

# The New Criterion

## Features

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### The destruction of Paris

by [Katherine Knorr](#)

On recent developments in Paris architecture & their harmful effects on the city.

A few years ago, Eric Rohmer made a movie about the mayor of a village in the Vendée who decides that what his picturesque hamlet needs is not a new library but a *médiathèque*, an untranslatable word for a fashionable multimedia boondoggle.

A *médiathèque* building must be erected, which means bringing in an architect and setting aside space for parking lots and handicapped ramps and the right municipal lighting. In this particular village, it also would mean cutting down the venerable and pleasant tree near the house of the “*baba cool*” village teacher.

The teacher, not surprisingly, is against the whole project, as are related other stock characters in this curious movie: the newspaper editor, the muckraking freelance journalist, the mayor’s good-looking girlfriend, all for their own reasons. But it is the teacher who sums up certain t ...

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