



castle is in a terrifying state and desperately needs money to be saved. They have detected fissures in the rock foundation of the Bran Castle and say that an earth tremor could cause the entire structure to collapse. According to Reuters, "State funds for emergency consolidation works have run dry."

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Which reminds me...

FLASH!

THE MT VOID is in imminent danger of collapse. Deep fissures have been discovered in the base of our type font. The result is that our letterhead is listing still imperceptibly but dangerously to the right, due to the preponderance of heavier letters to that side. Teams of experts have been called in and say that the letterhead could fall at any time. AT&T officials say that they are sympathetic, but due to the recent cost cuts they may just have to let the old and deeply-loved publication meet its doom. We are desperately asking all members and other interested parties to join in the crusade to save the VOID and send their dollars to the VOID care of Mark Leeper.

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2. THE ANGEL OF THE OPERA by Sam Siciliano (Otto Penzler, ISBN 1-883402-46-8, 1994, 256pp, \$21.95) (a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Last year was Nicholas Meyer's T\_h\_e\_C\_a\_n\_a\_r\_y\_T\_r\_a\_i\_n\_e\_r, and now we have Sam Siciliano's T\_h\_e\_A\_n\_g\_e\_l\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_O\_p\_e\_r\_a. One suspects that this is due more to the success of the Broadway play about the Phantom of the Opera than to the authors suddenly finding the Gaston Leroux novel on their library shelves. I suppose that any day now we'll get a novel in which Sherlock Holmes meets Cosette (and what i\_s her last name anyway?).

But T\_h\_e\_A\_n\_g\_e\_l\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_O\_p\_e\_r\_a is much better than last year's

\_ C \_ a \_ n \_ a \_ r \_ y  
\_ T \_ r \_ a \_ i \_ n \_ e \_ r. For one thing, it's much more faithful to the Leroux original. I suppose one might even claim it is too accurate to the original, with such a wealth of detail from the novel that it might appear as though Siciliano put it all in simply because he knew it. (In fact, the only technical quibble I have is that the Phantom's letter on page 23 re-arranges and renumbers the clauses of the letter of the original, placing more emphasis on Madame Giry than in the Leroux. The sense of the translation of that and other missives is accurate, however, as compared against the Livre de Poche edition.)

Siciliano manages to have Holmes play a key role in the action without disrupting it from the original sequence of events. He does this by having Holmes intentionally work behind the scenes. Also, he is using the story to show the parallels between Holmes and Erik rather than to have Holmes take over and solve the mystery. Siciliano's view of Holmes's personality is not entirely new, but he presents it better than many have done previously. Holmes's companion here is his cousin Henry Vernier, who explains

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that Watson was "extremely conventional and had little imagination" and so never really understood Holmes. But Siciliano does not make Holmes a caricature by having him so obviously unlike Watson's portrayal that one suspects Watson had the perception of a blind mole.

While \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ C \_ a \_ n \_ a \_ r \_ y \_ T \_ r \_ a \_ i \_ n \_ e \_ r adds a cardboard Holmes in a formula fashion, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ A \_ n \_ g \_ e \_ l \_ o \_ f \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ O \_ p \_ e \_ r \_ a uses the story of Erik to illuminate that of Holmes. The ending is predictable about a hundred pages into the novel, but in spite of that I would recommend this book--and of course the original Leroux as well.

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3. R. HOLMES & CO. by John Kendrick Bangs (Otto Penzler, ISBN 1-883402-63-8, 1994 (1906c), 231pp, \$8) (a book review by Evelyn C.

Leeper):

This is only marginally Holmes-related. Bangs's premise is that Sherlock Holmes married A. J. Raffles's daughter and produced Mr. Raffles Holmes, who through some interesting genetic quirk seems to have inherited both his grandfather's criminal tendencies and his father's sense of justice ("and the elements So mix'd in him ..."). However scientifically unlikely, this mix does give Bangs an easy frame to hang his plots on: Raffles engages in some dishonest behavior, then repents, offers his services as detective, "recovers" the missing items, and pockets the reward.

Not all the stories fit this mold, but there is little enough variation that they provide no mystery or surprise to the reader. The book is quite short--due to large type and wide margins, the 231 pages total fewer than 40,000 words--and is of interest only as a historical oddity, or to a Holmes completist.

Mark Leeper  
MT 3D-441 908-957-5619  
m.r.leeper@att.com

A memorandum is written not to inform the reader  
but to protect the writer.

-- Dean Acheson

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