

matter properly left to the priesthood but instead takes matters into her own hands and achieves the satisfaction of dealing with the problem herself.

Mormon women have their own heritage and their own problems not shared by women elsewhere. The women's movement applies to them in unique ways. In coping with their problems, they need to develop their own thinkers, their own history, and their own literature. Mormon feminism is the mainspring of *Sideways to the Sun*, and Mormon women trying to find a new identity ought to find much interest and inspiration in it.

Sillitoe's literary power is so impressive that I sometimes wish she had sought a broader audience than the Mormon public to which this novel is directed and

to which it will be limited. Interpreting Mormon experience for a wider world is, as Wallace Stegner has observed, a formidable task, since the writer is constantly obligated to explain the culture about which he or she is writing—an obligation not imposed upon writers interpreting cultures with more widely recognized traditions. Sillitoe explains nothing; she assumes an understanding of Mormon theology, institutions, and folkways that only Mormon readers, or those who have lived in Mormon country or made a special study of it, will possess. She has, of course, the right to seek whatever audience she wishes, but writers of her sophistication emerge so rarely within Mormondom that I have to hope her future work will accept the greater challenge.

Livre d'Artiste

The Book of Abraham. Printed and designed by Day Christensen, lithographs by Wulf Barsch (Pleasant Grove, Utah: Wormwood Press, 1985), 19 folios, \$950 unbound in a linen box; \$1450 full leather binding.

Reviewed by Lowell Durham, Jr., past president of Deseret Book Company and editor of the *Journal of Mormon History*.

ON FIRST PICKING UP *The Book of Abraham*, printed and designed by Day Christensen with hand-printed color lithographs by Wulf Barsch, I flinched, then looked over my shoulder to see if any of my children were near. My fear was that one of them might tear a page, spill Coke on it, lose it, or draw on page eleven with an orange crayon. Why publish such an expensive book? The answer is simple. It elevates the genre "book" to an art form.

For that reason, a review of this book cannot be a typical critical analysis of the text which ignores the design, production, and the art. Rather, it is the process of bookmaking as a whole that expresses itself in this, the "livre d'artiste." This symbiosis

of book and art is described by Constance W. Glenn: "Books recognized by this designation [livre d'artiste] are valued for their beauty and their rarity, and sell for prices that climb rapidly from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands. They are usually handmade, published in limited editions, and represent either a close collaboration between artist and writer, or a sympathetic involvement—on the part of an artist—with historic literature or themes" (*Architectural Digest*, May 1984, p. 62).

For me, there is a dimension far more important than rarity or value. It is that the "livre d'artiste" approaches what a book should be—a miracle. This edition of *The Book of Abraham* is as uniquely designed and solidly crafted as were the great books of antiquity such as the Gutenberg Bible. For example, the margin ratios are 2:3:4:6, starting with the gutter margin of each right-hand page and going clockwise around the page. The left page is the same counterclockwise. The body type adheres to Aristotle's "golden mean." A diagonal from the top gutter corner to

the lower corner will also cut the type diagonally, corner to corner. In a personal interview, Christensen himself described the papers, binding leather, cloth, type, and box with the intelligence and love of an artist filling his palette with colors before painting.

Christensen selected quality paper with beautiful texture and heft. He specially ordered Caslon Old Face type from England and handset each letter. He also designed and colored the red initial letter that begins the book. The paper that wraps the unbound copies was handmade in France at the Richard de Bas paper mill that was founded in 1326. Each box that holds an unbound copy was handmade by Christensen and covered with dark-green cloth imported from Holland. Each bound copy was traditionally bound with goatskin by Robert Espinosa. All these elements bring to this work the classical feel of the architectonic that should be achieved in the design and production of the "livre d'artiste."

Wulf Barsch drew the seven lithographs found in this edition of *The Book of Abraham* on stones, and then Wayne Kimball hand printed them on Arches mouldmade paper. The text serves as a vehicle for Barsch's own artistic search. His lithographs are both a focal point for the work and a powerful, emotional stimulus.

The imagery and symbolism in Barsch's work are full of geometrics, desert, hope, color, sanctuary, temperature, and questions. Since the artist is reserved about the meaning of his work, it is also folly for a reviewer to say too much. I will say, however, that the art is full of lively imagery and emotion — full enough for anyone's search.

Barsch's own background sheds light on some of his personal symbolism. A native of German-speaking Bohemia, Barsch left with his family for an American section of Bavaria during World War II and then later moved to the United States. His conversion to Mormonism and his own

literal and spiritual wanderings brought him to Utah, a desert that may suggest some of the same distance, color, and searching for home that the Old-World desert suggested to Abraham. Judith McConkie described Barsch in a 1984 exhibit catalog as "a wanderer, searching for a prior home and a future rest in a controlled present" (*In the Desert: A Stranger in a Strange Land*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Museum of Fine Arts, 1984). Barsch's haunting lithographs help broaden our understanding of the story of Abraham.

The familiar text of *The Book of Abraham* (here taken from the original *Times and Seasons* text [1 and 15 March 1842], without verse breaks) is part of the Church's canonized scripture and is found in the Pearl of Great Price. The book of Abraham itself describes Abraham's need to leave Chaldea, and in preparation, his need to receive the blessings of his ancestors. The book is full of his search, his revelations about the earth, sun, and moon. He learns about premortal life, the creation, the Savior, and the second estate. The book includes Abraham's great blessing from God: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee" (Abr. 2:9). Also included in the text of this edition are the familiar facsimiles 1, 2, and 3, printed close to their original size, with their attending explanations.

My only criticism of this work might be that so much effort has been expended to bring us a text similar to that available in literally millions of copies. Still, there are advantages to using the *Times and Seasons* text. Besides some grammatical changes, the most noticeable difference between this and the standard edition published by the Church is the unbroken text. Consecutively numbered scripture verses encourage progressing through the text rather than finding the message, reading the story, or even sensing the revela-