

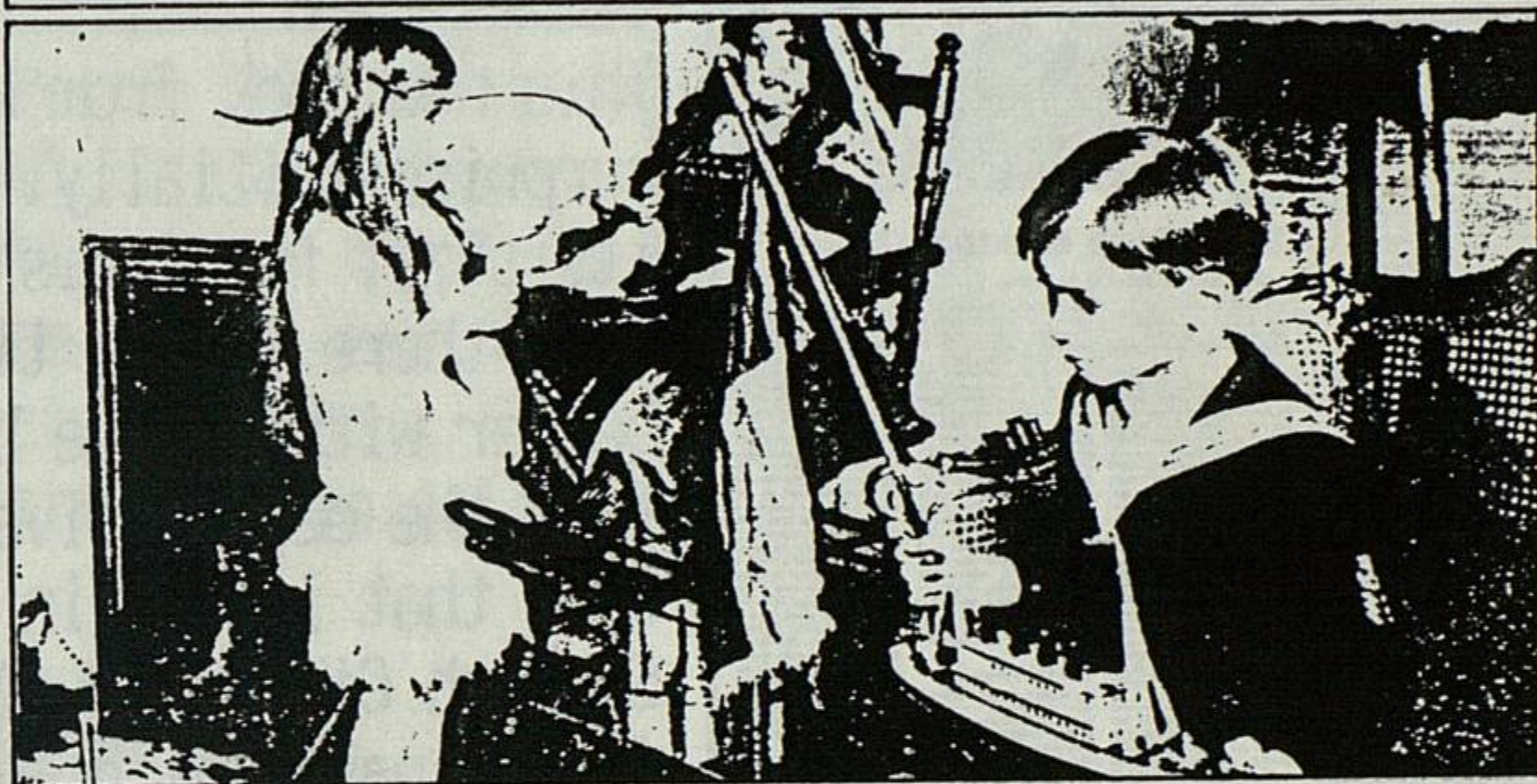
# UTE KÖRNER • LITERARY AGENT

RONDA GUINARDO 32-5º-5º • BARCELONA 08025 • SPAIN • TEL: 2550414

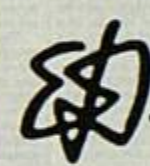
## PRESENTS:



Miguel Delibes  
*377A, madera de héroe*



Ediciones Destino *Áncora y Delfin*



607

EL PAÍS, domingo 6 de diciembre de 1987

"THIS IS THE BEST OF HIS  
NOVELS IN RECENT YEARS."



