

# The New Criterion

## Reconsiderations

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### Bang or whimper?

by [Theodore Dalrymple](#)

On the Centre Pompidou's "Creation and Destruction in Twentieth-Century Art."

Not having seen every building in the world, I cannot positively assert that the Centre Pompidou in the Place Beaubourg in Paris is the worst, but I should be surprised if anyone were able to point to a building that was very much worse.

If Jack the Ripper had been an architect, the Centre Pompidou is what he would have built: for he preferred his entrails out rather than in. The savage, gory mess that is the Centre Pompidou would have pleased him no end; perhaps he would even have obtained a sexual thrill from contemplating all the eviscerated intestinal pipes that writhe so uselessly around the inelegant core of the building.

The Centre Pompidou screams Look at me! at the passer-by, Look upon the originality of the architect who built me, and despair! He has done something that you, stuck upon your tramlines of conventional thought and judgment, could neither have thought nor dared to do. As to whether the thing ...

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