach.

then, slowly, my drunken excitement subsided. an irrational seriousness took its place, a serious attitude of the kind that it is a mark of good taste to display in public. and i felt like laughing at this ridiculous, paternalistic seriousness. but because seriousness is hypocrisy, and because 'conscience' needs to be acted out in private, i said to myself:

'you are accused... you are a scoundrel... an incendiary. you have enough remorse for a whole lifetime. you will be interrogated by the police and the courts and by the devil... prisoner in the dock, this is no joke... you don't understand that you need to be serious... you're going to be thrown headfirst into the clink.'

but my attempt at seriousness did not convince me. it sounded empty, like an empty can. no, i couldn't take this mystification seriously. and now i was a free man, and what did society have to do with this freedom? and now i was free i could do whatever i liked... kill myself if i wanted... but that was a bit ridiculous... and i... i needed to do something beautifully serious, perfectly serious: to love life. and i repeated:

'yes, life... you are pretty, life... did you know it? from here on in i will love all the pretty things of the earth... of course... i will worship trees, and houses and the sky... i will adore everything that there is in you... and also... tell me, life, isn't it the case that i'm an intelligent kid? did you ever know anyone like me?'

split into four chapters (with each corresponding roughly to another of silvio's teenage years), *the mad toy* follows the young narrator from his days as a street thief, to his work as an errand boy in a bookshop, to a brief stay in a military academy, and finally selling paper products on the streets of buenos aires - before a nefarious plot will come to mark the rest of his life. silvio's idealism, tempered by frustrations and abjection, forever leads him on a exploratory quest to not only better himself, but also carve out a meaningful life. resilient and conscientious (in his own unique way), silvio's independence is met by myriad disappointments - until he decides what he must inevitably do.

'it's right... there are moments in our lives when we need to be scum, to make ourselves dirty even on the inside, to do something infamous, i don't know... to destroy a man's life for ever... and after doing this then we can walk with our heads held high again.'

the mad toy is quite the novel and it's of little wonder that roberto arlt was held in such high esteem by a veritable who's who of latin american letters. arlt's prose is remarkable, vacillating between the urban slang of his young protagonist and his more museful introspections. silvio's street reality is portrayed adroitly, as is arlt's snapshot of the argentine capital. *the mad toy* is a fine work of fiction - one that situates arlt prominently amongst the other masters of argentina's rich literary heritage.

the trials of being human! how many sad words did we still keep hidden in our guts!

*translated from the spanish by james womack (poet and publisher)

Bryan says

Acepto leer más Bildungsroman hispanoamericanos.

Eliana Rivero says

Es un libro que no es recomendable leer si estás deprimido. Totalmente cruda y cruel, cuenta la historia de pobreza de Silvio Astier, un muchacho muy inteligente, que primero quiere ser ladrón, pero que luego quiere ser algo en la vida, quiere trabajar y no quiere seguir trabajando en exceso sin vivir la vida. El honor y la sinceridad al parecer es lo que prevalece. Y es que la vida es linda...

Samuel Avila says

Silvio Astier es el personaje principal de la primera novela de Roberto Arlt o su Bildungsroman, parece ser sacado o desdoblado del propio Arlt, ya que su personaje es un adolescente un poco bandido y romántico en la primera parte, luego se extiende como un manifiesto existencialista en su narración y las propias aventuras o desventuras de su personaje y puesto que un análisis exhaustivo como el que se le ha hecho a esta y a todas las obras, Arlt parece poner un poco de sus propias experiencias y aficiones compartidas con Silvio por la literatura folletinesca, policíaca, historias de bandidos, por su puesto influencias de poetas y grandes escritores que rayan en la conciencia psicológica de Silvio y que marca el pulso de la obra, llevando al éxtasis, al lirismo, las aficiones, como dije las desventuras, un montón de cosas.

Para mí un placer y un descubrimiento haber leído esta novela, con su argumento ambicioso, bien logrado, lleno de matices psicológicos, sociales, estilísticos... que envidia me da el personaje mismo que es Arlt con sus pretensiones, sus breves narraciones (en algunas ocasiones) rimbombantes, la manera en que Silvio juega con sus propios límites y quizá el mismo autor al escribir su novela -che, si la vida es linda... linda...

Emir Ibañez says

Durísima, tristísima y pesimista. Nada más que decir.

Kenchiin says

Una patada en la cara. De esas que duelen.

Andrés Cabrera says

Un libro bellísimo, en donde la angustia y la alegría confluyen bajo el compás de la vida. El universo de los miserables, de esos que buscan el cobijo en los márgenes de una sociedad que no los tolera, que no los desea, a los que hace gente prescindible, encuentra refugio en estas páginas. Entre trabajos anodinos (y el hecho de verse vivo) a la existencia en el mundo del lumpen (corriendo el riesgo de morir o "ir a la cana"), los personajes de Arlt se aferran a la vida, de la mejor manera que pueden. En palabras de Arlt, "Che, es la Struggle for life, unos se regeneran... otros caen... ¡Así es la vida!"

La desesperación es la única nota que resuena en el panorama. La vida es lo único que parece tener sentido, al final del día...frente a todos, contra todos. De manera crítica y mesurada, sin sonar aleccionador ni pretender serlo, Arlt disecciona la angustia del hombre moderno: el temor ante la maquinización e industrialización de la vida, el desprecio por una forma de ser que no parece propender por la felicidad (la vida capitalista, si se quiere), el desamparo de las clases más bajas (que sólo tienen su fuerza de trabajo: prescindible y subvalorada) y el dolor por la desigualdad...entre muchas otras más cosas. Me atrevo a decir que esta pequeña novelita está al nivel de Los Siete Locos: es igualmente violenta, aunque carece del humor de su obra prima.