377 A, THE STUFF OF HEROES  
by Miguel Delibes  
published by Destino, Bar-  
celona, 1987. 440 pp.

# MIGUEL DELIBES







# TRIAL BY FIRE

Little by little, and with the utmost care taken by the excellent narrator Miguel Delibes, the reader is led to the discovery that he has before him an apologue, a moral fable, one of the currents which run through the work of this writer from beginning to end. Its two poles have always been Castile and ethics, the two at times coming together in masterly fashion. It can take the form of a civic lesson (Cinco horas con Mario - Five Hours with Mario, 1966), satire (Mi idolatrado hijo Sisí - My idolized Son Sisí, 1953), or that of a theoretical quest in his more dubious moments (Parábola del naufrago - Parable of the Shipwrecked, 1969) and in his best, such as the above-mentioned Las

[illegible]

\* The Hedge

MD

FUNDACIÓN MIGUEL DELIBES



14 DOMINGO LIBROS II

EL PAÍS, domingo 6 de diciembre de 1987

## Estufas perfectas

El futuro de los jóvenes cuentistas

Alonso Quijano  
Fuentes, 1987. 100 páginas.  
120 pesetas.

Alonso Quijano es el autor de este libro, que es una recopilación de sus cuentos. El libro está dividido en dos partes: la primera contiene los cuentos que el autor escribió antes de 1980, y la segunda los que escribió después de esa fecha. El libro es una excelente introducción a la obra de Quijano, que es uno de los mejores cuentistas de la literatura española contemporánea.



## El destino es contrario

Delibes escribe sobre el heroísmo

Delibes, 1987. 100 páginas.  
120 pesetas.

Delibes es uno de los mejores escritores de la literatura española contemporánea. Su obra está caracterizada por una profunda reflexión sobre la condición humana y la sociedad. En este libro, Delibes aborda el tema del heroísmo, que es uno de los temas más importantes de su obra. El libro está dividido en dos partes: la primera contiene los cuentos que el autor escribió antes de 1980, y la segunda los que escribió después de esa fecha. El libro es una excelente introducción a la obra de Delibes, que es uno de los mejores escritores de la literatura española contemporánea.

guerras de nuestros antepasados (1975). This 377A, MADERA DE HEROE thus turns out to be a sort of private prolongation of the theme developed in the previous novel, although it is superior in terms of narrative expression - hindered in the earlier work by the technique of psychological interrogation.

The bureaucratic number alongside the descriptive title is deliberately placed there in order to demythologize it, to reduce a so-called absolute ideal to administrative terms. It is not possible to bureaucratize the hero. The novel moves forward with clarity and rhythm; reality gets inside this boy who is not only unmarked by the fate which had been promised him but is, rather, governed by the fate of ordinary mortals. His father, on the other hand, describes this immortal symptom as an 'horribilization', that is, as an attack of fear, and the youth will make his definitive discovery of this when he comes face to face with the war and with death. But he will also discover the ambiguity of heroism, for the person who is a hero for one cause will be a traitor for the opposing cause and, when reduced to subjectivity, the boundary between good and bad causes becomes a line so fine that it almost disappears.

Heroes do not exist, of course, and heroism is nothing more than a result in which the subsequent circumstances of the protagonist have more influence than his will. Miguel Delibes speaks with wisdom, with a strange and almost unnoticed serene sarcasm which is nevertheless present from beginning to end. He speaks in the name of the bulk of mortals and investigates the contradictions of this own world with his usual rigour and austerity. And this is the best of his novels in recent years.

RAFAEL CONTE

"THIS IS THE BEST OF HIS NOVELS IN RECENT YEARS."

FUNDACIÓN MIGUEL DELIBES



# Review

NOVEMBER 11, 1990

3

## Spanish Heroism and Virtue

MD

### THE STUFF OF HEROES

By Miguel Delibes, translated by  
Frances M. Lopez-Morillas  
Pantheon; 293 pages; \$22.95

REVIEWED BY  
STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

**M**iguel Delibes, born in 1920, 16 years before the onset of the Spanish Civil War, emerged as a novelist in the aftermath of that tragedy. Under the Franco dictatorship in 1947, he received a literary honor, the Nadal Prize.

As a writer, Delibes has overcome the Franco-era heritage of continued political polarization. In "The Stuff of Heroes," published in Spanish three years ago and translated into English by Frances M. Lopez-Morillas for U.S. publication recently, he provides a rare look at the war from the viewpoint of a Franco partisan.

His hero, Gervasio, a young recruit to Franco's naval forces, has experiences in the war that are not, in the end, very different from those of his Republican enemies. Delibes' subtle weaving of emotions and observations is a parable of reconciliation, 50 years later, for the million who died in the war.

Gervasio's family is a group of fading aristocrats. His father, Don Telmo, is a supporter of the Republic and is arrested and interned at the beginning of the fighting, but is saved from death by the intervention of other family members, who are Francoists. Gervasio also has two "crazy" uncles who are brutally executed.

Yet his family calls on him to erase this horror from his memory, and Gervasio finds in the civil war a means of self-discovery and fulfillment by enlisting as a naval cadet. Before he reports for duty he experiences a life behind the lines that seems to mirror what generally is known about the ordeal of the Spanish Republic.

"Uncontrollable" pro-Franco extremists carry out terror raids and murders. Aerial bombings sow panic and hatred among city dwellers on both sides, and they react with reprisals against political prisoners (Gervasio prays that his father, who is being held captive in a bullring, will not be killed). Political competition between fascists and monarchists is as fierce under the counter-revolutionary flag as that between Communists and anarchists in leftist-controlled territory. Everywhere is Goyaesque agony.

Like the young volunteers of the left who went to their deaths singing revolutionary anthems, Gervasio enters the naval service under the spell of a heroic Foreign Legion and its quintessentially Iberian marching song, "Death's Sweetheart": "No one in the ranks/ Knew that soldier's name,/ So brave and so audacious / Who enlisted seeking fame..."

Gervasio's progress through the ranks of the Franco navy is not easy. Here, too, the subtext is significant, for almost the entire Spanish navy, as alluded to frequently in these pages, sided with the Republic, with the lower ranks killing the officers.

Thus, to enter the naval service was to acquire yet another burden, since the Navy was viewed with suspicion by Francoites.

Delibes is not an apologist for Franco's counter-revolution. He is simply an accurate recorder of the ultimate truth of all civil wars: that neither side has a monopoly on martyrdom, virtue or heroism. This touching, beautiful book deserves a very wide readership.

Stephen Schwartz is on the staff of The Chronicle.

*May favorable ésta, de un periódico importante  
Abrazo, Frances*

MIGUEL  
DELIBES  
FUNDACIÓN



(New York)

NEWSDAY

8-16-90 New  
This Week

## BOOKS



**Till the End of Time**  
By Allen Appel  
Doubleday, \$19.95

The time-traveler of "Twice Upon a Time" and "Time After Time" returns, here thrust back to the eve of Hiroshima; while he wrestles with the dilemma of whether or not to prevent the bombing of Japan, back in the future his female love interest (ignorant of his whereabouts) tracks a story on Japanese biochemical warfare for The New York Times.

  
**The Stuff of Heroes**  
By Miguel Delibes  
Pantheon, \$22.95

A child's-eye view of a politically divided aristocratic family during the Spanish Civil War; by one of Spain's most acclaimed novelists.



FUNDACIÓN  
MIGUEL  
DELIBES



romance  
Review

(American Library  
Association)

Booklist 5  
9/15/90

MAB:31DELIBE.SE2

**Delibes, Miguel.** *The Stuff of Heroes*. Sept. 1990. 295p.  
Pantheon, \$19.95 (0-394-57746-9). Galley. YA

[CIP] 89-43253

Like Hugo Claus' *Sorrow of Belgium* [BKL Je 1 90], which depicted a young boy growing up in fascist Belgium on the brink of World War II, Spanish writer Delibes' coming-of-age novel is set during the equally politically charged and tempestuous time of the Spanish civil war. Gervasio has had premonitions of hero status since he was a mere child: his neck hairs stood on end when he heard military marches, and he has been susceptible to sudden mystical swoons as well. Eventually, as a naval recruit, Gervasio will get the chance to become a real hero, but by this time his indoctrination will cancel all the expected glory and pride, and death will seem a more likely reward for the truly heroic deed. But even before this moral flash point, Gervasio's family and their position in conservative Spanish society also become problems for Gervasio, as sides in the forthcoming battle are chosen and his relatives divide in their patriotic allegiance. English readers may not catch all of the historical resonance of Delibes' story, but the depiction of Gervasio's family life resounds with laughter and anguish. —*John Brosnahan*



FUNDACIÓN MIGUEL  
DELIBES